

Effect of Citizen Participation on the Sustainability of Rural Development Projects: A Case of Nakuru County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Citizen participation has been considered crucial in the efforts to attain project sustainability in government development projects. Practicing poor development practices and failure to prioritize and listen to inputs from beneficiaries could lead to a mismatch of needs and undesirable project outcomes. It is on this basis that the research aimed to explore the effect of citizen participation on the sustainability of rural development projects in Nakuru County Kenya. The objectives of the research were to examine the effects of interactive websites on the sustainability of rural development projects in Nakuru County and to examine the effects of focus groups on the sustainability of rural development projects in Nakuru County. The research was guided by Deliberative Democracy Theory and Social Action Theory. The research utilized descriptive research design and random sampling procedures to acquire 364 respondents from the possible target population of 4,089 people. The research further employed closed and open-ended questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions to collect primary data. Secondary data was obtained from various publications. The study analyzed quantitative data from closed ended questions by editing, sorting and coding them into SPSS 25 for descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was categorized into narratives, discourses and conversations alongside research variables. Quantitative data was presented using means, standard deviations, charts, tables and graphs. Qualitative data was presented using various themes in accordance with the study variables. To ensure ethical guidelines were followed, the project cultivated confidence among the participants by promising them anonymity and confidentiality of their answers. With a beta value of 0.267 and a critical value of 0.000, the research found that interactive websites significantly and positively affect the long-term viability of rural development initiatives in Nakuru County. Focus groups were shown to have a favorable, statistically significant impact on project sustainability (beta = 0.186, $p = 0.020$).

Key Words: Citizen Participation, Project Sustainability, Interactive Websites, Focus Groups.

INTRODUCTION

Project sustainability has received recognition and its importance noted far and wide (Silvius, Schlpper & Planko, 2012). This is because issues of sustainability have been neglected in project management studies (Martens & Carvalho, 2016). Also, the recognition is in cognizance of the crucial role played by development projects in sustainable development and the challenges hampering the attainment of project sustainability (Silvius & de Graaf, 2019; Silvius, 2017).

According to Gachie (2019) incorporating sustainability in projects translates to success of the said project. Further, involvement of targeted beneficiaries during the organising phase and when assessing needs has proven crucial in attaining project sustainability, as it brings about behavior change among the beneficiaries (Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2018). On the other hand, Di Maddaloni and Derakhshan (2019) argue that community members support long-term innovation and development programs for better benefits realization at the local and nation-wide level, when they are consciously engaged in transparent communication by project initiators. Konrad, Wiek and Barth (2020) are of the same opinion that success factors for fostering sustainability of projects widely hinges on the advanced skills in stakeholder

engagement, communication and teamwork.

According to Smith and Wales (2018) since 1970s, citizen participation has been promoted and run in the form of juries in the USA and German. Juries in the USA had the influence of mainstream media but overall had little influence in political decision making, whereas in German where it was referred to as planning cells it caught the attention of government institutions with a view of employing it in future decision making. Evans-Cowley and Hollander (2010) is of the opinion that face-to-face political interactions is a flawed process hence the advocacy for technology to enhance new forms and practices of citizen participation that fosters public discourse. This has led to emergence of web-based virtual worlds like second life and Facebook where communities are involved in issues to do with planning.

In Thailand, social networks are the source and motivation for citizen participation in their own affairs something that tends to improve how well public goods work. (Suebvises, 2018). Accountability is found to be weak in the provincial and local authorities, citizen participation and social capital chips to ensure improvement of public sector accountability and performance. In the Netherlands, governments encourage citizen participation as a measure of enhancing the resilience of local communities towards climate change (Mees, Uittenbroek, Hegger & Driessen, 2019). Consequently, local government is gradually shifting towards a more stimulating, facilitating and networking roles, albeit at a slow pace.

