Enhancing Public Participation in Governance for Sustainable Development: Evidence From Bungoma County, Kenya

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Abstract
The use of PP in government policy formulation, decision making as well as the implementation of government programs has been embraced by many countries in the world. Kenya is among the recent developing economies that legally adopted PP through the promulgation of the new constitution a decade ago that ushered in PP. Despite this, its efficiency has staggered as information regarding public involvement in governance is still limited. We present the analysis of challenges facing the integration of public participation in governance and their impact on sustainable development. We use primary data from Bungoma County in Kenya, and SEM techniques that encompassed the CFA test to validate variables, path analysis to model perceived underlying direction of causality amid the constructs, and impact estimation using the coefficient estimator of SEM regression. The study finds PP significantly impacting on governance for H₁, public participation meaningfully influences sustainable development (SD) for H₂, governance considerably moderates the PP-SD relationship for H₃, and the PP-Governance interaction process substantially supports SD. The study recommends consolidation of public awareness through civic education to strengthen understanding of their civil role in governance, timely notice as well as equitable facilitation in attending government development forums. Further, in enhancing PP functionality, the study suggests institutionalization by establishing the Office of Public Participation Rapporteur (OPP) responsible for collecting citizen and leaders’ views, and implementation of associated policies and regulations.

Keywords
public participation, government, governance, sustainable development, institutionalization

Introduction
Globally, governance and management have undergone significant changes from traditional hierarchical, authoritarian, dictatorial, and imperial structures to democratic and collaborative structures. The integration of democracy was at the heart of the third wave of democratization. It has established a new model of administration and policy to encourage citizens’ participation in government decision-making. Therefore, participatory governance is a system of governance in which citizens are involved in both voting and deliberations on management issues. It creates an interactive platform between citizens and government, the latter taking on the role of sponsor. Citizen participation is the backbone of democracy (Holmes, 2011; Huntington, 1991; Molokwane & Lukamba, 2018; Wampler, 2011, 2012). Participation provides a platform for comprehensive governance that strengthens democracy. It gives people a voice about issues that affect their daily lives.

Citizen participation is motivated primarily by the challenges posed by typical government restrictions on the provision of necessary services, accountability of public resources, inefficient use of public resources, and biased prioritization (Goetz & Gaventa, 2001; Narayan et al., 2000). In addition, there is an increasing need to change governance structures and institutions to make governance more efficient and productive. In addition, political leaders are seeking public
support for policies and ideas to strengthen existing policies. Some seek justification for unpopular government policies (Balloch & Taylor, 2001; Barnes & Prior, 2000; Goetz & Gaventa, 2001; Pritchett & Woolcock, 2004; Ruane et al., 2002). Having the government as the only solution provider has proven weak. Not all ideas are in government officials. In addition, resources are shared and citizens have the right and responsibility to know how to use public funds efficiently. Therefore, public involvement in funding allocation is essential to avoid a lack of development priorities and to increase accountability.

The increasing societal complexity requires a solid, holistic form of government in which representative democracy cannot exist in absolute form. An interactive relationship is needed between the government and the people. The mere aspect of voting slightly facilitates political decision-making at the expense of advisory forums and other public participation research mechanisms. This process relies on more than a justification of political, democratic, ethical, practical, and social accommodation. PP provides a platform for the exchange of such structurally organized ideas (Assembly, 2014; Burton et al., 2003; Korfmacher, 2001). Society is becoming more complex and is creating new needs that require comprehensive advice for better decision-making/policies to support proposed solutions. Ensuring a cooperative and flexible government that leads multiple stakeholders to the establishment of a swift and consultative government at all levels remains a prerequisite for long-term development. In addition, supporters of sustainable development argue that governance and the rule of law are an integral part of the development agenda. Governments around the world are working to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms while promoting the rule of law. That is, its citizens and institutions are under the rule of law and are responsible for the law (Assembly, 2014; Molokwane & Lukamba, 2018; NESC, 2009; OECD, 1998; UNDESA, 2013; USEPA, 2017). Effective governments are equally efficient and cater to people’s needs. Challenges, opportunities, and priorities in development programs are inevitable. Whenever there is a problem that the government wants to address, citizens are the recipients and stakeholders in finding solutions. Therefore, social issues can only be addressed through intersectoral cooperation in the redesign of operational structures that bundle the resources, knowledge, and expertise of different parties. Governments play an important role in establishing a platform for citizen participation and developing rules. Timely dissemination of information also contributes to citizen-centred governance.

Kenya enforced the 2010 Constitution to protect the values of the rule of law, which previously served as the basis of governance. However, PP was negatively emphasized, especially in policymaking and implementation. The main challenge is that government project leaders and politicians do not want to involve citizens. In addition, the inability of citizens to advise on government issues due to lack of information and empowerment programs such as civic education also affects the extent to which citizens participate in the governance process (Ronoh et al., 2018; Rossouw et al., 2019).

This study investigated the challenges that impede the integration of PP governments and their impact on sustainable development in Bungoma County, Kenya. Specifically, this study investigated how sustainable development is affected by PP and the government as a sponsor. The approach to SEM modelling begins with CFI testing for parameter/configuration reliability, followed by path analysis and regression analysis. The results show some important impacts of PP on governance and sustainable development, but factors such as public awareness and willingness to do so also have a significant impact on participation. In addition, this study extended existing literature by including the impact of the PP-governance relationship on sustainable development. Citizen participation for relationship effect analysis and inclusion of PCA components to aggregate the interactive composition of government also complement the existing literature. This also applies to the crucial revelation that PP is an inevitable process for shaping national policy.

The remainder of the paper is divided into the following sections: The next sections deal with the review of literature, data, and study methodology, Section 3, results, analysis, and discussion, Section 4 while Section 5 presents conclusion, recommendations, and limitation of the study.

