

Determinants of Participation of Disabled Persons in Public Decision-Making Processes: A Case of Turkana County, Kenya

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Abstract

*Inclusivity of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the process of selecting, correcting, and effecting the decision-making input in the policymaking process is key to achieving sustainable development goals. However, statistic reveals that Kenya has more than 60% of its population excluded from participation in decision-making in the governance processes where persons with disabilities top the list of the most underrepresented. Thus, human rights mean little if they are not operationalized in the real world. The study sought to; assess the determinants of participation by disabled persons in public decision-making processes in the Turkana County Government. Explanatory research approach was used with a target population of 212 state and non-state actors from Turkana County. The sample size was 139 respondents derived from a population of 212 persons through Yamane's formula. Research data was collected using self-administered structured questionnaires. Consequently, data was analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential methods by SPSS version 25.0 software. The data was presented using tables. From the study findings correlations between demography and infrastructure were significant where $r=.331^{**}$, $r=.552^{**}$ and positively correlated to public participation in public decision-making processes by disabled persons where $P<0.01$. All the four determinants (demography, and infrastructure) jointly explained 39.2 per cent variation on public participation in decision making processes. Therefore, there is need for bundling the determinants under study as demography and infrastructure through mutually consistent policies to enhance their synergy in achieving high public participation in decision making processes by disabled persons. The findings would bolster the enhancement of public participation in decision-making processes by persons with disability through various stakeholders in public and private domains.*

Key words: Demography, Infrastructure, and Technology and Disability awareness

1. Introduction

Inclusivity in public participation in decision making is the cornerstone of prudent community design, planning, development and good citizenship relationship. However, disabled persons, who are estimated by the World Health Organization to be fifteen percent (15%) of the world's total population remain excluded from public decision-making processes. This group of persons from time immemorial has been disparaged and isolated from various decision-making processes at international, regional, national and even at local levels (Lwiindi, 2020). The phenomenon has remained a big challenge despite legislations to strengthen inclusion of their voices and consideration of their concerns in routine decision-making processes.

It has further been amplified by obstacles they encounter in realizing their social, economic, cultural and political rights in participating during the decision-making processes (Cherchas, 2014; ILO., 2015).

Emerging information about public participation that has benefitted from empirical research reviews and attained some level of acceptance as a basis of defining and describing effective and meaningful public participation indicates that, the concept was based on a continuum of five related objects that sought to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower the citizens with an aim of moving from a reluctant Government that provides bits of information here and there to an engaged government that partners with its citizens in making decisions that affect them. The International Report of Public Participation (IRPP) 2019, equally revealed that public participation was actually a matter guided by principles whose purpose was to guide the engagements

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between the government and the citizens to make better decisions thus public participation was based on principles that; those affected by a decision have a right to participate in the decision making process; a promise that public inputs and contributions will influence the final decision; needs and interests of all participants are recognized and fully shared at the public engagement forum to promote sustainable decision making.

The process will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected or interested in a decision-making process, the process will accept input from participants on how they want to participate, information required to take part into the process should be availed by the concerned authorities to enable meaningful participation and, that the process provides feedback to the participants on how their inputs shaped the final decision. Studies by Box (1996), Putman (1996), Timney (1996) and Thomas (1995) have awarded public participation the global currency it deserves and heralded it as the backbone of good governance in jurisdictions that practice participative democracy. The studies further advocates for continuous inquiry into the determinants of effective and meaningful public participation with a view of providing basis for remedial interventions especially for the disabled persons who are most disadvantaged alongside other vulnerable groups.

The current global dispensation recognizes inclusion into the decision-making process as a fundamental right and a critical freedom entitlement issue from which disabled persons are not to be excluded whatsoever (ohchr.org., 2012). In spite of this, participation in decision making as a conduit for achieving sustainable development expectations for disabled persons is still a big challenge and presents a lot of limitations (Basaninyenzi, 2020). In this regard, the current research found it necessary to attenuate disability stereotypes which reinforce the barring and seclusion of disabled persons to participate in making decisions in places where they are affected in terms of interest or needs in the private or public sectors. Pursuant to this, the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (CRPD) encourages a complete integration of disabled persons in society in decision making (Basaninyenzi, 2020). This is further underscored by the 2030 agenda for sustainable development that precisely says that disability is not a good ground or procedure of denying access to development programs and the understanding of human rights. Participation in the process of making decisions accords every person an opportunity to give their views as well as share their knowledge and experiences with others irrespective of their status. *Participation* is crucial as it assists one to make informed choices or resolutions and is also presented as a procedure of empowerment to citizens and amounts to good governance (Lockwood, 2010). Participation allows transformative social changes as disabled persons have a voice. Institutions comprising of

disabled persons can contribute to good administrative practices by making authorities more accountable and responsive to their basic needs (Guide, 2010). This enhances how power is distributed in the community which enables individuals to ascertain which needs and whose needs should be achieved through equitable allocation of resources (Van Dijk, 2013).

Disabled persons encounter several hindrances to participation in decision-making process broadly categorized into; social, physical, economic or environmental barriers that contribute to high levels of hunger and poverty amongst them (www.un.org., 2018). In addition, disabled persons either intellectually or psychosocially suffer numerous legal, institutional, communicational and social limitations which limit them from; voting, vying for public office and civil society integration. Disabled persons' lawful capability is more frequently incapacitated. There is evidence that in developed and developing countries, disabled persons are among the world's poor when compared with those not having any disabilities in their countries (Kithuka, 2018). However, participation is based on the international human rights framework as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), certified by Georgia, Moldova and Armenia. The discrimination is based on the limitations of physical or social inability among decision-makers and the lack of involvement of disabled persons in decision-making institutions in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova (Unison., 2016). In this regard, decision-makers, representatives of NGOs and disabled persons have expressed their readiness to take part in trainings and discussions on inclusivity in making decisions that will alleviate barriers experienced by disabled persons. On the global front, Peru was among the pioneer nations to subscribe to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. However, despite ratifying the CRPD and having constitutional and legal provisions to support the inclusivity concept, disabled persons in Peru remained marginalized as they suffered the most to the extent of being denied the right to vote, a fundamental right. (hrw.org., 2012). In terms of political participation, other global jurisdictions from the more developed countries such as USA, Europe and Canada usually considered as comparatively socially inclusive still continue to remain (relatively) politically marginalized when it comes to disabled persons (Alvarez, 2012).