In South Africa, citizen participation has proven crucial in promoting sustainable livelihoods, creation of employment, addressing poverty by boosting local economy and inclusivity especially on the success of Warwick junction initiative (Mlambo, 2017). Auriacombe and Sithomola (2020) in South Africa, the solution to community challenges hinges on empowering citizens, an endeavor that will enable them point out and find remedy to their predicaments while keeping an eye on the actions of appointed and elected public officials

Institutional, individual, and social-cultural factors all have an impact on civic engagement in decentralised governance in Kenya, according to Kalekye (2016). Consultative forums and attendance at development meetings were two of the most important methods of citizen participation used. In Kisumu County, citizen involvement has improved ownership of public infrastructural programs and encouraged transparency, good governance and better service delivery (Kimutai & Aluvi, 2018).

Citizen participation is key and therefore should be encouraged and facilitated especially on the issues revolving governance to foster performance of governance in the county governments (Amuhaya, Namusonge & Nthigah, 2018). This is important because Citizen Participation fosters receptiveness of policies formulated to address the needs of the community. In Kenya, Munyao (2019) there are gaps in public communication, lack of a public participation and civic education Act. The scholar recommends the development of public participation and civic education Act by county governments and holding of public forums in conformity with legislative and constitutional dictates. The study measured citizen participation through interactive web sites and focus groups.

Interactive websites refer to internet-based participation tools used by government agencies to drive up the interaction level and serve as a catalyst for citizens to learn more and offer suggestions for determining public policy (Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010). Citizens' participation in public life online, often known as interactivity and user-generated content, is often touted as a trend that improves democracy (Jönsson & rnebring, 2011).

Reddick (2010) argues that E-participation went through 4 stages; online presence, level of interactions, transactions and how it has transformed government services. After evaluating the accessibility and usability of online information about governmental meetings, budget issues, information on government and voting (Greitens & Strachan, 2011) hold contrary opinion that governments have done an inferior task of educating

and enhancing citizen engagement through websites. The study measured interactive websites using simplicity, transformation, interactivity and efficiency.

Three crucial design components have a direct impact on the type and standard of interactions between focus group participants. According to Femdal and Solbjr (2018), they are focus group composition, interpersonal influences, and research environmental factors. According to group dynamics studies, a variety of factors can affect participants' comfort zones. According to Stewart and Shamdasani (2014), the influences are divided into three broad categories: intrapersonal factors and individual differences, interpersonal factors, and environmental factors. Group interaction, internal factors, and external framing all have an impact on the focus group constructs (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

Focus group techniques used by social researchers and commercial market researchers are increasingly diverging. The main concerns and practical steps of the social researcher, namely group composition, planning, and conduct, are covered by Bloor (2001). In addition to using examples from their own focus group research experience, Tremblay, Hevner, and Berndt (2010) also discuss the three key elements of composition, conduct, and analysis. The study measured focus groups using group composition, external factors, individual factors and interpersonal influences.

Project Sustainability

Ostrom (2010) defines sustainable development as a kind of economic growth that does not compromise the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs while still meeting the needs of the current one. According to Luvenga et al. (2015), the capability of a development program to continue out its goals even after substantial financial, administrative, and technical assistance from donors has stopped is what is meant by the term project sustainability.

According to Wabwoba and Wakhungu (2013) funding levels, leadership, group member's participation and rainfall patterns were found to affect the sustainability and longevity of local food security initiatives in Kiambu. The beneficiaries of development initiatives should be at the forefront in the organizing and execution for the purpose of ownership and sustainability. Wanjohi (2010) is of a similar opinion that, the challenges bedeviling sustainability in emerging economies are; financial issues, local and team issues, project management processes among others. The Study measured project sustainability based on beneficiary participation, leadership, stakeholder ownership, project management, project design and planning of the projects.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the pivotal function projects do in the realization of sustainable businesses, sustainability poses a challenge to our modern time (Silvius, 2017). Citizen participation has been considered crucial in the efforts to attain project sustainability in government development projects (Roseland, 2012). Practicing poor development practices and failure to prioritize and listen to inputs from beneficiaries could lead to mismatch of needs and undesirable project outcomes. Sustainable projects are defined by the application of triple bottom criteria, evaluating projects in a cultural and social lens, a stakeholders-focused management strategy, employing project management and a value-based approach to projects (Silvius, 2017)

Researchers in Uasin Gishu County found that institutional, social demographic, and media impact elements were the most important in encouraging public engagement in devolved finances (Ajwang, 2017). It was discovered that participation in funds occurs during program operation, benefit access, program monitoring and evaluation, fund allocation, and project identification. The research on how community involvement affects access to social services indicated that affordability of social services was effectively enhanced by citizen participation in development interventions (Hassan et al, 2017). The above studies were however

focused on devolved funds and access to social services.