**Literature Review**

PP is considered one of the modern models of governance. The policies developed by government institutions affect citizens and their way of living. Many scholars have documented reasons delving into detail the importance of PP.

For example; according to Holmes (2011), Administrative theory and practice are increasingly interested in putting individuals at the centre of the thinking of political decision-makers, not as subjects, but as actors. As a result, they (people) should be created by people. “Governance by the people, for the people, and for the people,” as the Kenyan New Constitution’s preamble states, is now the norm (Kenya, 2010).

Participation in public affairs educates citizens and promotes a sense of citizenship. To build a progressive society, we need to educate our people. Unlike the developed countries of the West, which have a well-informed public, developing countries are still on this historical path; every country has a history. This, however, is not appreciated by Western elites/experts. However, no state can be formed without the historical development of the concept of citizenship (Team, 2015). Public participation is equally important as it builds the commitment and capacity of the government and citizens.

PP provides ideas on public issues to support government decision-making, mitigate protracted conflicts and costly delays, and foster a spirit of cooperation and trust between the government and the public. Subcommittees and the
general public in society often represent their own interests. These are useful for analyzing policies and their impact. It can provide an alternative to gaining the public interest early in the decision-making process. In addition, citizens will be able to easily understand and understand the decision-making process (Marzuki, 2015). PP, therefore, if well planned relates citizens’ expectations and the Government while reducing the disparities.

Consequently, information is very important for citizen empowerment in PP. Availability of information for the public should be a priority by any government. Just as the government expects a citizen to usher them with information so it should be for the government to citizens (Cogan et al., 1986). Inadequate dissemination of information and inadequate measures for consultation and active participation in policymaking can jeopardize government relations with citizens (OECD, 2001). Policy development is only effective when directed directly to the community. Therefore, it needs to cover the interests of the population. Public contributions must make all policy decisions.

Public participation enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of government policies and services. Government should be intended to involve citizens at every stage of every government initiative in the community. Ultimately, the responsible government ensures that citizens understand and actively consider the policy options presented to society. This can improve the efficiency of policies created during the implementation of the project. Sidor (2012) argues that the main goal of the authorities involving citizens is to improve the quality of decision-making and service. With PP, you can easily achieve better governance.

The objective of PP is to build credibility with the affected parties, facilitators, and end-users of projects. Additionally, identifying public concerns and values, developing consensus among parties of interest, users, and taxpayers. This creates the greatest number of unsurprising apathetic, better decisions, and enhances democratic practice. The process upon full implementation offsets government-citizen conflict arising from marginalization, misappropriation of public resources, and missing priorities by the government. According to Devas and Grant (2003), citizens know and are confident about what they want from the government, so they need to be involved in government decision-making. PP is regarded as a pillar of democracy as well as local governance and administration. In addition, PP strengthens government relations with citizens, is a better policy-making venture and a core component of governance (Team, 2015).

Governance is the method of workout legitimacy, consensual authority, transparency, efficacy, effectiveness, and truthful control. It is critical to word that it happens with the participation of individuals who set dreams and priorities and take part in their implementation. As a result, PP is a demand for reaching governance (NHHDR, 2001). Therefore, governance is based on mechanisms that ensure a continuous and continuous and efficient interaction between citizens and government officials who are responsible for making decisions at various levels and in all aspects of governance. The introduction of PP can only promote effective government. By allowing citizens to participate in political decisions, governments achieve better solutions to their problems, increase accountability to elected leaders, and take into account the relevant needs of society.

By focusing on PP, governance is at the centre of the transition to a modern state. The complexity of social needs is steadily increasing due to the dynamics of global structural adjustment and growth. Issues such as social exclusion, inequality in health care, education, and other government services, and community renewal have escaped traditional hierarchical governance measures. It is unrealistic for the government to decide on the social development of such a society (Kooiman, 2000; Korfmacher, 2001; Rouban, 1999).

In governance, interactive planning facilitates information, feedback discussions, and negotiations. A transparent plan leads to better decisions that are accepted by different stakeholders as the focus shifts to the Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, it means that the government is primarily focused on implementing the consequences of civil participation, and its success is based on an already established memorandum of understanding (Láng, 1986). In addition, Láng argues that most of the planning practices are dominated by the perspective of technical rationality. However, other perspectives, such as organizational, political, and personal perspectives, do affect resource planning. Bang et al. (2002) asserted that the subjective government would lack the governance capacity to address abstract issues and conflicts of interest, rather than addressing specific policies to identify issues.

The PP process provides a platform for developing more creative and innovative solutions to environmental problems from different perspectives. It is essential for integrating different types of knowledge into the decision-making or policy-making process. The ability to empower citizens and build trust in elected leaders is the most important prerequisite for the long-term democratic reform process. The stronger the bond between the two parties (citizens on the one hand and elected officials on the other), the more successful and democratic society will be.

Undoubtedly, this relationship grows in direct proportion to the willingness of officials elected to meet the true needs of citizens, represent their best interests, and improve their livelihoods. This is especially important at the local level, where the connection between the two is more noticeable and specific, and sensitive (Brody et al., 2003; Fung, 2006; Layzer et al., 2008; Newig & Fritsch, 2009). Therefore, three crucial dimensions within society the case of coverage, program, challenge, or plan to suffice sustainability are financial growth, social equity, and ecological integrity, which seem like in no way balanced of their interplay with interdependence tied to neighbourhood wishes and circumstances. As a
result, the idea of sustainability has been implemented in a whole lot of tasks.

