

**EVALUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DURING THE BUDGET MAKING  
PROCESS: A CASE STUDY OF NAIROBI CITY COUNTY**

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## DECLARATION

The project is my original work and has not been submitted for an award of degree in this or any other university.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my mentor and friend Mr. Billy Odhiambo, my closest friend Mr. Jonathan Murunga and my family for their support, guidance, and encouragement during the entire period.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study sought to evaluate public participation in the budget making process in Nairobi City County. The objectives were; to determine the sources of information that influence the level of public awareness during the budget making process, to establish the level of involvement of the citizenry of Nairobi City County during the budget making process and to evaluate the community's perceptions on Public Participation in the budget making process in Nairobi County. The study adopted the mixed methods approach that combined retrospective quantitative and qualitative design. The study used convenient sampling to come up with a total of 170 respondents from the public participation forums. Data collection involved structured questionnaires, focus group discussions and observation. The study used descriptive statistics to analyse the quantitative data and content analysis for the qualitative data. Findings indicated that the most common source of information used by the county was print media (mostly newspapers). The level of involvement of the citizenry by Nairobi City County during the budget making process was low, with 57% of the respondents indicating a low extent of involvement. Qualitative data established that the public perceives their engagement in the budget making process with a lot of hope and a platform for realization of change they have so wanted. There was optimism in their perception, which is an indication of acceptance and readiness to embrace the process as it offers them a platform to air their needs, control resource wastage, and offer direction on priority services and projects to be initiated. The study recommends that the County Government diversify their sources of information, which will ensure information is shared widely and promptly. It also recommended that county government develop mechanisms that ensure that the public have access to documentation concerning the budget process well in advance in order to effectively contribute to the entire process. The study further recommended the county government should set up an office/department that is charged with handling public participation for purposes of accountability and transparency. The study recommended more research in the area of level of awareness to come up with empirical data. It further recommended that more research be carried out in order to establish a gold standard for measuring effective public participation.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The definition of democracy in today's world can be likened to the involvement of the public in decision making especially in decisions that affect them directly. According to Baiocchi and Lerner (2007), Public participation is viewed as a form of democracy in a government that is people centred. It is now a legal requirement or prerequisite for government decision-making. Public participation is a process that involves the engagement of individuals as well as communities in decisions that affect their lives. People's attitude determines their need for participation as well as presentation of opportunities that the people might see or expect (Bienen, 2015).

Public participation explains a process of consultation and working with people. Citizens are encouraged to participate as well as contribute profoundly to something they feel part of, which they can identify with, as well as associate with their efforts. Community engagement is the process through which stakeholders' participate and engage in control of development initiatives, decisions and critical resources, which influence their lifestyle. Public participation acts as a tool, which puts the government in check, it allows the public to be involved in all decisions made by government (Kinyodi, 2008).

Public participation is seen as a continuum, which moves from the position of a reluctant state organ providing" little bits of information here and there, to an engaged government that partners with its citizens in making decisions that affect them (Masvaure, 2016). Social accountability as defined by (Odhiambo, 2016) is an approach geared towards establishing accountability among citizens and or/civil society organizations where members give opinions and information based on the community projects. The public participation continuum highlights the different levels at which citizens and civil societies participate in decision-making. There are five levels of participation, namely ;

Information: this involves the passing of information from government agencies to the public for awareness purpose. The intention of the government is just to inform the public but no action is required on their part. Consultation: in this part of the continuum, views on public issues are collected from the public on an issue under consideration. The main aim of consultation is to gather feedback, Citizens air their views but there is no guarantee they will be taken into account. It is referred to as therapeutic public participation. Involvement: here, the concerns, interests and views of the citizens become part of the decision making process however, the final decision is still in the hands of the government. Collaboration: this type of involvement brings about a joint effort to make decisions by both government and the citizens. Alternatives are weighed and agreements are sought through consensus. Empower; at this point, the power to make decision is squarely in the hand of the citizens. The government organs are obligated and committed to implementing decisions made by the citizens themselves. The government organs are obligated by law to implement decisions made by the citizens themselves (Bovaird, 2007).

The utilization and accountability of funds is a contentious issue in Kenya that has given rise to many cases of corruption and misappropriation of funds. Due to these many cases of corruption and failure by both the county and national governments to deliver in terms of planned development projects, public participation has been hailed as a crucial tool for accountability. Article 201, of the Constitution of Kenya states that; “there shall be openness and accountability, including public participation in financial matters, the public finance system shall promote an equitable society, public money shall be used in a prudent and responsible way, financial management shall be responsible, and fiscal reporting shall be clear (Government of Kenya, 2015).

Participation is not just a one off exercise; it is a continuous process and can be seen as having a start point but not having an end (Bienen, 2015). The budget making process, for instance, the citizens and civil society groups participate from the genesis of the budget process to the allocation and utilization of the resources through evaluation of the same (Birkland, 2015).

The budget making process for county governments in every financial year consists of the following stages: integrated development planning process that shall include both long term and medium term planning; planning and establishing financial and economic priorities for the county over the medium term; making an overall estimation of the county government's revenues and expenditures; adoption of county Fiscal Strategy Paper; preparing budget estimates for the county government and submitting estimates to the county assembly; approving of the estimates by the assembly; enacting an appropriation laws and any other laws required to implement the county government's budget; implementing the county government's budget; and accounting for, and evaluating, the county government's budgeted revenues and expenditures. The County Executive Committee member for finance shall ensure that there is public participation in the budget process (The Public Finance Management Act, 2012).

The evaluation of the performance of the government by the citizens is referred to as social accountability; it entails an evaluation of the effectiveness of the public officials/institutions in terms of providing value for money in provision of services, poverty reduction and development projects (Bienen, 2015).

The purpose of accountability is to check the political leaders and ensure that there is no abuse of power as well as ensure effective operation of governments. In order for it to be operational, accountability needs to possess two aspects: answerability that can be defined as the responsibility to account for as well as the right to get a response; and enforceability.

Based on this background, this study seeks to understand whether devolved system of governance have enhanced accountability. Particularly in matters relating to the budget making process given that public participation engagements aid governments to practice accountability and responsiveness to the society. Public engagements have also been associated with improving public's perception of organizational performance as well as the value added to the public from the government. Developing a transparent budget process improves government's trust and credibility in the Society.

## **1.2 Nairobi City County**

Nairobi City County is County number 47 on the County schedule and is the Capital city of the Country. It is considered as the second largest Legislature in the Country after the National Assembly. The county has 123 members, 85 who are elected and represent the 85 wards spread across the county and the remaining 38 members are nominated. The county has two arms like the Executive and the Assembly. The Executive comprises of the Governor and his executive committee, which is made up of County Executive Committee members who represent different departments/sectors within the County. The key sector for this particular study was the Finance and Economic Planning Sector, which is charged with the planning and mobilization of resources.

A County Treasury shall monitor, evaluate and oversee the management of public finances and economic affairs of the county government (The Public Finance Management Act, 2012). The role played by the Finance Sector of management of finances is key to the research as the department is also charged with preparing the annual budget.

The Assembly is the Legislative arm of the County Government and its membership has three main roles: Legislation, Oversight and Representation. The County Assembly shall approve the budget and expenditure of the county government (The County Governments Act, 2012); the oversight role allows the assembly to put the county government in check through committees, which work hand in hand with the respective county departments/sectors. The relevant committee of the county assembly shall discuss and review the budget estimates and make recommendations to the county assembly (The Public Finance Management Act, 2012). Through the budget committee, the assembly is able to oversee the budget process and ensure all procedures are adhered to using the stipulated statutes.

The researcher chose Nairobi City County as a case study due to the fact that amongst the 47 Counties spread across the Country, Nairobi City County gets a Lion share of the revenue allocated to the Counties from the National Government. During the research period, financial year 2016/2017 Nairobi County was allocated 14 Billion from the National Government,

which was the highest allocation to a single county (Commission on Revenue Allocation, 2019).