The relatively advanced political jurisdictions of Africa particularly South Africa also exhibits similar characteristics as the developed countries in respect to under representation of the disabled persons and their eventual exclusion from public participation in the decision-making processes. (Kleintjes, Lund & Swartz, 2013). Despite the undoing of South Africa, the rainbow nation carried the day as a better jurisdiction in comparison to Kenya which had just 12 members of parliament against 17 (Wanambisi, 2015). Ghana, an elite

member of the West African nations relied on Chapter 5 of the 1992 Republican Constitution to encourage inclusion of persons with disabilities with very little success. As argued by Sackey (2015), the disabled persons remained marginalized even after the constitutional provisions in Ghana inclusion of persons with disabilities. Closer home, the East African jurisdiction of Uganda where five seats are intentionally reserved for the disabled persons, sign language and braille are not only recognized as formal languages in the parliament proceedings but also for the nation-state (Kandyomunda, Ingdal, Qutteina & Mogen, 2012). Despite this necessary adjustment, Uganda seems to be sailing on the same ship with yet another elite East African jurisdiction named Tanzania which is yet to meet the disability quota despite constitutional provisions (Aldersey, 2012). To this extent, the study seeks to determine the reasons behind poor representation and involvement of persons with disabilities in Kenya as shared with neighboring jurisdictions in East Africa despite the robust constitutional provisions to safeguard against the exclusion of persons with disability.

Nationally, Kenya's constitution 2010 afforded a robust legal structure for the participation of people with disability in development procedures. For example, Article 1 of the constitution has given sovereign power to citizens of the republic of Kenya and they exercise their power at the national and county levels in a direct manner through citizen participation or through democratically elected representatives (GOK., 2010). The Kenyan constitution incorporated disabled persons in all levels of governance to allow them to enjoy their rights of participation and representation (Gitonga, 2018). Despite this, Kenya still has more than 60% of its population excluded from participation in governance process and disabled persons top the list of the most underrepresented (Otema, 2020). Lack of representation in the county assembly, lack of inclusive services like sign language interpretation, inaccessible venue with poor access infrastructure, lack of a coordinated approach in reaching out to the persons with disability during mobilization, is disturbing as it locks out disabled persons from participating actively in the governance process (simavi.org., 2020). Still on the national context of Kenya, proliferation of civil societies and rights groups have enriched the call for disability inclusion and thorough mainstreaming of disability concerns into the framework of public participation. A report by the Consortium for Constitution and Reform Education (2014) supported the declaration of 'illegitimate' in respect to outcomes that had left out disabled persons from participation either by default or design. The report raised concerns over the use of the term 'intergrated' as a description of decision-making processes that excluded disabled persons, the minority and other segments of the diverse and dynamic populations expected to take part in the process.

In the local context of Turkana, which was used as the case study, a report by Oxfam (2016), indicated that the County Government of Turkana had put in place adequate measures, mechanisms and procedures for efficient public participation during its engagements with the public in the formative 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 financial years. However, 65% of the community members in Turkana expressed the feeling of being excluded from the processes as evidenced by poorly managed development programs most of which were viewed as alien and government led with no structured inputs from the public. The same report also indicated that the executives presented pre-determined development projects and used the public participation forum to rubberstamp the decisions and overcome legal potholes. It is against this background that the need to establish the determinants of participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County through research is highlighted. The background also highlights; from literature cited, possible lapses in enhancing public participation for disabled persons (Basininyenzi, 2020), possible nonadherence to the legal frameworks that guarantee disabled persons the right to participate (Kithuka, 2018; Van Dijk, 2013) and inaccessible infrastructure for facilitating participation (Sackey 2015, Unison 2016 & Aldersey 2012). The study used the background information to examine determinants of participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County.

1.1. Statement of the Research Problem

Inclusivity in public participation in decision making processes is a fundamental milestone for societal planning, development and in achieving a just, cohesive and socially bound community. During scientific industrialization famously known as the new information age, the needs of disabled persons were not considered in the technological and infrastructural designs. Across the Globe, disabled persons have historically been at the periphery of decision-making processes and excluded from participating in community programming, investments and they have potentiality remained undiscovered. Upon realization that participation in decision-making is a universal and fundamental human right, states and non-state actors formulated and enacted international covenants and domestic legislations such as the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability of 2006, the Kenya's Disability Act of 2003, Salamanca Conference Resolution of 1994, America's Disability Act of 1990, among others to promote the inclusion of disabled persons in public decision making processes, protect their interest and remove administrative practices that undermine the realization of their needs. These legislations were envisaged to provide efficient and effective avenues through which disabled persons can access technological information, enjoy inclusive infrastructural designs,

remove social exclusion and derogatory attitudes and promote their equal representations at international, national and local assemblies. In spite of these efforts, disabled persons continue to be at the periphery of decision-making processes. In order to address these challenges, this study sought to determine the hindrances against the active participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes, in the context of Kenyan experience and particularly Turkana County, with a biased attention to demography, infrastructure, disability awareness and technology.

1.2 General objective of the study

To establish the determinants of participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County.

1.3. Specific Objectives of the Study

The research was directed by the following specific objectives to:

- 1) Establish the effect of demography on the participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County.
- 2) Assess the effect of infrastructural design on the participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County.