PP contributes crucial information and know-how to challenge making plans and design, in addition to clarifying the quantity to which stakeholders will receive or stay with trade-offs. This permits the authorities to make concise, informed, and included choices approximately tasks, programs, or rules wherein it needs to participate. Hence, mitigating the government-citizen conflicts that would arise as a result of missed consultations, resulting in public policymaking devoid of civil views. This necessitates the essence of PP for the sake of citizen-government harmony. Missing tranquility sees the government proactively mitigating misguided policy initiatives, but at a cost. Otherwise, if ignored, residents will face inequity in authorities projects and challenge allocation, in addition to accelerated sabotage stages (Fung, 2015; Hardy, 2015).

Over the past two decades, we have dedicated ourselves to building strong partnerships between governments and citizens for sustainable development. PP forums promote active citizenship in the development of government programs and political decision-making. Civic engagement was primarily motivated by the inadequacy of centralized systems for providing essential services to citizens, lack of accountability, inadequate use of public resources, and distorted prioritization. It focuses on changing governance structures and institutions to make government more effective (McNulty & Wampler, 2015; Wampler, 2011, 2012). Fung (2015) added that political leaders and government officials are also seeking public approval for policies and ideas to support what they have. Some seek to legitimize unpopular government policies. Also, PP is taking root worldwide. Countries have adopted it to curb conflicts between governments and citizens caused by the marginalization and unequal distribution of public services. The goal is to establish open, accountable, and participatory governance, but not much has been done to achieve such governance. Governments view PP as simply consultations with customers rather than interacting with citizens as equal partners in governance. The PP is still a limited work, and most of its powers have not yet been delegated to the people. Other barriers to participation include:

- Improper enforcement of public participation laws, lack of information, and citizens’ ignorance of important responsibilities (Aulich, 2009; Okello et al., 2009). Yami et al. (2018) added that while the government has worked to ensure public participation in decision-making, citizens’ opinions are ignored in decision-making.

- Public participation promotes the following values of democratic governance: efficiency, legitimacy, and social justice. Significant changes brought about by advanced technology have increased the need for participatory management systems that are considered competent. The traditional hierarchical system of government, mainly involving government anarchy, has been criticized. Citizens today demand that governments be made for and by the people. A government that does not adopt a democratic form of government is called an illegal government. In a democratic society, people are the source of power. PP strengthens the relationship between citizens and government. While several governments have continued to work for legitimacy, social justice, and efficiency, a lack of organized leadership, consensus, and limited stakeholder empowerment to engage freely has hampered the process. Many political leaders are aware that governments do not have to solve every problem in society. Most of the current government is not holistic. Therefore, public partnerships are essential to finding answers to social questions (Fung, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2015).

Kyohairwe (2014) provides that participatory governance in nearby democracy is a community-pushed method to duty. In Uganda, for instance, public conferences are held on the village stage to planned at the appropriation of public sources. Later, authorities’ reviews on fees are mentioned in those public conferences, and evaluation is accomplished at the extra consistent with the budget. The exercise has facilitated duty in authorities’ use of public sources.

PP can type out many demanding situations if properly dealt with. According to Li et al. (2018), involving people in environmental protection against pollution has decreased industrial pollutants in China. Though it’s far on the embryonic level and has now no longer been broadly practised, there may be a sizeable extrude and might be beneficial if properly dealt with through the authorities. Authorities are asked to create a conducive ecosystem for involving residents via amending legal guidelines that could accommodate this component on higher grounds. Sharing information via media is similarly critical because it empowers residents to have interaction with a knowledgeable factor of view. Kenya’s scenario isn’t precise in that public participation has suffered setbacks. People’s unwillingness, a loss of political goodwill, inept participation, political interference, a call for incentives, and a loss of time PP through residents are examples of such setbacks. Besides, residents lack civic training and suitable verbal exchange channels because the authorities reduce the chains to preserve residents within the darkish concerning authority’s intentions. Creating consciousness approximately improvement applications that allows residents to take part in shaping improvement (Njagi & Kirimi, 2018; Ronoh et al., 2018). Lees-Marshment (2015) similarly notes that an awful lot of energy, sources, and time had been committed wrongly to the entire system in search of public opinion. Hence, growing waste because the authorities none- theless give answers that don’t meet the questions raised through the subjects. The information, sometimes, as Yami et al. (2018) places it, simply stops on the characteristic of participation. The final results in phrases of coverage do now no longer replicate public evaluations making the system a disappointment.

The above works of literature, however, delve an awful lot into the significance of citizen involvement in governance
and the demanding situations dealing with this component of PP. In this faith, there may be a want to reinforce PP to correctly sell governance and sustainable improvement. This observation provides the present frame of know-how on a way to counter the demanding situations and beautify PP in governance for sustainable improvement.

The idea of PP which originates from the socio-political discourse includes the interplay among the humans and the authorities. Such interplay encompasses public management and improvement theories concerning the involvement of the residents in governance. Hence, the observer employs approaches (theories) to explain the interplay. They consist of the Social System version principle and the Contingency Theory which therefore gives the evolution of the hypothetical assumption of this paper.

The Social System version implies the life of massive linkages amid the executive device components (authorities) and the outside environment (stakeholders/public). That is, inputs, processes, output, and comments as central factors of the social device and vital within the execution of public legal guidelines, and selling capability in governance. This principle postulates an organization/authority as a cooperative or collaborative device that helps suitable results (Lamidi, 2015; Manithaneyam, 2003; Taylor, 1985). The study is hypothesized that (H1) Public Participation promotes the governance process.

According to the theory of contingency, there is no better way to drive or make decisions in any collaboration. However, behaviour is always influenced by the internal and external environment. Some authors view this theory as the dominant theoretical, rational, and open systems model of organizational theory at the structural level of analysis, with the initial assumption that the environment for operating an organization determines the best way to organize it. Contingency theory is a relationship between two phenomena, which means that if there is a meaningful relationship between two phenomena, meaningful behavioural relationships can be inferred from one another (Betts, 2003; Schoech, 2006). Through this, it was hypothesized that (H2) public participation greatly contributes to sustainable development, and the correlation between (H3) PP and sustainable development is significantly affected by governance.