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The transition from a central to a devolved governance system as was mandated by the constitution has not been a smooth ride; there have been several challenges especially concerning involvement of the public in decision-making and accountability (Kinyodi, 2008). The constitution of Kenya clearly provides for public participation and emphasises its importance. It is instilled in the national values and principles of governance stipulated in article 10 of the Constitution. The emphasis on public participation in both the national and county governments is fuelled by the need for accountability and transparency from the government, a concept that is not fully appreciated by the city residents (Pape & Lerner, 2016). Despite the participatory approach to the budget process, there is still poor delivery of development projects by the county governments (Simonsen, 2018).

Lack of transparency in budget processes results from unwillingness by government to provide the public with budget information (Aikins, 2013). Massive participation of people could lead to political activity at the local level as a result, it is better to minimize the role of citizens in a democracy, which in turn eliminates the need for the county government to be accountable to its residents, (Michels, 2006). Opening up a decision making process to public debate is seen as undermining and reducing the authority of 'key people'. The budget making process as is stipulated in the constitution should be a participatory process, where government, citizens and civil societies exchange ideas on how and where funds will be allocated as well as prioritize development projects which are deemed imperative (Simonsen, 2018; Bulkeley et al., 2018). The low levels of participation are common and are associated with low demand for participation from the government, on the budgetary processes (Fung, 2006). The feeling of marginalization creates the negative perception that consequently creates disinterest in participating in government projects (Bienen, 2015).

There have been studies carried out on decentralization of power and the direct link between citizen participation and service delivery, which indicated that the two are interdependent. A study was carried out on the role of public participation in Laikipia County, which indicated that



there was a lack of awareness among the citizens, as well as lack of a threshold or standard for effectively evaluating the success of public participation (International Institute for Legislative Affairs, 2015). The study thus sought to evaluate the level of involvement of the public in regards to public participation in Nairobi City County and more specifically during the budget making process, which is a contentious sector and an area that has not been researched on before. From this backdrop, some questions subsequently arose in regards to public participation in the budget making process; what is the level of involvement of the public during the budget making process in Nairobi County Government? What are the sources of information that create awareness in regards to Public Participation during the budget making process? What is the community perception on Public Participation during the budget making process in Nairobi County Government?

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the sources of information that create awareness for public participation during the budget making process?
- ii. What is the level of involvement of the citizenry of Nairobi County during the budget making process?
- iii. What are the community perceptions on Public Participation in the budget making process in Nairobi County?

#### **1.5 Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to assess public participation during the budget making process in Nairobi County.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- i. To explore the sources of information that create awareness for public participation during the budget making process in the County
- ii. To assess the involvement of the citizenry in public participation forums during the budget making process in Nairobi County.
- iii. To assess community perceptions on Public Participation during the budget making process in Nairobi County.

## **1.6 Justification of the Study**

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 recommends that public participation on budgets and planning be conducted for every financial year, however, there are still low levels of involvement of the public in the budget making process and prioritizing of development projects. In four years of devolution, the study would want to ascertain the level of involvement of the citizens during the budget making process, explore the most common sources that are used to communicate to the citizens and establish whether they are effective, as well as assess the perceptions of the community on public participation.

The Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) carried out a survey that indicated that only 15 out of the 47 counties hold public participation forums for the budget making process. Another study also observed that there are low awareness levels on the County Fiscal Strategy Paper at 7% and the County Integrated Development Plan at 16%, which are all crucial documents in the budget making process (Transparency International Kenya, 2014). It was thus justifiable to ascertain whether the aspect of public participation was being embraced at Nairobi City County, and whether members were actively involved in the budget process.

The study findings are expected to aid the Finance and Economic Planning Sector, as well as the County Assembly to identify areas, which may have loopholes in terms of public participation during the budget process. This will enable them come up with measures that will ensure the loopholes are covered so as to have effective public participation. The study may further help the policymakers come up with significant policies that will ensure that there is a clear framework on how public participation is carried out.

## **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the study**

The scope of the study was Nairobi City County, which has 85 wards. However, due to the vast nature of the county, the public participation forums were conducted at the sub-county level. Nairobi City County has seventeen sub-counties, which made it easier to carry out the public participation forums rather than having to go to each ward individually. Selected respondents were those that confirmed to be residents of Nairobi City County.

There were three major limitations during the course of the study. One of the limitations of the study was the period between consecutive public participation forums, collecting data took a long time because the public participation forums were not frequent. Public participation forums could sometimes be spread months apart, which was time consuming.

Another limitation facing the study was the expectation of handouts from some of the public who were taking part in the public participation forums. There is a culture of receiving handouts for taking part in public participation forums and hence it was challenging for the researcher while trying to collect data as the public expected something in return for taking part in the research process. This challenge was mitigated by the researcher informing the participants beforehand that they should not expect handouts and only those who were genuinely willing were involved in the research.

The other limitation was finding a gold standard by which the study could measure what an effective or successful public participation forum would entail. There were guidelines on what public participation should entail, but no clear mechanism on how to measure its success.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter two defines the key concepts of the budget process and public participation explaining what they entail and their importance. The chapter also presents the theoretical and empirical review of public participation and the budget making process; it highlights the theory used to evaluate public participation during the budget making process as well as showing the evolution of public participation through the empirical review. It captures the concepts that influence local community participation, aspects like decision-making plenaries, community meetings as well as project planning forums. The chapter also presents the conceptual framework and conceptual model, which indicates the variables that affect public participation. The chapter through the operational framework, finally explains how sources of information, level of involvement and community perception contribute towards public participation.

#### **2.2 Defining Key Concepts**

##### **2.2.1 Budget process**

With the increasing responsibilities of government at all levels due to problems caused by population growth, urbanization, and technological change and the comparative shortage of tax sources, budgeting is being looked to as a major tool for solving the all-important problem of government, that is to get as much return as possible from the resources available (Birkland, 2015). The budget process aids in this aim by determining what monies exist and what revenue sources can be expanded or tapped if needs dictate, providing information for decisions on what programs of government have greatest priority, and by aiding in effective program management (Roberts, 2015).

The budget making process in Kenya and by extension Nairobi County has certain components, which are crucial for the success of the process. The county budget process was largely derived from the National Assembly budgetary process and thus they are similar in execution (Government of Kenya, 2015). The most outstanding element in the budget process at both national and county level is the emphasis on public participation as stipulated in the constitution and the public finance management act. Public participation is the corner stone of accountability

and has been given prominence in all government activities especially those pertaining to public funds (Kaimenyi, 2005). It ensures accountability and transparency during the budget process and aids in prioritization of projects, which are most important to the people.

The budget is guided by the Public Finance Management Act that stipulates the components and guidelines of how to manage public funds. It highlights the oversight responsibility of Parliament and County assemblies and points out the different responsibilities of government entities and other bodies (Government of Kenya, 2015). The budget committee is mandated to monitor all budgetary matters, monitor adherence by the county government to the principles of public finance and the constitution (Kaimenyi, 2005).

The emphasis on participatory approach from the constitution and the public finance management act further exhibits the extent to which the budget process borrows from the elements of public participation. The public finance framework provided for in the constitution of Kenya chapter 12 and finance management act of the public demand that public participation be an integral part of the budget process.

### **2.2.2 Public Participation and the Budget process**

Different people conceive public participation as a concept in different ways; it has no fixed definition although it has standards, which are similar across board. Participation in itself has several meanings depending on the particular situation at hand, in the budget process; participation is viewed as the involvement of the citizens in decision making (Finch and Omolo, 2015). It is not just a passive role played by the citizens, as is the case in other instances of participation. The concept of public participation is not a new discovery, it has been around for many years and has undergone transformation to a level that it is now considered standard practice in government decision making.

