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Project Scope as a Determinant of Methodology of Public Participation in Bomet County, Kenya

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Abstract

Complex decision-making processes require a more informed citizenry that arrives at a mutually agreed upon decision or at least one by which all parties can abide. This calls for public engagement in planning activities. Methodology of engaging the public in planning public participation is crucial for successful planning and the subsequent public participation process aimed to determine a project-specific public participation methodology in Kenya, considering diverse stakeholders, legal aspects, and resource constraints, to enhance engagement strategies aligned with unique project scope. The key issue is the potential discrepancy between project scope and the chosen methodology for public participation, highlighting the need for alignment and effective integration in planning public participation. The study applied the stakeholder theory. A literature review along with field research was undertaken to examine the available information on methodology of public participation and its determinants. In the study, observational methods were utilized, including categorized note-taking during two public forums to observe the proceedings of public participation. Additionally, self-administered questionnaires were distributed. The determined sample size comprised 34 respondents, constituting 20% of the target population of 168 administrators. Random sampling was applied during the pilot study in which interviewees from public officers were randomly selected in the two sub-counties not involved in the main study. The study conducted a comprehensive analysis employing descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and correlation tests to investigate the intricate dynamics within our dataset. ANOVA analysis demonstrated a statistically significant regression model (F = 9.91, p =0.0000523), affirming the collective impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. Additionally, the correlation test exposed a robust negative correlation of -0.637 between Public Participation (PP) Methodology and Project Scope, highlighting a discernible inverse relationship. These findings collectively contribute valuable insights into the interplay of variables, fostering a deeper understanding of the influence of project scope on the Methodology of Public Participation (MoPP). The study recommends taking into account the project scope when selecting the methodology for public participation.

Keywords: *Methodology of Public Participation, Project Scope*

1. Introduction

Project Scope as a Determinant of Methodology of Public Participation in Kenya is multi-faceted. Globally, the struggle is to establish a standardized public participation methodology that accommodates diverse project scopes while considering cultural, regulatory, and contextual variations. In the regional context of Kenya, the issue is further complicated by the need to align methodologies with the country's unique sociocultural and political dynamics, navigating legal frameworks, and addressing regional disparities.



At the local level, typified by Bomet County (BC), the intricacies become pronounced, requiring a careful balance between standardized and locally relevant methodologies that consider cultural nuances, socioeconomic factors, and community preferences to foster meaningful public engagement in planning processes.

New approaches are beginning to address the need to empower communities through participation in decision-making processes. This is in response to the outcomes of the United Nations Summit, the General Assembly (2010) which affirms the importance of the adoption of participatory and community-led approaches in national development strategies. Planning is one such arena where public participation and consultation is brought into the decision-making process. Meaningful community participation must provide a medium for learning amongst the participants (Tummers & Knies, 2013) Involving local people in community-based planning may create an arena for conversation between community members and other stakeholders and has the potential to generate positive social change (Braun, 2010).

Participation in government empowers citizens with information and the vital tools to shape their own destiny (Kibiru, 2014). The principle is that public participation is an essential component of planning, because educating the community and implementing public preferences in certain planning actions leads to successful implementations of the projects (Axelsson et al., 2010). If local residents are directly involved in the planning process they will be able to identify with the reasons behind planning decisions and take ownership of implementing the objectives of the plans (Scholl & Luna-Reyes, 2011). There is no better watchdog than the eyes and ears of an involved constituency (David, 2010).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the presence of legally binding rules emphasizing the importance of public involvement, a substantial majority of Kenyans remain uninformed about crucial aspects of local governance, as indicated by alarming statistics—83% being unaware of county fund allocations and only 7% cognizant of the County's Fiscal Strategy Paper. This underscores a critical gap between constitutional ideals and practical implementation, revealing a systemic issue where the constitutional spirit of meaningful public participation remains largely unrealized in practice.

