COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITIZENS AND LEADERS ON COUNTY GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF TRANS-NZOIA COUNTY IN KENYA

BY

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MOI UNIVERSITY
ELDORAT

2019
DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Dear late parents: mother Grace Khakasa and father Solomon Kisiangani Wakweika (RIP) for taking me to school.
ABSTRACT

The interest in devolved system of government has increased over time in Africa. In Kenya county governance has elicited much enthusiasm and with the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, before anything is undertaken by both the policy makers (leaders) and implementers (citizens and leaders), there ought to be participation of both parties. In as much as this should be the case, effective communication between citizens and leaders on county governance for sustainable development is elusive as evidenced on the ground. The main objective of this study is to examine the challenges of integrating public participation in the devolved system of governance for sustainable development. In articulating this objective, the study raised the following questions: 1. What is the nature of the communication between citizens and leaders in county governance? 2. What are the barriers to communication between citizens and leaders in county governance? 3. What are the citizens’ and leaders’ perceptions on how communication between them could be harnessed to enhance participation in county governance? The study focused on Trans-Nzoia County and adopted a relativist-interpretivist paradigm. The qualitative approach was used with purposive sampling of participants where seventy-six residents of Trans-Nzoia County and the leadership participated in this study. Data generation was through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Data was transcribed and analysed thematically. Findings of this research indicate that there is no structured communication between the citizens and the leaders in county governance. Hardly any of the offices in Trans-Nzoia County has a communication budget with citizens, yet communication is considered fundamental in society and plays a crucial part within the role of leadership. This study recommends development of positive attitude by the public towards public participation by explaining to them the benefits of communication for sustainable development on county governance. The study is beneficial to both citizens and the county leadership as it provides empirical data and interpretations upon which they could gauge and improve on their communication for good governance.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ......................................................................................................................... ii
DEDICATION ........................................................................................................................... iii
ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................... iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .......................................................................................................... v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS ................................................................................. viii
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS ........................................................................ ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................................................................... xi

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 1
1.1 Overview .......................................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Context of the Study ......................................................................................................... 1
1.3 Statement of the Problem ................................................................................................. 3
1.4 Research Objective ......................................................................................................... 4
1.5 Research Questions ......................................................................................................... 4
1.6 Scope of the Study .......................................................................................................... 5
1.7 Justification of the Study ............................................................................................... 6
1.8 Significance of the Study ............................................................................................... 6
1.9 Limitations of the Study ............................................................................................... 7

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................................... 8
2.1 Overview ......................................................................................................................... 8
2.2 Communication ............................................................................................................... 8
2.3 What is Devolution? ....................................................................................................... 9

### 2.3.1 Devolution and Governance, the Kenyan Scenario .................................................... 13
2.4 Concept of Communication in Governance .................................................................. 14
2.5 Forms of Governance ..................................................................................................... 17
2.6 Public Participation in Governance ............................................................................. 19

#### 2.6.1 Legal Provisions for Public Participation ................................................................. 23
2.7 Review of Relevant Theories ........................................................................................ 27

#### 2.7.1 The Theory of Communicative Action ................................................................. 27
2.8 Review of Relevant Previous Research ...................................................................... 29

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ............................................................ 33
3.1 Overview ......................................................................................................................... 33
3.2 Research Paradigm ......................................................................................................... 33
3.3 Approach to the Study ................................................................................................. 34
3.4 Research Method ............................................................................................................ 35
3.5 Research Population and Sampling ................................................................. 36
  3.5.1 Research Population .................................................................................. 36
  3.5.2 Research Participants ................................................................................ 37
3.6 Data Generation Techniques ........................................................................ 38
  3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews ...................................................................... 38
  3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions .......................................................................... 39
3.7 Data Analysis ................................................................................................. 40
  3.7.1 Transcribing the Data ................................................................................ 41
  3.7.2 First Phase (Open) Coding ........................................................................ 42
  3.7.3 Second Phase (Axial) Coding ..................................................................... 42
  3.7.4 Third Phase (Selective) Coding .................................................................. 42
  3.7.5 Data Presentation (Producing a Research Report) ...................................... 43
3.8 Ethical Considerations ................................................................................... 43
  3.8.1 Trustworthiness ......................................................................................... 44
4.1 Overview ........................................................................................................ 46
4.2 Nature of Communication between Citizens and Leaders in County Governance .... 46
  4.2.1 Issues Communicated by Citizens in the County ...................................... 47
  4.2.2 Ways in which Citizens Communicate with Leaders in the County .......... 51
  4.2.3 Absence of Feedback to the Citizenry by Leaders ................................... 54
4.3 Barriers to Communication between Citizens and Leaders in County Governance ..... 56
  4.3.1 Inadequate Communication Personnel in Offices ................................... 57
  4.3.2 Underrating the Importance of Communication for Citizen Engagement .... 59
  4.3.3 Lack of Communication Budget ............................................................... 60
  4.3.4 Language Barrier ..................................................................................... 63
  4.3.5 Lack of Basic Systems and Services .......................................................... 65
  4.3.6 Knowledge and Skills Obstacle ................................................................. 66
  4.3.7 Inaccessibility to Communication Gadgets .............................................. 67
4.4 Perceptions of Citizens and Leaders on Improved Communication in County
  Governance ......................................................................................................... 69
  4.4.1 Perceptions on Citizens’ Role in Decision-Making .................................... 69
  4.4.2 Perceptions on Involvement of Citizens through Communication .......... 71
  4.4.3 Perception on the Communication Strategies used by the Trans-Nzoia County
    Government to Engage Citizens ...................................................................... 72
  4.4.4 Perception on Impact of Education on Communication ............................ 73
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ....76

5.1 Overview ........................................................................................................................................... 76

5.2 Summary of Key Findings .................................................................................................................... 76

5.2.1 Two-way Communication in County Governance ......................................................................... 81

5.2.2 Leadership Accountability Demands and Challenges through Communication ......................... 84

5.2.3 Way Forward on Citizens-Leaders Communication in County Governance .............................. 91

5.3 Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................ 96

5.4 Recommendations ............................................................................................................................. 97

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research ...................................................................................................... 98

5.6 Summary ........................................................................................................................................ 99

REFERENCES ......................................................................................................................................... 100

APPENDICES ......................................................................................................................................... 105

APPENDIX 1: AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM MOI UNIVERSITY .................................................. 105

APPENDIX 2: AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ................................................................. 106

APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD) .......................................................... 107

APPENDIX 4: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR GATEKEEPERS .................................................. 108

APPENDIX 5: LETTER OF CONSENT FOR KEY INFORMANTS .................................................... 109

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS ............................................................. 110

APPENDIX 7: RESEARCH SCHEDULE ................................................................................................. 111

APPENDIX 8: RESEARCH BUDGET ..................................................................................................... 112

APPENDIX 9: PLAGIARISM REPORT ................................................................................................. 112
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Constituency Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDFC</td>
<td>Constituency Development Fund Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGA 2012</td>
<td>County Government Act 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Economic Commission of Africa</td>
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<td>ESRC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication and Technology</td>
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<td>KHRC</td>
<td>Kenya Human Rights Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>Member of the County Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>Short Message Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN</td>
<td>Social and Public Accountability Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFDG</td>
<td>Task Force for Devolved Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Education Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizen</strong></td>
<td>A person who has the legal right to belong to a particular country, county, ward or place. In this study it refers to residents especially those in Trans-Nzoia County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizen participation</strong></td>
<td>Voluntary action by citizens more or less directly aimed at influencing the management of collective affairs and public decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizen perceptions</strong></td>
<td>Predominant meaning (understanding) that participants in this study (citizens) associate with communication in Trans-Nzoia County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>In the context of this study communication refers to exchanging and sharing information between the county government leadership and citizens with a view of understanding the communication intentions of each other for better governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Assembly</strong></td>
<td>A county assembly established under Article 176 of the Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County government</strong></td>
<td>Semi-autonomous unit of government devolved from the national level. There are forty-seven counties or sub-national units in Kenya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td>Entails the management of public resources and the relationship between and among citizens, their elected leaders and their organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leader  Elected and appointed Trans-Nzoia County government leaders. Policy makers in Trans-Nzoia County government

Nature of the communication  Channels, media, messages, effect and feedback in communication

Perceptions  The manner in which individuals make sense of communication used in enhancing citizens’ participation in county governance.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter is the foundation of the study. It gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, scope, limitations, justification and significance of the study. What follows is a brief background to the study which gives an insight into communication between citizens and leaders in county governance.

1.2 Context of the Study

Developing countries like Kenya, approach sustainable development from the viewpoint of a need within their countries for socioeconomic upward mobility, (OECD, 2010). Social development and efficient delivery of public services in Kenya and other developing countries has for long been hindered by highly centralized governments. Recognizing the need to achieve economic growth and reduce economic inequalities, Kenyans persistently pushed for enhanced decentralization of governance and development (Wanjohi, 2003). The Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (2003-2007) outlined interventions and strategies for reducing poverty aimed at enhancing access to benefits of economic growth by the most disadvantaged members of the society. This has resulted in disbursement of financial resources directly to Districts, Constituencies and Local authorities (Republic of Kenya, 2003).

However, in a study by Mapesa and Kibua (2006) it was observed that though well intended, the fund(s) lacked proper direction and a system-based mechanism for implementation. The programme was initiated and implemented without adequate preparedness in terms of sensitization and creation of organizational structures and capacities, and development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This led to devolution, which is devolvement of functions and resources to the local county
government. Devolved governance in Kenya was anchored in the new constitution which was promulgated in the year 2010.

One of the most common and best-understood forms of citizen participation is voting in elections or referenda (Wamwea & Tomaszewski, 2012). When citizens lined up outside polling stations on August 4th, 2010, they were exercising their power by voting in a referendum to either accept or reject the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Voting, however, is not the only form of public participation.

Part eight of the County Governments’ Act, 2012 on citizen participation in county governments is based upon the following principles: Timely access to information, data, documents and other information relevant to policy formulation and implementation. Reasonable access to the process of formulation and implementation of policies, laws and regulations, including the approval of development proposals, projects and budgets, the granting of permits and the establishment of specific performance standards. Protecting and promoting the interest, rights of minorities, marginalized groups and communities and their access to relevant information. Public-private partnerships e.g. joint committees, technical teams and citizen commissions, to encourage direct dialogue and concerted action on sustainable development.

Trans-Nzoia County is located in the former Rift-Valley Province. It is divided into five constituencies (Sub-Counties): Kiminini, Saboti, Cherangani, Kwanza and Endeless. The total number of Wards is twenty five and Kitale town which is the seat of the Trans-Nzoia County government is shared by five Wards which include: Hospital, Bidii, Matisi, Tuwan and Sirende. The county is nicknamed ‘Kenya Ndogo’
3

(Small Kenya) because of its cosmopolitan nature in the ethnic composition of her residents.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The problem that prompted this study is that the establishment of county governments in 2013, anticipated citizens’ involvement through effective communication with the leadership which is largely lacking. Participatory governance through devolved structures at county level is entrenched in the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the County Government Act (CGA) 2012. Therefore the Trans-Nzoia County government ought to facilitate the establishment of structures for citizen participation in county policy implementation. It is possible, almost inevitable that effective communication between citizens and county leadership is either non-existent or haphazard as stipulated under the CGA 2012 on principles of public communication, 93 (a) integration of communication in all development activities. This would therefore imply either misrepresentation of citizens’ wishes or some level of dictatorship by leaders who undertake county governance decisions on their own.

It is not known whether and to what extent this communication takes place as envisaged in our constitution. A fundamental question is how does the county leadership know the needs and priorities of the citizenry? Leaders claim to know the citizens whereas the latter say they rarely see them, do not know them and have no influence, especially when told there is no money or equipment to initiate development projects. Under CGA 2012 on establishment of modalities and platforms for citizen participation, 91, the county government shall facilitate the establishment of structures for citizen participation including – (g) establishment of citizen fora at county and decentralized units.
County governance is a new phenomenon in Kenya and there is very minimal empirical research which has been conducted on communication existing between the leadership and citizens. Trans-Nzoia County is highly multicultural with unique demands on the leadership yet no research on how the unique multicultural wishes are communicated to the citizenry. CGA 2012, part 8 on principles of citizen participation in counties, (c) protection and promotion of the interest and rights of minorities, marginalized groups and communities and their access to relevant information. The leadership should ensure that political decisions impact positively on the minorities just like they benefit the majority making this study to interrogate communication between citizens and leaders. On access to information, CGA 2012, part ix, 96 (1) Every Kenyan citizen shall on request have access to information held by any county government or any unit or department thereof or any other State organ in accordance with Article 35 of the constitution. CGA 96 (2) states that every county government and its agencies shall designate an office for purposes of ensuring access to information as required by subsection 96 (1). This has not been adhered to in Trans-Nzoia County government raising concern.