Public participation is a process by which public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision-making. Public participation is two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of better decisions that are supported by the public (Creighton, 2005)

For the county residents to oversee the operations of the county governments, they must have good insights about the development pillars of their county government leaders, the categories and volume of cash available within their counties, and the budgets. This is essential in facilitating relevant questioning of development urgencies, standards of service delivery, as well as the expenditure (Transparency International Kenya, 2014). According to Transparency International Kenya (2014) counties have employed different forms of media proactively present some of this information to citizens. Websites, newspapers, electronic and social media, and notice boards at offices of the county governments are some of different types of media county government have utilized. Since majority of the respondents lacked vital county information, it implies that these forms of media are not very effective.

The lack of knowledge by the public on the amount of funds allocated to the county governments opens a loophole through which corruption and misappropriation of funds occurs. The success of social accountability in identifying graft and mismanagement of funds makes it an attractive anti-corruption tool. Social accountability forums, however, could go beyond identifying problems in the implementation of programs to identify the priorities that future budgets should address. Social accountability can shed light on not only how funds are being used, but also how they should be used through public input (IBP, 2012).

Counties are legally required to formulate documents pertaining to county governance system with the participation of citizens or at the very least, present them to the public for their input. As observed during a study to determine the public awareness levels, there are low awareness levels on the County Fiscal Strategy Paper at 7% and the County Integrated Development Plan at 16% (Transparency International Kenya, 2014). The budget was the most widely known document as 41% of the respondents acknowledged awareness of it. Gaining access to relevant government financial records is essential to the success of social accountability. In contexts where a legal framework exists, civil society and the public should use it to obtain information necessary to carry out social accountability (IBP, 2012).

The Constitution of Kenya, Article 201 (a) states that there shall be openness and accountability including public participation in financial matters. Sub – section (e) goes further to say that financial management shall be responsible and fiscal reporting shall be done. With the National Government currently investing over Kshs. 230 billion on the 47 counties, it is crucial that the citizens play their oversight role on the devolved units to safeguard public resources and promote accountability. Accountability can be achieved by conducting social audits in which Civil societies and communities evaluate the use of public resources and identify how best to improve outcomes of public programs and policies. In addition to analysing financial information, a social audit looks at the quality of community participation in decision-making and how well the projects being assessed serve the needs of local residents (IBP, 2012).

In Kenya, there has been low public participation in Public finance management in the past leading to inefficiencies and misallocation of resources (ICPAK, 2014). The County Government Act provides for planning. It also clearly stipulates that Citizen Participation in the county planning process is mandatory and is facilitated through provision to the public of clear and unambiguous information on any matter under consideration in the planning process. These include; clear environment impact assessment reports; clear strategic environment assessment; expected development outcomes; and development options and their cost implication (Ministry of Devolution and Planning & Council of Governors, 2016).

### **2.3 Theoretical Review of Public Participation**

This study will be guided by the Arnstein’s ladder of participation theory which stated that there are different levels of participation, from therapy of citizens or manipulation, to consultation, and to what might now be viewed as genuine participation, that is, the levels of members control and citizen partnership (Yang and Callahan, 2007). At manipulation level, community members participate through knowing what happened and what is to happen. The stage is explained by the unilateral information shared by leadership to the project beneficiaries without the beneficiaries contributing to the information through any form, including critique or questioning (Wagle & Shah, 2001). At the therapy and informing level, community participants are engaged in analyzing the leaders’ presentations, asking and answering questions as well as participating in extractive information processes like answering to survey questions.

The second phase of therapy and information level does not allow the community members to influence the proceedings, and the findings as the research findings are not shared with the community and their accuracy is not checked (Lerner, 2011). At the consultations phase, locals are consulted with the external experts listening to views. The external professionals are able to extract problems and share solutions based on the local members' responses.

The external experts should be able to deduce the message from community participants (Baiocchi & Lerner, 2007). Placation level is meant to calm down the people expected to participate by appeasing them. At this stage, resource sharing is needed in form of labour, ideas, cash, food or even material incentives. The phase is also characterized by swift ending of the project activities once the incentives are over (Yang and Callahan, 2007).

Partnership level is the level where people participate through formation of groups targeted at meeting programmed objectives related to the community project that sometimes involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisation. The stage of participation occurs after major decisions have been made and there exists independence of the institution from the external facilitators and initiators (Lerner, 2011).

Delegate power is the level where people participate in joint analyses processes leading to development of action plans that inform the actions to be undertaken to strengthen the institutions. The participation processes engage interdisciplinary approaches that use both structured and systematic learning processes improving people's communication. Members take control of their decisions and feel parcel of the community decision-making and implementation process.

The final phase is the citizen control where people participate through taking initiatives that are free from external influences in embracing their own change processes. Members are able establish links with external institutions for technical partnerships while retaining control of the critical resources.



## **2.4 Empirical Review of Public Participation**

### **2.4.1 Evolution of the Concept of Public Participation**

Public participation is a collaborative process involving partnership, engaging, listening, communication, and consulting with the public as interested party to identify and carefully consider parts of disagreement and agreement to help in making decisions. Wanjiru et al. (2017) define public participation as the process where non-governmental, governmental and individual groups dictate the process of forming decisions in oversight and development matters, legislation, service delivery, and policy. Public participation is a two-way collaborative process in which the duty bearer conveys information in a manner that is timely and transparent, involves the individuals in making decision, and he or she is liable and responsive to the needs of public. If the issue at hand is directly associated with the public, people become actively involved in the event (Kinyodi, 2008).

Participation is best understood as a continuum, which has different levels of engagement. It either seeks to inform the public that involves the government or state agencies simply sharing information with the public regarding a particular issue with no intention of getting public input (Mulwa, 2004). Reinforcing public governance and engagement is a vital aspect in strategy of Kenya to hasten growth, as well as resolve enduring disparities in service delivery, investment and economic prospects in various regions of the country (Wanjiru et al., 2017).

The next level is listening to the public where by the government listens to the public's views but has discretion whether to implement their views or not. Real public participation actually takes place at the third level of participation where the government and the public engage in problem solving together. All views and interests are taken into account during the process of decision-making (Orodha, 2003). The final level of the public participation continuum involves consultative agreements between the government and the citizens; whereby, the two parties engage in discussions and come up with mutually beneficial agreements. This is considered the epitome of public participation.

Development change is in many cases implemented through participation process by the community members. Participatory decision-making improves on the traditional approaches of making communal decisions through setting common agenda and implementing community programs through participation as recorded by Rowe and Frewer (2004). Public participation encompasses a two-way approach to enhance full understanding of the problems and solutions given by the community members.

Public participation in decision-making, especially in the budget making process is considered part of the very definition of democracy (Gaibulina and Dobrezova, 2011). Aside from public participation being seen as standard practice in the government decision making, there are elements of public participation that have to be considered for any participation to be fully considered standard (Gaynor, 2011). They can be considered as the core values of public participation. The foremost element of public participation is that the process has to provide participants with information on their need to participate in the budget making process in a meaningful way (Bovaird, 2007).

The citizens need information beforehand alerting them of forum, these can be done through advertisements in the dailies, websites and through media like radio and TV (Suwanmala, 2007). Although law stipulates this, the information regarding such forums is usually scanty and many a times it has done deliberately (Ruget and Usmanalieva, 2010). The Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) carried out a survey that indicated that only 15 out of the 47 counties hold public participation forums for the budget process. This is largely due to lack of or scanty communication by the county governments. True participation involves a high level of empowerment of the public and a direct input into the decision process, and decried approaches that appear to be participative yet yield no real power (Rowe and Frewer, 2004).

