

Dynamics of Accountability on Sustainable Resource Management in County Government of Kericho, Kenya.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2024.1108045>

Received: 02 July 2024; Accepted: 23 July 2024; Published: 05 September 2024

ABSTRACT

Sustainable resource management involve managing resources in a way that their sources are not depleted; so that the future generations can also benefit from it. Africa is endowed with diverse and abundant natural resources and stands at a critical juncture where responsible and sustainable management of these resources is paramount for the continent's development. The Kenyan governments (national-level and county-level) recognize the need for sustainable resource management for the good of the citizens. In devolved government units in Kenya, sustainable resource management is critical. This study sought to assess the dynamics of accountability on sustainable resource management in county government of Kericho, Kenya. The study was guided by Resource-based view theory, administrative theory, transformational leadership theory and the theory of Planned Behaviour. This study adopted a pragmatism approach that took a practical and flexible approach, focusing on the usefulness and applicability of research findings, rather than an all-or-nothing, mutually exclusive philosophical position. A descriptive research design with a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data collections was adopted. The target population of the study comprised a total of 213 senior, middle and lower level management staff of the county government of Kericho. The Stratified random sampling was used to develop a sample from different management groups. A sample of 139 management staff was selected using Slovin's formula. Reliability of the study was ensured by conducting a pilot study in the neighbouring County Government of Nakuru while context, content and criterion validity were ascertained by the researcher in the field of study. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics which described the nature of ethical leadership and sustainable resource management. Inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation and regression analysis) were used to determine the nature of influence between the variables. This was done with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Qualitative data was analysed by themes and content analysis. The study findings revealed that accountability had a statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management. The study concluded that there exists a strong and significant relationship between accountability ($r=0.940$ and $p=0.000$) and sustainable resource management in Kericho County, Kenya. The study recommends that accountability in record management, auditing and procurement processes should be promoted as a way of promoting sustainable resource management in county governance.

Keywords: Accountability, Sustainable Resource Management, County Government of Kericho, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable resource management means managing resources in a way that their sources are not depleted; so that the future generations can also benefit from it (Yadav, 2020). Sustainable resource management takes the concepts from sustainability and synthesizes them with the concepts of management. (Hassine, 2019).

Sustainable resource management is often as a result of social and human activities which guarantee the continuation of benefits in the long run (Kramar, 2014).

Africa, endowed with diverse and abundant natural resources, stands at a critical juncture where responsible and sustainable management of these resources is paramount for the continent's development. The effective governance of these resources varies across countries due to differing policies, institutions, and approaches, (Amponsah, Okoh & Essumang, 2020). For example, Ghana, known for its gold and mineral wealth, has strived to balance resource extraction with environmental conservation. South Africa is renowned for its mineral resources, including platinum, gold and coal. The country's regulatory framework emphasizes environmental protection and social responsibility in resource extraction. Egypt's resource management centers on the Nile River, a lifeline for the country's water supply and agriculture.

Kenya stands out for its innovative approach to sustainable resource management, particularly in the energy sector. Kenya's Vision 2030 outlines ambitious goals for renewable energy development, which align with the country's efforts to combat climate change and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The African Development Bank reported that in 2019, Kenya derived about 48% of its energy from renewable sources, showcasing its commitment to a sustainable energy mix, (Ministry of Energy, Republic of Kenya, 2019). Kenya is strategizing for industrial development by use of renewable energy. This is very essential for creation of employment opportunities for the large number of unemployed youths graduating from various colleges and universities.

The Kenyan governments (national-level and county-level) recognize the need for sustainable resource management for the good of the citizens. Kenya's 2010 constitution sought to establish a fairer way of managing public resources in a sustainable manner. The constitution acknowledged that a new way of resource management was necessary where aspects of environmental, societal and economic were not to be compromised. It has been noted that sustainable resource management enhance the image of the organization (Goel, 2015). In a competitive environment in organizations, sustainability should be the most fundamental goal (Mazur, 2016). In Kenya, resources are so limited that there is a high need to use sustainably so that it benefits the biggest growing population.