According to Ronoh's 2019 study, demographic parameters including age, gender, and education level have an impact on how the public participates in Kenya's decentralized administration. may have an impact on public participation. Further, it was established that men and youths were found to make a quality and meaningful contribution than the female and elderly respectively. Kihonge and Kaseya (2016) examined the factors influencing the efficiency of public participation in county governance in Kenya and concluded that civic education was crucial to the success of public involvement in county governments. The study further proposed strategies to induce Citizen participation among them formulation of guiding policies, early notification of public forums, portioning more funds towards public participation, use of variety of methods and offering incentives. However, the above studies only focused on demographic factors and factors effecting effective Citizen Participation therefore presenting an empirical gap. Regardless of the crucial role citizen participation performs in the realm of development, there was a notable lack of empirical evidence on the effects it had on project sustainability, the research gaps the study aimed to when it examined how public involvement affected the viability of rural development projects in Kenya's Nakuru County.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the effects of interactive websites on the sustainability of rural development projects in Nakuru County, Kenya.
2. To determine the effects of focus groups on the sustainability of rural development projects in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the research provide a better understanding of citizen participation and may help citizens appreciate their contribution to development. Because they provide information on potential strategies for increasing participation in regional development initiatives, the study's results may be useful to the County Government of Nakuru, local citizens, and any other development groups in the area. More generally, the data supports a more thorough and informed discussion of development issues. The research anticipates that policy and legislative reforms will be made using the data generated.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Deliberative Democratic Theory

Deliberative democratic theory offers explanation on how to produce more legitimate decisions because it respects the moral agency of the participants (Thompson, 2008). Deliberative theorists postulate that Policy choices ought to come from fair and reasonable discourse between citizens (Bohman, 1997). The exchange of contrasting beliefs, values and opinions enriches mutual understanding enables people to reflect on viewpoints they never would have contemplated on their own. (Mellon University Press, 2007).

Deliberative democracy is an effective strategy for attaining better development outcomes through provision of information, giving citizen's forums to engage in discussion, weigh various viewpoints, and come to a consensus on the course of action, policy, or procedure that will best serve the interests of the general public (McAfee, 2004). Deliberative democracy Theory expounds on the significance of seeking the clean bill of health from the locals before commencing any project. The nod from the locals translates to legitimacy a phenomenon that leads to projects sustainability. The theory was crucial to the study because its ultimate aim is to provide information and increase citizen participation in order to attain better development outcomes and a more authentic democratic society (Ros Cavalier, 2011).

Social Action Theory

Max Weber developed the concept of social action theory in one of his 1920s-era books on Economy and Society. The theory sought to understand how human actions in a social context relate to cause and effect (Weber, 2009). Social theorists say that one's conduct and chances in life are not impacted by their socio-economic standing. They place a strong emphasis on the active individual and interpersonal interactions as key factors in determining one's identity and, by extension, the larger society (2011) Jones, Bradbury, and LeBoutillier. According to this idea, human beings alone and above all else define their own wants, interests, and aspirations (Adler, 1924). By recognizing an individual's unique driving force, the theory aids institutions in understanding human behavior.

The theory is crucial due to the insight it provides that the society has diverse people and needs therefore calling for due diligence from any development agency to exactly find out the pressing ones for tackling in order aspects of project sustainability. The theory was applicable to the research because it is crucial for governments and development agencies to embed the needs and opinions of communities in development projects so that they can effectively address their needs and yield sustainable projects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interactive Websites and Project Sustainability