The benchmark for participation has not been clearly defined according to (Wanjiru et al, 2017). The authors indicate that one of the challenges presented was lack of standardized benchmark that could be used to gauge whether the process was successful or not. Their recommendations indicated that the threshold for participation was influenced by the population of the county, the terrain of the county, available infrastructure and the diversity of the population hence

concluding that there was no standardized threshold for participation. Their suggestion was thus at least 10% of the population in a given area of representation could amount to satisfactory representation during budget making processes.

#### **2.4.2 Community Perception**

Changing the poor economically or socially requires all the stakeholders to participate and learn their needs, understand how to make decision in their local communities. Identifying opportunities in the community, collaborating institutions and the right resources leads to improved community decision-making processes, Suwanmala (2007).

Community participation was not totally involved in achieving a totally participative society but engaging the community in giving their opinions on the development processes Mchunu (2012). He opined that community participation was more concerned with development of rural programs that members had control of in enhancing their livelihoods. Kaimenyi (2005) also supported the assertion that community participation has levels with some phases more distinct and crucial than others. Through assessing the impacts of community participation, it becomes easier to enrol the community participation and input that is associated with successful implementation of programs (Fung, 2015). The observation was also shared by Wanjiru et al. (2017) who observed that a seven-step ladder of community participation that has different degrees of engagements.

The ‘manipulation’ phase and form of community participation is evident across the phases one to four of the levels of participation but it should be viewed as a form of ‘non participation’ approach in community engagement. Wanjiru et al. (2017) conceptualizes the phases of community participation in terms of ‘strong and weak participation’. According to the author, weak form of participation involved “informing (notifying) and consulting (referring)” phases while strong forms of participation were in forms of “partnership and control”. The study was of the opinion complex projects had difficulty in establishing the boundary from the “weak” to the “strong” end of the project continuum. In such conditions, it is easily assumed that the intended beneficiaries are consulted cross the project lifespan.

### **2.4.3 Participation/Involvement**

Participation can be at the national, regional and even at the county levels. Forms of participations include; county fiscal strategy paper; making of the budget policy statements; and during the release of the budget estimates. In addition, members can be engaged through circulars on the budget process for the preceding fiscal year (Wanjiru et al., 2017). The Public Finance Management Act (2012) observes that the County Executive Committee member for finance should ensure public participation for any public expenditure. The essence of Public participation is to improve accountability and transparency on the government's side, but also to allow the citizens to determine where and how the resources are allocated. Many a time's resources are allocated to programmes or activities that do not really benefit the citizens. The county and the national governments should allow the public to make their preferences and priorities that should be covered by the budget (Wanjiru et al., 2017).

The county is required to release to the public details of the ratified budget, which is in form of an Appropriation Act. The County Assembly should do this within 21 days of its approval. The public should engage simultaneously with both the County Executive and the County Assembly through performance management and oversight Government of Kenya (2016). Through performance management, the government in conjunction with the public are able to develop solid indicators that can be measured by a sound M&E system for purposes of reporting the progress or challenges, which will in turn inform further actions to be taken and organizational lessons provided. Furthermore, the public should have access to key documents for implementation to enable it engage effectively in the process of monitoring results (Republic of Kenya, 2016).

The right level of public participation entirely depends on what form of engagement is required so that the choice reached can have enough legitimacy to be implemented without protest from the public. If an institution/agency is, by virtue of legislation and executive judgement, pre-committed to a solitary sequence of action, it is far better that this agency basically informs the general citizenry than engage a sham process of engagement that has low likelihood of having an impact to the community, Baiocchi and Lerner (2007).

#### **2.4.4 Sources of information and Public Awareness**

Different people within the same community might have different interests thus having different intentions in development projects Nampila (2005). People are able to reflect on their own actions, processes and preferences thus leading to increased community participation. An opinion by Kakumba and Nsingo (2008) was that engaging citizens in public projects was paramount to boosting their livelihoods as well as fostering development. The authors opined that involvement in community project was capable of reversing the societal inequalities previously installed by the colonialism.

The rural citizens were of the opinion that lack of access to plausible sources of information on government programs and services was a major obstacle to effective community participation (Dukeshire & Thurlow, 2002). In addition, the study pointed out that there was an increase in desire to access and learn about government public finance usage therefore creating a need for the government to spread and share information with the public. There is need to increase information sharing among the stakeholders, continuous dialogue, monitoring and evaluation of public projects. The study also opined that there was need to have regular assessments to help in determining whether there were progresses made or not. It is through identifying challenges and constraints that the community is able to enhance its analytical skills as well as implementation capacity.

Engaging the community helps in raising knowledge, the interests and promoting understanding of the community process through community approaches. Across the project management cycle, it is important to create awareness, as it is the main channel of community participation. Transmission of knowledge and socio-cultural values is enhanced through embracing community participation (Gaynor, 2011). Community members are also able to own projects, promote mutual learning and give opportunities for dialogue between the community and the government stakeholders.

There is need to embrace a variety of techniques and methods for raising community awareness, community leadership should be involved in directing the public on the plans for execution Lerner (2011). The community members thus need to be informed of the objectives of the project or community program in a bid to create interest among the community members.

There is also need for adequate orientation of the program activities to ensure members have knowledge of the expectations during the public participation process (Faulkne & Haller, 2012).

Sharing information sources and pieces needs proper documentation of the progress reports and project plans. Dissemination of information should be based on the validated researched information. Picking information that interests the community is likely to create interest and attention thus making the process of community participation successful. Community forums are suggested to provide platforms for effective dissemination of information. Designing strategies, documenting practices and experiences on regular basis to increase awareness levels, interests and skills.

#### **2.4.5 Public Participation's Influence on Budget Making Process**

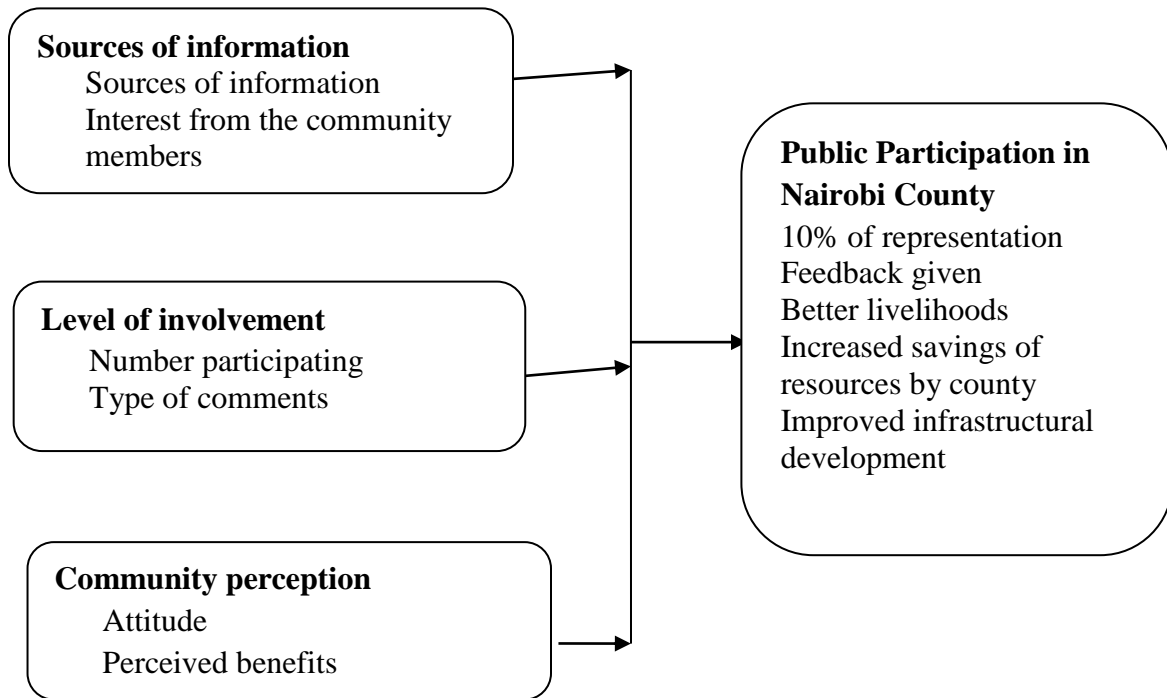
There are challenges associated with involvement of the public in the budget-making processes within counties in Kenya. (Mbithi et al., 2019). Lack of legislations in place to guide public participation, difficulty in accessing information on county budgets and lack of responsive county assembly members (Jonah, 2019). Limited support from the political processes is associated with failed systems of public participation. Despite the Kenya Vision 2030 seeking to have an open and participatory political processes, the political goodwill of the elected leaders and the devolved units has been low.