1.4 Research Objective

The objective of this study was to assess the challenges of integrating public participation in the devolved system of governance for sustainable development in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya

1.5 Research Questions

This study is based on the following questions:

(i) What is the nature of the communication between citizens and leaders in county governance?
(ii) What are the barriers to communication between citizens and leaders in county governance?

(iii) What are the perceptions of the citizens and leaders on how communication between them could be harnessed to enhance participation in county governance?

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study aimed to find out how the leadership communicates to citizens in Wards in Trans-Nzoia County. The channels, media, messages, effect and feedback to communication was established especially channels of communication that the county leadership uses in passing decisions made in its departments and county assembly to citizens. The channels used by citizens in accessing information for participation and decision-making in county governance were looked at. Sections 93, 94, 95 and 96 of the County Governments’ Act, 2012, clearly elaborate the principles, objectives, framework for access to county communication.

County governments should establish mechanisms to facilitate public communication and access to information in the form of media with the affairs to influence local development outcomes in the best interest of the community for widest public outreach. Some of these media channels include; county websites, transparency boards, short message service (SMS), local newsletters, local or community radio, television and barazas. The second concern will be to find out the constraints to effective communication in the dissemination of relevant information between citizens and the county government leadership. Thirdly, this study did an evaluation of the leadership-citizen communication through willing citizens and county leaders to know if it assists citizens in accessing relevant information and participating in the county government.
1.7 Justification of the Study

Lack of previous research on communication between the citizens and leaders on county governance necessitated this study. The focus is on the communication existing between the county leadership and citizens. This study sought to provide information on development of positive attitude by the public towards public participation by explaining to them the benefits of communication for sustainable development on county governance. This may guide policy-makers when decisions are made in order to strengthen citizens’ rights, improve county leadership responsiveness, accountability and prioritize development projects to be undertaken. This will provide the basis for understanding how communication can be used to engage citizens in arriving at vital decisions concerning the socio-economic development of their counties. The study also exploited the barriers involved in effective communication between the leadership and citizens in county governments. Suggestions on how these barriers could be dealt with, was looked at in chapter five of this study.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is that it will help county government policy makers, politicians, citizens, the business community, other non-state actors, and academia in understanding their role in harnessing proper functioning of devolution through communication and mitigating challenges as they occur. The findings from this study will benefit citizens and the county leadership as both will communicate and reach better policy and implementation decisions. Citizens will persuade and enlighten leaders on priority development projects to undertake and the leadership will build trust and avoid hostility from citizens over insensitive, unresponsive or bad governance. The county government will develop policies that
will promote communication with the citizens for good governance. The citizenry will also benefit from the recommendations especially on their role in promoting accountability and transparency by knowing the county governments’ channels of communication available and utilize them. The study seeks to address existing communication between citizens and county leadership through relevant information access and involvement in decision-making in county governance. Information empowers citizens to influence public policy decisions in the right social development way.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

This study covered mainly five Wards in Trans-Nzoia County hence limited in scope. The study would have given more insight if the sample size or number of participants was big or involved all the twenty five Wards in Trans-Nzoia County. Governance structures at county level especially leadership in most Wards in Trans-Nzoia County are still unfolding hence some participants were not fully conversant with issues of governance especially communication between the leadership and citizens. Equally citizens may not be aware of their obligations and rights on participation in county governance as envisaged in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and the County Governments’ Act, 2012. Participants were busy with their personal engagements and lacked enough time for detailed interviews and focus group discussions.

I incorporated data that answered the research questions above, as well as kept the aim of the research in mind. Despite these limitations, the contributions that the findings in this research brought to the field of communication as well as to the county government of Trans-Nzoia, not to mention making visible the challenges the county leaders face in this county, cannot be underscored.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

In this chapter, literature on communication between citizens and leaders on county governance has been reviewed. Communication has been defined as per this study and its functions in governance looked at.

2.2 Communication

The word communication is derived from the Latin word ‘communicare,’ meaning ‘to share.’ Communication is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more human beings. It is a means in which people express their identity and participate in social activities. Information Communication Technology (ICT) has vastly improved the process of informing and communicating in the world today (Unwin, 2009). Both information and communication are central in society since information without communication is of little value (ibid).

Communication is one of the defining aspects of humanity. Information and communication have always been central to the effective functioning of human societies, and between the citizens and the state. Both information and communication are central in the society and in the implementation of development, since information without communication is of little value (Unwin, 2009). Citizens need to communicate their needs so that leaders can determine how the same can be met efficiently. For citizens to know that their demands and questions have been heard there is need for answers and feedback (Making All Voices Count, 2014). When talking about communication it is also important to mention the aspect of interpretation, that the message actually is understood (decoded) in the way that the sender intended it to be understood (as the sender encoded it) (Hall, 1973).
According to Juddy, et al (2003), communication is a process by which meaning is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behaviour. It concerns creating, exchanging and sharing messages with a view of understanding the communication intentions of each other. In this study, citizens are supposed to access the required information on leadership so that they share meaning with the leaders for good governance.

Effective communication engages citizens and requires channels, media, messages, effect and feedback that will ensure access to and utilization of relevant information. Cooper et al (2006) argue that deliberative and collective action strategies of civic engagement are the most promising ways of involving the public and focusing public management around the citizen. A fundamental question is how does the county leadership know the needs and priorities of the citizenry? The leaders claim to know the citizens whereas the latter say they do not see them, do not know them and they have no influence, especially when told there is no money or equipment to initiate development projects (DFID 2002).

2.3 What is Devolution?
Devolution simply means a legal granting of powers from central government to lower levels of government such as provincial, district or municipal councils. It is a political and financial issue as it involves election of local representatives by citizens and giving those lower levels of government a budget that is normally administered by the central government. Federalism involves the sharing of power to govern between the national and state or provincial governments as defined by the constitution. Quite clearly, there is a world of a difference between devolution and federalism (Moyo, 2014).
The rationale behind devolution is guided by different historical perspectives unique to every country. In Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa, decentralization policy was promoted in response to the political and economic problems in their history. In South Africa, emphasis was promoting local governments aimed at ‘rebuilding local communities and environments, as the basis for a democratic, integrated, prosperous and truly non-racial society,’ following the trauma of apartheid in the country. In Rwanda decentralization was to ‘provide a structural arrangement for government and the people of Rwanda to fight poverty at close range, and to enhance their reconciliation via the empowerment of local populations,’ following the trauma of the genocide of 1994, while in Uganda decentralization is ‘a democratic reform, which seeks to transfer political, administrative, financial and planning authority from central government to local government councils and to promote popular participation, empower local citizens to make their own decisions and enhance accountability and responsibility.’ (Kauzya 2007, ROS 1998, GOR 2001, GOU 1994)

The Kenyan experience is also different based on her socio-eco-political dynamics which might not be far from the above African countries.

Factors that have accelerated decentralization which is used interchangeably with devolution at certain times include;

1. State coercion.

2. Political democratization: Usually through popular elections at different levels.

3. Peoples’ power and popular pressure.

4. Traditional historical understanding that it existed in the past in many developing countries.

5. A combination of the above factors noticed in different countries.
The Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010 was adopted by sixty seven per cent (67%) of Kenyans in a national referendum on August 05, 2010, thereafter, promulgated on August 27, 2010. Thus the CoK 2010 became the supreme basic law replacing the nearly fifty year old Constitution of Kenya, 1963. The latter was enacted by the British House of Commons and issued as the Kenya Independence Order – in – Council of 1963. The concepts and principles of democratic governance in CoK 2010 expressly provide for an unfettered sovereignty of the people as the arch-stone of government. Hence, the unequivocal right of the people to participate in and oversight the government, traverses the entire Constitution. Embedded, therein and of no less significance, are the objects and principles of devolved government. Devolution is principally meant to take away and re-distribute or share out powers to plan, legislate, budget and make policies for governing from an erstwhile highly centralized national executive and legislature to forty-seven county executives and assemblies.

Despite the drawbacks with devolution world over, Kobia and Bogaka (2013) opine that the devolution experiment in Kenya has brought with it some renewed energy in the management of public affairs. Powers that were originally centralised in one arm of the government have been dispersed to other levels of government and even within arms of the same government these powers have further been dispersed. This dispersal of powers has greatly enhanced the system of checks and balances, and promises to foster democracy in the management of public affairs. While administrative efficiency may not be achieved as fast as citizens may wish, the democratic values such as accountability, transparency, representation and diversity, among others, promoted through the new public service are worth the cost. In any case, leading and managing changes in public service should be expected and
addressed as the two governments enhance service delivery and improve quality of life for citizens.

A challenge that is reminiscent with the devolution in Kenyan governance structure includes what scholars like Metter; Soss, et’al and Winston in (Omari et’ al, Undated) contend that little is currently known about ramification of the devolution policy making power by an upper level of government where the lower level is only a recipient. To this challenge it is vital to reinforce as Kotter (2008) state that knowledge on devolution which in essence is transformation from central governance to devolved governance is necessary to facilitate the understanding of counties and know they will be run by the citizens, professionals, business community, current local government employees and politicians. A central fear among some Kenyans is that from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) experience, decentralization of power has also seen devolution of corruption, nepotism, conflicts and misappropriation of funds (Kiprorir 2008).

This thinking brings doubt about devolution. Though others contend that devolution may intensify inequalities among jurisdiction because some localities are ill-equipped and lack the personnel or policy making capacities necessary to deal with the new authority (Omari et ‘al, Undated), it is viewed that this thought is ill conceived in the Kenyan case where devolution seems to have neglected even the requirements of National Cohesion Commission for human resource in favour of locals, a direction that looks like taking the devolved units to what would resemble some form of federal states. A big challenge which is easier said than acted on in the Kenyan polity is what Burugu (2010) cites that national and county governments are expected to work in consultation, exchange of information, respect for respective organs institution and structures. It is true this consultation has been broken a thousand times in the short life
of Kenya’s devolution. Indeed prospects linger in this new constitutional dispensation in Kenya’s history with devolution despite the challenges. As Burugu (2010) indicates, it has indeed opened a new window of change of moving from the central governance to the devolved government.

2.3.1 Devolution and Governance, the Kenyan Scenario

Kauzya (2007) makes a caveat to the devolution debate thus: ‘the mere fact of opting for decentralization shall not by itself ensure that citizens effectively participate in its development which is the ultimate goal of a good policy of decentralization and good governance. It is important to set up mechanisms reassuring the participation of the population….’ This poignant warning implies that however good the system may be, it is bound to have setbacks. ‘In fact [devolution] could even result in entrenching disparities if the right policies are not implemented,’ the report says. ‘A rushed transition could set up counties to fail by giving them responsibilities before they have the capacity to carry them out.’ Experts warned it will take time for Kenyans to understand how the new government will work, and without skilful management both at national and county levels, the central promise of the country’s new Constitution could end up being stillborn, notes Mungai (2013).

Political decentralization can be understood to refer to either or both of the following: (i) Transferring the power of selecting political leadership and representatives from central governments to local governments, and (ii) Transferring the power and authority for making socio-politico-economic decisions from central governments to local governments and communities. Understanding political decentralization only in the first sense would be limiting the meaning of ‘political’ to the choice of political leadership through elections. Therefore the promotion of political decentralization in this sense would entail only putting in place structural arrangements that would
facilitate local people to exercise their voting power with limited hindrance or intervention from central government. Here political decentralization would be referring to only electoral decentralization and citizen participation would be understood only in terms of elections.

On the other hand, promoting political decentralization in the second sense, would entail putting in place structural arrangements and practices that would empower and facilitate local governments and communities to exercise not only the voting power in the choice of their local leadership and representatives but also to have strong influence in the making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of decisions that concern their socio-political economic wellbeing and to constantly demand accountability from their local leadership Kauzya (2003).

2.4 Concept of Communication in Governance

There is a simple explanation why communication is important in governance reforms. According to Odugbemi and Jacobson (2008), governance reforms are technocratic solutions that are accompanied by strategies to understand and address obstacles to reform. These solutions often rely on communication between and among networks within and outside of government, among civil society organizations, and between citizens in the public sphere. In relation to this, communication facilitates adequate and efficient flow or exchange of information between citizens, tiers of county government and other institutions, which in turn contribute to improvement of public governance.