A paper on mobile-based technology platforms for citizen involvement in Malawi analyzed the condition of citizen participation in that country and the gaps that still remain. The study's findings (Sibande & Thinyane, 2016) indicate that the proliferation of smartphones and the internet has made it possible to enhance interactions between citizens, elected officials, service providers, and local government. The study also suggested creating a web-based platform for citizen engagement that is mobile responsive in order to address the shortcomings in citizen engagement outside of elections that scholars and practitioners have noted. The platform supports data collection streams via social media, web forms, and SMS. For evidenced based reporting. The platform also incorporates multimedia files like images, videos and Audio. It will also look into the factors that encourage or discourage people from using technology to engage people. The discussion surrounding the utilizations of ICTs to promote citizen involvement has benefited from the paper's findings. The study was conducted in Malawi, where the current study was based in Kenya. An empirical evidence on the evaluation of Kenya's websites' usability in Nairobi financial district suggested that ICT literacy and ICT delivery channel influenced the accessibility of government websites (Kituyi & Waweru, 2016). The research further found out that disability was statistically significant in offering explanation on accessibility of e-government websites. The above study focused on ICT as an avenue to accessibility of government services in the Nairobi financial district whereas this research aimed to quantify the impact of interactive websites on project sustainability in Nakuru county.

Focus Groups and Project Sustainability

A study by Sharma et al., (2019) on the creation of informational materials for lung cancer screening sought to be guided by Focus groups and in-depth interviews to make their research decisions. The themes that emerged from the discussion included among others; eligibility criteria, apprehension regarding results and cost obtaining exams information that was used to bring about an understanding on concerns and misconceptions about lung cancer screening among past and current smokers. The above study was conducted in America a geographical gap this research sought to fill. Online focus groups have been shown to be a useful alternative to in-person focus groups for research in the hospitality sector, according to empirical evidence from the southeast United States of America (Richard et al., 2018). This platform produced ideas of a similar quantity, variety of viability, and average quality. The above study focused on

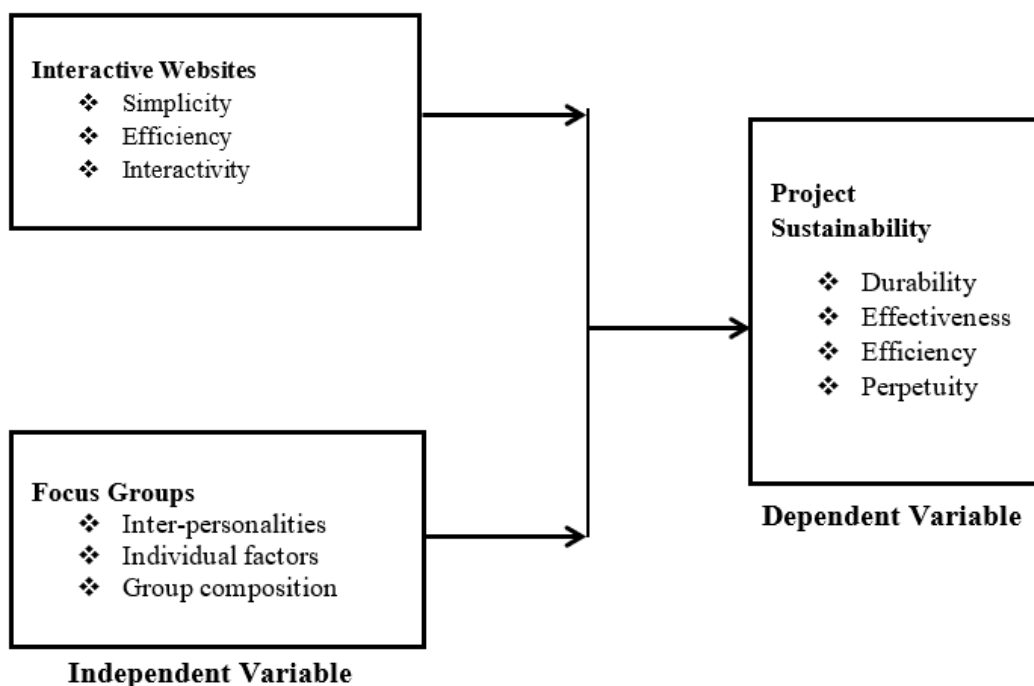
the health sector whereas this research narrowed down to project sustainability.