Daudi (2016) stated that the centrality of the public participation in decentralization of political powers and resources from the central government has not been implemented as required by the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. The study by Daudi (2016) further asserted that only 24.7% of the public were aware of the devolution operations and the need to engage counties in public participation. Tumpes and Mike (2019) on the determinants of public participation in county governments of Kenya noted that effective feedback mechanisms within the county operations are needed to include the concepts of transparency and fair representation.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework borrows from the ladder of participation, which gives categories of participation including non-participation (manipulation, therapy), tokenism (informing, consultation and placation) and citizen controls that involves three top levels of partnerships, delegation, and citizen control. The model thus says that effective participation depends on the levels of engagement of the community. For instance, at non-participation level where therapy and manipulation play, participation is likely to be associated with attitudes as well as perceived benefits. Gaynor (2011, p. 123) on proposition three indicates that stakeholders believe that CDCs should work to eliminate or even reduce the perceived distance (perceptions) between the residents and the program owners to facilitate effective decision-making.

The level of involvement in terms of the number participating and the nature of comments were suggested in proposition two and one that addresses the existence of conventional participation paradigm that should focus on participation initiatives. Effective participation is based on increased direct interaction or involvement with authorities/stakeholders where information is exchanged. This relates to Gaynor (2011, p.125) proposition four that indicates, “Residents seek increased interaction/involvement with city government (authorities) through participation initiatives



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual model on Key determinants of Public Participation**

**Source:** Adapted from *Stakeholder Perception on the Role of Community Development Corporations and Resident Participation* By Gaynor, 2011, p.125.

## 2.6 Operational Framework

An operational framework explains how variables are interrelated and how one variable affects the other. For instance, how participation of the public could improve the budgetary process. The conceptual model borrowed from Gaynor (2011) works to show how the variables are interrelated. Level of public awareness through access to information, level of involvement of the public and the perception of the public informs public participation and subsequently influences the level of budgeting process and its effectiveness.

Sources of information play a major role in determining the level of awareness of the public not only on the budget process, but also on how to participate effectively. Information creates awareness and subsequently also creates an interest from the public who then participate in the budget process from an informed point of view. The sources of information used largely



contribute to the number of people reached by the information. Traditional sources of information like newspapers are still used and add some value, although they have been overtaken by more current sources of information. The use of electronic media; social media, television and radio has a greater impact in the dissemination of information. The use of public meetings and community leaders as a source of information also plays a significant role in dissemination of information on the budget making process especially in the rural setting. With access to information, the public are able to gain knowledge on the budget making process and thus become aware of their role. Through this awareness, the community members can then actively take part in the public participation forums where they can hold the county government to account.

Public participation is also informed by the level of involvement where, according to the ladder of participation, the degrees of citizen power and the degrees of tokenism influence their levels of involvement. The level of involvement can be measured through the nature of comments in terms of the level of knowledge exhibited in the comments and the number of participants involved during the budget making process. The nature of questions raised coupled up with knowledge of the budget making process from the public indicates a level of involvement from the local governments. Involvement in its entirety entails having the public on board from the beginning of the budget process, and not only providing the necessary information on the budget process, but also encouraging the public to take part. Through this involvement, the public are able to grasp the concept of budget making and acquire knowledge with which they can hold the county government to account as well as ensure their needs are prioritized.

The level of involvement is also measured through the number of participants attending the budgeting processes. High turnout of stakeholders can be associated with successful contributions and ownership of the activity. With better knowledge on the budget making process, the public gain interest in the process and thus participate more which in turn influences how effective the budgetary process is. More questions and comments indicate an improved understanding of the budget process due to access to information as well as a desire to know more about the budget thus contributing towards an effective budgeting process.

Community perception is a major factor influencing effectiveness of budgeting process as influenced by the attitude possessed by the stakeholders participating as well as the anticipated benefits from the activity. The attitude projected by the stakeholders' influences how the process is conducted determining its success or failure. In case the stakeholders perceive the project in bad faith, then there is high likelihood that disruptions, lack of contributions, and failure to support the initiative will arise

Attitude of the stakeholders is likely to influence the outcomes, as in some cases, contributions from stakeholders, can either create a barrier of communication or facilitate a smooth platform for exchanging ideas. Perceived benefits also influence the perception as a process likely to benefit the stakeholders is likely to be taken positively. In an incident where community members or stakeholders see direct benefits, participation is likely to be lively and active owing to the expected benefits. Benefits can act as tokens to influence participation on budgetary processes. For instance, community members likely to benefit from resource allocation can contribute to the ideas and give their priorities and preferences.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology used in carrying out the study. It expounds on the research design employed by the researcher and the suitability of the chosen design in ensuring accurate and appropriate data is collected. The chapter also expounds on the target population and further explains the sampling technique used; its' benefits to the study, as well as the data collection methods and analysis techniques used.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted the mixed methods approach that combined retrospective quantitative and qualitative design to explore public participation during the budget making process. This involves conducting research that collects, analyses and integrates quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys) and qualitative (e.g., focus groups, interviews) (Creswell, Plan Clark, et al., 2003). A mixed methods design was appropriate because as much as the bulk of the data was obtained from quantitative survey, the researcher also obtained qualitative data through focus group discussions on community perceptions on Public Participation during the budget making process.

#### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population for the study was mainly from the finance department/budget committee members, civil society groups, NGOs, faith based groups, community based organizations and the general public. The researcher however noted that most of the participants in the public participation forums were either part of a CBO, Faith based organization or were attached to a civil society group. The number of people who randomly walked into the forums were few, as most of the participants had been rallied to attend by either of the aforementioned groups.

#### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

The study used convenience-sampling method. Convenience sampling method was used because it depends on data collection from target populations who are easily accessible and proximate to the researcher. Public participation forums were not as many during the research period and were

clustered into sub-counties due to the many number of wards within the county’s boundaries. This hence led the researcher into employing convenience sampling, as the sample would be drawn directly from those who participated in the forums that took place.

The target groups were NGOs, Civil Society Groups, CBOs and Members from the Finance Department/budget Committee. The researcher opted to focus on these groups because it was noted that most of the participants during the public participation forums, had been drawn from the public and were being empowered by the NGOs, Civil Society Groups and CBOs to take part in the forums.

These groups were an easy choice to focus on because they consistently ensured the public attended the public participation forums to address their needs, thus making them an easy target population. The presence of these organizations consistently during the public participation forums made it easy to carry out convenience sampling method. The researcher settled on a sample of 170 because an average of two NGOs would attend the forums; five civil society groups; CBOs and Faith based organizations would form up the majority of the respondents as majority were dwellers of the respective sub-county and thus drawn from the public. The sampling distribution is as shown below.