According to Baker (2002), good communication strengthens our democratic system of governance by developing partnerships, informs policy development and improves service delivery, anticipates issues and manages expectations and enhances
community participation in government. Communication in the public sector ensures stakeholders such as citizens, leaders and institutions are informed about the programmes, services and matters which affect their benefits, rights and obligations. According to Government Communication and Information System, in order to enhance democracy and promote a better life for citizens, it is imperative that the communication function in government is seen as an integral element of governance and service delivery. Communication in public governance is no longer limited to a ‘media liaison function which responds during times of crisis or a marketing publicity function’ but a basic service that should be provided by government (Naluz, 2010).

As per the Information and Communication for Development team of the Department for International Development (DFID, 2006) and the Development Communication Division of the World Bank, the communication processes and the media of communication are a fundamental part of how governance systems operate in any political community. According to them, communication, particularly at the local level, plays a role in: shifting community biasness and addresses unity; keeping in touch with the needs, concerns and aspirations of the community which can improve service delivery; and create accountability by providing citizens information about performance of elected leaders which can directly influence quality of governance.

One important function of communication is its ability to affect attitudes, behaviour and opinion. Public opinion is no more than the aggregate of all individual beliefs or opinion. Gaining support by optimistic public opinion for county government reform is critical for its success.

According to Odugbemi and Jacobson (2008), good governance straddles both supply and demand sides of governance by focusing on dynamic forces in politics (the power
of public opinion) and structural force of politics (Public Arena or Democratic Public Sphere). Simply put, it is how stakeholders like citizens, leaders and institutions coexist and relate to each other to make reforms within the system. Odugbemi defines, the Public Arena or the Democratic Public Sphere as the space between state and households where free citizens come together to share information, debate, discuss and deliberate concerns. In this day and age, due to technological developments in mass communication, it has grown out of the physical realm and entered the virtual arena. Likewise, people, as it was in the past, do not have to go to physical locations to be informed or engaged in public discourse but can participate remotely through mass media. Due to this development, the public arena has become more accountable, transparent and accessible.

In relation to this, Odugbemi defines Public Opinion as: community values, beliefs and prejudice; political and academic elite opinion, individual attitudes on public issue; and majority view which has been debated and discussed in a public arena. One critical aspect of public opinion is that it legitimizes power and authority which in turn gives consent to rule over them. Thus, public opinion processes matter if governance reform initiatives are to succeed.

Considering the impact brought about by technology to make the Public Arena more participatory and Public Opinions importance to consensus building and legitimacy, it is critical for public governance to make good use of these forces in politics. It is critical for government to maximize and use the technology available to tap into the public arena and use non-coercive methods to influence public opinion for government reform initiatives. Odugbemi sees ‘communication as a deliberate work to influence public opinion’ and ‘ensures that crucial stakeholders go through a non-coerced change in attitude, opinion or behaviour.’ This emphasizes the fact that
communication plays a vital part in achieving consensus among stakeholders from both top-bottom and bottom-top approach for governance reforms.

According to Meisel (2007), developing countries should focus on four main priorities when experimenting with governance in both the public and private sector. The four focus priority areas are on: increasing individual autonomy while increasing accountability; inclusive selection of government officials accessible to innovative newcomers; increase participation of new countervailing organizations other than hierarchical organizations in delivering activities toward general self-interest; and improving communication and the quality of information flows. The latter focus area involves improving the quality of information and increasing the speed of dissemination to the public.

2.5 Forms of Governance

Devolution is considered a form of political decentralization, involving a full transfer of responsibility, decision-making, resources and revenue generation to a local level of public authority that is autonomous and fully independent from the devolving authority. Decentralization is often linked to concepts of participation in decision-making, democracy, equality and liberty from higher authority (Dutta, 2009). The objectives of devolution in Kenya are stated under Article 174 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and they are:

a) To promote democratic and accountable exercise of power

b) To foster national unity by recognizing diversity
c) To give powers of self-governance to the people and enhance the participation of the people in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them

d) To recognize the right of communities to manage their own affairs and to further their development

e) To protect and promote the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized communities

f) To promote social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya

g) To ensure equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout Kenya

h) To facilitate the decentralization of State organs, their functions and services, from the capital of Kenya

i) To enhance checks and balances and the separation of powers. To achieve the objects of devolution, the key building blocks, founded on effective citizen participation, devolved governance will require effective political parties, operations founded on ethics and values, effective development planning, a skilled human resources and sustainable funding.

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 seeks to ensure effective citizen participation in all facets of governance, to which the county governments must respond. According to Report of the Task Force for Devolved Government (TFDG 2011) the new constitution seeks to reverse the centralized non participatory governance paradigm by institutionalizing an embracing governance system and a leadership with integrity. It does this primarily by: establishing an enabling normative framework, creating
relevant governance institutions, creating checks and balances on the exercise of executive power, providing for facilitative legislation, enhancing public participation in governance as a bulwark against abuse of power and tightening the process of recruitment and retention of critical public officers. The system combines self-governance and shared governance at the local and national levels respectively. The essence of this is that at the local level the people are allowed a certain flexibility within which they can make decisions that are unique to themselves and their locality.

2.6 Public Participation in Governance

White defines public participation as an active involvement of the local population in decision-making concerning development projects and their implementation, White (1992). In development planning and implementation, people as citizens and consumers of the services are the most valuable resource, since they know and understand their needs and how such needs can be met. This definition is supported by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) which further highlights that in public participation, citizens themselves are afforded an opportunity to improve their conditions of living, with as much reliance as possible on own initiative, Davids (2005).

Public participation is a useful tool to promote the involvement of the public in governance. The World Development Report (2000), states that governments at all levels have begun to understand the importance of inclusive, participatory and consensual models of public participation. As a result, various strategies are applied to consult and engage with members of the public in progressive nations across the globe. While the global drive towards promoting public participation holds considerable promise and benefits for sustainable development, the implementation of public participation approaches is not without challenges. For example, the more
sensitive the issue, the less likely that consensus will be reached. According to Sisk (2001), the World Bank study on participation in practice identified the following key challenges to effective public participation in planning, Sisk (2001):

- Lack of government’s commitment to adopting a participatory approach: Public participation is often seen as a time consuming process.

- Unwillingness of the project officials to give up control over project activities and directions. Officials are often not receptive and do not acknowledge the importance of citizens’ views. This is because officials consider themselves experts in their field.

- Lack of incentives and skills among project staff to encourage them to adopt a participatory approach. Public participation requires a set of skills amongst officials to be able to interact with diverse communities and understand dynamics of the society. Without incentives, officials do not go an extra-mile to involve the public. Lack of community engagement skills also compromises effective public participation.

- Limited capacity of local-level participation and insufficient investment in community capacity building.

Other challenges include among others, resource constraints, abuse of participatory structures by community elites and opportunists, marginalization of communities from decision-making, legitimacy of structures, through which the public participates. In addition, lack of transport for members of the public to attend public participatory forums and utilization of ward committees as platforms is also a challenge.
Public participation is the involvement of all parties who may potentially have an interest in a development project, or be affected by it. It is an empowering process which enables local people to do their own analysis, take command and gain confidence (Chambers, 2002). Public participation may be advanced as part of a ‘people first’ paradigm shift, that public participation can sustain productive and durable change (Mdunyelwa, 2008). Public participation is seen as a form of empowerment and is a vital part of democratic governance. It is part of a ‘people first’ or ‘people centred’ methods of management, which avoids centralized, hierarchical decision-making. Participation is important because practical experience on the ground shows that it establishes the necessary sense of ownership. Generally people tend to resist new ideas if they are imposed on them, (Odhimbo and Taifa, 2009).

The Kenyan Constitution 2010 provides viable proposals aimed at achieving participatory governance. It is, however, critical to observe that devolution in itself will not enhance ‘automatic citizen participation,’ (Republic of Kenya, 2010). First, it will be imperative that adequate civic education and awareness is provided so that citizens understand their responsibilities in a devolved system. Scholars have cited lack of capacity of many of the actors in developing countries as the reason for governments’ resistance to participation by the poor, who generally, have limited education, low literacy levels and hence deficient understanding of the policy process (Anwar, 2007). Hence, civic education is necessary and urgent. ‘Public participation’ and ‘sustainable development’ have become central and interconnected terms in present day development discourse.

According to Economic Commission of Africa, ECA (2004), ‘public participation’ has been proposed as an essential pre-condition for sustainable development. ‘One of the fundamental prerequisites of the achievement of sustainable development,’ states
Chapter 23 of Agenda 21 (the declaration emerging from the 1992 Rio de Janeiro UN Conference on Environment and Development) ‘is broad public participation in decision-making.’ Public participation in decisions about development is fundamental to achieving lasting and sustainable solutions. Modern democratic life requires an active role from the members of the public. Participation transforms the democratic system, energizing it, by creating a permanent connection between the governed and those who govern. The joint venture permits more reasoned decisions (being these the product of a higher consensus), enables a better understanding of the problems that preoccupy a society, and allows the two parties to work cooperatively towards possible solutions leading to sustainable development. Public participation allows government actions to become transparent, effectively avoiding corrupt behaviours.

Rowe and Frewer (2005) categorize three different levels of citizen participation:

(a) Citizen communication, where information is conveyed from the government body to the public;

(b) Citizen consultation, where information flows from the public to the government; and

(c) Citizen participation, where information is exchanged between the public and the government and some degree of dialogue takes place.

I support Rowe and Frewer’s (2005) categorization level of citizen participation as one can clearly see the communication engagement between the county government and the citizens. This is one of the core aims of this study, to establish if this type of communication exists in county governance from the county executive to small devolved units, the County Wards like among others; Hospital, Bidii, Matisi, Tuwan and Sirende Wards in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya.
The promulgation of the New Constitution in Kenya in August 2010 provides a strong legal foundation for the enhancement of participatory governance through devolved structures at county level. This is an important milestone, but scholars concur that devolution is not without its risks and does not necessarily lead to improved governance and economic performance. Devolution rules and systems thus need to be properly designed and implemented. Conversely, it would only lead to the translation of central government bureaucracies, poor utilization of resources, rent-seeking and lack of accountability to sub-national units (Mwenda 2010).

2.6.1 Legal Provisions for Public Participation

Constitution of Kenya 2010, makes citizen participation a central part of Kenya’s governance system. Participation of the people is recognized in Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya as one of national values and principles of governance. Further Article 174(c) provides that the object of devolution is to: ‘enhance the participation of people in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them.’ Article 184 (1) (c) also requires that mechanisms for participation by citizens be included in the national legislation relating to urban areas and cities governance and management, Republic of Kenya (2010). The centrality of public participation cannot therefore be over-emphasized. The rationale of public participation is based on the foundation that the people of Kenya have sovereign power which they have delegated to state actors at the national and county levels. The sovereignty must be respected and institutionalized in all processes of governance. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 demands transparency, accountability, participation and inclusiveness in governance.

The County Government Act, Kenya (2013) and other devolution laws mandate county governments to engage citizens in planning and policy making processes,
facilitate public communication and access to information, establish citizen forums and conduct civic education, among others. Article 232 (d) of the Constitution provides for the participation of the public in the exercise of the powers of the state and in making decisions through indirect and direct involvement of the people in the process of policy making and participation in the legislative business of the National Assembly, Senate and County Assemblies.

Article 196 of the Constitution further provides for public participation in the proceedings of the County Assembly, Republic of Kenya (2010). This will enhance responsible governance and accountability to the people as well as community-based monitoring and advocacy for transparency and accountability. Closely related to leadership and integrity, are the national values and principles of governance that should guide us as a country and as individuals in spirit and practice. These are defined in Article 10 (2) of the Constitution.

Article 1(2) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010: All sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya. The people may exercise their sovereignty directly or through their elected representatives. Article 10 (2) a, b and c: The national values and principles of governance include; democracy and participation of the people, inclusiveness, good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability.

In Article 27 the Constitution guarantees equality and non-discrimination. Hence, public participation should ensure equality and non-discrimination. Article 33 Public participation should respect the freedom of expression of all participants. Article 35 the Constitution guarantees the right to access information by citizens. Article 174(c) Objects of devolution are; to give powers of self-governance to the people and enhance their participation in the exercise of such powers in decision making. Article
174(d) Communities have the right to manage their own affairs and to further their development. Article 232(1) (d) the values and principles of public service include the involvement of the people in the process of policy making and (f) transparency and provision to the public of timely and accurate information. The functions and powers of the county are to coordinate and ensure the participation of communities in governance. Counties are also to assist communities to develop the administrative capacity to enhance their exercise of power and participation in governance at the local level. The Public Finance Management Act Section 207 County Governments are to establish structures, mechanisms and guidelines for citizen participation.

County Government Act Section 91: The county government shall facilitate the establishment of modalities, and platforms for citizen participation. The County Government Act Sections 94, 95, 96: Counties are to establish mechanisms to facilitate public communication and access to information using media with the widest public outreach. Every county shall designate an office for ensuring access to information. County Government Act Sections 100 and 101: County governments should create an institutional framework for civic education.