A study on the construction industry’s sustainable project management crucial success factors was conducted by Mavi and Standing (2018). The paper was driven by the limited empirical evidence on inclusive categorization of critical success factors on construction sector, 26 project managers from Australia’s construction sector were the target audience for the survey. The findings suggested that sponsor support and top management were assigned weighty responsibilities as restrictions were noted to be imposed by end users and various stakeholders. The study above was undertaken in the developed jurisdiction a peculiar context of which its inferences could not be generalized locally. While focusing on carbon disclosure project in Canada in the period 2008-2014, Ben-Amar, Chang and McIlkenny (2017) conducted an investigation on the corporate response to sustainability initiatives and gender diversity on board. The targeted only publicly listed firms and sustainability initiatives were determined by carbon disclosure project with the support of institutional investors. The survey findings revealed that with an increase percentage of women on board, there was a likelihood of voluntary climate change disclosures. The study above failed to link project sustainability with citizen participation the gap the research aims to close.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between citizen participation (predictor variable) and project sustainability (dependent variable).

Figure 4:1 Operational Framework



Source: Researcher (2023)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive research strategy. It suited the study because it is concerned with the characteristics and those of the whole sample (Saliria, 2012). It is also employed to identify and acquire data pertaining attributes of social situations, social structure and social events among others (Akhtar, 2016).

Further, the scholar posits that the design is paramount in answering question on when, where, how, what and who. Therefore, the design was most ideal in describing the phenomena citizen participation and implementation of development projects accordingly make inferences to the general population.

Target Population

The total set of survey data from which conclusions are made is referred to as the target population (Lavrakas, 2008). The 4,089 (IEBC, 2022) registered voters of Solai ward in Nakuru City County constituted the target population. The study targeted registered voters because these are the people who can constitutionally either indirectly or directly influence development projects they need by; voting in qualified leadership, providing oversight of leadership and censoring the leadership.

Sample Size

Salkind (2010) defines a sample size as the number of people who take part in a research. The researcher also cautions researchers that selecting a small sample might distort the real influence of the predictor variable on the dependent variable due to poor statistical power. Out of the 4,089 registered voters in the target population in Nakuru County’s Solai Ward, 364 respondents participated in the sample. The study attempted to create the research sample using the Yamane formula.

n =sample size,

N = population size

e =level of significance (5%)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{4089}{1 + 4089 (0.05)^2} = 364$$

Table 5:1 Sample size Distribution

Respondents	Quantity	Frequency	Percentages
Chemasis Sub-Location	30	30	8
Nyamamidhi Sub-Location	30	60	8
Emarangishu Sub-Location	30	90	8
Arusto Sub-Location	30	120	8
Lower Solai Sub-Location	30	150	8
Koisamo Sub-Location	30	180	8
Arutani Sub-Location	30	210	8
Chiefs	3	213	1
Sub-Chiefs	7	220	2
Non-Governmental Organizations	2	222	1
Welfare Associations	3	225	1
Nyumba Kumi Leaders	14	239	4
Foundations	2	241	1
Member of County Assembly	1	242	1

Random Registered Voters	122	364	33
Total	364	364	100

Source: Researcher 2022

Data Collection Instruments

The study used focus groups, questionnaires, and interview schedules to gather information from a sample of 364 respondents. The use of more than one tool for collecting data underscored the aspects of triangulations thereby garnering an all-round data for making proper inferences.

Data Collection Procedures

The study used focus groups, questionnaires, and interview schedules to gather information from a sample of 364 respondents. The closed-ended questionnaires were seeking to collect quantitative data, open ended questionnaires were gathering qualitative data. The study also sought to interview key informants such as leaders of Nyumba Kumi, area Member of County Assembly, welfare associations, foundations, NGOs, chiefs and sub-chiefs. The researcher also collected data using 14 FGDs that were categorized into groups of 15 respondents two in every sub-location in Solai Ward.

Data Analysis and Data Presentation

The research used content analysis as the method for analyzing qualitative data and organizing responses into different themes in conjunction with research variables. After that, SPSS 25 was used to edit, sort, and code the quantitative data for descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive data was illustrated using means and standard deviations, while tables and graphs presented inferential statistics.