**Table 3.1: Sampling Distribution**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Sampling Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
1.	Civil Society(5*3)	15
2.	NGOs(2*3)	6
3.	County Finance Department/Budget Committee	4
4.	Community Based Organizations	80
5.	Faith Based Organizations	65
	<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>

**Table 3.2 Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Discussion Members**

S/No.	Variable	Categories	n=sample size
1.	Gender	Female	27
		Male	43
2.	Age	Below 25 years	18
		26-35 years	26
		36-45 years	12
		Above 45 years	14
3.	Education Level	Primary	7
		Secondary	5
		Certificate	10
		Diploma	13
		Bachelors	23
		Post graduate	12
	Total FGD Participants	n	70

### **3.5 Data Collection Tools and Method**

The study collected information using individual questionnaires, which were given to the public, and group administered questionnaires. Questionnaires are a data collection tools that consist of a series of questions given to the respondents with the aim of gathering information about a particular topic. They use either open or close-ended questions to collect data; they are a preferred because they allow the researcher to collect data from a large number of people easily without incurring too much cost. The data collection method also allows for measuring of behaviours, attitudes and preferences of a large group relatively easily with responses, which are easy to analyse. Questionnaires also guarantee confidentiality and anonymity.

Owing to the fact that the researcher works in a local government, observation method was also employed during the budget making process and during the actual public participation forums. Observation method of data collection involves the researcher taking either an active or a passive role in the research. The study adopted the passive approach to observation whereby the researcher only observed the public participation forums and took note of the proceedings

without getting involved. Observation method is advantageous as it enabled the researcher to observe the behaviour of the participants in raw form, which makes the information gathered more credible. The method also eliminates the chances of bias as the information is obtained first hand in a natural setting.

Qualitative data was also obtained via focus group discussions from the participants of the public participation forums. Focus Group Discussions are structured discussions that are used to obtain in-depth information from a certain group of people about a particular topic. The study employed this method when trying to figure out the perception of the public in regards to public participation during the budget making process. The study collected secondary data from published works, journals, reports, periodicals and textbooks.

The variables were derived from the conceptual framework where the first independent variable on level of awareness is measured by the interest of stakeholders and the interest created by the participants. Options of the available channels of information were given for the respondents to select one or more. The other section on awareness was measured using five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The researcher asked about the sources of information and the level of influence on the information sources from the activity owners. Options were given for the respondents to choose, thus appearing as nominal and others ordinal. The level of interest was also measured through options given in the questionnaire. The second independent variable on the level of involvement was measured by the number of participants who indicated to have participated in budgetary processes in terms of the extent to which they felt (perceived) to be involved. Five-point Likert scale options were given to allow the respondents to answer the prompts. An open-ended questionnaire was designed for FGDs with the community and Faith based organisations to obtain their perception on public participation in the budget making process.

### **3.6 Data Collection Method**

The researcher sought assistance of four research assistants (RAs) to assist in data collection and analysis processes. Thorough training was done for the RAs to ensure they understood the tools, and the associated objectives. It was necessary for the RA training to ensure high quality of data collected and ethical processes observed. The RAs administered the questionnaires to the sampled respondents. Seven focus group discussions comprising of 10 community and/or faith based organization members were conducted each lasting for thirty minutes. The researcher acted as moderator in each group, however there was one research assistant who was took notes of all that was being discussed and recording nonverbal communications for comparison purposes with what the moderator also noted down. With the research question and study objective in mind, the moderator was able to pose very objective and clear questions to the team, which were easily responded to by the group members. After conducting three FGDs, a trend of themes was evidence in terms of responses thereby making subsequent FGDs easier to facilitate.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Since the study involved both quantitative and qualitative data, data type was subjected to different analysis process. The data collected from the closed-ended items of the questionnaire was assigned numerical values (coded), checked for any errors and finally analysed. The researcher used SPSS as analytical software to generate frequencies and percentages, and presenting results in tables and graphs. Median was used, as a measure of central tendency because data collected was ordinal and therefore mean could not have been an appropriate measure. To analyse FGDs data, the study opted to carry out a constant comparative analysis. Constant comparative analysis is suitable for analysing focus group data that involves multiple focus groups within a similar study. This method provides the opportunity for the researcher to scrutinise exhaustiveness of information in general and across-group exhaustiveness in specific (Anthony, Wendy, Nancy & Anmarie, 2009). Constant comparison analysis has three stages; open coding which involved organising the responses into small pieces and attaching codes to each of the units; axial coding which is the second stage where the researcher was able to group the codes into categories; and lastly selective coding as the third stage where the researcher generated themes out of the content of each group. Then counts of each thematic area was done to determine distribution of perception of the community participants.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**PUBLIC AWARENESS, INVOLVEMENT AND PERCEPTION OF THE BUDGET**  
**MAKING PROCESS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY**

**4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on data collected from the field by the researcher. The purpose of the study was to assess public participation in the budget making process in Nairobi City County. The first section of the chapter highlights the response rate and the sample size that was used while collecting data in the field. The second section presents the background characteristics of the respondents who took part in the study by gender, age and level of education. The third and final section of the chapter presents the results of the assessment that aimed to establish; the influence of sources of information on creating awareness for public participation, the level of involvement of the public during public participation and the perception of the public, which was examined by the use of Focus Group Discussions.

**Table 4.1: The Response Rate**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.	Civil Society(5*3)	15	15	100
2.	NGOs(2*3)	6	6	100
3.	County Finance Department	4	4	100
4.	Community Based Organizations	80	70	88
5.	Faith Based Organizations	65	52	80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>87</b>

Out of 170 questionnaires issued, 147 were fully filled and qualified for analysis thus resulting in 87% response rate. A response rate of over 70% is considered excellent for data analysis to take place (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The high response rate can be attributed to the researcher continued persistence in paying frequent visits to the respondents reminding them to fill the questionnaires and assisting in areas of difficulties. The researcher employed self-administered questionnaires because they are a quick and cost effective way to obtain a large amount of data. Due to the fact that the public participation forums were not frequent and largely spaced apart in



terms of occurrence, self – administered questionnaires aided in collecting a lot of information in a short period of time.

#### **4.2 Background Characteristics of the Respondents**

Table 4.2 below presents the background characteristics of the respondents during the study; by gender, age and education level of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (53%) were male while female were 47%. This shows that there was a distributed gender participation in filling the study thus ensuring gender parity. It is evident that majority of the respondents (38%) were between 26-35 years followed by 26% below 25 years, 21% above 45 years and the remaining 15% were between 36-45 years. This therefore implies that majority of the respondents were youths. From the secondary sources, having a representative sample was recommended to remove bias and any other error that could have led to results that are not representative (Brannen, 2017).

The author also observed that studies with balanced samples are likely to give a true picture of the entire population when generalized. Lastly, on the education level of the respondents, (35%) had bachelors level of education, 18% had diploma, 16% had postgraduate, 14% certificate, 9% secondary and the remaining 7% had primary level education. This is an indication that many participants were well educated. Education plays an important role when it comes to public participation according to (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015). It was observed that the respondents who had higher education (post-secondary school education) were more likely to participate in public engagements including budget preparations.

**Table 4.2: Characteristics of the Respondents**

<b>s/no</b>	<b>Background Characteristics</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1.	<i>Sex</i>		
2.	Female	69	47
3.	Male	78	53
4.	<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>
5.	<i>Age Brackets</i>		
6.	Below 25 years	38	26
7.	26-35 years	56	38
8.	36-45 years	22	15
9.	Above 45 years	31	21
10.	<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>
11.	<i>Level of Education</i>		
12.	Primary	10	7
13.	Secondary	13	9
14.	Certificate	21	14
15.	Diploma	27	18
16.	Bachelors	52	35
17.	Postgraduate	24	16
18.	<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>

### **4.3 Sources of information used to create Awareness on Public Participation during the Budget Making Process**

The first objective aimed at determining the sources of information used by the local government for creating awareness on Public Participation during the budget making process. Level of awareness is determined by the citizen's knowledge on the opportunities they have to participate and the knowledge of how to participate. This knowledge is acquired through the information that the county government is expected to disseminate to the public for purposes of creating awareness on the budget process and the role of the public in the process.