The overall responsibility to facilitate and report on public participation in the county government is on the Governor of the County Government. This is to be done through the various departments and agencies of the county and at all levels of decentralization (Sub-county, ward, village, urban and city areas). In the case of the County Assembly, the responsibility is on the speaker of the County Assembly and Chairpersons of various Committees of the House. The legal provisions for the same are as follows: According to County Government Act, Kenya 2013, Section 30(3) (g) of the County Government Act, the Governor should promote and facilitate citizen participation in the development of policies, plans and service delivery in the county.
County Executive Committee: Section 46(2) (g) of the County Government Act provides that the County Executive committee should bear in mind the need for an all participatory decision making. Sub-County Administrator: Under Section 50(3) (g) of the County Government Act is responsible for the coordination, management and supervision of the general administrative functions in the Sub-county including the facilitation and coordination of citizen participation in the development of policies, plans and service delivery. Ward Administrator: Under Section 51(3) (g) of the County Government Act is responsible for the coordination, management and supervision of the general administrative functions in the ward including the facilitation and coordination of citizen participation in the development of policies, plans and service delivery.

Village Administrator: Under Section 52(3)(a)(I) of the County Government Act is responsible for the coordination, management and supervision of the general administrative functions in the village including ensuring and coordinating the participation of the village unit in governance. County Assembly: Article 196 of the Constitution should facilitate public participation and its involvement in its committees, the legislative and other business of the assembly. Urban Areas and Cities: Section 21(1) (g) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act empowers boards of cities and municipalities to ensure that residents participate in decision making, its activities and programmes. Section 22 establishes that residents of a city, municipality or town may actively be involved in policy and law making plus service deliveries in their respective areas. County Executive Committee member for finance: Section 125 of the Public Finance Management Act provides the involvement of the public in the budget making process.
2.7 Review of Relevant Theories

2.7.1 The Theory of Communicative Action

Jurgen Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action focuses on the communication process regardless of between whom the communication is taking place. This theory tries to explain social structures through an understanding of the ways in which communication is framed and organized (Unwin, 2009), and since my thesis deals with communication between citizens and leaders in county governance, I find Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action relevant in making visible the impact that increased communication awareness citizens have on county political leaders in county governance in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya.

Habermas (1984) defines this Theory of Communicative Action as:

“Communicative action refers to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations. The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. The central concept of interpretation, refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation that admit of consensus” (p.86).

Communicative action is action designed to promote common understanding and cooperation rather than trying to achieve power and one’s personal goals. The core in Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action lies in human liberation and it emphasizes widespread participation, sharing of information with the public and reaching consensus through dialogue (ibid). This is why Unwin (2009) states that Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action is of particular importance in the context of development, because of its focus on human liberation. Similarities can
also be seen between Habermas’ theory and the Development Theory, where both highlight a wide participation within the society towards reaching consensus and development.

Language has a prominent place in Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action.

“The concept of communicative action presupposes the use of language as a medium for a kind of reaching understanding” (Habermas, 1984, p. 99)

Habermas states that communicative action is the only form that embodies the use of communication to negotiate and attain common understanding. Through communication we are able to interact with the world around us and by doing so make validity claims, either implicitly or explicitly, about what we say. The validity claims are open to criticism and can be defended to achieve a common understanding (ibid).

Habermas suggests that for communicative action to occur, an “ideal speech situation” defined by a number of factors discussed subsequently, need to be in place. The most important according to Habermas are that nobody can be excluded from the discourse, that everybody has the same chance to contribute, that the participants must mean what they say and that the communication must be free of external as well as internal constraints (Habermas, 1984).

But Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action has also been criticized. McCarthy (1981) argues for example that the theory is illusory, that Habermas thinks that ideals of consensus and freedom are “ingrained” in the mechanism of the linguistically mediated socialization of humanity, and that each utterance relies upon the anticipation of freedom from unnecessary domination, a power-free communication.

But in reality there are hierarchies in the society where not everybody’s voice counts equally (Stahl, 2004). In many cases it will simply not be possible to include all of the
parties who would have an interest in the communication (ibid). A prominent example of this would be communication between county governments and citizens. Democratic processes determine rights and obligations, norms and the type of interaction between individuals (ibid), and how power is shared among these different individuals does not always allow for the ideal speech situation that Habermas suggests. However, external factors such as limited or developing communication infrastructure can challenge the ideal speech situation.

As O’Donnell and Henriksen (2002) and Unwin (2009) suggest this theory provides a foundation on which critical evaluations of communication between citizens and political leadership in county governments can be developed.

Communication is one of the defining aspects of humanity and has always been central to the effective functioning of human societies, and therefore also between the citizens and the state. Efficient communication and information are also key tools towards reaching development. One of the key roles that communication has in development today is to help county governments to fight corruption and create transparency and accountability among political leaders. But there is also research arguing that communication for example comes at the cost of other inputs for development, like food, medicine, sanitation and clean water. The main theory applied in this thesis is Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action, which is a theory that puts the quality of the communication process in focus regardless of between whom the communication is taking place.

2.8 Review of Relevant Previous Research

This literature, however, has left significant gaps in our understanding of how to measure the outcome of citizen participation programmes and limited attention has
been paid to the evaluation of citizen participation programmes in county
governments. County governments now face the challenges of improving the quality
of public service and the capacity to implement adequate policies and practices that
respond to the challenges of economic and social development.

This thesis deals with communication between citizens and leaders on county
governance to enhance democratic leadership. Communication covers different fields
of development, of which democracy is one part. As the use of the term
communication continues in the rest of the thesis, the reader should notice that it deals
with the democratic and political leadership at the county governance, and this point
will be emphasized throughout.

A number of studies within the field of communication highlight citizens’
involvement in democratic processes through communication (Asiimwe et al, 2013,
2010, Kim, 2009), but few studies focus on the experience of political leaders and
citizens through this course. Actually one of the least studied areas within this sector
is the use of communication by parliament, legislatures, county assemblies and their
elected members (MCAs) and county government staff (Clift, 2004). This research
asks questions such as: If the politicians have the means to handle the new work-
situation with more rapid and increased demands from their citizens, which is the
most efficient ways to communication feedback with the citizens?

It should be recognized that when studies have been conducted within democracy and
communication, most of these studies have been focusing on corruption and
leadership accountability to fight corruption (Asiimwe et al, 2013, Baguma, 2014,
2010, Kim, 2009, Strand, 2010), which of course are extremely crucial topics. But it is also important to highlight other parts of political leadership in developing countries, and leadership accountability from the leaders’ perspective, to get a better and more complete picture of the situation in order to know how to go about these development issues.

The quite recent global initiative Making All Voices Count (2014), which is supported by a number of international development agencies, emphasizes that open government depends on closing the feedback loop between citizens and government. Therefore it is important that the voices of all county citizens are heard, but also that county governments have the capacity as well as the incentive to listen and respond. When government and politicians respond effectively, citizens’ confidence in government performance is likely to increase and the link between governments and citizens strengthens, which enhances democracy and good governance (Making All Voices Count, 2014). But on the other hand if the government and politicians lack the skills, systems and means to respond effectively and do a good job, then the relationship between them and the citizens naturally becomes weaker and democracy decreases. The fact that we still have initiatives like Making All Voices Count also indicates that the gap in communication research, which is dealing with politicians and communication that Clift (2004) highlighted years ago, is still there.

Communication is central in the processes discussed here and it is also the main concept under focus in this thesis. If one is to understand the experience of the county government leaders and their use of communication to deliver services to the citizenry, a look at the communication practices through the technologies should highlight the impact.
Literature review focused on the experiences of other countries under decentralization especially those in Africa, Asia and Latin America as third world countries, to establish whether they had success or failure especially on the factors under study. The literature reviewed is intended to help in identifying gaps in knowledge in order to create a framework and direction for new research.

Crook and Sverrison (2001) on devolution effects in two districts in Ghana concluded that seventy per cent of citizens felt that the elected assembly leaders did not respond to their needs. This means there was no assessment of levels of accountability and responsiveness by county government.

Lineth Oyugi (2009) on performance of LATF in Kenya concluded that the challenges included inadequate and inefficient oversight from central government as well as from the beneficiaries of the services they provided as citizens were not involved in LASDAP preparation.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview
In this chapter, strategies used to execute this study are discussed. A detailed account of research methodology that allowed a comprehensive interrogation of the research topic and exploration of the research questions to come up with viable conclusion is given. The chapter also explains the research paradigm, approach to the study, research method, data generation techniques, research population and sampling, data analysis and presentation. This chapter ends with ethical considerations involved in the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm
In this study, relativist (relativism) ontology and an interpretivist (interpretivism) epistemology was adopted in order to understand the dimensions of communication in county governance. This research paradigm suits the study as the focus is on Trans-Nzoia County which like the rest of the forty-seven Kenyan counties, is implementing devolved government structures where communication between citizens and county leaders is crucial. The relativist ontological worldview is ideal for this study as communication is a highly relative term as explained in the literature review. The interpretations to be made here will be subjective based on personal judgement and view of the world and context of Trans-Nzoia County.

Research paradigm is the logic of the study; such as the What? How? Why? of data production (Green & Thorogood, 2009). There is always a reason why one should engage in research, whether explicitly stated or not and such a reason may influence the research design in one way or the other. A research design is the overall plan that guides the study and links us to the philosophical paradigm i.e. the worldview taken by the researcher (Jwan & Ong’ondo 2011).
The nature of reality or the assumptions we have about reality or knowledge is ontology. This study follows a relativist (relativism) ontology which takes a subjective position: that there is no single worldview and therefore reality is internal to and dependent on the individual’s perceptions and experiences (Johnson, 2008). Knowledge, here, is considered to be relative, dependent on other issues, contextual and dynamic.

In this study, knowledge is being studied or sought. Epistemology is the ‘How’ we study or search for knowledge. The study adopts an interpretivist (interpretivism) epistemology that states that knowledge can be interpreted and measured differently. It also assumes that knowledge is informed by worldviews, flexible and generalized naturalistically.

The relativist ontological and the interpretivist epistemological stances will be the ideal framework for this study. The conclusions drawn from the researcher’s interpretations of communication in county governance will be highly dependent on the context within which he is operating, (Asiyanbola, 2005). The strengths of using the relativist ontological and interpretivist epistemological positions is that they allow an in-depth exploration of the subject of communication and will help me understand societal interpretation depending on the voices of the participants in the study.

3.3 Approach to the Study

There are three general strategies or roadmaps in arriving at, studying or searching for knowledge. These strategies are referred to as approaches. They are qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches (Oso & Onen, 2005).

In this study, the qualitative approach is used as it suits the study in that communication between citizens and leaders in county governance will be explored in
depth. The research questions raised will be answered in an explorative and comprehensive style. This approach will provide an in depth description and understanding of the social issues as it focuses on individuals. Interviews of specific individuals on communication will assist in understanding their interaction, discourse and social phenomenon.

Green and Thorogood (2009, 5) posit that it is useful to characterize qualitative approach by its aims and not by method used or by kind of data generated. Qualitative approach uses words and categories of the participants making it much easier to produce a convincing and vivid case for a wide range of audiences - Gillham (2000). In this study, deeper understanding of communication in Trans-Nzoia County governance is being sought and the communication channels used by the leadership to pass the relevant information to citizens. Views on the existing communication channels between citizens and their leaders will be clearly sought. This approach will comprehensively exhaust the subject under study, employing varied participants’ voices thus being highly effective in understanding social issues.

3.4 Research Method

This refers to the major strategy adopted in the research study. In this study, the case study method is used. Deep understanding of the citizens and leadership in Trans-Nzoia County and how they feel and take part in communication in county governance would be gained. Instrumental case study method where the case, Trans-Nzoia County is of secondary interest, as it plays a supportive role facilitating the understanding of something else (Stake, 2005, 445) will be taken. This type of case study is used if a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The main focus in this study will not be all the activities that citizens participate in, in Trans-Nzoia County leadership, but only those
associated with communication or lack of it. The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation. Thus any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a corroborating mode. (Jwan & Ong’ondo, 2011)

A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon or object within its real life context. It involves an in-depth observation of an individual unit. Case study is used to gain in-depth understanding of the participants, focusing on the process rather than outcome (Jwan & Ong’ondo, 2011). Case study allows investigation that retains the holistic and meaningful characteristics of the real life events.

3.5 Research Population and Sampling

In the following subsections, I looked at the research population and sampling of the participants involved in this research.