County resources are assets in a county that help meet the needs of those around them. These assets can be human resources, natural resources and financial resources. County resources cover a wide range of things that's potentially helping the community in that county, (Goel, 2015). This could be anything as long as it provides assistance or a service to the members of the local community. County resources can be used to improve the quality of community life (Yadav, 2020). County resources can be essential in helping the people access assistance and expand their range of outlets of support to meet their needs. County resources help build stronger, more resilient individuals and communities if only that they are utilized efficiently and effectively.

Ethical leadership is a way of influencing workforce through values, principles and beliefs that widely verge on the acknowledged standards in the conglomerate practices (Buble, 2012). Ethics is a Greek philosophical word, which means custom, character or conduct. Ethical leadership is the showing of normatively proper direction through close activities and relational connections (Hsin-Kuang, Chun-Hsiung & Dorjgotov, 2012).

Through their destinations, goals and activities on issues identified with specialized, monetary or human resource factors, they straightforwardly or by implication influence the government assistance of various individuals in the general public. They are affecting the future, for their associations as well as for individuals who work for them, buyers who utilize their items, and investors who may have put their reserve funds in the organization, and for the general public in general. Every one of these individuals ought to have

the option to confide in the supervisors' decisions. This implies every chief needs to turn into their own ethical logician, and apply moral reasoning and standards to the choices they make (Alsagoff, 2017).

In devolved government units in Kenya, majority of the leaders are unethical with most of them involved in irregular public procurement which is subject to rampant corruption and bribery. According to data from the Kericho County Land and Environment Court (2022) seventy-five (75) land-related disputes were recorded in the past year, reflecting the growing tension over resource allocation. According to Office of the Auditor General (2021), Kericho County was faced with a challenge of financial resource mismanagement (under-invoicing of rates, un-collected rates, rent arrears, under-collection of statutory fees) and unexplained variance on the use of goods and services in its 2022/2023 financial year. Kericho County government's employment practices violated Section 7 of the National Cohesion and Integration Act, 2008, with 90% (2280 out of 2530) of permanent employees belonging to the local dominant community, exceeding the allowed one-third threshold (AOG, 2023). Use of ethical leadership can help in better management of the county resources in a sustainable manner. It is however not clear if ethical leadership can guarantee the same outcomes that it does in other organizations whose structure is different from devolved county governance. Influence of organizational workforce through values, principles and beliefs that widely verge on the acknowledged standards on county government resources management (human, physical and intangible items as well as finance) has not been previously documented.

Sustainable resource management is a critical aspect of governance that involves balancing economic development, environmental conservation, and social equity to ensure the well-being of present and future generations. Kericho County, located in the Rift Valley region of Kenya, is renowned for its tea production, fertile lands, and picturesque landscapes. However, despite its abundant natural resources, the county faces several challenges in sustainable resource management, which are intricately linked to issues of ethical leadership. The purpose of this study was to determine the dynamics of public participation on sustainable resource management in county government of Kericho, Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a pragmatism approach that took a practical and flexible approach, focusing on the usefulness and applicability of research findings, rather than an all-or-nothing, mutually exclusive philosophical position. A descriptive research design was adopted. The target population of the study was two hundred and thirteen (213). This included all officers/management staff of the county government of Kericho. According to County Public Service Board of Kericho; Departmental / ministerial heads were ten (10), Middle level management Officers were one hundred and one (101) and lower-level management workers were one hundred and two (102) of Kericho County Government.

Proportionate stratified sampling was employed when selecting a representative sample per management groups. The Slovincs' formula was used to develop the sample size in the study as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error

1 = is a constant value

$$n = 213 / (1 + 213(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 213 / 1.5325$$

$$n = 138.9$$

$$n = 139$$

Using the above formula, a sample of one hundred and thirty-nine (139) management staff was selected.