Moreover, this issue extends beyond mere awareness; it permeates the very fabric of civic participation, with only 15% attending county meetings, according to Transparency International (2014). The lack of active involvement points to a deeper problem and the ineffectiveness of public participation mechanisms in fostering genuine engagement. Public participation is the aim of public meetings, workshops and hearings. However, inconvenient timing, limited access to resources, biased survey designs, and dominant minority voices hinders meaningful participation, failing to represent diverse community perspectives effectively. While global and national frameworks provide valuable insights, they often fall short in addressing the unique sociocultural and political dynamics at the local level, particularly in regions like Bomet County. Works by scholars such as Smith et al. (2018) and Jones (2020) emphasize the importance of context-specific approaches to public participation but neglect to delve deeply into the role of project scope in shaping these methodologies. The study aimed to fill this void by examining how varying project scopes influence the choice of public participation methodologies in Bomet County, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the selection of methodologies in a local context. This targeted exploration is vital for advancing the efficacy of public participation efforts in Bomet County and beyond, offering valuable insights that can be extrapolated to similar regional contexts facing challenges in aligning public participation strategies with project-specific scopes



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1.2 Research Objective

The study was guided by the following objective:

To assess the influence of project scope on the Methodology of Public Participation.

2. Literature Review

An examination of the literature illuminates the pivotal role of project scope in influencing the selection of participation methodologies. According to Xie et al. (2014), the intensity of public engagement is notably heightened when issues directly resonate with individuals. Workshops, recognized for their expansive scope addressing communitywide concerns (Ostergaard et al., 2016), are acknowledged as vital platforms for earlystage discussions and the dissemination of information. The influence of project scope on these participatory events is a crucial consideration in understanding how the community is engaged in the initial phases of decision-making. Further Bardach (2012) emphasizes the significance of hearings, particularly in the context of development projects. These sessions typically occur after planning processes and workshops (K, 2016), seeking public input on crucial matters such as policy interpretations and permits. In the unique context of Bomet, recognizing how the scope of projects shapes the dynamics of public feedback during hearings becomes imperative. Unravelling the nuances of this relationship is essential for comprehending the impact of project scope on the effectiveness of public participation methodologies in the later stages of decisionmaking.

Looking beyond specific participatory events, the literature characterizes policymaking as an extensive process ideally integrating public preferences on overarching goals and objectives (K, 2016). In Bomet, where public participation is of particular significance, aligning the scope of a project with community preferences during policymaking becomes a focal point. The exploration of how project scopes influence the integration of diverse community perspectives into broader goals and objectives is vital for understanding the effectiveness of public participation in shaping policies that resonate authentically with the community, while existing literature underscores the importance of project relevance in stimulating community engagement, the intricate interplay between project scope and various public participation methodologies in regions like Bomet remains underexplored. Thus, a more profound investigation is warranted to unveil the complexities and subtleties of how project scope acts as a determinant in shaping effective public participation methodologies in Bomet.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Stake Holder Theory

Pioneer of the "stakeholder Concept" changed his definition over time. In one of his latest definitions Freeman (2004) defines stakeholder as "those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation". In one of his latest publications Freeman (2004) adds a new principle, which reflects a new trend in stakeholder theory. In this principle in his opinion the consideration of the perspective of the stakeholders themselves and their activities is also very important to be taken into the management of companies. He states "The principle of stakeholder recourse. Stakeholders may bring an action against the



Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2024, ISSN: 2663-7367 (Online) & ISSN: 2663-7359 (Print) directors for failure to perform the required duty of care" (Freeman 2004).

A basis for stakeholder theory is that companies are so large and their impact on society so pervasive that they should discharge accountability to more sectors of society than solely their shareholders (Shoemaker, 2011). Not only are stakeholders affected by the company, but they in turn affect the company in some way. They hold a 'stake' rather than simply a 'share' in the company. Stakeholders include shareholders, customers, suppliers, creditors, employees, communities in the vicinity of the company's operations and the public (Freeman 2004). The most extreme proponents of stakeholder theory suggest that the environment, animal species and future generations should be included as stakeholders (Brower & Mahajan, 2013).

Linked to stakeholder theory is the idea of corporate social responsibility. Companies are being encouraged to improve their attitudes toward stakeholders and to act in a socially responsible manner (Dobele et al., 2014)(Dobele et al., 2014)(Dobele et al., 2014)(Dobele et al., 2014). The 'pure ethics' view assumes that companies should behave in a socially responsible way, satisfying the interests of all (Harrison & Wicks, 2013)(Harrison & Wicks, 2013)(Harrison & Wicks, 2013)(Harrison & Wicks, 2013). Based on the theory, only after meeting these moral obligations could they attend to their obligation to maximize shareholder's wealth . Stakeholder theory emphasizes identifying and engaging all parties affected by or having an interest in the project through stakeholder mapping. It determines which stakeholders are involved and their level of influence, guiding the selection of appropriate participation methods to ensure inclusive decision-making processes.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A graphical representation depicting the impact of project scope on the Methodology of Public Participation for planning public engagement in BC is illustrated in Figure 1.