2.Literature Review

The study reviewed literature on the relationship between variables under study which included determinants of participation by disabled persons in public decision making as demography and infrastructure designs.

2.1 Demography and participation of disabled persons in public decision making

There are many factors that influence public participation, one of them being demographic factors (Ronoh, 2019). PWDs will more often suffer from many socio-economic problems such as little education, poor health, unemployment and greater poverty rates (Basaninyenzi, 2020). Therefore, there is need to have a proper planning to optimize public participation in decision making by considering their gender, age and level of education. There is a common prejudice and discrimination against persons with mental, physical or developmental disabilities (Burkhardt & Haney, 2011). While the debate on the demographic conditions of disabled persons is often minimal and largely accepted as the most vulnerable groups to exclusion arising from social prejudice and impairments, the data provided focussed on national and international context whose

generalization might not apply to the context of Turkana where the research was conducted. The researcher used the paradigms of demography to highlight how they determined public participation of the targeted disabled persons in the study areas.

Research has shown that the paradigms of age, education level and socio-economic status are not only demographic issues but also basis for social inclusion in many human activities with historical roots from the ancient times (Agyeman & Delle, 2013). With reports derived from national statistics and shared by the World Health Organization in respect to access to educational opportunities showing just how disabled persons are disadvantaged, the ripple effect is equally demonstrated by increased difficulties in accessing employment, poor health outcomes and reduced ability to take part in social engagements that use education as the basis for entry. The vulnerability aspect arising from these demographic conditions hereby cited provided the basis for the research to question the disabled persons in circumstances where they were excluded from direct or indirect participation due to lack of skills, derogatory attitude by cohort participants, educational level and socio-economic status. Many disabled persons generally attain lower education levels more often and this prevents them from accessing employment and besides other limiting factors also prevents them from public participation. Agyemang and Delle (2013) argues that age and education level greatly influence the kind of attitude employees develop towards disabled employees. More often, PWDs receive little or no education at all and sometimes no skills because they are socially excluded. They are also unable to access facilities and this becomes a great hindrance to improving their livelihood since they cannot get employment and hence, they become incapacitated economically (Dube., 2005). The situation as described puts disabled persons at a state of vulnerability of being thought of as 'lesser' human beings incapable of giving meaningful suggestions during the public participation processes by examining the extent to which the disabled persons felt a sense of belonging to the County Government processes.

As a matter of fact, inclusion of disabled persons into the routine decision-making processes has been noted for improving the conditions of disadvantaged people by according them an opportunity and atmosphere for mutual respect and gross engagement despite the disadvantages brought about by material deprivation. The mutual respect developed acts as an eliminator of practices that exclude disabled persons from participating by creating a framework for improved engagement of the disadvantaged groups. However, there is evidence from research that there is exclusion and further analytical studies that need to be done about what is inclusion in order to improve data availability (Milner & Kelly, 2009).

Morin, Rivard, Crocker, Boursier and Caron (2013), did a research about the effect of public attitudes towards

people living with intellectual challenges in Canada. The study had three objectives namely; to explain how public attitudes affect people living with intellectual challenges with reference to affective, cognitive and behavioral features and the second objective was comparing and contrasting the attitudes based on age, sex, income, education and the frequency and quality of contacts with people having intellectual disability. The third objective was to confirm how the level of functioning affects attitudes. A questionnaire was designed and administered by phone to 1605 randomly selected respondents comprising of male and female adults who were randomly picked. These were picked by stratification from each region in the province of Québec, Canada. From this study, it was found that public attitudes in general were positive in relation to the three attitudinal dimensions. It was found that the attitude of men was more negative than that of women in relation to the discomfort factor, but women were more negative in relation to capacity of knowledge and rights factor. Younger people were more positive as well as the more educated respondents. There was however no association between attitude and income. The attitude of the public was more negative towards people living with low functioning intellectual disability. However, the study didn't focus on how sex, age, education and income of persons living with disabilities affect their public participation in decision making processes. Besides this, the study did not look at other disabilities but was limited to intellectual disabilities (IDs) providing a gap for the current study.

Goreczny, Bender, Caruso and Feinstein (2011), did an investigation of attitudes of 129 people who attended a statewide conference in the US whose aim was to improve the standard of living for people living with disabilities. The respondents' attitudes were generally positive toward PWDs. There were notable attitudinal differences in terms of age and gender. There were statistically significant differences in women and younger people presenting more accommodative attitudes than men and older people towards the PWDs. From this research, it was clear that the attitude of people towards PWDs was negative and deleterious and that was the reason why these individuals suffered from decreased opportunities and denial of chances of integration into the community. This was the reason for low public participation in decision making. The study did not use a sample from a diversified population i.e., a group selected from persons from different areas of specialization. The study did not examine a wide range of attitudes. This study however was not done in Turkana County and this provides a gap for the current study.

Burkhardt and Haney (2011) conducted an online survey whose objective was to find out whether the age of the participants influenced the attitudes toward people suffering from physical disabilities among the Americans. They hypothesized that young adults possessed more pessimistic explicit and implicit attitudes against disabled persons than older adults but the results indicated that

young adults exhibited more pessimistic implicit and explicit attitudes towards people with physical disabilities. However, the age factor was not moderated by participants' experience with disabled persons. Additionally, this investigation was limited to the perceptions of participants regardless of their status towards people with disabilities and not the age of the PWDs providing a gap for the current research.