3.5.1 Research Population

The target population in this study were residents of Trans-Nzoia County. Views from forty-eight residents selected from Hospital, Matisi, Bidii, Tuwan and Sirende Wards of Trans-Nzoia County were sought. In addition to the residents, information from, the Trans-Nzoia County Governor, the Deputy Governor, Sub-County Administrators, Members of the County Assembly, the Ward administrators, the County Administrators - chief, assistant chief and village administrator. Research population refers to the target population which is the total number of participants or the total environment of interest to the researcher (Oso & Onen 2005, 33).
3.5.2 Research Participants

Here, purposive sampling was employed where those included in the study were chosen. Purposive sampling is appropriate to research where the aim is to investigate human experiences or to gain understanding of a phenomenon (Patton, 1990). Purposive sampling was used as the focus was citizens’ communication with their leaders in county governance so the residents of Trans-Nzoia County known to have the information needed were picked on. To get in-depth explorations of participants who possessed specific criteria concerning the key research questions asked in this study, groups were divided into: village opinion leaders, women and youth leaders, business entrepreneurs and the county leadership. Adults here meant those who were thirty five years of age and above then the youth, those who are between eighteen years to thirty four. Forty-eight participants, residents of Hospital, Matisi, Bidii, Tuwan and Sirende Wards of Trans-Nzoia County were sought. Matisi and Tuwan Wards represent Saboti Constituency (Trans-Nzoia West Sub-County) and Bidii Ward represents Kwanza Constituency (Kwanza Sub-County). There are five constituencies (Sub-Counties) in Trans-Nzoia County out of which three are represented in this study because of their proximity to the seat of Trans-Nzoia County government leadership in Kitale town.

A sample is part of the target population that has been procedurally selected to represent the rest (Oso & Onen 2005, 34). It is the procedure a researcher uses to select the number of individuals or objects from a population to study (Kombo et al 2006). The sampling criterion adopted in any research depends on the nature of the study.
3.6 Data Generation Techniques

In this study, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to generate data. Interviews and focus group discussions provided extensive exploration of communication between citizens and leadership in Trans-Nzoia County governance.

In qualitative approach to research, data is mainly made up of words. The art of assembling data is generation and the different ways used in generating data are techniques (Jwan & Ong’ondo, 2011).

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

In this study, the open-ended (semi-structured) interview was used. Here the interviewer has a general idea of where he or she wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it, but does not enter the interview with a list of pre-determined questions (Jwan & Ong’ondo 2011, Nunan 1992). Views and opinions of the respondents concerning communication in Trans-Nzoia County governance were sought. The challenges faced by the county leadership in communicating with citizens were addressed. Interviews ensured the generation of clear and detailed information as respondents had time to clarify and explain information required.

The selected respondents in the interviews included; the Trans-Nzoia County governor, the deputy governor, Sub-County administrators, Members of the County Assembly (MCAs – Hospital, Matisi, Bidii, Tuwan and Sirende Wards), the Ward administrators, the County Administration representatives within Wards – three chiefs, assistant chiefs and village administrators per Ward. The responses from the interview were written down in a notebook and also recorded on a voice recorder since it is faster than writing down in a notebook. The notes written were a backup of
the recorded information. Personal (face-to-face) interviews were preferred than the telephone (mobile phone) way. Face to face is flexible, more information can be generated and the non-response is low unlike the mobile phone use.

Interview is a technique of generating data involving presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply of oral-verbal responses (Kothari 2004). It involves gathering data through direct verbal interaction between individuals (Cohen et al 2007). According to Ong’ondo, Jwan and Agumba M.N. (2008), an interview is a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information. Oso and Onen (2005, 38) add that an interview involves person to person verbal communication in which one person (group of persons) asks the other questions intended to elicit information or opinions.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions

Six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) comprising of eight village leaders, women, youth leaders and business entrepreneurs per group in Trans-Nzoia County were conducted. These were citizens who live in Hospital, Matisi, Bidii, Tuwan and Sirende Wards and might have voted in the county leadership and had the information needed on communication with the leadership in Trans-Nzoia County.

The dialogue here was audio and video-recorded for transcription (Naanyu et al 2011). The participants sat together in a semi-circle to enhance interaction. Questions used in focus group discussions were researcher administered with some cases of assistance of a trained research assistant. Where the respondents could not comprehend English and Kiswahili, a local research assistant was identified to help in facilitating the focus group discussions in the local (vernacular) language. The said
research assistant also helped in transcribing and translating data from the local language to English.

Focus group discussion is a group interview where a researcher or moderator conducts a discussion with a small group of people on a specific topic (Jwan & Ong’ondo 2011). This is a small group brought together to discuss a particular issue under the direction of an interviewer or facilitator who has a list of topics or questions to discuss (Green & Thorogood, 2009). It combines both elements of individual interviews and participant observation and involves six to eight people who have something in common (Casey & Krueger, 2000). This data generation technique helps in assessment of needs and possible improvement of existing programmes (Kombo et al 2006). Naanyu et al (2011) further points out, that focus group discussions data generation techniques has become popular in Kenya and other parts of the world in assessing development programmes and how citizens are involved. Views of citizens who directly experience the county governance were sought as they are the ones who also participated in voting into office the said leaders.

3.7 Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was done thematically which is a process of searching and identifying common trends and extends throughout an interview (Morse & Field, 1995). This analysis type aims to produce a detailed and systematic recording of the themes and issues together under a reasonably exhaustive category system (Sloan 2006).

This is the process of examining, categorising or recombining qualitative and quantitative data into more explicit data (Yin 2003). It involves the organization, interpretation and presentation of data collected. According to Oso and Onen (2005,
data analysis entails separation of data into constituent parts or elements, or an examination of data to distinguish its component parts or elements separately or in relation to the whole. According to Jwan and Ong’ondo (2011), data analysis in qualitative research involves looking at data, assigning categories and putting together emerging issues into themes in an attempt to answer the research questions raised. Yin (2003) observes that analysing data is not easy because there are no specific universal steps of doing it in research publications; and that the process of data analysis varies depending on research focus. Stake (2006) adds that there is no particular moment when data analysis in qualitative research begins as it is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations.

3.7.1 Transcribing the Data

In this study, the recorded data was changed into actual texts after listening to what participants in the study said. Where a participant used vernacular or local language, a local research assistant identified and trained helped me in transcribing and translating data into English. I reread the transcripts to familiarize with the data generated. I identified emerging themes focusing on the research questions. The coding process which was in three coding stages; first phase (open) coding, second phase (axial) coding and third phase (selective) coding, Cresswell (2007), followed.

Transcription involves turning data from the verbal (and sometimes non-verbal) to the written mode. This is mostly relevant to interview data which ought to be audio-recorded so as to capture all that an interviewee is saying and also to free the interviewer from the task of taking detailed notes and allow for concentration on asking questions and probing. As for observations, journals or documents, we expect that at the analysis stage the data will already be in transcript form (Jwan & Ong’ondo 2011).
3.7.2 First Phase (Open) Coding

Alston et al (2003), open coding is the initial coding done early in qualitative approach to research and is unrestricted data coding aimed at producing provisional concepts and dimensions which seem to fit the data needed. Here, I highlighted themes that seemed to answer the research questions raised in chapter one. The labelling of emerging themes with different codes in relation to research questions was done.

3.7.3 Second Phase (Axial) Coding

Similar codes that are most familiar to the research questions were grouped together (Flick, 2009). In qualitative research, I removed redundancies and overlap (Dornyei, 2007), created hierarchies of codes (Lichtman, 2006) and reduced or ‘winnowed’ the data (Cresswell, 2007, 152). Codes generated from open coding were sorted out and core categories of data were established leading to selective coding.

3.7.4 Third Phase (Selective) Coding

Here, I grouped categories into themes. Themes usually correspond to the research questions posed in chapter 1 and may end up forming the chapters in which findings will be presented. Different categories and codes are grouped into themes and regrouped appropriately similar to the axial coding including relevant chunks of data as suggested by Clarke and Braun (2006). I re-read the data under the new themes ensuring that the categories and codes were appropriate labels of the chunks of data under them. I needed to bank more data that does not fit the new themes, categories and codes (Jwan & Ong’ondo 2011).

Here different codes from the axial coding were grouped into broader categories, putting related codes together. Themes developed were matched with the research
questions in chapter one. There was narration of data as per the participants’ responses and this involved going back to where data was saved. Some important quotes of what was said by participants were included. Lastly, I concluded and made recommendations.

3.7.5 Data Presentation (Producing a Research Report)

This is the stage where the story is taken from the mouth of the participants and reported to readers basically by paraphrasing the statements of the participants and only retaining a few direct quotations to give the report credibility. Refining is done here to capture much detail and remove unnecessary repetition to achieve precision, clarify, coherence and accuracy. Presentation chapters could be more than one, perhaps according to research questions, the different cases (if it is a case study method), according to sets of participants, stages of the study or any other logical formula (Jwan & Ong’ondo 2011).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics is the moral principles that guide research from its inception through to its completion and publication of results (Jwan & Ongo’ondo 2011). Ethics involve individual and communal codes of conduct based upon adherence to a set of principles which may be explicit and codified or implicit, and which may be abstract and impersonal or concrete and personal (Zimbardo, 1984).

Research involving human participants is regulated by strict professional and research ethical codes which ensure that participants are protected from potential physical and emotional harm during the research process (Seidman, 2006). According to Oso and Onen (2005, 47), the major ethical issues of concern are informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, anonymity and researcher’s responsibility. Regarding informed
consent, I informed participants about the procedures of the study they were to participate in. Participants were given information on the purpose of the research, the expected duration of participation and the procedure to be followed, any unforeseen risk or discomfort to the participants and the benefits of participation.

I ensured anonymity of participants by informing them not to mention their names during the interview as the voice recorder would record this if they did so. Take into consideration the researcher’s responsibility by being sensitive to human dignity and well-meaning to the intent. The participants’ privacy and confidentiality was maintained and I assured them that data generated was to be used for the purpose of this study only.

3.8.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an important concept in qualitative research because it allows research to describe the qualities of the study (Given 2008). It refers to the truthfulness of the data generated from the field (Macnee & McCabe 2008). It helps acknowledge and admit and possible influences encountered in the study process. Similarly Jwan and Ong’ondo 2011, point out that in qualitative approach to research, a researcher should ensure that the research process is truthful, careful and rigorous enough to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness here refers to credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. They (Jwan & Ong’ondo 2011) further define credibility as a researcher showing what he/she claims to investigate and report what transpired in the field. Transferability refers to generalization of the data to other contexts. Here findings from the field can be applicable in another context where the study was not done. Dependability refers to the extent to which a researcher provides sufficient, detailed and clear research
process in a way that another researcher can replicate the study. Conformability is to what extend the findings are free from both internal and external influences.

I followed the required steps above so that findings are true and can be used for both academic and non-academic endeavours. I ensured that findings reveal a believable link between the participants’ expressions and the themes and codes that emerged. As a researcher, I worked closely with supervisors to ensure that all went right.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents and interprets data. It interconnects between data collected and the research questions raised. The chapter starts by presenting the nature of the communication that goes on between citizens and leaders in Trans-Nzoia County government. Secondly, the barriers to communication between citizens and leaders in county governance have been explored. Lastly, the perceptions of the citizens and leaders on how communication between them could be harnessed to enhance participation in county governance, has been presented and interpreted.

4.2 Nature of Communication between Citizens and Leaders in County Governance

The participants were asked about the communication that goes on between leaders and the citizens in Trans-Nzoia County. This question cut across all adult participants irrespective of age or gender. Findings of the study suggest that even though county governance is few years old now since it officially commenced, a large portion of the population is yet to really grasp the communication that goes on between the leadership and the citizenry in Trans-Nzoia County government. Almost half of the respondents stated that they did not know if there is any communication that goes on between them and their leaders.

Some of the respondents who had experienced this communication criticized the channels used to pass across the messages. It emerged that the county leaders use ceremonies or meetings like funerals, weddings and church functions as the main platforms to pass across their message to the citizens. In case one has not attended such meetings the message would not reach him or her as indicated by the following respondents:
What are you talking about (with a sarcastic smile)? Since we voted for these ‘waheshimiwa’ (leaders) to office, you can only meet them and listen to what they say at funerals, mostly on Saturdays. So you tell me, will I be travelling all over Trans-Nzoia County to attend funerals so that I can listen to what they (leaders) have to tell me? (Respondent 4)

I think during burials, there should be no time set aside for leaders (administration). They (leaders) take this opportunity to air out their political views some of which harm the bereaved more than console them. Rarely do they talk about development issues (Respondent 6)

This group of participants totally refuted that there is any meaningful communication that goes on between the leaders and citizens. To them it was just the usual politicking and the verbal attack of political opponents at ceremonies such as funerals and weddings.