Therefore, the cross-correlation between (H4) PP and governance supports sustainable development.

**Methodology**

**Dataset**

This set consists of primary data collected through questionnaires carefully structured to objectively collect information about the purpose of the current survey. In this case, the target audience is an adult in Bungoma County, Kenya, who is 18 years of age or older and has internet access. The survey assumes that everyone over the age of 18 has internet access and has reached the statutory age under the statutory provisions of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution. According to Article 260 of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution, adults are 18 years old.

Demographically, the National Bureau of Statistics of Kenya (KNBS) predicts 701,151 people aged 18 and over in Bungoma County in 2018.

Since a proportionally stratified random sample was used in the study and the sample population was over 10,000, the study followed the suggestions of Fisher, 1983 (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) in selecting the sample size (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) in selecting the sample size. That is, according to Fisher, the size (n) is given as:

\[
    n = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2(0.5 \times 0.5)}{0.05^2}
\]

Where z is the 95% confidence interval, e—sample error, p variability (maximum) of the population at 50%, and q = (1 − p). Regarding equation (1), 384 is the desired sample size. A link to an online questionnaire was shared on social media. No incomplete questionnaire was submitted as the settings could not allow it. Only complete questionnaires were submitted. The limit for responses was 384, therefore we set the limit of responses to be submitted. The link closed after attaining the set number (384) of responses in support of Fisher, 1983 (Carter, 2006). Therefore, the sample size is a set of both endogenous and exogenous variables.

Therefore, the intrinsic variable is potentially called sustainable development and was parameterized in this study by both preferred and development funding. The priority was based on asking respondents whether the district government would prioritize the essential needs of the citizens for development, while the development funding parameters were local government/state essential development. And was based on having the means and resources to develop an infrastructure project. However, they are all tuned based on the 5-point Likert-type scale (1—strongly agrees in the range of 5—disagrees strongly).

The exogenous set was on the other hand constituted by both public participation (PP) and Governance (G). In the former, the parameters are set according to the awareness of citizen participation, understanding of the process of citizen participation, whether people need relief, whether the public is willing/well-meaning to participate in citizens, and whether they know. It was done. The phase of the budgeting process, that is, whether (a) respondents are in control of the PP process, (b) are aware of the existence of PP, and (c) are interested in encouraging or encouraging participation in PP events. (d) Respondents participate out of their own will, and (e) they have knowledge and understanding of the budgeting process. Nonetheless, all the variables were fixed to the 5-point Likert-type scale (of the 5 I fully agree, 1 completely disagrees).
The endogenous variable is governance, which records the state’s interest in the PP process. It was fixed to many parameters, including creating a facilitating environment for PP, naming public places for PP, and whether there was political interference by government officials on PP. It also relied on the government’s timely announcement of PP events and the government’s compliance with PP law. Researchers have relied on the following statements to guide the parameterization of governance indicators.

(a) The government has created the necessary framework for the PP.
(b) The PP has designated or fixed short-distance locations.
(c) Political interference with the PP process is inevitable.
(d) In principle, the PP process will be announced at the right time.
(e) People are subjectively satisfied with how local governments comply with the legal provisions of the 2010 Constitution regarding plausible PP in national affairs.

In addition, all parameters except the PP method were calibrated using a 5-point Likert scale (1 I fully agree with 5). In contrast, the parameters of the PP law are those who acknowledge the existence of the law, or “yes” if introduced (i.e., that is). The variables in this study were widely suggested in the available literature and showed. Aulich (2009) and Okello et al. (2009) discussed the perception and understanding of PP. Ronoh et al. (2018) addressed political interference, goodwill of the public and government, understanding of the population for the PP process, the naming of places for participation activities, and citizens’ demands for incentives or institutions. Fung (2015) advanced the idea of raising awareness and empowering citizens with information on governance and policy-making issues. Huang and Mary (2015) and Yami et al. (2018) complement aspects of funding and government intervention in the decision-making process. In these studies, researchers used variables to advance or discuss both PP challenges and opportunities in governance and development. However, in this study, variables were treated as indicators and were aggregated under PP government, or sustainable development.

It is worth noting that the three key variables show Cronbach’s alpha statistics (see Table 2) of .76, .78, and .68 for PP, Government, and Sustainable Development, respectively. This reliability was an indicator of a dataset with average reliability for further analysis, initiated by examining its physical properties with the results shown in Table 1.

This was followed by an empirical methodology for current research, including an analysis of CFA. A test was included to validate the importance of each configuration to explain the existing relationships or goals of the study, and the results are shown in Table 2. From the CFI test, we performed a path analysis as shown in Figure 1 to identify the possible root cause. Direction within variables, and finally simultaneous equation modelling. As a result, the goal of identifying the relationship between PP and government, and the impact of both public participation and government on sustainable development, was finally put into operation. The results are shown in Figure 2. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of these results will be discussed in the next section.

However, it is important to report that our designs contribute to the classical study of structural modelling in innovative ways and enhance our knowledge of PP in search of robustness in results. This means that principal component analysis and KMO can be used to improve the building of informative and interactive indexes between PP and government, and to balance the autocorrelation problem for final impact analysis on sustainable development. However, the underlying information for each parameter is retained. In this way, this study avoided the pseudo-regression that occurs when a single regression contains.