The research used the following regression model;

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y = Dependent Variable (project sustainability)

Independent variables, which include:

X1 is interactive websites

X2 is focus groups

α = the constant

$\beta_1 - 2$ = the regression coefficient or change included in Y by each X

ε = error term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The results of the research participants' response rates are shown in table 4.1, and they are well explained by describing both their representation and the method used to elicit their responses.

Table 6:1 Response Rate

Response rate	Frequency	Percent
Returned	292	80.2
Unreturned	72	19.8
Total	65	100.00

Source: Field Data (2023)

A sample of 292 participants in the study were polled using a standardized questionnaire. Only 72 of the 292 target respondents were able to fill out and submit their survey, yielding an 80.2 percent response rate that was sufficient for drawing conclusions. According to Johnson and Owens (2003), a response rate of 50% is appropriate for analysis and reporting, a rate of 60% is excellent, and a rate of 80.2% or higher is extraordinary. The study’s response rate was thought to be very good for drawing conclusions and offering suggestions. According to Babbie (2010), who agrees with this conclusion, a response rate of 70% or higher is considered excellent. These opinions suggest that the study’s response rate was sufficient.

Interactive Websites on the Sustainability of Rural Development Projects

The study looked at how interactive websites affected the viability of rural development initiatives in Kenya’s Nakuru County. The outcomes are displayed in Table 4.7 further down.

Table 6:2 Interactive Websites on the Sustainability of Rural Development Projects

Opinions	N	Mean	Standard Dev
Interactive websites are efficient enough in relaying message of development projects.	292	3.78	.7565
There is interactivity brought about by interactive websites.	292	3.90	.5651
The digital platforms for engaging citizens are very simple to use.	292	4.07	.8813
Online platforms have allowed formation of citizen communities.	292	4.11	.6239
Interactive websites have enhanced feedback, collaboration and sharing of opinions on the development of rural projects.	292	3.86	.8316
Digital spaces have fostered information flow on rural development projects among citizens.	292	4.08	.5897
Interactive websites enhanced the collection of spatial information a various social project	292	4.17	.8195

Source: Author 2023

Most of the respondents, as evidenced by the average of 4.17 and S.D of 0.8195 in Table 4.7, strongly agreed that interactive websites improved the collecting of spatial information for various social projects. As seen by the average of 4.11 and S.D of 0.6239, they likewise firmly agreed that internet platforms had made it possible for citizen groups to emerge. As evidenced by an average of 4.08 and a S.D of 0.5897, the respondents were in agreement that digital spaces had encouraged information flow on rural development initiatives among locals. The median response was 4.07, and the S.D was 0.8813, indicating that the

respondent thought that using digital platforms to engage citizens was very simple. The average of 3.90 and a S.D of 0.5651 indicate that the respondents believed that interactive websites promote interaction. As evidenced by an average of 3.86 and a S.D of 0.8316, the respondents also concurred that interactive websites had improved feedback, cooperation, and exchange of perspectives on the development of rural initiatives. As evidenced by the study’s average of 3.78 and S.D of .7565, interactive websites are effective enough in relaying the message of development initiatives.

The study was in line with Cho and Park (2018) who found that interactive websites helped to facilitate communication and collaboration among project stakeholders, which in turn promoted greater accountability and trust. Rienties et al. (2017) also found that interactive websites and other digital tools may significantly boost stakeholder engagement, knowledge sharing, and collaboration in sustainable development projects.

Focus Groups on the Sustainability of Rural Development Projects

The research was conducted in Nakuru County, Kenya, with the goal of determining the impact that focus groups had on the success of rural development projects in the area. Table 4.8 summarizes the findings.