Awareness is associated with aspects like access to information, which in turn provides knowledge that enables citizens to contribute actively to the budget process from a point of information.

**Table 4.3: Sources of information on Public Participation**

s/no	Source	Number	Percent
1.	Social media	25	17
2.	Television	31	21
3.	Radio	40	27
4.	Newspapers	20	14
5.	Social gatherings	17	12
6.	Friends	9	6
7.	Others	5	3
8.	<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>

Asked about how they found out about public participation, 48% of the participants cited the electronic media (television-21.1 percentage and radio-27.2 percentage), 17% indicated social media, while 14% cited newspapers. Social gathering contributed to about 12% as a source of information. The least common sources were friends (6%) and about 3% cited other sources as the major channels of getting information on budget making process.

From the results, it was evident that electronic media was the most common source of information. However, it was noted that organized groups and civil societies were responsible for pushing most of the advertisements regarding public participation on electronic media as a way of galvanizing the public to participate. Community members require information about available platforms for participation; they need to be capacitated on how to get involved in matters that affect their lives so they can make a meaningful contribution (Public Service Commission of South Africa, 2008).

The results indicate that Newspapers at 14% were the fourth most popular means of receiving information regarding the budget process and public participation, which was the medium that the County Government preferred to use. Lerner (2014) opined that there were a wide variety of techniques and methods that the county government and other governmental organizations could use to ensure public sensitization. The study findings also supported recommendations by Faulkne and Haller (2012) who indicated that local leaders had high chances of reaching the community in pursuing them to participate in budgeting processes.

#### **4.3.1 Influence of sources of information on Level of Awareness in the Budget Making Process**

The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with the following prompts on level of public awareness on matters related to public participation in county budget making process using a scale of 1-5 where 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 moderate 4 agree 5= strongly agree.

**Table 4.4: Influence of sources of information on Levels of Awareness in the Budget Making Process**

<b>Sources of Information</b>	<b>Median</b>
Community members are constantly informed of public participation forums within their areas.	2
The level of public awareness influences their participation in budget making process.	4
Awareness of participation program gives interested communities a chance to influence the outcome	4
Public participation provides information to the citizens with which to question government performance and demand responsiveness	4
County government give timelines and venues for public participation in advance	2

The respondents disagreed that county government gave timelines and venues for public participation in advance (median=2) and that community members were always notified of public participation forums within their regions (median=2). The respondents agreed that the level of public awareness influences participation in the budget making process (median=4), public participation provided information to the citizens with which to question government performance and demand responsiveness (median=4) and, that awareness of participation program gave interested communities a chance to influence the outcome (median=4).

The findings indicate that the county government did not disseminate information on the budget process adequately, using various mediums of communication which in turn affected the awareness levels of the public. Awareness is dependent on access to information and without information on the budget process, the citizens are not able to effectively participate and influence the process. Through creation of awareness and creating the need, the public is able to participate and contribute to the budgeting process ( Marzuki, 2015).

Raising the levels of awareness among the community members leads to formulating of interest, knowledge and understanding of the need and benefits accrued from public participation (Gaynor, 2011). Another study that supported the assertion that awareness was created through provision of information was by Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002) who suggested that the rural citizens who had inadequate access to information were less likely to participate in public forums, as they are not aware of the proceedings.

#### **4.4 Level of Involvement in Public Participation during the Budget Making Process**

The second objective aimed at establishing the level of involvement of the citizenry during the budget making process in Nairobi City County. The number of participants and the types of comments were used as a measure of the level of involvement; a high attendance as well as positive and informed comments would suggest high involvement. While, poor attendance from the public and/or negative comments regarding citizen participation would suggest low involvement.

#### 4.4.1 Level of Involvement

The respondents were asked to rate the level of public involvement in budget making process in the county of Nairobi. They responded as follows.

**Table 4.5: Level of Involvement of the Public in Public Participation Forums**

<b>S/NO</b>	<b>Level of Involvement</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1.</b>	Very great extent	4	2.7
<b>2.</b>	Great Extent	14	9.5
<b>3.</b>	Moderate extent	43	29.3
<b>4.</b>	Low extent	83	56.5
<b>5.</b>	No extent	3	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>

Over half of the respondents (56.5%) indicated that the level of involvement was of a low extent pointing to the fact that the citizens were not frequently engaged during the budget making process. 29.3% indicated to a moderate extent, 9.5% to a great extent, 2.7% to a very great extent and 2% to no extent. This therefore implies that the level of involvement in budget making process in the county of Nairobi was low. The level of participation was directly related to the efficiency in budgeting process as indicated by Kilewo and Frumence (2015) who pinpointed some of the aspects that hinder public participation. In cases where there were hindrances to public participation, the level of participation was low as witnessed in Nairobi City County. Warui's (2014) findings also support the study's findings in that access to information also enhances public participation in government projects.

#### 4.4.2 Influence of Level of Involvement on the Budget Making Process

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the following statements assessing level of involvement in respect to public participation in the county budget making process using a scale of 1-5 where 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 moderate 4 agree 5= strongly agree.

**Table 4.6: Influence of Level of Involvement on the Budget Making Process**

<b>Level of Involvement</b>	<b>Median</b>
The number of local community members participating in budget making process have generally increased	2
More positive comments on citizen engagement by county government have been received from the public	1
Community members are well involved in the various stages in county integrated development planning process	2
I am able to access the relevant materials for public participation on time prior to public participation	2
I am given a chance to give your comments during public participation	3
My comments are incorporated in the final approved budgets	2

The respondents moderately agreed that they were given a chance to give their comments during public participation (median=3), while there was a disagreement that community members were well involved in the various stages in county integrated development planning process (median=2), and the number of local community members participating in budget making process had generally increased (median=2). They further disagreed that their comments were incorporated in the final approved budget documents (median=2), they were able to access the relevant materials for public participation on time prior to public participation (median=2) and finally, the respondents strongly disagreed that there are more positive comments on citizen engagement from the public (median=1).

A study by Sarzynski (2015) indicated that the nature of comments, access to materials, and the number of participants were connected to the success or failure of public participation. Limited supply of information sources was likely to influence low levels of involvement, which was the case in Nairobi City County. It was found that when an organization or the county received positive comments on the budgeting processing, it was likely that the budgeting process had public participation. Bretty (2005) further indicated that low levels of participation like the ones experienced in Nairobi City County were likely to be caused by lack of government

commitment. The author further asserted that continued process of involvement was necessary as it informed continued strengthening of public participation in budgeting process. Fokane (2008) pointed out that low degrees of involvement become a central feature in budgeting process when there is little input from the government and concerned agencies.

#### **4.5 Community's Perception on Public Participation during the Budget Making Process**

The third objective aimed at examining the community's perception on Public Participation during the budget making process in Nairobi County. Community perception is informed by perceived benefits to the community members and attitude where they lead to making decisions in whether to participate or not in budgeting process. The qualitative data obtained through FGDs was aimed at establishing the perception and attitude of the public towards public participation, especially in regards to the budget making process. The qualitative data obtained was analysed and summarised into four themes established from the consistent responses recorded from the groups. These are as presented below:

##### **4.5.1 Good Idea for engaging community in budget making process**

Across the seven groups majority of members termed it as good idea for the public to be incorporated during the budget making process. Involving us the public in the budget making process will create interest and desire to be more participatory in the process” one respondent pointed out. Participants within each group and across group expressed that it was a sign that the county was moving in the right direction. However, other participants, although a few in two of the groups feared the participation would just be a formality with nothing to show for it. “The County Government has only come here today because it is a constitutional expectation, otherwise we would not have seen them”

##### **4.5.2 Platform to Express their Needs**

Many respondents within and across the groups reiterated how the County government has not been paying attention to their needs. “We always complain about our problems to the relevant county departments and officials, but we never get a response or solution to the problems” The researcher noted that there was a desire from the participants to have their comments not only



heard but also incorporated in the budget making process. To many, it was a way of exercising their democratic right.