### Findings and Discussion

This section is based on descriptive statistics examination of variable constructs and their associated parameters, as shown in Table 1. According to the table, the selected sample for analysis is 384. At the same time, about the mean, the most volatile activity is the budgeting process with mean values of 4.82 and willingness (with mean value 4.23) in PP, enabling environment (with mean value 3.57) in government and development funds (with mean value 2.31) in sustainable development. These values imply that due to increasing willingness for the public to participate in state policymaking, an enabling

| Parameter                   | Number of observations | M    | SD    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------|-------|
| Public participation        | 384                    | 3.055| 1.397 |
| Public awareness            | 384                    | 1.167| 0.455 |
| Understanding PP            | 384                    | 4.244| 0.065 |
| Willingness                 | 384                    | 4.817| 0.386 |
| Budgeting process           | 384                    | 3.367| 1.391 |
| Facilitation                | 384                    | 4.057| 2.360 |
| Priority                    | 384                    | 2.111| 0.270 |
| Development funds           | 384                    | 2.309| 1.047 |

Note. The minimum and maximum values for all except PP law observations are calibrated from 1 to 5, respectively, based on the Likert scale. The participation law has 1 and 0 for being effective or not, respectively.
Table 2. Confirmatory Test Analysis.

| Construct/indicator parameter | Cronbach statistic | Cronbach $\alpha$ (CR) | Factor loadings | Z-statistic |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Public participation          |                    |                          |                 |            |
|     Public awareness          | .815 (.856)        | .563***                  | 15.80           |            |
|     Understanding PP          |                    | .501***                  | 13.56           |            |
|     Willingness               |                    | .476***                  | 12.73           |            |
|     Budgeting process         |                    | .682***                  | −24.72          |            |
|     Facilitation              |                    | −.592***                 | −16.04          |            |
|     Public attendance         |                    | .622***                  | 21.22           |            |
| Government                    | .799 (.875)        |                          |                 |            |
|     Enabling environment      |                    | .489***                  | 12.99           |            |
|     Designated venue          |                    | −.42*                    | −0.92           |            |
|     Public interference       |                    | .728**                   | 38.53           |            |
|     Notification              |                    | −.182                    | −1.09           |            |
|     PP Law                    |                    | .595***                  | 17.93           |            |
| Sustainable development       | .738 (.701)        |                          |                 |            |
|     Priority                  |                    | −.917***                 | −56.32          |            |
|     Development funds         |                    | .482***                  | 12.93           |            |

Note. LR Chi-square statistic = 358.45***; RMSEA = 0.069; CFI = 0.895; SRMR = 0.071. Cronbach $\alpha$ is the Cronbach alpha. Bracketed statistics are the respective variable constructs reliabilities (CR), the rest of the statistics presented are the coefficients while the *, **, and *** are the 10%, 5%, and 1% significance, respectively. LR is the likelihood ratio, RMSEA, is the root mean square error of approximation, and CFI is the comparative fit index.

Figure 1. Path analysis of PP, governANCE, and sustainable development. N = 384; LR-Chi-square (431.4) = Probability 0.000; RMSEA = 0.083; CFI = 0.694; SRMR = 0.702. The statistics presented on the path diagram are the coefficients, while the *, **, and *** are the 10%, 5%, and 1% significance, respectively. LR is the likelihood ratio, RMSEA, is the root mean square error of approximation, and CFI is the comparative fit index. The figure is arrived at by using the latently developed constructs; PP, Governance, and Sustainable development using their respective indicator parameters integrated under path analysis and using the MLE and bootstrap function of SEM instruction.
environment by the state is created and associated with the allotment of development funds to spur sustainable development. However, this does not holistically seem the case as demonstrated in further analysis.

Descriptive Analysis Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Parameters

On the other hand, the confirmatory test by Table 2 displays measure validities of the constructs, namely; PP, government, and sustainable development, which have been parameterized using respective real variables.

Confirmatory Test Analysis to Check on Reliability and Significance of Data

Initiating the analysis of Table 2, and starting with the endogenous variable measured by Priority and Development, we notice that its indicator parameters have respective factor loading coefficients as −.91 and .48, which are above (or close to) the .5 cut off measure. This means the indicator is significantly signposting sustainable development, whereas, the constructed variable having the Cronbach alpha .73 is also significant as depicted by its CR statistic .701 which approximates the .7 cutoff measure for a composite variable to be valid.

Figure 2. Hypothesis analysis of PP, government, and sustainable development. \( n = 384 \); LR-Chi-square (431.4) = Probability 0.000; RMSEA = 0.083; CFI = 0.694; SRMR = 0.702; \( R^2 = .671 \). The statistics presented on the path diagram are the coefficients, while the *, **, and *** are the 10%, 5%, and 1% significance, respectively. LR is the likelihood ratio, RMSEA, the root mean square error of approximation, and CFI is the comparative fit index. The double-headed arrow designates the interactional backdrop. Further, H4 was performed by the PCA component using an interactive variable term by the two constructs and yielding the KMO statistics as 0.698. All of the three variables were calibrated based on the Likert-type scale, that is, \( 1 = \) strongly agree to \( 5 = \) strongly disagree for PCP; \( 1 = \) strongly disagree to \( 5 = \) strongly agree for VC and \( 1 = \) never to \( 5 = \) very often for PSM and sourced from significant surveys in literature (Huang & Mary, 2015; Nyaranga et al., 2019). PCP measurement based on the inquiry seeking to know the ofenest the citizen over previous year oversight their organization, and contributed input to both priority services and on long-range plans. Operationalization of VC is rooted in the question which sought to know the extent to which the citizen felt significantly involved and that his/her input was valued in decision making implemented from previous PP occasion. With PSM, the current study operated it based on the inquiry that sought to measure the level at which poorly performing public official on the PP process is safeguarded by formal (employment) rules which cushions him/her from ouster from public office. Their Cronbach alpha is on average at .69 for interpretation of good fit as the rest of statistics (like their PCA validation) may be availed upon request from the corresponding author.
With the exogenous one, we have PP and Government which have been constructed using the respective indicators. For PP, the indicator bears significant factor loading coefficients approximately equal to or greater than the .5 endpoint measure and implying that the indicators consequentially construct the PP score. The constructed PP score with the Cronbach alpha weight .82 is also well integrated based on the Cronbach reliability coefficient of .86 which is outrightly greater than the .7 cutoff point. For the Government construct, it can be seen that out of the five indicator parameters, it’s only PP law, Public interference, and Enabling Environment that bears significant factor loading weights. That of Designated venues/Notification is weakly insignificant/significant and implies that they may disenfranchise the construction of the Government score. However, the integration of the five variables still significantly designates the Government constructed score index with a cumulative weight of .79 and significant.