Table 1. Sample Size

Management Group	Frequency	Sample Size	Percentage
Department/Ministries Heads	10	7	4.7
Middle-level management staff	101	66	47.4
Lower-Level Management Staff	102	66	47.9
Total	213	139	100.0

Source; Field Data (2023).

The researcher used two types of data collection instruments which included questionnaire and interview schedule to collect data for this study. Interview schedule was used to collect data from Departmental/Ministerial heads. Middle and lower-level management staff were issued with standard Questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study was validated through application of content validity. The instrument was pilot tested using 30 (thirty) officers/management staff of the county government of Nakuru who included departmental or ministerial heads, Middle and lower-level management staff. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach alpha coefficient where a coefficient of 0.7 and above was acceptable (Kothari, 2014).

The collected data was both quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative data was analyzed using themes where content analysis was used. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations) helped in describing variables under investigation. Inferential statistics (Pearson’s correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis) was used to establish the nature of influence amongst variables. A significance level of 95 percent confidence interval was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

The subjects for the study comprised the middle and lower-level management staff of the county government of Kericho. The study gathered information on the respondents’ personal attributes. These attributes encompassed the gender, age, academic qualification, job title, job category and duration worked.

Respondents’ Gender

The researcher sought to determine the gender distribution of the respondents. The results on the gender of

the respondents are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	66	50.4
Male	65	49.6
Total	131	100.0

Source; Field Data 2023.

The results show that 66 (50.4%) of the respondents were female while 65 (49.6%) of the respondents were male. This implies that there was gender balance among the respondents who participated in the research study. Therefore, majority of the respondents were female.

Age of Respondents

The Respondents' age was clustered in interval range from 22 years to 60 years of age as shown in bar chart below;