**4.2.1 Issues Communicated by Citizens in the County**

Leaders communicate on development, education and the 2017 General Elections. Citizens communicate about high cost of living, security, school fees and medical expenses. Others talk to leaders on development issues like road construction, piped water supply and unemployment. Most issues are related to development of the county, specifically infrastructure. The road network in the county is bad and communication from leaders is all about improving the roads while citizens are always complaining about the impassable roads especially during the rainy season. Leaders address the issues of economic and social development of the county such as building of schools and financial support for education, infrastructural development,
reduction of taxes, healthcare, environmental conservation and improvement of agricultural activities.

Citizens will always engage leaders on issues to do with food security, education, health, security and development projects. They also communicate about building of hospitals and schools. Citizens also bring up issues like soaring food prices, electricity connection and insecurity. Leaders on the other hand discuss about the development of the county, the problems facing citizens and their strong areas in terms of political support. There is also talk of security issues, educational matters e.g. building of schools, giving out of bursaries to needy students, development issues such as road maintenance, water supply, building of hospitals and electricity connection. Leaders engage in updating the citizens about their development agenda and projects that the county has undertaken. They also address issues of donor funding and healthcare.

Other issues citizens communicate with leaders include how to improve on the transport and communication network, ways to alleviate poverty, disease and levels of ignorance in the county. Leaders keep urging citizens to embrace devolution and really support it so as to enhance quality education, security, infrastructural development and food security to all citizens. All the time they keep preaching against tribalism, nepotism and exclusive leadership. The leaders inform citizens of the part they should play to foster development and roles each of them should play to ensure success. Citizens have always asked leaders to bring development down to the village level. They ask for water for domestic use, build schools, supply electricity in schools and villages, pay fees for children from poor families (needy students).

Citizens always tax leaders to make available cheap farm inputs to enable them get good harvest. Development issues such as school and church building, education fund
and group empowerment such as youth projects and women groups. Majorly about development and too much complain over the war between themselves i.e. between governors and senators. Development of the roads so as to ease transport, improving on or building new hospitals and dispensaries and improving on or building new schools, polytechnics, colleges and universities.

The issues leaders communicate about with citizens include the nature of their living standards, education and security matters and employment. Citizens talk with their leaders on matters of transport i.e. the road situation, the leaders’ commitment on serving citizens and their participation in county assemblies. Leaders communicate to citizens about better living standards and good education. Citizens on the other hand talk to leaders about basic needs of survival for example food and better housing facilities. Security issues, unemployment, embrace unity, party membership or drumming up support for their political parties or coalitions. Leaders condemn vices in the society i.e. abortion, rape, robbery, etc.

Citizens ask for assistance in terms of school fees, to bill funeral expenses and construction of community projects. Pledges on the fulfilment of the development projects promised i.e. road carpeting, electricity installation, water piping, etc. Some leaders criticize the county government and complain that its policies are not good because, the cost of living is very high while common citizens suffer greatly. Most of the leaders do not speak the truth and tend to speak lies so that they can win the audience support during election. Most problems like insecurity, high cost of farming and poor infrastructure recur after five years and leaders neglect them. Some of the issues communicated about include: insecurity in the ward, how to improve the level of education and what actions to take in order to curb poverty. Budget and how the finances are allocated per ward is also one of the key issues talked about.
Unemployment has been a major issue in Trans-Nzoia County and citizens especially the youth are desperate and urge county leaders to do something about it. Security has also been a major challenge and in the recent times, people especially business persons have lost their lives and property to thugs. They politic on the various leaders in different areas, schools, hospital and services offered in these institutions. Leaders talk about the economic empowerment, political power and peaceful co-existence of communities in the county. Citizens always talk about health matters, insecurity, poverty and lack of infrastructure. They communicate with them about issues that deal directly with the citizens i.e. bursary to the needy and development projects they are undertaking. Citizens rarely communicate with leaders. It is majorly top to bottom communication.

Citizens also talk about insecurity, how education standards can be improved and how drug and alcohol abuse can be eradicated. People for instance in Hospital, Bidii, Matisi, Tuwan and Sirende wards, have been talking about and raising issues concerning the rampant rates of insecurity in the area, improper or poor waste disposal plus the low levels of sanitation as well as poor drainage of sewage that cause great havoc especially during rainy season. The leaders on the other part just speak of the issues such as lack of funds and the strategies they have laid in place that they are yet to fulfil. Leaders always promise heaven on earth e.g. piped water, proper security, etc. The leaders keep on telling the citizens on what they intend to do. But alas! This has not been forthcoming. The citizens want service delivery from the leaders, job creation and other amenities such as roads, electricity, farm inputs, etc.

Citizens in the wards have numerous problems/issues which they expect the elected leaders to address. These include: rural electrification and improvement of rural roads. There is also the issue of massive youth unemployment which leaders are very shy to
address. Apart from the above, land issues, tribalism, sales of the agricultural products like maize and milk are a major headache to citizens. Citizens have tried to put across certain issues for instance; infrastructure, education, poverty and technological advancement in various fields. Leaders take time in propaganda politics, talking about who is giving a raw deal and how they can topple them. A few discuss issues that affect ordinary mwananchi like the state of the roads. Mostly about politics, no development is even mentioned or they mostly discuss about what should be done by others never by them (blame-shifting).

4.2.2 Ways in which Citizens Communicate with Leaders in the County

Citizens communicate with leaders through the spoken word, mobile phones and meetings. Leaders communicate through meetings in the oral form. Through chiefs’ barazas, funerals, churches, mosques, etc. Leaders usually prefer to meet citizens in forums such as rallies, church gatherings and funerals to pass their agenda. Orally during meet the people tours of the county where they spell out their opinions or complaints.

Communication is through memos/posters, public rallies/barazas, radios, newspapers, television, social media, facebook, twitter and whatsapp. Citizens communicate to leaders through representatives, workshops, seminars and chiefs’ barazas. Public notices, citizens’ memoranda, face to face talks and delegations, social media e.g. facebook/twitter. They also communicate through church forums, fundraising and sports activities. They communicate through barazas, local meetings and even during various functions in the ward for instance harambees/fundraising, funeral gatherings and political rallies.
In some cases the citizens make radio calls through local FM stations or when they meet in social ceremonies like weddings. Public barazas/meetings, use of posters/billboards, over the radio – some leaders have airtime on local radios and citizens make phone calls. It should have been through meetings and barazas but so far I have to see this happen. So the citizenry usually complain in matatus, bars, hotels, or at social places they meet. Accessing the elected county leaders in their offices is almost impossible due to the bureaucracy they have established. Both sides communicate through chiefs’ barazas, county meetings and the press. It is done through posters, village elders and chiefs’ barazas. Leaders communicate to the citizens through public rallies. Leaders communicate to citizens by attending social gatherings e.g. weddings, funerals, fundraising ceremonies, etc.

Citizens have to go through personal assistants to get their grievances voiced. Citizens stage protests to air out grievances so as to be heard by the leaders in some instances they communicate through public rallies, during functions like funerals. Citizens use demonstrations, mass action to pass issues to their leaders. Leaders use public political rallies to address the issues and also in the county assembly debates and to a small extend through media. They communicate through open forums, fundraisers or during funerals while others opt to write articles in the newspapers. Citizens communicate to leaders through meetings organized by village elders/at funerals/wedding gatherings. Citizens also communicate via media channels such as radio whereby they call radio stations and air their views.

Citizens in Trans-Nzoia County usually wait for functions like fundraising, funerals for they to pass information to the leaders present. If leaders don’t attend such functions then citizens do not get any information from them. Communication is rare but at times it is done during funerals and in churches. Citizens get to air their issues
to their leaders if they have a chance to get them in either a funeral, fundraising function but there are no fixed times organized for proper communication between leaders and citizens. The process of communication is not mostly available as imagined. Mostly is through the allies of the leaders or their relatives and friends. Citizens sometimes have media sessions on radio where they communicate with their leaders through asking them questions on issues concerning their areas of governance. Also through development meetings as earlier highlighted. Communication has been rare and when this has to be done, it’s at funerals or during church services where leaders have attended. Therefore no strategic places are set for citizens to air out their views and thus giving them limited time to meet with these leaders.

Through already established groups e.g. women groups where they address them directly, at times through proxy and other times through individuals who meet them and they talk. Through their leaders, citizens are able to pass their grievances and leaders pass the message through people who are close to them. Official communication is cultivated with citizens writing letters to leaders and also seeking public audience and private audience with their leaders. The communication usually occurs through the use of middlemen/representatives e.g. village elders and chiefs because they are not easily found in their county offices.

Leaders hold meetings which they get citizens’ views or use representatives like ward representatives, provincial administration in areas of security and at times go to meet them in their offices. Through brochures placed at the nearby centres or noticeboards at the chiefs’ offices and through personal assistants of the MPs, senators and governors. Some also pass their grievances through the media. Most Trans-Nzoia County leaders are never there to be communicated to and citizens communicate through the grapevine effect of communication that involves gossips and rumours
amongst them in the hope that it would reach the relevant persons. The leaders on the other hand avoid public gatherings and are in a hide-out. Few people get the opportunity to talk to the leaders. Sometimes they have to be looked for in their homes since they rarely stay in their offices (avoiding the electorate who elected them).

**4.2.3 Absence of Feedback to the Citizenry by Leaders**

During the following focus group discussions with youth leaders, it emerged that there was a general community concern with the failure of the Trans-Nzoia County government to provide feedback (answers) to the citizenry, especially where such feedback had been promised. This appeared to be creating suspicions among citizens hence making them not feel free to communicate with their leaders. For example, during the interview with one of the motor cycle, boda boda riders, he explained:

> At times, the Trans-Nzoia County government officers come and take information from us with the promise that they will be bringing a given development project and after that they take many months or fail to bring answers (feedback) so it becomes a problem. Next time the county government comes for information citizens are hesitant to give it (throws hands up in resignation) because they feel it’s of no use since there is no answer (feedback). Once ‘cheated,’ twice shy. (SBE FGD 2)

This, according to another participant, was making the work of the county government difficult as citizens keep on asking for the feedback (answers to questions) that they were promised:

> Sometimes the Trans-Nzoia County government makes promises to the citizenry and fails to deliver and thus when we (SBE) make pre-visits citizens
are on our necks. Sometimes we are forced to use our own language to convince wanainchi. The citizens are very suspicious of the county government that collects information from them since there is no feedback to citizens. (SBE FGD 2)

At the same time Small Business Entrepreneurs (SBE) acknowledge that there is a delay of feedback. During the group interview, they said that the county government needs to take into account the issue of feedback, for example even communication made on phone makes people wait for long to get feedback:

Communication is normally made on phone and this becomes a problem because when you ask for information they say wait and you end up waiting for a month to get the answer or sometimes you wait for ever without any feedback, so the customer care communication desk at the Trans-Nzoia County government could serve better. (SBE FGD 2)

In some cases there are emergencies with poor responses to them. (SBE FGD 2)

The concern about feedback does not just affect Small Business Entrepreneurs (SBEs). Some youths who participated in the focused group discussions also felt that there was no need to participate in some of the Trans-Nzoia County government’s activities or development policies since they never receive any feedback, as one of the participants whose views were supported by others says:

There was a time our MCA took our details, national identity cards (IDs) photocopies promising to give us ‘kazi kwa vijana’ (jobs for youth) but he disappeared and didn’t bring back the answer to date. (Youth FGD 3)
With these views from participants, it was clear that absence of feedback is eroding the mutual trust between the citizens and leaders in the county government of Trans-Nzoia. Literature support the notion that it is extremely important to understand that feedback is very important at all levels of development project planning and implementation (Mheta, 2011). Feedback in citizen engagement processes makes communication meaningful. It makes communication continuous between citizens targeted (Seun, 2012). Seun further posits that, in community engagement processes, feedback play a crucial role, meaning that it is through feedback that the organization can know how people involved felt or what they think with regard to the project(s) being implemented. Therefore, appropriate channel or medium of communication should be put in place so that free flow of information can be obtained from the Trans-Nzoia political leaders to the citizens and vice versa.