The CFA executed to measure validation point that the greater than 0.5 cutoff point for the factor loadings supports the fact that the majority of the real variables sufficiently measure their respective latency. Besides, PP and sustainable development may strongly measure their constructs unlike the weak effect by Government in which indicators like designated venues and Notification are insignificantly indicated. Regarding the general model fit, the significance of the Chi-Square statics is not only enough due to its sensitivity on sample size (Bagozzi, 1988), and calling for other model fit diagnostics. Thus, the closer the CFI index is to the 0.9 cutoff point, the greater the root mean square error, the greater than .5-factor loadings coefficient, and the composite reliabilities that are either above or close to the .7 cutoff point, the stronger the model’s convergent validity (Bagozzi, 1988; Byrne, 2009; Huang & Mary, 2015). This analogy, therefore, favours further analysis which is initiated with the implosion of path analysis that holistically decomposes the underlying correlational paths/direction of influence on both parameters and constructs objectively done to aid demonstration of both the weight of the settings and causeway.

Thus, according to path analysis in Figure 1, demonstrated, are some significant directed path dependencies. Regarding PP, the path by Public awareness, Public attendance, willingness, and the budgeting process bears a significant causal path to PP except for facilitation with a statistically insignificant negative coefficient. A large proportion of these indicators suggest a significant influence on PP. The implication is that awareness by citizens of the PP process is likely to facilitate their desire and attendance. However, the negative path by facilitation connotes the fact that citizens have to be assisted with various packages to attend the participation process that however yields a negative correlation. This may undesirably weaken the overall positive influence of PP on the Government. With sustainable development, both priority and development funds demonstrate significant causality paths to the construct. Their high significance with relatively large coefficient weights reflects their strong influence in sustainable development that, guided priority and autonomous access/presence of funds for development play a key role in sustainable development. More, the strong contribution made by indicators of PP and sustainable development in this part coincides similar-consequentially greater effects by the same indicators to their respective constructs in the CFA test. However, the negative but strongly significant coefficient (−1.1) amid PP and sustainable development implies that despite the two validly relating, they correlate negatively. For Government, a significant causal path indicates them as all positive but stronger for PP law and weakest for designated venues. In comparison, notification and designated venues which seem to insignificantly construct the Government score in the CFA above are hereby valid with significant causal paths. The evidence should be adding to the strength of their measure validity.

Furthermore, variable constructs display mixed causality paths, that is, between PP, government, and sustainable development. The most promising causality is the correlational backdoor between PP and sustainable development and with an enormous weight suggesting to paramount-coordinated mutual relationship amid the two variables for stable government coexistence. However, the underlying connection is negative and implies the discrepancies of the socio-political regimes and institutions. A similar-real but unpalatable underlying effect is demonstrated from both PP and sustainable development with weak weights. However, the literature supports that although there may underlay some causal trail by path analysis and coinciding with the data generating process, this may not go in support of the genuine relationship in the empirical field. Literature raises the need for further exploitation of causality direction in the constructs and is specifically investigated with the hypothesis of the current study demonstrated in Figure 1. In this line, these constructs that represent parameters of greater interest are however linked by some hypothetical statements describing the impact on to target variable. Thus, for between and within the constructs, the following hypothesis connotated as H1 to H4 are designed, and impact tested as for Figure 1.

- **H1:** Public participation promotes governance process
- **H2:** Public Participation influences sustainable development
- **H3:** Governance moderates Public Participation-sustainable development correlation
- **H4:** Public participation-governance mutual correlation supports substantial sustainable development

**SEM Analysis Showing the Causal Effects on Interdependent Parameters**

Only the coefficient of modelled construct and test diagnostic statistic from the PCA analysis is presented regarding the needs of the section. However, the rest of the component analysis is
available upon request from the authors. The figure is integrated using latent constructs; PP, Governance, and Sustainable development. The PP-Governance interactive variable is first consolidated using the PCA to ensure component reliability after which, the newly interacted construct is imposed in path analysis regression to investigate if sustainable development is conditioned on the interactive environment as H4.

Therefore, Figure 1 demonstrates the outcome due to SEM regression of the estimated hypothesis using the maximum likelihood function (MLE) and bootstrap function in Stata 15 for H1 to H3. The PCA component that encompassed the interactive terms by the two variable constructs (PP and governance) while yielding a significant KMO statistic is implored regarding H4. The 1% significant LR-Chi square statistic (431.4) does not wholesomely point to the sufficiency of the model and raises the need for other test diagnostics. The significant RMSEA (0.083), the high CFI (0.694), and valid SRMR (0.702) demystify the misfit issue which may not be well depicted in the case of only the LR statistic. Therefore, the fitted model suits the data with the contention that the fitted model best captures the hypothesis. Similarly, the relatively higher squared multiple correlations ($R^2$) value (.671) points out that over 67% of the variation is accounted for by the fitted model and adds to the fitness of the model. Besides, the KMO statistics of 0.7 confirm that the fitted model by PCA also benefits the underlying interactive backdrop of the data generating process. In this faith, we proceed to analyze hypothesized correlation amid the three constructs, that is, PP, governance, and sustainable development captured as the main aims of this work.