Note: Minimum = 22; Maximum = 60; Mean = 41.04; Standard deviation = 9.9

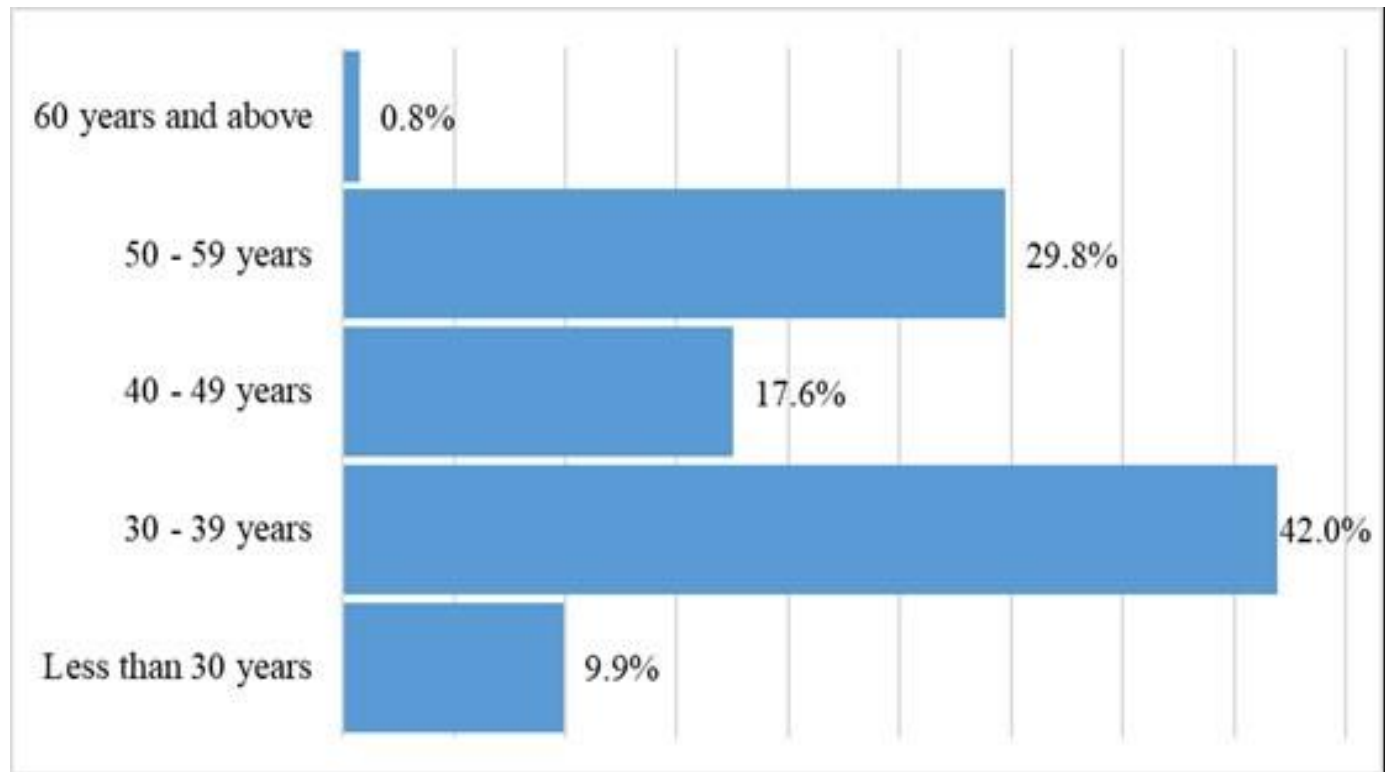


Figure 1: Respondents' Age Brackets.

Source; Field Data 2023.

The results indicate that Majority (42.0%) of the total respondents were aged 30 - 39 years. About 29.8% of the total respondents were aged 50 - 59 years while (17.6%) of the total respondents were aged 40-49 years and less than 30 years (9.9%) of the total respondents. There were very few respondents aged 60 years and above as represented by 0.8% of the total responses. This is as shown in Figure 1.

Respondents' Academic Qualification

The Respondents were categorized into the following Academic Qualification; Primary and Secondary, Diploma, Undergraduate, Master and Doctorate (PhD). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents' Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary/secondary	31	23.7	23.7
Diploma	41	31.3	55
Undergraduate	44	33.6	88.5
Masters	14	10.7	99.2
Doctorate(PhD)	1	0.8	100
Total	131	100	

Source Field Data 2023.

The Largest population of the study reveals that 44(33.6%) of the respondents had undergraduate level of education. The second was 41(31.3%) of the respondents had diploma level of education while 31(23.7%) had primary/secondary level of education. It was only 14(10.7%) of the respondents who had masters and only 1(0.8%) respondent had PhD level of education. The above data, reveals that the county public service have most of the employees who possess Undergraduate and Diploma qualifications. The county government does not prefer the services of employees with Doctorate (PhD) qualifications.

Respondents' Job Categories

This study comprised of respondents who were in lower and middle level management. This is as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Respondents' Job Categories

Job Categories	Frequency	Percent
Lower-level management staff	61	46.6
Middle level management staff	70	53.4
Total	131	100

Source; Field Data 2023.

The Respondents job categories reveals that; Majority 70 (53.4%) of the respondents were middle level management staff and 61 (46.6%) of the respondents were lower-level management staff. The results indicate that the County Government have proportionate distribution of workers in the varies categories of the job groups.

Number of Years (duration) Worked

The researcher took to survey the sample of the population on the period in which the respondents have served in the devolved County Government of Kericho. The data collected is as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Duration of Years Worked

Duration in years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 years	57	43.5	43.5
5 - 10 years	35	26.7	70.2
11-15 years	22	16.8	87.0
More than 15 years	17	13.0	100.0
Total	131	100	

Note: Minimum = 2; Maximum = 35; Mean = 9.69; Standard deviation = 7.89

Source; Field Data 2023.