Independent Variable Dependent Variable Project Scope Potential impact of Methodology of public project on the participation community. Public hearing Planned time for project Community completion. workshop Range of options and choices presented to the public. Frequency and duration

3. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to gather data in Bomet County. The target population included all sub-county administrators, ward administrators, and heads of departments in the five sub-counties, totaling 168 respondents as indicated by the County Public Service and Administration department office, BC.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used. BC was purposively selected out of all the 47 counties in Kenya. It was selected as the study's focus because of the researcher's intimate knowledge of its social, cultural, and geographical nuances. This familiarity



enhances the study's depth, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of public participation methodologies within the specific and familiar context of Bomet, contributing valuable insights for effective choice of community engagement methodology. Random sampling method was used to select 34 respondents; which was 20% of the target population (168 administrators) and two public participation forums for observation were purposefully sampled.

The observational method was employed to gather data on methodology, location, date, time, duration, attendance, weather conditions, and the count of presenters. Additional data was collected about meeting characteristics including: meeting purpose, level of dialogue, speaker duration, visualization tools, setting, stage in the planning process, method of interaction, communication flow, degrees of power and the existence of formalities. Opportunities to participate and the sensitivity of the project were also observed. Ratings were subjective based upon what was observed. Observation gave the actual reliable picture on the ground.

Further, a survey questionnaire was utilized, self-administered to randomly chosen participants. This method collected data on respondents' perspectives, opinions, and demographic information relevant to the study's objectives. The researcher trained and made use of two research assistants to take part in the administration of questionnaires which was distributed by hand.

The split-half technique assessed reliability in the pilot study by dividing items in the questionnaires into two halves and calculating the Spearman correlation coefficient (r). A correlation coefficient above 0.7 is typically considered reliable, indicating consistent responses. Data were analyzed using statistical software, employing descriptive statistics and inferential analyses including correlation test. Comparable methodologies were successfully employed in studies by Zhi, L., Qiaojun, L., and Zhang, Y. (2015) demonstrating the robustness of this approach in ensuring questionnaire reliability.

4. Results and Discussion

Descriptive analysis was used to determine the proportions and frequency of the variables. The data collected from the closed-ended items of the questionnaire was assigned numerical values (coded), checked for any errors, and finally analyzed by use of a logistic model under excel toolbar which provided coefficients. The study then computed the coefficients to probability to provide cross-tabulations that explain the relationships of the independent variable to the reference dependent variable. Other statistical testing processes considered were correlation analysis and ANOVA test.

Thirty-four questionnaires were issued to sub-county administrator, Ward administrators and departmental heads as indicated in the sample size. 31 were all filled and returned. This represented a 91.2 % return rate, which was a good representative and sufficient to generalize. A commonly accepted guideline aims for a return rate of at least 60% to 70% to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected (Babbie, 2016). This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study as it acted as a representative. The reasonably small size of the sample population and literacy level made it efficient to collect valid data from the targeted respondents. The researcher also attended two Public Participation Forums; one employed the Public Hearing (PH) methodology and the other applied the community workshop (CW) methodology to make



observations and ascertain the information by the respondents. The data obtained in form of notes was categorized into themes and incorporated into the qualitative results and discussions.

4.1 Project Scope as a determinant of methodology of public participation in PPP

The research was conducted to determine the influence of project scope on the MoPP. In this research, the dependent variables were two: Community Workshop (1), and Public Hearing (2). The descriptive statistics table (Table 1) presents key measures for a dataset. The mean, calculated as 1.516, represents the average value. The standard error, at 0.091, indicates the precision of the mean estimate. The median and mode, both at 2, suggest a central tendency. The standard deviation, 0.508, measures data dispersion around the mean. Therefore, the reference point of the dependent variables under the study was Public Hearing (2).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics table

1.5161	Mean	
0.09123	Standard	
	Error	
2	Median	
2	Mode	
	0.09123	0.09123 Standard Error 2 Median

Source: Author's computation, 2018

4.1.1 Correlation Results

Correlation test was conducted to determine the magnitude and directions of relationship between the independent variable under study and the dependent variable. The ANOVA test revealed that the study was significant. The study is considered statistically significant with an F-ratio of 9.910 because the observed significance (p=0.0000523) is lower than the conventional threshold for hypothesis testing, set at p=0.05. This suggests strong evidence against the null hypothesis that Project scope does not significantly influence the method of public participation, supporting the study.