Based on significant statistics from the same (Figure 1), we read some certainly important parameters for construct generalization. Observed parameters like public awareness, public attendance, willingness, and the budgeting process critically indicate PP as Governance is significantly indicated by political interference, designated venues, notification, and PP law as the statistically significant parameters. For sustainable development, priority and development role play to underscore the latency in development. In addition, the likely identified causality paths from the above may be shadowing the hypothesized postulations, shorthand as; PP to be significantly impacting governance for H1, public participation promotes (SD) for H2, governance considerably moderates PP-SD relationship for H3, and for H4 that the PP-Governance mutual interaction process substantially supports SD. The errand in Figure 2 aims to explicate these postulations.

Consequently, Figure 2 regarding the operationalization of the four hypotheses consequentially points to some significant output. For H1, it postulates for a significant effect by the public in participating in the governance process. But, insights of the coefficient for H1 in Figure 2 seem consequentially point out differently. The coefficient is $-0.003$ and insignificant at any rule of thumb for missing consequential contribution of public input in governance. The coefficient is weak and insignificant, which indicates the fragility nature of the public and government regarding public input in the state policymaking process. The weak and largely insignificant effect of public input in governance has literature ascribing to it. In contradiction, Lees-Marshment (2015) reported a consequential effect of PP in government and noted the need for collecting and processing public input as a fundamental aspect in making government effective. Other studies found that the awareness of the public and willingness influenced PP and governance (Drazkiewicz et al., 2015; Fung, 2015; Huang & Mary, 2015; McNulty & Wampler, 2015; Njagi & Kirimi, 2018; Yami et al., 2018).

Regarding H2, it postulated a valid effect from PP to sustainable development which, indication by Figure 2 supports. The coefficient is .463 and significant that public participation is a critical ingredient in sustainable development and that participation by the public is inevitable for sound socio-economic development. The 1% statistical significance should be depicted to the greater importance of PP in sustainable development errands. As a result, there is an unwavering need to create an autonomous awareness of the importance of public participation and understanding the process, as well as to build a positive involvement attitude without unnecessary facilitation, and to disseminate their views/inputs in relevant public agendas. In addition, the significance of H2 is an indication of the will of the people toward policymaking. Their understanding and awareness heighten their attendance to participate in government policies that are prioritized and allotted funds that yield positive relationships in case of plausible management, and accountability to cause the resulting connection. Such positive relation is supported (Gaventa & Barrett, 2012; Huang & Mary, 2015; Njagi & Kirimi, 2018; Yami et al., 2018)

The third hypothesis postulated that governance consequentially limits H1 also seems to be coherent with respective output in Figure 2. Thus, for H3, the coefficient is .341, significant at 10% and positive to imply that governance amid Public participation heightens sustainable development. However, the coefficient is weakly significant to mean that despite the underlying expectations of the Governance to SD, the pragmatic impact is weak and nearly disgusting. More, the PP moderated effect to SD by Governance may be undesirable and incongruent (as depicted by the weak coefficient .341 at 10% significance), and demonstrating the fact that the interference and ineptness of the socio-political regime de-catalyzes an optimum environment over which PP can feasibly influence SD. That is, evident with the fact that various positively impacting parameters by PP construct to support the structures over governance calibrates the scale. Through this, governance avails venues and creates an enabling environment, implements public participation law, and provides timely notice which increases sustainable development (Gaventa, 2012; Mohanty, 2010; Molokwane & Lukamba, 2018). It is worth noting that all three studies confirm that PP helps people gain access to development
resources. For example, when the government prioritizes urgency and prudence in response, PP increases access to better Medicare and other basic needs of livelihoods. Furthermore, it is implied that providing an enabling environment among designated venues for PP, informing the public of upcoming PP programs, and enshrining legal requirements of the law for public participation in SD are unfeasibly implicated while yielding positive but nearly unsatisfactory results.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) was grounded on expectations that PP and governance interactively present a plausible backdrop over which any development implored is expected to be consequentially sustainable. The PP-Governance correlation has the statistic .002 and is weak in both weight and statistical significance, an implication that the pragmatic relationship between the public and Governance for a PP errand is far from the fundamental relation. However, the PP-Governance integrated impact on SD is promising. The statistic (for H4) is −.576 and strongly significant and implies, the cohesive correlation amid the PP-Governance and creating their weakly positive bondage finally diminishes SD with a strong offsetting effect. Thus, the underlying sustainable development is a subset of the poor relationship amid the client and host of participation. Specifically, the will of the people on policies, their understanding, and awareness works collectively while heightening their attendance in participating in government decisions attracts the need for designated venues and enabling environment. In response to an early prepared informative notice and protected legal provision of their participation, the citizen’s contribution is imminent but often distracted by the need for facilitation. Although the resulting integrated effect may be slightly palatable, it is negatively impacting sustainable development. In the literature, the significance of the integrated correlation on SD in H4 has garnered support (McNulty & Wampler, 2015; Ronoh et al., 2018; Rossouw et al., 2019; Yami et al., 2018).