The data displayed revealed that the majority of the respondents had worked for a duration of less than 5 years as represented by 57(43.5%) of the total respondents. Furthermore 35(26.7%) of the respondents had worked for 5 – 10 years. A few respondents had worked for 11-15 years were 22 (16.8%) and the smallest number of employees had worked more than 15 years were 17(13%). The lowest period the employees had served the devolved County Government of Kericho was only two years, the average duration of years served was 9.69 years and the highest number of employees had served in the defund local Authorities as civic employees. Most of the former local authority workers were transferred to the currently County Government of Kericho, Kenya. The employees who have worked for less than five (5) years were employed by the current county government of kericho.

3.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results

Accountability

The fourth objective in this study sought to analyze the influence of accountability on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya. In pursuing this objective, an analysis was done using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations).

Respondents rating of the level of accountability

This study was interested with the levels of accountability among the county staff. Table 6 presents the respondents ratings of the level of accountability among county officials.

Table 6: Respondent’s rating of the Level of Accountability among County Officials

Ratings	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very high	13	9.9	9.9
High	15	11.5	21.4
Moderate	37	28.2	49.6
Low	66	50.4	100.0
Very low	0	0.0	
Total	131	100.0	

Source; Field Data 2023.

This results point out that majority of the respondents rated the level of accountability among county officials as low as represented by 66(50.4%) of the total responses. About 37(28.2%) of the respondents cited the level of accountability as moderate. Those who indicated that the level of transparency was high and very high were 15(11.5%) and 13(9.9%), respectively.

County Government Rating on Accountability

Respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on a set of statements on accountability. The results are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7: County government rating on accountability

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std
The county government administration embraces the use of technology in ensuring accountability	17 (13)	62 (47.3)	20 (15.3)	22 (16.8)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.59	1.143
The County government system ensures individual accountability	16 (12.2)	67 (51.1)	17 (13)	20 (15.3)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.56	1.144
The county government advocate for clear record management	15 (11.5)	67 (51.1)	20 (15.3)	19 (14.5)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.56	1.111
The county government ensures that each employee is liable of his/her decision which ensures accountability	20 (15.3)	60 (45.8)	21 (16)	20 (15.3)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.54	1.152
Overall							2.563	1.107

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree (1), D= Disagree (2), U=Undecided (3), A=Agree (4) and SA= Strongly Agree (5).

Source; Field Data 2023.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'The county government administration

embrace the use of technology in ensuring accountability ' as compared to those who agreed. While a cumulatively of 79(60.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, enhance only 32(24.4%) cumulatively agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 62 (47.3%). An additional 17(13%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The population of the respondents 20 (15.3%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 22 (16.8%) and 10 (7.6%), respectively.

The Departmental Head for Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) (Interviewee coded number 06 of 2023) was interviewed by the researcher on the independent variable –Accountability conveyed the following sentiment;

Individual employees are personally held responsible for any misappropriation of funds in their department. The devolved unit does not embrace the efficient and effective utilization the appropriate modern technology and innovation to ensue accountability of the enormous resources at their disposal. The county government of Kericho is not serious about records management and proper documentations of their resources which leads to high resource leakages hence therefore high wastage of the meager or inadequate human and natural resources within their reach.

The study findings conquer with those of Burugu (2016) who found that governments are redefining the boundaries between themselves and their citizens in important ways. Innovations that expand and redefine the relationship between the government and citizens help to provide more inclusive, transparent and accountable governments, which can further amplify the power of innovation.