4.3 Barriers to Communication between Citizens and Leaders in County Governance

One of the major research questions of this study was to assess the challenges faced by Trans-Nzoia County political leaders in communicating with citizens within the county. To achieve this, I conducted eighteen (18) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the Trans-Nzoia County leaders. During the interviews the leaders generally reported that they had implemented some channels of communication that helped them to communicate with the citizenry they were representing, and now most citizens are more informed about the Trans-Nzoia County government’s operations. However, they also identified a number of communication barriers that they had encountered. These communication barriers form the focus of the next sub-section.
4.3.1 Inadequate Communication Personnel in Offices

Communication is not an individual’s affair; it requires manpower, especially when it is intended to reach a large heterogeneous audience (John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2003). Participants in this study revealed that the small numbers of communication personnel was one of the main hindrances in having effective communication with the citizens in Trans-Nzoia County. During the interviews, it emerged that most political leaders in the county do not have a communication department or they have a small section dealing with communication of policies. This, according to one participant, made it difficult for these leaders to implement policies that could have helped to enhance citizens’ engagement in Trans-Nzoia County affairs. When I asked one participant about the challenges they face in implementing this communication, he explained:

Let me give you an example: In my office there is only one receptionist at the inquiries. When I came into office in 2013, there was no receptionist for six months so I had to employ one. I would have all the progressive ideas to tell voters as their representative (MCA), but it becomes difficult because the area I represent is big and the information has to reach all corners of the Ward.

(KII 1)

In the following interview, another key informant supported this view saying that inadequate number of personnel in the communication department (which does not exist) made it difficult for them to engage adequately with a large and diversified citizenry that they serve:
As elected representatives of the people, we move everywhere in our Wards within the county, also it takes more time to cover the whole Ward so we need more people to assist us in doing this. (KII 2)

Perhaps this is why some of the participants in the community felt that elected leaders had not adequately engaged with them, as one participant puts it:

Our Trans-Nzoia County leaders, especially Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) are rarely seen. Some don’t even stay in their Wards of representation, they stay in Kitale town. They appear in public during ceremonies like funerals or weddings after a very long time. They may use public address system to communicate but they don’t reach far-flung and remote areas of the Ward. (Youth FGD 4)

Citizen engagement is a mechanism that brings development, adds efficiency in service delivery, sustainability and collective community power (Xu, 2007), it is important to note that adequate and trained personnel in citizen engagement process needs to be considered with county governments whose key aspect is to engage citizens (Gelsthorpe, 2003). This is due to the view that, the development of any community depends on the ability of the concerned county government to engage citizens targeted (Porche, 2004). Therefore, county governments involving citizens require knowing that citizens’ engagement cannot be effective unless there are adequate and trained communication personnel in offices.
4.3.2 Underrating the Importance of Communication for Citizen Engagement

Another factor that was considered as a major challenge by participants was the failure by the Trans-Nzoia County government to support the communication department adequately to be able to achieve their objectives. During the interview, it emerged that communication appeared to be seen as trivial hence little financial resources are allocated for communicating county government policies to the citizenry:

Communication is seen as extravagant, like we know radio is the effective way of communication to the people in rural areas of this county, but before we get to that point where the Trans-Nzoia County government leaders would be comfortable with using that money to go into radio, it needs a lot of convincing. Using local FM radio like Milele FM would have been the best way in reaching out to many people in the rural areas, but the problem is there is no money budgeted for that. (KII 3)

Besides financing, there also seems to be a general lack of clear understanding on the importance of citizen engagement among staff working in other departments of the Trans-Nzoia County government. Interviews revealed that communication with the target citizens is not taken seriously by some departments as indicated by the following respondent:

Communication is crucial for example I once tried to insist on this with the trainee nurses at the Kitale County Referral Hospital and I made a guideline where I gave them the messages to communicate on malaria prevention among the populace, what type of communication channel to use, whether brochure, posters, etc. I gave them guidelines and told them to
fill in areas to be covered and the audience preference on the channel of communication to be used. I got one response out of eight. The challenge is convincing people to realize that communication is crucial in county governance. (KII 6)

According to this participant, the lack of general understanding of the role of communication in governance especially county governance might have led to a lower budget allocation to the communication department.

4.3.3 Lack of Communication Budget

One of my biggest and most surprising findings is the fact that hardly any of the county political offices have a budget for communication with the citizens and if it is there it is very limited. This is very notable since communication is of fundamental importance for the society to function (Habermas, 1984 and Unwin, 2009 with others). How are the county leaders supposed to keep up the fundamental communication when they are not given the means to do so? This is definitely an important aspect that needs to be discussed and considered further.

Most of the respondents (leaders), as can be read below, emphasize on how at many times they have to use their own money and mobile phones for communication with the citizens, and how they failed to hold themselves accountable through communication due to lack of a communication budget. In addition to the previous communication barrier which discussed lack of personnel, economic resources are also important for leadership accountability. Communication is a costly activity and requires a budget that will enable the leaders to respond to demands and questions from citizens. However, it is not just money for communication through communication channels which is missing, as can be read below, but also a budget for
example fuel if physical travel is required on the part of the county political leaders to reach a particular area of jurisdiction.

Most times I use my personal money to buy mobile phone airtime (credit) and bundles to satisfy my people on the ground. Sometimes you find that you have really spent your personal money, which is not good because you have a family which you are supposed to cater for or some other personal needs that require money. We need to talk to the people in our Wards always but we don’t have enough money for this communication. (KII 5)

Personal budget gets limited and we find ourselves not communicating or not being accountable to some areas within Wards. There is no money given from the county government for communication, and even if it is there, it is never enough. (KII 8)

There is no support in terms of transport and communication and we don’t have gadgets like video cameras which would help you to prove, in putting your message clearly across to citizens. So we just now talk verbally or even write plain information that is not backed with tangible evidence, sometimes that hinders the effectiveness of our work on the ground. Most of the time when you voice your priorities to the county government, then they prioritize differently. So if there is something to do in the Ward, and money has not been planned for it, you can’t change it, because we make county annual budgets. Now within that year, if there is an emergence, you have no money to tackle it. Mobile phone airtime or bundles is not budgeted for so then you cannot use personal money and claim for it as is not budgeted for. (KII 7)

For my part, I don’t have the resources. In any of the budgets there is no money included for communication to citizens. That is the biggest challenge for us as MCAs. (KII 10)
Most of the time we are also being underfunded and what we are getting is not enough for us to communicate adequately. When a National government ministry exhausts its budget and there is an emergence, they will go for a supplementary budget passed and approved by the National Assembly. It is not possible at the County Assembly level. Kshs. 10 million budgeted for a particular project remains the same, but the National Assembly will budget for Kshs. 500 million and the moment that money is over they will go for a supplementary budget. (KII 11)

There is no money from the county government specifically for communication. The money we use on communication is usually our county assembly sitting allowances. So it means if we exhaust that money, then we will not be able to communicate to citizens. So accountability might become a problem because you have not reached the electorate. You have not told them what you are supposed to do in your Ward because of lack of money to communicate. (KII 12)

For example, if we had budgeted for construction of say, two or three rural roads, and then we get funding for one road, they start saying we told them pure lies. It is very difficult as the electorate only say they will change the leadership come the next general election in 2017, without necessarily understanding what we went through during initial planning for given projects. (KII 13)

Our local FM radio would be the best way of reaching out to our citizens but is expensive. In other words you cannot be regular on radio simply because we are limited by financial resources. (KII 14)
4.3.4 Language Barrier

Findings from this study indicate that language was one of the key challenges in communication between leaders and the citizens. It emerged that the nature of the audience that county government deals with in Trans-Nzoia County is large and diversified with some citizens being illiterate. This, according to some of the participants in the study, made it difficult to communicate effectively to all citizens. For instance it was reported that, not in all areas of the county brochure or posters could be used:

When it comes to illiteracy levels, almost 60% are in the rural areas, so really we can’t use a lot of brochure or posters unless they are in picture form. Trans-Nzoia being a cosmopolitan county, we also have different tribes represented all over the county. (KII 15)

This perspective was also supported by another informant who said that illiteracy and language are really a problem in developing communication and they are barriers to communication between leaders and the citizens they are serving. He explained that a poor understanding of local language by some Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) in Trans-Nzoia County poses a problem in their communication with citizens:

There is the issue of language barrier as not all MCAs are from one community so when you go to a certain group, they wish that one communicates in their local language and at the end of the day you will not have passed across your intended information. We also have the issue of old people; they need to be talked to in their mother-tongue so that they understand the message better. (KII 16)
Findings show that in some cases, where communicators had been selected based on their capacity to communicate effectively in the local language, it was at times realized that such people might not have been grounded adequately on the content of the communication, as suggested by this participant:

When we were selecting the representatives for county public budget participation we realized that some of them were illiterate but they were good in public communication. So we had to correct some of them while on the ground doing the real exercise. (KII 7)

To address this problem, new criteria had to be developed for selecting community representatives in the Trans-Nzoia County budget participation:

The selection method had to be made to cope with communication challenges, that is, an adult who is respected by the local community who can read and write, speak both Swahili/English and even the local language fluently. (KII 8)

While the Trans-Nzoia County government has been facing language barriers during policy implementation, different approaches are used to overcome communication barriers, where, criteria has been made so that communication could be effective. Scholars strongly assert that communication plays a key role in the success of any development project. This is due to the fact that it helps to achieve the desired results for citizens and the county in a variety of ways: for instance bottom-up communication approach provides information needed about citizens, perceptions and opinions. This helps the county select and tailor programmes and policies to meet the specific needs of citizens. County government’s success depends greatly on effective communication. With this view, it is clear that even if counties involving citizens face
challenges, specifically language barriers, it should be noted that it is important to find ways to overcome this problem because studies reveal that one of the many factors that contribute to the failure of projects is poor or insufficient communication (Mehta 2012).

4.3.5 Lack of Basic Systems and Services

In this context, infrastructure refers to electricity (power) and network, none of which are reliable or readily available in some areas of Trans-Nzoia County. This is also one of the main reasons why so many development projects have failed to work. The quotes below show how leadership accountability and the increased demands for communication fail to take into consideration the challenges of reliable communication infrastructure. Communication demand contemporary and prompt responses, which are not possible when network and electricity (power) are not there.

Electricity connection in this Ward is not everywhere. It reaches here but the Ward stretches far into the interior for over 15 kilometres from here. So one may not have time to dash his or her mobile phone to a charging place where there is power and therefore if you need to talk or SMS somebody through your mobile phone you become ‘mteja’ (unavailable). (KII 1)

Power blackouts are quite common here and when there is an electricity power blackout for long, my mobile phone battery goes off and communication is cut completely. (KII 2)

Communication network is unreliable because there is time you can spend a long time trying to browse the internet and you can’t get the required information because of low (unreliable) or no network. (KII 3)
4.3.6 Knowledge and Skills Obstacle

The following quotes show the lack of skills and knowledge on the communication gadgets that both the political leaders and citizens, struggle with. There are capacities missing on different levels for example knowledge about how to use different communication channels as well as knowledge about information in the society in general and language skills. This means that the illiteracy level is high in different ways. Citizens put increased demands for improved service delivery on their leaders through the usage of communication gadgets. But looking at the data from this research many leaders lack the basic skills required to administrate the use of these technologies. As Key Informant Interviewee 6 (KII 6) highlights, he sometimes ends up physically driving or going to deliver a document instead of emailing it due to lack of the basic communication gadget-use (computer) knowledge.

My feeling is that MCAs should have the basic computer use knowledge. Unfortunately, many of us are computer illiterate (smiling). If you are not in a position to sponsor yourself to learn computer skills (packages), it is difficult.’ (The informant talks about computer knowledge of political leaders in his Ward) (KII 4)

The Trans-Nzoia County government does little. They don’t know about how things are handled in Information Communication and Technology (ICT), they don’t know about most of our challenges. Right now we need to be trained on how to use computers. (KII 5)

Training facilities for computer are missing for the Trans-Nzoia County staff. First, this should be done for us leaders, the administrators, because at times even we don’t know how to effectively use information. This makes it more expensive, because instead of photocopying, scanning or emailing a document, you end up travelling to
deliver the document physically when you just needed the skill to send it easily and fast. Both the county and national governments have not provided any computer use knowledge but they assume that it’s a requirement that you should get it by yourself. (KII 6)

Leaders are willing to use the internet, but majority don’t have the knowledge? Even you can have a laptop, and it has a modem but you fail to use it effectively. (KII 7)

There are lots of gaps in as far as communication channels are concerned. Including us leaders, we are expected to be all round and yet we are unable because of those limitations. These leaders we are talking about, most of them are not computer literate. Ironically, they are leading citizens in the digital era yet they are still technologically analogue in communication which is a big challenge. So how I wish we had the leaders being computer compliant, literate, then they would be in a position to champion this course of communication with the citizens they lead. (KII 8)

People are informed sometimes but they misunderstand the information. Any person can come and give the information and they accept because no one is going to oppose it or explain it effectively to them. (KII 11)

We have low digital literacy level. It means you have to translate, and when you do the message may lose the original meaning intended. (The respondent talks about the literacy level of the citizens) (KII 12)

**4.3.7 Inaccessibility to Communication Gadgets**

For one to communicate effectively through communication channels one does not only need infrastructure, skills and money. One does also need access to the communication gadgets. The majority of the respondents I met did not have access to
a computer, laptop or good mobile phones. If they want to use the internet they need to go to a cyber cafe and pay for the service as their offices are not wireless fidelity enabled. All the six respondents answered that they are using their own private phones to communicate at their workplace.