A study about the role of gender in local governance was done in South African municipalities by review of relevant literature. From this study, it was revealed that there was a low level of involvement by women especially at the most basic level of governance. They attributed this problem to women not having expertise, capacity, too many domestic duties and society demands compounded with cultural opinions. To solve the problem of low participation, the women should be empowered politically by enhancing their capacity right from the local government. The study suggested a normative approach to deal with the public's participation way of transformation. It also suggested the instrumental approach to deal with political transfer of control from national to local offices to promote participatory decision-making at the local levels. The study also proposed revision of the current constitution, the structure of political, legislative and regulatory frameworks and also the electoral system, to remove barriers that prevent the participation by women at the same level as their counterparts in the decision-making process. It also proposed that the government should upgrade the monitoring and evaluation to ensure that women participate in decision-making process (VYas-Doorgapersad, 2014). However, the study was conducted in South Africa and not in the Kenyan context limiting its generalization. Besides it didn't focus on disabled persons which is the focus of the current study.

Ugwu and Onah (2019) conducted a study about factors that influenced the attitude of the people of Nigeria towards people living with physical challenges. The hypothesis of this research was that the age, education level and the physical disabilities do not influence the attitudes of the people of Nigeria towards people with physical disability. This was a cross-sectional survey. A total of 100 workers were randomly selected from both the state and local government. Self-administered questionnaires by, using a modified version of the Scale of Attitudes towards Disabled Persons (SADP). The study hypotheses were tested by Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and independent variables i.e. gender, age, level of education, and exposure to physical challenges neither jointly nor independently influenced the attitudes of the people towards people living with physical challenges. This study was conducted in the Nigerian context and the respondents comprised of people from the same socio-cultural and religious backgrounds and therefore this affects the generalization of the study outcome in other contexts. Secondly, this

research suffered from common method variance because it was based on self-report. Besides this study didn't look at public participation in decision making but attitudes providing a gap for the current study.

Ronoh (2019) conducted a research about the effect of demographic characteristics on public participation development activities in devolved governance in Kenya. This research found out that there was significant association between demographic characteristics and public participation activities. Demographic characteristics like the level of education, gender and age influenced public participation. In terms of gender, males appeared to participate more than females and the youth tended to participate more than older people and finally the more educated people appeared more meaningful and provided more quality contribution. However, the study did not focus on only the disabled persons providing a gap for the current study. The study also didn't focus on institutions advocating for the rights and privileges of disabled persons.

Mwangi (2011) also conducted research about the causes of gender imbalance in education administration within teachers in government secondary schools in Thika district. The factors in consideration in this study were: roles of gender, perceptions, socialization and gender stereotypes, models and mentors' educational qualifications and training in relation to gender imbalance in education administration among the instructors. Questionnaires were used to collect data in a descriptive survey and the raw data was analyzed by SPSS analysis computer software. The results of this research indicated that gender roles, teacher's self-perception, socialization and gender stereotypes, availability of role models, mentors and training caused gender imbalances in education administration among teachers. This study recommended sharing of duties related to gender with their spouses so that they could rise to leadership positions at schools. 65 government sponsored secondary schools from the larger Thika district were used in this study. The target population comprised male adults, women principals and trainers/teachers. Thus, findings could not be generalized to other public sectors. This research was also limited to only gender and no other demographic variables. The research design was also descriptive limiting the generalization of the study findings to other settings. The study didn't look at gender in relation to disabled persons and how public participation is affected.

The consideration of demographic issues reveals that the five problems of education levels, gender imbalance, and derogatory attitude towards the disabled persons, economic disadvantages and actual impairments were the main thematic posing challenges to disabled persons when it comes to effectiveness in taking part in public participation engagements. It is against this background that research sought to determine the corresponding

details on how disabled persons of Turkana County are affected by the situation.

2.2 Infrastructure and participation of disabled persons in public decision making

The role of infrastructure in driving the agenda of Disability Inclusion was noted and supported as a matter of primary concern by authorities and institutions of global significance ranging from World Health Organization, the United Nations, United States of America Aid (USAID), United Kingdom Aid (UKAID) and their international affiliates owing to the need to meet SDG 4,8,10, 11 and 17 on various aspects disability concerns by the year 2030 (Wiman & Sadhu, 2004). Further towards this agenda, a 23 paged year 2000 DFID financed report by the Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development (ICED) was unveiled as the basis for comprehensive source of information in respect to disability friendly infrastructural designs for governments and institutions moving forward (icedfacility.org., 2019).

The report began by acknowledging that greater disability inclusion would be achieved by conscious and deliberate investment in infrastructural designs that unlock the potentials of disabled persons and open opportunities for providing them with assistance during the use of the said infrastructure. The report further highlighted the seven universal principles which support the design of products, environments, programs, and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design as a starting point. Equitable use, the design that is useful and marketable to persons with diverse abilities; Flexibility in use, the design that accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities; Simple and intuitive use, the design that is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or concentration level; Perceptible information, the design that communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities; Tolerance for error, the design that minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions; Low physical effort, design that can be used efficiently and comfortably and with minimum fatigue and, Size and space for approach and use, the design that provides appropriate size and space – for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture or mobility. This was termed as an effective infrastructure that would reduce the degeneration of impairment to a disability. The current research used the framework provided to examine the conformity of the venues used by the Turkana County Government during public participation and routine service delivery to the disabled persons since the context used to generate the principles was universal rather than local hence the need for the study.

Still on the report, three major access barriers were identified as disproportionately hindering access to infrastructure despite the adherence to the seven universal principles of design that promote disability friendly environments as rooted in behavior and attitude, information and physical factors. On behavior and attitude, an accusing finger is pointed towards Government employees and persons in charge of operations supposed to serve disabled persons for succumbing to cultural traditions that inhibit sympathetic resonance with the access need of disabled persons hence reducing financial allocations for including barrier free ramps, architectural acoustics, disability friendly sanitation services and other accommodative designs in buildings leading to stigmatized use of the facility by the disabled persons. On information, yet another accusing finger is pointed towards authorities for failure to furnish both the public and the disabled persons with the information concerning the adjustments made to buildings to accommodate disability needs. The absence of adapted signage, parking and elevator reservations markings and persons to direct the disabled exemplified the informational barrier. Using the framework so developed, the need to determine the presence of a catalog of disability-friendly services existing in Turkana emerged as a gap to be filled by this research.