Innovative governments are enhancing citizen engagement and ensuring public involvement at every stage of the policy cycle: from shaping ideas to designing, delivering and monitoring services. The goal is not only to improve the type and quality of services that governments provide, but also to transform the culture of government so that citizens are seen as partners who can shape and inform policy and services.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'The County government system ensures individual accountability' as compared to those who agreed. While a cumulatively of 83 (63.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, the smaller population of 31 (23.7%) agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 67 (51.1%). An additional 16 (12.2%) strongly disagreed with the statement. About 17 (13%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 20 (15.3%) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

According to Mungai (2013) governments are pursuing multiple approaches to involving citizens in promoting innovation and technology. Governments are renegotiating what it means to be an expert through active participation and co-creation of policies and services by their citizens' governments are linking citizen engagement to other key initiatives.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'The county government advocates for clear record management ' as compared to those who agreed. While a cumulatively of 82 (62.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, the smallest population of 29 (22.1%) cumulatively agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 67 (51.1%). An additional 15 (11.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. About 20 (15.3%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 19 (14.5%) and 10 (7.6%), respectively. This study agrees with Carnegie and Napier (2014) who found that sound accounting shapes developments in organizations. The study also agrees with Kelly (2016) who found that accountability influence employee performance in engineering firms. In addition, the study results are consistent with Mbugua (2016) who found that financial accountability promoted sustainable resource management in non-governmental organizations in Kenya. Organizations with sound financial standards and financial accountability in the organizations contributed to improved performance. The study

also established a significant relationship between financial performance and financial accountability.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'The county government ensures that each employee is liable of his/her decision which ensures accountability ' as compared to those who agreed. While a cumulatively of 80 (61.1%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, the smallest of the population 30 (22.9%) a cumulatively agreed. Specifically, those who disagreed were 60 (45.8%). An additional 20 (15.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. About (16%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 20 (15.3%) and 10 (7.6%), respectively. The results in this study are consistent with Nina (2015) who investigated the effects of accountability on employee performance; a case of Bambuiy engineering services and techniques and found that each employee is liable to her decision which affects accountability and performance in organizations.

The respondents overall rating of the extent of accountability in the county government as perceived by the sampled respondents was computed as a mean of 2.563 with a standard deviation of 1.107. The county government was rated highest with respect to embracing of the use of technology in ensuring accountability (mean of 2.59). The county government ratings based on other parameters in terms of accountability was as follows: having of systems that ensures individual accountability (mean of 2.56); advocating for clear record management (mean of 2.56); and, ensuring that each employee is liable of his/her decision (mean of 2.54).

Sustainable Resource management

Respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on a set of statements on sustainable resource management. The results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: Sustainable Resource management

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
There's equitable distribution of job opportunities	19 (14.5)	69 (52.7)	16 (12.2)	16 (12.2)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.47	1.139
Resources are allocated equitably	15 (11.5)	72 (55)	17 (13)	16 (12.2)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.51	1.112
Resources are allocated based assessed needs	18 (13.7)	68 (51.9)	17 (13)	17 (13)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.50	1.139
Resources are distributed based on the population size	19 (14.5)	68 (51.9)	17 (13)	17 (13)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.47	1.125
County projects benefits the local community most	20 (15.3)	70 (53.4)	14 (10.7)	16 (12.2)	11 (8.4)	131 (100)	2.45	1.145
There is prudent utilization of available resources	18 (13.7)	71 (54.2)	16 (12.2)	16 (12.2)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.46	1.111
County resources are not utilized for personal gains	20 (15.3)	69 (52.7)	16 (12.2)	16 (12.2)	10 (7.6)	131 (100)	2.44	1.124
Overall							2.473	1.097

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree (1), D=Disagree (2), U=Undecided (3), A=Agree (4) and SA= Strongly Agree (5)

Source; Field Data 2023.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'There's equitable distribution of job opportunities' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 88 (67.2%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27 (20.6%) of the respondents cumulatively agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 69 (52.7%) and 19 (14.5%), respectively. About 16 (12.2%) were undecided respondents. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'Resources are allocated equitably ' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 87 (66.5%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27(20.6%) of the respondents cumulatively agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 72 (55%) and 15 (11.5%,) respectively. About 17(13%) proportion of the respondents were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 17(13%) and 11 (8.4 %), respectively.