Path Analysis of Hypothesis Interactional Effects

An insight of above results regarding H1 to H4 (and which refers to the regression in Figure 2) have noted an insignificant impact from PP to governance (for H1) but significant from PP to SD (for H2) while that from Governance to SD (for H3) and for the interactive backdrop (H4) are weakly and strongly significant in that order. However, the invalidity of H1, the weak coefficients weights, and low significance levels (by H3 and the interactive coefficient) together with the divergence amid the pragmatic findings and the underlying expectations seemingly create a confounding backdrop on the influence of PP in governance and SD. Further, this should be mystifying on consistency and robustness of reported impact concerning PP. The authors carried out robustness checkup but now, using citizen awareness about PP, knowledge on the budgeting process, designated venues for PP, government priority on people’s needs/demands, interference by government officials and political class, development fund allocation, creating enabling environment through civic education to empower citizens, giving timely notice for the PP event, facilitation by the government to all citizens if necessary, the existence of goodwill for PP by both the citizens and government and understanding the PP process. These indicator has been adopted in studies like (Melokwane & Lukamba, 2018; Njagi & Kirimi, 2018; Okello et al., 2009; Ronoh et al., 2018; Yami et al., 2018) and proved to be significant.

Thus, regression in Figure 2 was re-examined with replacement of variables; past public participation, value congruence, and public service motivation (henceforth; PCP, VC, and PSM respectively). With the exogenous variables, PCP (VC) replaced public attendance (public awareness) in that order while PSM was exchanged for designated venues for government construction. PCP and VC have been significantly implored in the socio-political literature where they have proved to be consistent in impact/effect (Huang & Mary, 2015; Nyaranga et al., 2019). However, variable operationalization using the above variables in the SEM instructions had results displayed in Figure 3.

Robustness of Data Analysis

Based on findings in Figure 3, they seem not to differ much from those in Figure 2. The coefficient on H1 is −.023 and insignificant to imply an inconsequential impact of public input on governance activities. H2 bears a 5% significant coefficient (.519) and which implies that the contribution by the public toward SD is consequential as H3 bearing the coefficient of .639 depicts a significant and strong impact. Importantly, these results replicating similar but consistent effects as in previous (Figure 2).
findings supports the robustness of the significance of PP and governance to sustainable development.

**Conclusion**

In governance and for long-term socioeconomic development, holistic PP is unavoidable. Citizens gain platforms to present development proposals based on their socioeconomic and geographical needs, while the government gains insights and information to support feasible long-run sociopolitical and economic environments. In Kenya, such stability between the public and the government appears to be imperfectly orchestrated, with a lack of a centralized system for citizen-needful service delivery, imprudent accountability of public resources and their utility, skewed policy program priorities, and imperfect governance structures and institutions, among other things. In addition, the integration of public participation in such public policy processes appears to have been underemphasized. Governance, on the other hand, has bulldozed and uneffectively integrated public propositions in development programs. Furthermore, there appears to be little information in the public domain about citizens’ important role in government programs. Existing studies regarding the public participation-development relationship or integration postulate mixed proposals that deter sound policy conclusions. The majority of home-grown studies have mainly concerned the factors supporting sustainable development, as some have missed public participation-governance linkage. The studies negatively underscore the integration of PP in governance. The impact of the link between variables; PP and governance on sustainable development was investigated using structural equation modelling on a primary data set from Kenya. The paper contributes to the body of knowledge by examining the present problems of PP implementation in governance and development. The most important findings revealed that non-existent government structures have weakened PP, negatively affecting development sustainability, and that factors such as public awareness and willingness to participate in public decision-making play a significant role in determining the extent to which people are involved in public decision-making.

These findings suggest that government officials and the political class intervene to minimize popular opinion and its input consequences. This is due to the government’s failure to provide timely notice for public participation, civic education, and ignoring public input on final decisions. As a result, it may be pushed to the bottom of the priority list at the implementation stage, resulting in obsolete and stopped projects in the future. Resources are misallocated as a result of this process, which has a negative influence on long-term development. As a result, government failure to establish an
enabling environment for active PP has a long-term impact on growth.

The study suggests the need for institutionalization of PP through establishing/creating the Office of Public Participation Rapporteur (OPPP) in the process of institutionalization to smoothen PP and facilitate consultations in policy development. Consequently, since the Kenyan government is devolved, the rapporteur can be established across all political units in a devolved system with the same functions. Thus, policies promoting civic education, their empowerment and involvement in governance, public participation, and those objectively incorporating the political class in the governance process can be formulated. Also, constitution enshrinements can be implemented by this office.

Running public utility development should be like any other business idea, that is, put under incubation, allowed to mature as experts’ research on the implications, benefits, timing, and plans. In this regard, PP can offer fresh ideas on policies and projects that government would adopt. Depending on the needs (i.e., short/long term), the plans are taken through stages. This implies that policies that would continually ensure active public participation may be implemented under the supervision of the rapporteur but in cooperation with other government institutions.

Also, PP should be a critical aspect in spheres such as the comprehensive development programs (CDPs), especially for the densely populated rural areas. If feasibly implemented, such programs are likely to offset underdevelopment, increase employment, and alleviate poverty levels among other social contributions. Therefore, it is likely to positively influence public participation and improve economic development. Despite the current study not studying the influence of PP in CDP, future studies may incorporate the relationship or impact of public participation and the comprehensive rural development programs to empirically gauge the extent to which sustainable development hasten governance.

Limitation of this Study

Public participation is a subset of the socio-political and administrative discourse which is continually dynamic in response to changing socio-political regimes and demands/aspirations. This may affect the dynamism of public views/opinions and public participation input. The current study which largely concentrated on the effectiveness of PP and governance for sustainable development relied more on first-hand data collected from sample frames who out rightly postulates dynamic information that may imperfectly align the demands of the socio-political discourse and sustainable development. This dynamism is likely to limit the reliability of the feedback concerning questionnaires by the study so that future studies may take this a concern. Additionally, data collection was online, the study assumes that all the respondents were adults and above 18 years old as per the Kenyan Constitution.

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Ethical Standard

This paper complied with the code of ethics.

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