On physical barriers, reference was made to the programming and investments aimed at promoting physical access to the infrastructure for the various disabilities. For example, access needs for a wheelchair user significantly vary from the access needs for a person with white cane user with visual impairments calling for the two to be classified under different categories of access needs all of which must be included in a building. Experience has however shown that inclusion of access installations is mostly partial in such a manner that some disability access concerns are neither factored nor considered despite the huge number of disabilities and their differing needs. The physical barriers associated with the ICED report used data collected from an American environment in which consciousness to disability civil rights was heightened as opposed to the African or Kenyan situation in which some disabilities may go unnoticed despite their presence. To this extent, it is impossible to generalize the context as glaring comparison gaps may arise. The study sought to bridge the gap by examining venues for public participation with a view of determining the presence of physical access features as well as their capability to handle the huge variety of disabilities displayed by disabled persons.

In yet another research on infrastructure as a key component of driving disability inclusion, Agarawal and Steel (2016), Eklund (2008) and Kanter (2009) are cited as failing to respond to the question of what happens when the infrastructure is not disability friendly. The scholars' concerted efforts were deservedly expended towards raising the profile of disability inclusion and pointing out

to the wide range of installations including designated seating spaces, reserved parking lots, specially designed sanitation facilities, lined pedestrian lanes for walking aid users, and architectural acoustics among others required to achieve the goal. However, their studies failed to inform the target institutions and private developers about the downside arising from poor value for money and the missed opportunity for inclusive growth when disability concerns have not been included in the infrastructural designs. While terming the issue as 'the cost of ignoring disability inclusion during infrastructural design', the ICED report further reinforced the need to take developers and institutions to account for the financial implications of approving architectural designs that are not disability friendly. From a research perspective, there is a huge possibility that the cost implication was ignored during the designing and construction of public utilities such as ward and sub county offices in Turkana. Available evidence drawn from experience have further justified the neglect in selected facilities even at the headquarters level hence the need to conduct research aimed at availing data on the utilities that must undergo the necessary renovations to attain the desired level of accommodation.

Winam and Sadhu (2004) noted that disability was aggravated further by the inaccessibility of the physical infrastructure which alienated disabled persons from contributing their expertise to the noble activity of nation-building by limiting their functionality. Disabled persons can be empowered to become social and development change agents if physical infrastructure becomes more accessible. The scholars noted the significant success so far achieved in developed countries but took issues with the slow pace of changes in the developing world where infrastructure has remained largely inappropriate and limiting. The differences in the developing and developed countries carried the implication of disproportionate vulnerability in which the disabled persons in the developing world faced greater risks of being alienated from buildings, services and installations for important functions such as public participation exercises. Wiman and Sadhu (2004) further argued that the vulnerabilities posed by inappropriate infrastructural designs are made worse by associated problems related to low educational levels, lack of jobs among the disabled persons, poor housing conditions, malnutrition, pollution, accidents, and infectious diseases. The uncontested comparison showing the differences was welcome however, the source of its data did not include Turkana and was not specific to access to the infrastructure for public participation hence the gap to be reviewed in the study. Besides, the scale of comparison used was national development index which is an intricate economic tool of analysis that effectively excludes disaggregation of data based on other aspects of consideration such as gender and educational level which are more individualistic in nature. The current study

sought to examine how demographic information determined the use of accessible infrastructures for public participation among disabled persons in Turkana. Agrwal and Steele (2016), asserted the prominence of accessible infrastructure is very important for social functioning and has a direct impact on social wellbeing. Infrastructure should be accessible to all social groups otherwise it creates social exclusion and hinders participation in society. Therefore, intentional discrimination, physical and social hindrances make PWDs exposed to the possibility of being affected negatively in terms of increased poverty and exclusion (Wiman & Sandhu, 2004). Infrastructure should be well structured to support the community or society, with an impact on primary community needs such as prosperity, income, education and health (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Apart from public participation, which was the principal concern of the study, the presentation on potential use of public utilities by disabled persons for income generating purposes, furthering educational opportunities or attaining economic empowerment also afforded an additional opening for further research. To this extent, the study sought to determine the range of services supported by the physical infrastructure other than public participation as a research concern. It may be possible that some countries allow public installations to be utilized by their disabled population for a variety of purposes but the case in Turkana remains unknown hence the research.

When the infrastructure is inaccessible in part of fully aspect, it can isolate people living with disability to the extent of downgrading the standards of living and constitutional rights, in the long run demeaning them. PWDs quite often, are inactive in leadership positions both politically and in their own countries because of exclusion (Price, 2018). There are many complex obstacles to public participation and they are multifaceted. These obstacles are social shame, inequitable legal frameworks and infrastructure reign supreme. The United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR) report of 2009 defined accessibility as accessible environment to persons with disability in the realization of their rights to independence and proper participation in social, economic, cultural and political activities (Kanter, 2009). Consequently, many countries should put in place appropriate courses of action in the implementation policies about accessibility of infrastructure, physical environment, transportation, technology and access to information as a means of enhancing participation of the disabled in public decision making. Kenya as a nation state has made a name for itself as a country with law abiding citizens who recognize and implement tenets of the law however, some lapses in the full adoption of legal provisions due to economic difficulties have also been reported. The study used the implementation gaps to verify the extent to which laws on reasonable accommodation of infrastructure was implemented.

Eklund (2008) criticized the Kenyan Disability Act the shallow definition of accessibility as the constructing of government buildings and government vehicles to become usable by PWDs. The writer did not include accessibility to private and generally all vehicles and services of caregivers including translators and guides. The main problem is that PWDs are isolated from society because many infrastructures do not conform to their requirements (globalaccessibilitynews.com., 2017).