Most participants showed discontent with legislators who only sought their views during campaigns but thereafter side-lined them in their development plans and budgeting. The participants thus believed that the public participation forums would provide a good platform through which they could address their concerns and ensure their priority needs are captured in the budgeting process.

#### **4.5.3 Control Wasting of Resources**

In all groups, it emerged that misuse and wastage of resources was one of the major concerns for the participants. One participant commented, “Nairobi City County has one of the largest budget allocations but yet we the residents are suffering due to lack of basic amenities”. Their involvement through public participation would enable the public closely scrutinise the finances allocated to each sector/department. By so doing, unnecessary and/or unauthorized expenditure that will compromise development projects will be reduced. One participant indicated that, “if the County Government used public funds for their intended purpose, the lives of the citizens would improve and life would become easier”. Members of most focus groups were of the opinion that, effective public participation in budget making process would be able to transform government officers to be responsible people, as they will have to adhere strictly to development plans and budgets.

From the FGDs, the youths (those 25 years and below) were of the opinion that budgets was not involving all stakeholders and was skewed to financing projects that did not benefit the youth. “The County includes projects in the budget that are supposedly meant for the youth, but they don’t consult us the youth on what our priorities are”. Lack of engaging the youths in the budgeting process was the cause of the misplaced projects targeting the youths but with poor youth reception. One indicated, “We have never been invited to participate in any budget making process since the onset of devolution. We only see projects being implemented at the local areas and when we ask about them, we are told the youths selected the projects.” The position was shared by many other youth (n=18).

The CBOs (community based organizations) had a higher number of participants (n=35) who have had some form of participation in budget making process. There were complaints from the CBO members who indicated that the budget materials were in most cases few in addition to being distributed on the very same time the participation process was supposed to start. They bring us huge documents filled with figures and expect us to interpret all of this now? Such documents should be distributed well in advance of these forums one participant lamented. Other concerns raised were that the County Government needs to diversify their sources of distributing information, many felt that most advertisements on public participation were only placed in the local dailies.

Faith based organizations (FBOs) also felt that there was more to be done to ensure the population participates in budget making process. They indicated that the citizens of the county have a perception that the leaders they elected will properly represent them and consider them during the budget process and adequately allocate resources.

#### **4.5.4 Improvement of Services and Objective Development**

It emerged from several participants that some of the projects that the County government has been initiating with big budgets are not directly beneficial to them. Many of these projects are avenues by which public funds are stolen one participant said. They are just corrupt projects aimed at lining the pockets of a few big wigs The researcher noted that many of the participants believed effective public participation during the budget making process would allow them to offer guidance on what projects and services are considered as priority within their communities.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter five covers the summary, conclusions as well as recommendations based on the research objectives. The objectives were: to determine the sources of information that create awareness for Public Participation during the budget making process in Nairobi City County, to establish the level of involvement of the citizenry by Nairobi County during the budget making process and to examine the community's perception on Public Participation on budget making process in.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The findings indicate that the most common source of information for creating awareness on public participation was electronic media (covering television and radio). However, it was discovered that the County Government did not frequently use electronic sources and mainly focused on print media (Newspapers). Public participation moderately provided information to the citizens with which to question government performance and demand responsiveness. Community members were rarely informed of community participation platforms within their regions.

Results indicated that the level of contribution in the budget making process was low. Public was moderately given a chance to give their comments during public participation. The number of residents participating in budget making process had stayed low. The public were not able to access the relevant materials for public participation prior to the forums and their comments/suggestions were hardly incorporated in the final approved budgets. From the findings, the public had a positive perception on the budget making process thus generally many people in the county of Nairobi have a positive attitude towards the budget making process. Perceived benefits by the citizens on county development initiatives influenced their participation in budget making process.

The benefits associated with their participation catalysed the desire to actually take part. Their participation would help them be able to carry out oversight in terms of monitoring money allocated to projects, recommending priority projects and services for their respective communities, and lastly have an avenue of channelling their concerns. Simonsen (2018) found that when the public had positive perception of the budgeting process, there were likely to have more citizens participating in the budgeting process.

The study findings had similar findings with that of Suwanmala (2007) that pointed out that reaching the poor required understanding of their needs, and how they made decisions on public participation on government projects. Oakley and Marsden (2012) also supported the study findings as they agreed that community participation was more on creating meaningful involvement in the budgeting process, and that total participatory is achieved gradually.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study concludes that the most common source of information on public participation was television and radio, social media and newspapers. The locals expressed the challenge of accessing information about the budget making process and public participation forums hence the lack of effective participation in public forums (Dukeshire & Thurlow, 2002). The study concludes that county government inadequately provided information to the citizens with which to query government performance as well as demand for responsiveness. Gaynor (2011) indicates that informing and increasing the state of awareness to the locals helped in promoting resident's participation especially the use of participatory approach.

The study also concludes that the state of engagement in the budget making process was low. Public hardly had a chance to give their comments during public participation. Public participation forums were carried out as an attempt to abide by the laid down law, rather than an opportunity to actually engage the public and get their views. According to Bretty (2003), feeble participation was informed by informing and consulting and on the other side, strong engagement was characterized by partnership and control .

The public were unable to access the relevant materials for public participation on time prior to public participation and their comments were not incorporated in the final approved budgets. Oakley and Marsden (2012) point out that community participation especially for aspects of rural development is majorly focused on creating a solid participating community block that can enhance rural development programs and not mere engagement without aspects of development. In addition, this has been established to be missing in Nairobi County.

The study concludes that the public have a positive perception on the budget making process thus generally many people in the county of Nairobi have a positive attitude towards public participation during the budget making process. They believed it could improve service delivery with a pro-poor focus as well as empower communities to participate in the County development programs and especially the budget making process.

#### **5.4 Challenges during the study**

The study had some challenges that disrupted the planned completion period. Getting permission from the Nairobi City County to conduct the survey took longer due to bureaucratic processes. The other challenge was associated with the data collection process where the respondents wanted some form of appreciation for their time and input into the study. The problem was solved by requesting the respondents to volunteer to give information. There was also the issue of frequency of public participation forums. Public participation is an expensive exercise and thus the period taken between two consecutive public forums would be weeks if not months at times.

The problem of not having a threshold to inform on the minimum threshold for effective and sufficient public participation was also present, leading to borrowing literature from other studies done elsewhere apart from Kenya. The county governments as well as the National Treasury need to have clear terms on what proportion of population in specific jurisdictions make a sufficient public participation.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Policy and Programmes**

The researcher has come up with the following recommendations drawn from the findings:

- i. The study recommends that the County Government diversify their sources of information, which will ensure information is shared widely and promptly. The use of Community leaders, CBOs and Faith Based Organizations could be an avenue to achieve this.
- ii. The study recommends that county government develop mechanisms that ensure that the public have access to documentation concerning the budget process well in advance in order to effectively contribute to the entire process. Ambushing the public with huge documents on the day of public participation will not achieve effective participation.
- iii. The study also recommends that the public should develop an interest in understanding the budget process by regularly attending the public participation forums as well as developing an interest in the legislative process.
- iv. The study further recommends that the county government should set up an office/department that is squarely charged with handling public participation for purposes of accountability and transparency.

## **5.6 Recommendation for further Research**

- i. The study only focused on Nairobi County and public participation during the budget process. The study therefore recommends that other studies be carried out in other counties as well as other areas within the larger legislative processes.
- ii. The study also recommends that more research be carried out in the area of level of awareness in order to come up with empirical data that can help further the research.
- iii. The study finally recommends that more research be carried out in order to establish a gold standard for measuring effective public participation.

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