Table 6:3 Focus Groups on the Sustainability of Rural Development Projects

Opinions	N	Mean	Standard Dev
There are aspects of interpersonal influences in the discourse of rural development projects.	292	4.02	.6707
Individual factors in focus groups normally have a significant contribution on the sustainability of development projects.	292	3.74	1.0191
Group composition of focus groups determine the sustainability of rural development projects.	292	3.85	.6770
During focus group discussions there always discovery of preliminary development issues.	292	4.09	.7295
Discussions in focus groups bring about research environmental factors.	292	4.21	.9373

Source: Author (2023)

Based on Table 4.8, majority of the participants strongly concurred that discussions in focus groups bring about research environmental factors as shown by an average of 4.75 and S.D of 0.9373. Additionally, they also firmly agreed that During focus group discussions there always discovery of preliminary development issues as supported by average of 4.09 and S.D of 0.7295. The respondents also strongly agreed that there are the aspects of interpersonal influences in the discourse of rural development projects as shown by average of 4.02 and S.D of 0.6707. Those surveyed firmly concurred that Group composition of focus groups determine the sustainability of rural development projects as evidenced by an average of 3.85 and S.D of 0.6770. Lastly, respondents concurred that individual factors in focus groups normally have a substantial contribution on the sustainability of development projects as evidenced by an average of 3.74 and S.D of 1.0191. The study supports the findings of Mander et al. (2019) who found that focus groups helped to determine the needs and priorities of community members, which in turn led to the development of more targeted and effective interventions. Li et al. (2020) also found that focus groups helped to build trust and promote cooperation among project stakeholders, which in turn led to greater community participation and ownership.

Regression Analysis

The main objective of the study was to examine the role of citizen participation on the sustainability of rural development projects.

Table 6:4 Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.727	.653		5.708	.000
	Interactive Websites	.267	.074	.209	3.625	.000
	Focus Groups	.186	.063	.091	1.349	.020

a. Dependent Variable: sustainability of rural development projects in Nakuru County.

Source: Field Data (2023)

The resultant regression model was of the form:

$$\text{Citizen Participation} = 3.727 + .267 \text{ Interactive websites} + .186 \text{ Focus Groups}$$

The findings indicated that interactive websites affect the sustainability of rural development initiatives in Nakuru County positively and significantly (beta = 0.267, crucial = 0.000). Wanyama et al. (2019) found that interactive websites have the potential to increase the profitability of rural development initiatives, and their results are consistent with this. The study’s secondary aim was to examine how focus groups affected the viability of rural development initiatives in Nakuru County. Focus groups were shown to have a positive and statistically significant impact on the project’s sustainability, with a beta value of 0.186 and a p value of 0.020. These outcomes align with those of an earlier investigation by Wanjala et al. (2018), which also demonstrated the positive role of focus groups in enhancing the sustainability of rural development projects.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the research demonstrated, in conclusion, that the use of interactive websites is advantageous to the sustainability of rural development efforts in Nakuru County, Kenya. The results demonstrated that the use of digital platforms has improved the gathering of spatial data, encouraged communication among residents, and enabled the emergence of citizen communities. Additionally, the ease of use of digital platforms for public engagement has increased their accessibility and improved feedback, collaboration, and opinion exchange on the creation of rural initiatives. Additionally, the study showed that interactive websites are an efficient means of relaying messages about development projects, making them an effective tool for promoting sustainable rural development in the region.

In conclusion, the study on the impact of focus groups on the sustainability of rural development projects in Nakuru County, Kenya has revealed the significant role played by focus groups in the development process. Through focus group discussions, important research on environmental factors and preliminary development issues is carried out. The study has also shown that the composition of the focus group is crucial in determining the sustainability of rural development projects. Furthermore, the research has highlighted the importance of individual factors in focus groups and their input to the sustainability of development projects. The results of this study indicate that focus groups are an effective tool for promoting sustainable rural development in Nakuru County, Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research recommended that NGOs and governments prioritize the development and use of interactive websites to enhance citizen participation in rural development projects. These interactive websites should be user-friendly and easily accessible to citizens in rural areas. Additionally, organizations should invest in training citizens to use these platforms, especially for those who may not be technology-savvy. This will help to ensure that citizens are informed and engaged in rural development projects, which can ultimately lead to improved project outcomes.

The study also recommended that government agencies and NGOs prioritize the formation of focus groups in rural areas. These focus groups should have diverse composition to reflect the various interests of the community. In addition, meetings of these focus groups must be held on a regular basis in order to debate matters concerning initiatives for rural development. This will help guarantee that locals are consulted and given a voice on important matters affecting their communities. It'll make sure locals can weigh in on decisions too.

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