Simonson, Glick, Ellen and Nobe (2013), did a study about students' perceptions of accessibility to new and accessibility to old building and the perception of the learner's quality of education. The research was conducted on disabled learners at the university. ANOVA and regression analysis were done, and it was found out that the university was compliant to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) but many sectors needed improvement as per the students' perception on the study. Many improvements were proposed for those students suffering from cognitive and mobility disabilities. Every respondent presented a positive correlation connecting enhanced accessibility and enhanced education experience. This research was done in a single institution in America and therefore findings may not be generalized to other settings. Besides the study focused quality education as an outcome and not public participation in decision making.

According to a research at University of Tugli, Venda, Zungu, Ramakuela, Goon and Anyanwu (2013), the judgment of learners with disabilities with respect to accessing and support in the learning institution were measured through self-administered questionnaires. Data was used from 67 students living with disabilities and their mean age was 26.6 ± 4 years. The raw data was synthesized by using of descriptive details in statistics. 43.8% of the respondents said that physical conditions were a big hindrance to their learning; and greater than 53.8% of the respondents confirmed that physical environment posed dangers to disabled students. From the Friedman's mean rank, user friendly from residence, campus sanitation/hygiene, disabled sports/recreational facilities had scores of 5.23, 3.11, and 2.93; $p=0.000$ respectively. The research concluded that access and support services are necessary for all students to allow improved social and academic life for learners with disabilities. However, the dependent variable was not public participation in decision making besides the sample size was low with a low statistical power.

Bezyak, et al. (2020) did a study on female Hispanic, Latino and Spanish people by origin. The study was on community participation and public transportation barrier that PWDs suffer from. The study was done 1748 respondents through an on-line survey on the degree of accessibility in public transportation. From Pearson's chi-square and Mann-Whitney *U* tests many respondents had many problems while trying to access public transport. People suffering with vision impairments and

ones with low vision, psychiatric challenges, serious health challenges, or many disabilities suffered from many problems while trying to use public transportation. This survey, however, was convenience-based, and this could have influenced some groups with certain disability, cultures and those that could not access online computer services and therefore interpretation could not be derived by predictive outcomes. Besides the study was conducted in a non-Kenyan context focusing on transportation barriers and no other infrastructure barriers providing a gap for the current study.

Banda-Chalwe, Nitz and De Jonge (2014) did a study that intended to give an insight into the participation experiences of persons suffering from mobility problems or limitations (PWML), the accessibility was mainly in public buildings and other public spaces in Zambia. The group under study was disadvantaged because they could not access public buildings. The purpose of this study was to advice government on areas that needed improvement in terms of environment so as all citizens could enjoy their rights. This was a qualitative research design that used personal interviews and focus group discussions to investigate the accessibility of the built environment and how it influenced the entire family’s participation schedules. From the outcome of the research, learning institutions, workplaces and public spaces were found to be inaccessible and this led to reduced participation of persons suffering with mobility challenges with negative implications for personal, family, social and economic aspects of the lives of participants. The study identified government buildings and transportation were identified as very important but also least accessible. The study had a low sample size, qualitative design which is not statistically representative. Beside the research was conducted in the Zambia and this limits the generalization of the findings to the Kenyan context.

Mwirigi (2017) did a study about the effects of built environment, building regulations, financial resources and public awareness on the accessibility of building infrastructure by physically disabled people. This survey targeted people who are registered as Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK) Meru branch. The population comprised of 158 members, from which a sample 100 members of APDK-Meru branch, 10 County planning officers and 18 consultants were picked for this research. Sampling of respondents was done by Stratification and by simple random sampling. This research used questionnaires to collect information data from the respondents. Raw/primary data was analyzed by use of computer software (SPSS version 21.0). It was established from this research that building regulations, public awareness, funding resources, and built environment collectively influenced the accessibility of building infrastructure by physically disabilities persons from Meru Town, Meru County. In conclusion, there existed building regulations that said wheelchair ramps were a requirement in public housing in Meru town, but many buildings were not user friendly especially to the

physically disabled persons and this meant that there was laxity in implementation by the National Construction Authority (NCA) in the administration of these regulations. The study was not conducted in Turkana County and it didn’t look at public participation of the disabled persons.

The review on infrastructure focused on; specific installations such as ramps and architectural acoustics for which their presence or absence could not be determined; the seven basic principles that guide universal designs of infrastructure to make them more accommodative and accessible but with no information on their application in Turkana; the human and non-human factors that limit the capacity of the disabled persons from accessing the physical infrastructure but without the benefit of knowing their dynamics in Turkana and, cost implications of having a non-inclusive infrastructure but without the knowledge of the actual losses suffered by disabled persons in Turkana. It was against this background that the study was consciously designed to respond to; number, nature and distribution of disability friendly access infrastructures and, the range of services supported by the existing accessible infrastructure from which data was developed to bridge the emerging gaps.

2.3 Conceptual framework

Antonenko (2015), defined conceptual framework as a device used to organize a research or enquiry. It creates a captivating argument that is theory-based and has a data-driven concept which supports a research problem. It can be visual or written statement which explains either by graphical presentation or in descriptive form, the main ideas and variables in research and includes the presumed relationships. This research will consider demographic characteristics (gender, age, income and level of education), infrastructure (access point and suitability), disability awareness (acceptance, ability, tolerance of diversity and attitude) and, technology in terms of (availability, level of adoption and accessibility) as independent variables and, participation in decision making by disabled persons as dependent variable. Culture will be considered as a moderator as shown (figure 2.1).