Table 2: ANOVA table

ANOVA					
	Df	SS	MS	F	Significance p
Regression	4	4.6754	1.16886	9.9106	0.00005
Residual	26	3.0664	0.11794		
Total	30	7.7419			

Source: Author's computation, 2018

The correlation between variables under study is explained in the table 3.

Table 3: Correlation table

Correlation		
	PP Methodology	
PP Methodology	1	
Project Scope	-0.6369	

Source: Author's computation, 2018

Since the point of reference in the dependent variable was Public Hearing, the correlation between project scope and public hearing was -0.63696. This means that



there is a moderate negative linear relationship between public hearing and project scope. Therefore, it means that as the project scope broadens or widens, public hearing would not be the best choice for public participation. Project scope implies the availability of the opportunity for the public comment, the time schedule for the project, the project availability of choices and options and the stage of the project in the planning process. Projects with narrow scopes would employ public hearing as a method of public participation, while projects with broad or wide scopes would employ Community workshops as a method of public participation, hence the correlation between project scope and community workshop is a moderate positive linear relationship supporting findings of (Bryson et al., 2013).

4.1.2 Findings for the influence of the project scope on the methodology of public participation in PPP.

Scope of a project was evaluated in questionnaires and through observation. The coefficients were converted into logarithmic figures (y*=ln(p/(1-p))) and probability (p=exp(y*)/(exp(y*)+1)) to interpret the binary logistics coefficients. From table 4 the coefficient of project scope was found to be -0.397866292. This was negative implying a negative relationship. Since the point of reference in the dependent variable was Public Hearing, the study revealed that the probability of a project with a narrow scope choosing public hearing as the method of public participation was 82%. A workshop may be more effective for legislative decisions that have a broader impact, such as a general Plan, while a public hearing may be more suitable for quasi-judicial actions by a governing body (Fox & Le Dantec, 2014)).

Availability of the opportunity for the public comment, Sensitivity of the project, the time schedule for the project and the resources available, the degree of impact of the decisions to be made at the public forum, the project availability of choices and options and the stage of the project in the planning process are paramount in choosing the MoPP.

Table 4: Probability table

	Coefficien ts	PLS G	P'L'S' G'	PL'S G'	P'LS' G	P	L	S	G
Intercept	1.9170	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Project Scope	-0.397	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
y*=ln(p/(1-p))		1.257	1.917	1.055	2.119	1.51 9	2.02	1.45 3	2.00
p=exp(y*)/(exp(y*) +1)		0.779	0.872	0.742	0.893	0.82	0.88 4	0.81	0.88 2
Change		0.093		0.151		0.06		0.07 1	

Source: Author's computation, 2018

Results from Table 4 shows that 17 (55%) of the respondents strongly agreed that availability of the opportunity for the public comment and the subsequent inclusion in making decisions at the end of the meeting has influence on the MoPP, 8 (26%) agreed, none 0% were neutral and 4 (13%) disagreed while 2 (6%) of the respondents strongly



disagreed that Availability of the opportunity for the public comment and the subsequent inclusion in making decisions at the end of the meeting has influence on the MoPP. Majority 17 (55%) of the respondents strongly agreed that availability of the opportunity for the public comment and the subsequent inclusion in making decisions at the end of the meeting is paramount in the choice of the MoPP appropriate. This finding is like those of Kimani, (2012) who found out that community workshop requires adequate time for members to contribute their input in the project. This was further supported by the public participation event that the researcher observed with plentiful opportunities to participate.

The results further illustrate that 11 (35%) of the respondents strongly agreed that sensitivity of the project is considered in planning public participation, 10(32%) agreed, 6 (19%) were neutral and 2(6%) of the respondents disagreed while 2 (6%) strongly disagreed. Majority of the responses strongly agrees to sensitivity of the project as determinant of MoPP by 11(35%) responses. Based on the findings more sensitive projects calls for a public hearing; this may be because these projects attract larger breath of attendance. The observation on the forum that focuses on the relocation of the traders in Mulot market wanted an immediate action and it attracted a large crowd. This called for a public hearing.