The study findings are in tandem with those of Paolo (2017) who found that equal distribution of resources provides a social security net which may include education, housing, sustenance, healthcare etc. Without ensuring equality of opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth, the welfare of the marginalized and deprived sections of society cannot be ensured.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'Resources are allocated based assessed needs ' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 86 (65.6%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 28 (21.4%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 68 (51.9%) and 18 (13.7%), respectively. About 17 (13%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 17 (13%) and 11 (8.4%) respectively.

The study findings are in tandem with those of Kalniri and Sewe (2012) who agreed that resource allocation arises as an issue because the resources of a society are in limited supply, whereas human wants are usually unlimited, and because any given resource can have many alternative uses, hence resources are allocated based on the needs assessed in the community.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'Resources are distributed based on the population size' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 87 (66.4%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27 (20.6%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 68 (51.9%) and 19 (14.5%), respectively. About 17 (13%) of the statement comprised 17 (13%) and 10 (7.6%), respectively.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'County projects benefits the local community most' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 90 (68.7%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 27 (20.6%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 70 (53.4%) and 20 (15.3%), respectively. About 14 (10.7%) of the respondents were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and 11 (8.4%), respectively.

The study findings conquer with those of Orange, (2014) who find that community benefits from development looks at how publicly funded projects such as stadiums can be structured to provide the most

benefits to local residents. Best value contracting, local hiring, apprenticeship programs, health benefits for workers, and using small and minority contractors are ways to make large public works projects not only important amenities but true engines of economic and workforce development.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'There is prudent utilization of available resources' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 89 (67.9%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 26 (19.8%) agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 71 (54.2%) and 18 (13.7%), respectively. About 16 (12.2%) of the respondents were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and 10 (7.6%), respectively.

According to Sofia, (2015). The prudent use of resources means ensuring that we use them wisely and efficiently, in a way that respects the needs of future generations. This means enabling more sustainable consumption and production and using non-renewable resources in ways that do not endanger the resource or cause serious damage or pollution.

There were more respondents who disagreed with the statement, 'County resources are not utilized for personal gains' as compared to those who agreed. Cumulatively, 89 (68%) of the respondents disagreed, while only 26 (19.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement. Specifically, those who disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 69 (52.7%) and 20 (15.3%), respectively. About 16 (12.2%) were undecided. Those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement comprised 16 (12.2%) and (10 (7.6%), respectively.

According to Zulu & Kalipeni, (2016) the county leaders may not use their official position, including information learned by virtue of the position, for their personal benefit or for the benefit of others. An employee may not use their public office for their own private gain or for that of persons or organizations with which they are associated personally. An employee's position or title should not be used to coerce; to endorse any product, service or enterprise; or to give the appearance of governmental sanction.

The respondents overall rating of sustainable resource management in the county was a mean of 2.473 with a standard deviation of 1.097. The county was rated highest on equitable allocation of resources (mean of 2.51) and resource allocation based on assessed needs (mean of 2.50). the respondents rating of sustainable resource allocation based on other parameters were as follows: equitable distribution of job opportunities (mean of 2.47); distribution of resources based on the population size (mean of 2.47); prudence in utilization of available resources (mean of 2.46); benefits of county projects to the local community (mean of 2.45); and, non-utilization of county resources for personal gains (mean of 2.44)

The Head of Department for Public Service Management (Interviewee coded number 07 of 2023) during an interview with the researcher made the following observations on the dependent variable -Sustainable resource management;

There is no equitable distribution of job opportunities. Most employments are done in the region or wards where the County Governor, the Honorable Speaker of the County Assembly and the chairman of the public service board. The resources are not allocated equitably and also not based on assessed needs. The regions where the members of County Assembly(MCAs) are political powerful and highly connected to the County Governor and members of County Executive Committee (CEC). The same resources are not distributed based on the population size and there is no prudent utilization of available resources due to the prevailing corruption among the workers and members of the public. The renewable and non-renewable resources should be managed efficiently.