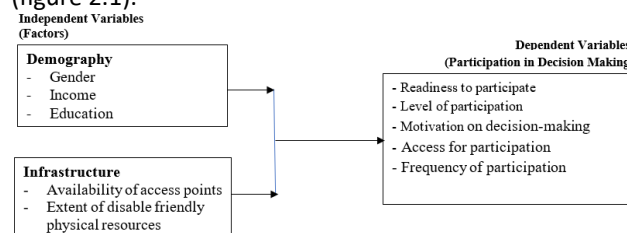


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: (Author, 2022)

3.0 Research Design and Methodology

Research Design: According to Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele (2012) research design represents a structure of

study meant to give solutions to the research objectives. An explanatory research design was adopted for this research. According to Elahi and Dehdashti (2011), this type of research design is applicable when the researcher wants to find out the degree of association of variables and when deriving predictions of the experiences of both societal and physical occurrences.

Target population: Target population is a group of study elements which could be real or hypothetical and could be in form of people, events or objects that the researcher wanted to use (Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine, 2019). Thus, the target population was 212 state and non-state actors drawn from Turkana County as provided in table 3.1 below. This was also considered for providing reliable information about the relationship between the variables of the research for the sake of generalization.

Sample and Sampling techniques: According to Cameron and Miller (2015), sampling is defined as a statistical process which involve the selection of a subset from a population under study for the sake of making observations. This research used stratified random sampling to choose a sample comprising of state actors and non-state actors. Simple random sampling was also used to draw samples from each stratum. Simple Random Sampling (SRS) is a sampling technique that comprises of n sampling units in a population N number of sampling units that have an equal chance of being selected (Elliott & Valliant, 2017). The objective of this sampling technique is to select groups that display variation on a particular phenomenon.

Sample size: sample size was determined by selecting elements of the study from each sampling frame involving procedures of selecting individual elements from the population. A sample size of 139 respondents was selected from a target population of 212 state and non-state actors using the Yamane (1967) sample size formula that was modified by Kent and Myers (2008) as referenced in Etuk and Akpabio (2014). The formula is as shown below:

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

Where, n represents sample size, N represents population size, and e represents the error of sampling. The research worked with a sampling error of 0.05. For the sake of sample size calculated as illustrated below:

$$n = \frac{212}{1 + 212 \times 0.05^2} = 139$$

The sample size was distributed proportionately by using the Neyman’s allocation formula (Singh & Micah, 2013). The method was useful when the researcher wanted to increase survey accuracy, from a known sample size. Thus, the most appropriate sample size for each strata h was be given by:

$$n_h = \left(\frac{N_h}{N}\right)n$$

From the formula, n_h represents sample size for strata h, n represents total sample size, N_h represents population size for strata h, and N represents total population. Therefore, random sampling procedure yielded the following distribution.

Table 3.1: Sampling proportions

Classification	Strata	Accessible population (Nh)	Size of Sample
State Actors	Department of Finance and Economic Planning.	26	17
	Department of Public Service, administration and Disaster Management.	46	30
	Department of Infrastructure and Public Works	7	5
Non-State Actors	Department of Early Childhood, Social Protection and Sports.	7	5
	County Assembly	21	14
	Community based organizations for PWDs	80	52
	Faith based organizations	25	16
TOTAL		212	139

Source: County Government of Turkana.

Data Collection Instruments: The greatest proportion of the data came from primary sources and was collected by using questionnaires while secondary data was sourced from literature review which included published journals, and websites. In this study the researcher administered questionnaires with closed - ended questions to the respondents which were preferred due to precise information generated.

Data Analysis: The data collected was entered into SPSS version 25 spreadsheet. The next step was cleaning of data to remove any inconsistencies as well as arranging and organizing in an analyzable format. This study used regression analysis and inferences made from analyzed data. Multiple linear regression model illustrated below was used.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 3.1}$$

Where Y was participation in public decision making, dependent variable X represented determinants of decision making, β_1 - β_2 are the standardized regression coefficient.

β_0 Represents the y intercept

- Y Represents Participative decision making
- X₁ Represents demography
- X₂ Represents Infrastructure
- ε Represents error term

4. Data analysis, results, findings and discussion

4.1 Determinants of participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County

The joint effect of all the determinants of participation of disabled persons in public decision making processes understudy are presented in the model summary of multiple regression model in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Goodness of fit model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.626 ^a	.392	.380	.767	.392	2.154

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Demography and infrastructure
- b. Dependent Variable: Participation in decision making

The results showed that all the four determinants (demography and infrastructure) jointly explained 39.2 percent variation on public participation in decision making. This showed that considering the two study independent variables, there is a probability of 39.2% (R²=0.392) in predicting public participation in decision making. This implies that if Turkana County embraces these determinants of public participation by people with disabilities and proactively formulates policies in support of disabled persons, public participation in decision-making processes in Turkana County would increase. The ANOVA output in table 4.2 below was examined to check whether the proposed model was viable.

Table 4.2 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.928	2	20.464	34.756	.000 ^b
	Residual	63.589	108	.589		
	Total	104.517	110			

- Predictors: (Constant), Demography and infrastructure
- Dependent Variable: Participation in decision making

The F-statistic was highly significant (F= 34.756 p<0.05), showing that the model was significant. The model

significantly improved the ability to predict participation in decision making process. Thus, the determinants (demography and infrastructure) combined significantly affect public participation in decision making in Turkana County. Results of the regression coefficients presented in Table 4.3 below show the estimates of Beta values and give an individual contribution of each predictor to the model.

Table 4.3 Regression coefficients of determinants of disabled persons participation in public decision-making processes in Turkana County government

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.077	.349		.220	.826		
Demography	.367	.093	.296	3.937	.000	.996	1.004
Infrastructure	.649	.092	.532	7.078	.000	.996	1.004

Dependent Variable: Participation in decision making

The Beta value tells us about the relationship between public participation in decision making by disabled persons with each predictor. The positive Beta values indicate the positive relationship between the predictors and the outcome. The Beta value for demography (.367) and infrastructure (.649) were all positive.