Additionally, 12(39%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the time schedule for the project and the resources available affects the MoPP in planning, 10(32%) agreed, 4(13%) were neutral and 4 (13%) of the respondents disagreed while 1(3%) strongly disagreed. A majority of the responses strongly agreed to time schedule as an essential aspect in choosing a suitable MoPP in PPP by 12(39%) responses. Time has to be taken into account in any planning. Public participation is an expense and the planners of public participation have to put into consideration the time required, and the resources allocated. Glucker (2013) found out that when the time is short and the resources inadequate then public hearing is appropriate. The researcher observed public participation forum on the County Annual Development Plan for the financial year 2019/2020; the time and the resources were adequate hence community workshop was suitable.

Furthermore, 12(39%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the degree of impact of the decisions to be made relates to MoPP, 11(35%) agreed, 6(19%) were neutral and 1(3%) of the respondents disagreed while 1(3%) strongly disagreed. Majority 12 (39%) of the respondents strongly agreed that degree of impact is crucial in selecting the MoPP. The impact can be immediate or later. From the observed PPF the public participation that focuses on later impact calls for community workshop like the PPF on CADP that was held in Kembu which was to be effected in 2019/2020 financial year.

The findings revealed that 8(26%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the project availability of choices and options influence the MoPP, 7(23%) agreed, 12(39%) were neutral, 8 (26%) disagreed while 1 (3%) strongly disagreed. The majority of the respondents were neutral. The study still found out that 13(42%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the stage of the project in the planning process determines MoPP employed, 9(29%) agreed, 4(13%) were neutral and 3(10%) of the respondents disagreed while 2(6%) strongly disagreed. An overwhelming majority strongly agreed by



13(42%) that the stage of the project is considered in selecting MoPP. From the CW observed, the forum focused on discussion of progress, resolving issues, and provide an opportunity to pose questions in early stage in the process. This may be because no decision is expected. The community at-large was being informed and the officials will make decisions another day.

Table 5: Project scope and Method of Public Participation in PPP

PROJECT SCOPE	SD F	%	D F	%	N F %	A F %	SA F %	Total F %
Availability of the opportunity for the public comment		6%	4	13%	0 0%	8 26%	17 55%	31 100%
Sensitivity of the project	2	6%	2	6%	6 19%	10 32%	11 37 100%	31
Time schedule for the project and the resources available	1	3%	4	13%	4 13%	10 32%	12 39%	31 100%
Degree of impact of the decisions to be made	1	3%	1	3%	6 19%	11 35%	12 39%	31 100%
Project availability of choices and options	1	3%	3	10%	12 39%	7 23%	8 26%	31 100%
The stage of the project in the planning process	2	6%	3	10%	4 13%	9 29%	13 42%	31 100%

Source: Author's computation, 2018

In general, hearing attracted larger crowd and stirred emotions more than workshops. The project scope in workshops encompasses a broad range of topics that affect everyone in the whole Community (Brovelli et al., 2016).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In pursuing the objective of assessing the influence of project scope on Methodology of Public Participation (MoPP) in planning public participation (PPP), the study found that the project's scope significantly influenced the selection of Public Participation methodologies. Additionally, the study observed a negative correlation between project scope and the effectiveness of public hearings, highlighting that as project scope broadens, public hearings become less effective, while community workshops become more efficient. Consequently, the study concludes that project scope is a crucial factor to consider when determining the appropriate MoPP for PPP initiatives.



5.1 Recommendations on Policy:

Based on the identified statistical significance and implications derived from data analysis, the study strongly recommends County leadership to prioritize strategic planning of public participation. This involves conducting a thorough analysis of determinants influencing the Methodology of Public Participation (MoPP), with special consideration given to the pivotal role played by project scope. In the context of contemporary planning, practitioners are advised to actively pursue substantial public input through diverse methods, acknowledging the substantial impact of project scope in determining an appropriate MoPP. This consideration, in turn, has significant repercussions on overall attendance and the depth of participation in public forums. The research recommends Bomet's decision-makers to use a flexible approach in public engagement. Comparative studies across Kenya's regions is important to evaluate scope-based changes in methodology choices, providing insights into the determinants and efficacy of public engagement methods. To gain a deeper knowledge of Bomet's public participation evolution, longitudinal studies can be carried out to analyze methodology trends, stakeholder engagement and outcomes.

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