3.3 Correlation Analysis Results

An overview of the correlation evaluations conducted is provided in this section. It aims to show the degree of the independent variable' associations with the dependent variable as well as their degree of interdependence.

Table 9: Results of correlation between accountability and sustainable resource management

Statistics	Value
Pearson Correlation	.940*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	131

The findings indicated that the $r=0.940$ and $p=0.000$. This indicated that there exists a strong and significant relationship between accountability and sustainable resource management in Kericho County, Kenya. The results of this study are also consistent with Yousueng and Hong (2019) whom in their review of the impact of accountability on organizational performance found that there existed a relationship between the organizational performance and accountability in U.S. federal government. Accountability (in relation to staffing, performance evaluation, and compensation) was positively and significantly correlated to organizational performance.

3.4. Regression Analysis Results

A bivariate regression analysis was conducted to determine the nature of relationships between an independent variable on the dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Coefficients from the Bivariate Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.087	.083		1.048	.297
Accountability	.931	.030	.940	31.229	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Resource Management

The linear regression results show that the coefficient for accountability (0.940) was positive and statistically significance at 5% level (the calculated t-value of 31.229 is greater than the critical value of 0.05 and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05)

$$Y = 0.087 + 0.940X_4$$

3.5 Hypotheses Test Results

The Hypotheses test results were conducted using the p-values approach at 95% confidence level. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis when the p-value is less than 0.05.

The null hypothesis in this study stated that “public participation has no statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya”. The findings revealed that the p value was 0.000 which was less than the 0.05 therefore the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that public participation has a positive and statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya. Greater public participation significantly improves sustainable resource management.

This study is consistent with Ochieng (2016) who established that community participation has a positive influence on project sustainability in Mara Basin, Kenya. The community used methods such as ensuring water security, conservation of water basin, conflict resolution, water allocation and permitting for the purpose of project sustainability. Participation is a key instrument in enhancing self-reliance and community empowerment. This study agrees with Mueke and Alelah (2017) who found that community participation had a positive influence on the sustainability of projects. For this reason, communities should be involved in the establishment, implementation and evaluation of projects at all stages.

The null hypothesis in this study stated that “accountability has no statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya”. The findings revealed that the p value was 0.000 which was less than the 0.05 therefore the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that accountability has a positive and statistically significant influence on sustainable resource management in devolved county government of Kericho, Kenya.

This study agrees with Han (2015) who evaluated the impact of Accountability on organizational performance in the U.S. federal government through employee’s perception of public organizations. Accountability in organizations positively and significantly influenced organizational performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions of the Study

From the findings the study concluded that the county government advocate for clear record management. The county government ensures that each employee is liable of his/her decision which ensures accountability. Accountability promotes sustainable resource management in non-governmental organizations in Kenya. Organizations with sound financial standards and financial accountability in the organizations contributed to improved performance. The county government ensures that each employee is liable of his/her decision which ensures accountability. The study also concluded that that there exists a weak and significant relationship between accountability and sustainable resource management in Kericho County, Kenya ($r=0.940$ and $p=0.000$). Greater accountability significantly improves sustainable resource management. This study agrees with Han (2015) who evaluated the impact of accountability on organizational performance in the U.S. federal government through employee’s perception of public organizations. Accountability in organizations positively and significantly influenced organizational performance.

4.2 Recommendations

Accountability should be promoted in order to improve sustainable resource management in county governments in Kenya. Accountability in record management, auditing and procurement processes should be promoted as a way of promoting sustainable resource management in county governance. To manage public resources effectively and efficiently, county governments need strong governance and a robust PFM system so that the use of resources is tracked, and that resources are appropriately allocated against public policy objectives. County governments must endeavor to achieve the most with the resources they have,

maximizing efficiencies in public service delivery, while minimizing loss through waste, fraud, or corruption.

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