A unit increase in demography considerations would lead to an increase in participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County by a factor of 0.410 (B=0.367, P<0.05). This implies that there is need for proper planning so as to optimize public participation in decision making by considering the adverse effects of demographic characteristics of disabled persons such as age, level of education, gender income among others on their capacity to participate in public decision-making process. Burkhardt and Haney (2011) acknowledges that there is a common prejudice and discrimination against persons with mental, physical or developmental disabilities based on their demographic characteristics. For instance, the study finding also underscores that disabled person with education command more respect than those without education. This resonates with the social model of disability which posits that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Thus, demographic differences amongst people with disability should not be a conduit for exclusion unless the community allows them to manifest themselves as a barrier. There fore there is need to continuously champion for an increase in participation of disabled persons in public decision-

making processes irrespective of their individual demographic variations. In this regard, disabled persons should participate in decision making and be given equal opportunities like the rest of the community members.

A unit increase in infrastructure would lead to an increase in participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County by a factor of 0.649 (B=0.649, P<0.05). All these together support the rejection of the null hypothesis. In this regard, it remains quintessential to have barrier free infrastructural designs for governments and institutions moving forward (icedfacility.org., 2019). These findings are further underpinned by the social cognition theory which avers that continued involvement of disabled persons in public participation in decision making would be enhanced by the environment, individual and behavioral factors. Environmental factors and behavioral factors function through cognition (Beauchamp, Crawford & Jackson, 2019). Thus infrastructure as an environmental parameter should be designed and implemented correctly to warrant effective civic participation of people with disabilities, both individually and collectively in public decision making. In a nutshell the perception of the respondents on the state of the infrastructure echoes the need for disability inclusive infrastructure designs and location Turkana County.

The regression model was presented as below:

$$Y = .077 + .367X_1 + .649X_2 + \epsilon$$

Where:

X₁ = Demography

X₂ = Infrastructure

T-test was then used to identify whether the predictors were making a significant contribution to the model. When the t-test associated with Beta value is significant then the predictor is making a significant contribution to the model. The results show that demography (t =3.937, P<.05) and Infrastructure (t =7.078, P<.05). These findings indicate that all the determinants jointly significantly affect disabled persons participation in public decision-making processes in Turkana County. These findings are underpinned by the social cognition theory (SCT), social model of disability and Ladder of citizen participation theory, thus based on addressing the determinants under study the participation of citizens without exclusion of disabled persons in government activities and decision making is achieved. Therefore, Turkana County should address the limitation uncovered by this study in terms of demography and infrastructure for optimization of public participation of disabled persons. The role of these variables combined was greater in causing variation in public participation by disabled persons than when treated independently owing to their synergistic roles. However, infrastructure caused the greatest effect on public participation in decision making by disabled

persons than the other predictors as disability awareness though this doesn't devalue the role demography.

This is further underscored by the correlation between the variables as depicted in table 4.22

Table 4.4: Correlation Analysis

	Demography	Infrastructure	Decision making
Demography	1		
Infrastructure	.065	1	
Decision making	.331**	.552**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the results in table 4.4 above, it can be seen that correlations among the determinants were significant. Correlations between demography and infrastructure were significant where r=.331**, r= .552** respectively were positively related to public participation in decision making by disabled persons where P<0.01. This implies that all the determinants under study jointly have a positive and significant effect on public participation in decision making by disabled persons in Turkana County. As such, it behooves the relevant stake holders to pay high premiums on these determinants to secure maximal participation in decision making by disabled persons in Turkana County.

Conclusion

From the findings, this study makes several conclusions. The study explored the determinants of participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes such as: demography, and infrastructure on participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes; the study concludes that these determinants are key in enhancing participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County. This is evidenced by the fact that these constructs jointly and independently affect to some magnitude participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes as per the study findings. The effect of all the determinants understudy significantly affects participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes. It therefore calls for the formulation, promotion of disability-oriented policies with participation in public decision-making orientation and focusing on their implementation. Consequently, they would become ingrained in county operations and not just an additional component of organizational policies thus high participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes.

The current study provides absolute support to the significant effect of demography on participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County. This implies that in the light of social cognition model; there is need for proper planning so as to optimize public participation in decision making by considering the adverse effects of demographic characteristics of disabled persons such as age and level of education on their capacity to participate in public decision-making process. This will definitely warrant their high levels of participation in public decision making.

Infrastructure significantly affect participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County. Therefore, disability friendly infrastructural designs for governments, institutions and other public utilities moving forward remains quintessential to enhancing participation in public decision making. This is corroborated by the fact that infrastructure significantly affects participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County. Thus, infrastructure as an environmental parameter should be designed and implemented correctly to warrant effective civic participation of people with disabilities, both individually and collectively in public decision making. This is because continued involvement of disabled persons in public participation in decision making would be enhanced by the environment, individual and behavioral factors.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study and the guidance from the literature review, it is apparent that strengthening the enhancers of participation of the disabled persons in public decision making remains a corner stone for inclusivity in Turkana County. While there are other determinants crucial for participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes in Turkana County. The relevant stake holders should pay more attention in addressing demography and infrastructural limitations for purposes of increasing participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes. Authorities of the state and non-state stake holders should acquire high participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes by mitigating the barriers occasioned by demography through continuously championing for an increase in participation of disabled persons in public decision-making processes irrespective of their individual demographic variations. Thus, there is need for improving the terms of participation in public decision making for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, gender and education.

Infrastructure as an environmental parameter should be designed universally and implemented correctly to warrant effective civic participation of people with disabilities, both individually and collectively in public decision making. There is need for paying attention to

design accessible toilets to accommodate people with physical disabilities. Outside relaxation seats should be made accessible to allow inclusion of PWD. Besides, all the physical facilities provided by the state a non-state actors should meet the expectation of the targeted groups of PWD. Therefore, the relevant stake holders should design infrastructure amenities which support people with disabilities in their quest for services.

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