We don’t have personal computers/laptops so if we want to use internet or computer for example filing KRA returns we need to go to a cyber cafe where we are charged Kshs 200. And when it comes to phones I use my private phone to make calls in my office.’ (KII 13)

There are two official phone-lines used for communication, they are the one of the Ward Administrator and the one for the Member of the County Assembly (MCA). So I use my private phone to make calls. (KII 14)

For example in this office we would be having a computer/laptop but the resources cannot allow. That’s why I am even limited in these skills because I have no access to it. (KII 15)

At times you need to have a laptop to text an email a document, but some of these things are still lacking in our offices. Like you see in all these offices, including my Ward Administrator’s office, do not have laptops and printers. (KII 16)

The county political leaders in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya are facing many challenges when they try to communicate through communication gadgets. The infrastructure is not stable, many of the respondents are lacking basic skills and knowledge of how to use the different communication channels and many of them do not even have the required access to the communication gadgets. On top of these
challenges the offices do not even have a communication budget. Many of the respondents end up using their own money in order to communicate with citizens. The above challenges greatly hinder communication between citizens and the Trans-Nzoia County government.

4.4 Perceptions of Citizens and Leaders on Improved Communication in County Governance

4.4.1 Perceptions on Citizens’ Role in Decision-Making

Previous research has shown that development projects are more successful when citizens are engaged in the process of developing and implementing those projects. Effective citizen engagement helps them feel that they are responsible for their development or resolving their problems (Johnson, 2009). Johnson’s study notes that it is important that citizens feel passionate about ownership of projects and this may prosper only if the citizen is involved in the decision-making process. Involving citizens in planning enhances the success of the project. For that reason, the Trans-Nzoia County government needs to take into account views and concerns of citizens in any project to be set up.

This study, therefore, aimed to investigate the role citizens play with regards to the development and implementation of the related projects by the Trans-Nzoia County government. The key objective here was to examine the nature of communication between citizens and leaders in Trans-Nzoia County government in the process of developing and implementing various projects. To achieve this objective, I conducted six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with citizens: adults, youth leaders and Small Business Entrepreneurs (SBEs). The total number of participants in these FGDs was forty eight. Furthermore, I conducted eight in-depth interviews with eight key informants who were mainly the political leaders in the community, as explained in
the methodology section. In the following subsections, I discuss the key observations of these investigations.

During the Focused Group Discussions with various participants drawn from the community, it emerged that the Trans-Nzoia County government had been involving few individuals on behalf of the entire citizenry. For instance, when I asked Small Business Entrepreneurs (SBEs) about the role of citizens in decision-making regarding development and implementation of projects by the Trans-Nzoia County government one of the participants explained:

Citizens are involved by county leaders through the village elders, sub-chiefs, chiefs and Ward administrators. (FGD 1)

Besides using the above leaders to reach the citizenry, the Trans-Nzoia County government involved opinion leaders in decision-making in planning and implementing their projects as one of the opinion leaders puts it:

Most of the times, before they implement any project, they call us and the village elders we discuss and agree on how to take the county government’s activities to the citizens. So basically we are involved in planning and implementation of their activities. (FGD 2)

Besides involving opinion leaders, the county government also engaged with Small Business Entrepreneurs:

We are involved in coming up with the programme where our contribution on how a given development activity should be run is sought. (SBE FGD 3)

These accounts reflect what the Trans-Nzoia County government leaders pointed out during the interview, that they involve citizens through opinion leaders and other
stakeholders. While opinion leaders constitute an important group in any county so as to win citizens’ acceptance and a sense of ownership of the development activities, it is thus important that the citizenry be involved in communication with the leadership. Literature supports the notion that citizens’ involvement in communication brings added efficiency, sustainability and collective citizenry power to projects involving them (Xu, 2007). It also provides the foundation for individual and collective well-being of the people (Gelsthorpe, 2003).

4.4.2 Perceptions on Involvement of Citizens through Communication

Through interviews with participants drawn from various sectors of the citizenry, it emerged that, they support projects coordinated by the Trans-Nzoia County government. However, there were a number of concerns which seemingly draw from the failure to engage citizens adequately in the process of developing and implementing development projects. This include concerns about lack of involvement in decision-making about which and how to implement certain development projects, absence of feedback and lack of clear explanation of the objectives of the projects. These issues are explored in more detail in the next sub-sections.

During the interview with citizens, they felt that while the Trans-Nzoia County government involves them in the implementation of development projects, they were not adequately involved in decision-making and policy communication.

The Trans-Nzoia County government rarely involves us in designing county development projects and other activities. The county government need to communicate to citizens and involve them right from decision-making to the implementation stage.’ (Youth FGD 4)

This view was supported by other participants who said:
The county government leaders don’t involve us they just bring their activities to us, what they have already planned. (Adult FGD 5)

The leaders just bring the project as they have planned. (Adult FGD 5)

When I asked if citizens were aware of some of the activities run by the Trans-Nzoia County government in their ward, one respondent replied:

…some of them don’t know anything (Adult FGD 6)

Another participant considered the approach used by the Trans-Nzoia County government as forceful. According to her, this seems to be the right approach as citizens might have rejected the proposed county policies:

The Trans-Nzoia County government leaders organize and bring them.
May be they were of the view that because we are somehow forced to accept their services partly because of suspicion due to political party differences. (Adult FGD 5)

4.4.3 Perception on the Communication Strategies used by the Trans-Nzoia County Government to Engage Citizens

This section focuses on how citizens perceive communication strategies used by the Trans-Nzoia County leadership to engage them in their development activities. Previous studies have revealed that it is vital for the leadership that aspire involving citizens to consider how they perceive their services. Literature reviewed has demonstrated that citizen engagement is perceived to be a proper action that needs to be made consensus, make sense of ownership on goals and plans of the intended project (Creighton, 2005). This is because people will feel that their concerns are taken into consideration and it helps in enhancing chances of success of the intended
programme plan. Understanding public perceptions, therefore, helps in improving service delivery with regard to the implementation and sustainability of the projects. Opinions on the strategies that the Trans-Nzoia County government uses to engage with the citizens seemed to be divided with some participants finding the approaches used as effective while others perceiving them as not appropriate.

Another concern identified in the study deals with the apparent lack of acknowledgement for the role played by the citizens. During a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the Small Business Entrepreneurs (SBE) felt that the Trans-Nzoia County government needed to do more to appreciate the role that citizens played in the implementation of the county government’s development projects. This, they felt, would help in enhancing the communication link between the county government and the citizens as one of the participants explains:

Our Trans-Nzoia County government should also come up and appreciate the work of village elders as sometimes they sacrifice their time and take you round the villages without any appreciation yet people like chiefs are being appreciated they are given some small monies. We suggest that the chiefs and village elders should be rewarded for example through certificates of participation in a particular county government project. This will greatly improve the communication link between citizens and the county government since they will feel appreciated and motivated. (SBE FGD 1)

4.4.4 Perception on Impact of Education on Communication

Illiteracy among some citizens affected their ability to comprehend communication materials such as posters and brochures:
The great challenge is illiteracy level, some people don’t know how to read and write, but this could be solved by interpreting the posters before they are placed at strategic places. Interpretation could be done in barazas (meetings) by village elders and chiefs. (SBE FGD 2)

There is the issue of the old who might be illiterate; they need to be explained to in vernacular so that they understand the messages clearly. (KII 4)

From the above response, the burning question is ‘How do Members of the Trans-Nzoia County Assembly (MCAs) know the needs and priorities of the citizens?’

Given the limitation of the electoral process, this fundamental question’s answer can be deciphered through the following responses I received from the MCAs and citizens I interviewed:

What Hospital, Bidii, Matisi, Tuwan and Sirende Wards MCAs said:

We know our citizens. (Who are they?)

We meet them always. (But often indirectly, through personal assistants, with no formal system of consultation system of consultation)

We regularly hold meetings. (Although this is rare in practice and MCAs usually depend on the county administration like the County Commissioners (CC), Sub-County Commissioners (SCC), Chiefs and Sub-chiefs to hold barazas so that they come in to address citizens)

They visit our homes. (But people come to ask for individual favours, not communal needs, which is what the county government is there to provide)
What Trans-Nzoia County citizens said:

We never see our MCA, except perhaps around election time or passing by in his car!

Some of us don’t even know who our MCA is!

Vote-buying (giving hand-outs) is common: people feel obliged to vote for those who have paid them especially during tough economic times like these!

We have no way of telling who is a good candidate because of manipulative party politics! People tend to vote for the local dominant party not individuals!

We do not have any influence, especially when told there is no money or equipment for development.

However, the situation is not all gloom as there are signs of changing attitudes, as illustrated in some of the case studies in this study.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

In this chapter, I provide the summary of key findings, discussion, conclusion, recommendations, suggestions for future research and summary of the chapter. Findings analysed in this chapter are based on interviews conducted with Trans-Nzoia County government political leaders and opinion leaders. Focus group discussions with Trans-Nzoia County residents, was done. There is also document analysis from the Trans-Nzoia County government offices as discussed in the previous chapter.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The aim of this study was to get an understanding of the Trans-Nzoia County leaders’ situation in the county government, as the citizens in this county just like the rest of the forty seven counties in Kenya, successively have started to demand much more accountability from their leaders through communication. This research aimed to explore if there is any meaningful communication between leaders and citizens in the Trans-Nzoia County Government in Kenya.

The main questions guiding this study were:

(a) What is the nature of the communication between citizens and leaders in county governance?

(b) What are the barriers to communication between citizens and leaders in county governance?

(c) What are the perceptions of the citizens and leaders on how communication between them could be harnessed to enhance participation in county governance?
To answer these questions I went on a field study in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya and conducted qualitative research interviews with county political leaders and citizens. By analysing results of the research through the lens of Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action, I have come to the following key findings:

County political leaders in Trans-Nzoia County government do appreciate the increased demands from the citizens through communication in the perspective that they now know what kind of service the citizens require. The county political leaders feel that their workload, due to the increased demands, has become heavier. They also feel that the increased demands from the citizens motivate them to do an even better job and demand more themselves from both the county and the national governments. The research shows that communication has eased the interaction between the county political leaders and the citizens and has contributed greatly to increase two-way-communication between the leaders and the citizens.

The research also reveals that the county political leaders are facing different challenges when it comes to leadership accountability through communication. Some of these challenges are weak infrastructure, lack of skills and communication budget and inaccessibility to communication gadgets. Digital illiteracy, poor network and the absence of electricity (power) in some areas of the county are communication challenges the leaders face in achieving leadership accountability to citizens. In my opinion one of the most striking findings of this research is that hardly any of the county political offices in Trans-Nzoia County has a budget targeted for communication with citizens. On the side of the citizens, the following communication challenges manifested:
Majority of the citizens are not aware about public participation meetings probably because the Trans-Nzoia County government does not communicate to citizens effectively. The county government informs the public about public participation forums through daily newspaper advertisements of which majority of them cannot access and they also use announcements through local radio stations once or twice a day yet many citizens may not be in a position to listen to the radio. The best mode of communication is through posters which can be placed at the markets places or pathways and by use of public address systems mounted on cars which can move from market to market or village to village mobilizing residents to attend the public participation forums. There should be continuous communication and dissemination of information on what is going on in the county, engage the right stakeholders especially the opinion leaders and experts, have good timing of public participation meetings so as to have key stakeholders attending, formulate/have civic education bill or laws, assembly to be in touch with the public by use of media and public barazas.

Majority of the citizens think that they have no capacity to participate or they don't understand what they are supposed to do in public participation forums. This shows that Trans-Nzoia County government has not carried out civic education to enlighten the citizenry on the need for public participation, what is done in public forums and why they should participate in such forums. There is need to empower the citizens by giving the information and documents containing information on development activities and legislations that require their input in advance so that they know and understand what they are coming to do in public forums. This will enable them to prepare their questions and contributions in advance before the actual meeting.

Most of the times citizens are invited for public participation forums without being given enough information and necessary documents in time hence few people turn up
for the meetings and even those who turn up may not ask questions or make adequate contributions because they would be getting information for the first time. The key informants interviewed said that they normally post the necessary documents in the Trans-Nzoia County governments or assembly’s website for the public to access and download. However, not many people have the capacity and resources to visit the website and download the said documents. Scholars have cited lack of capacity of many of the actors in developing countries as the reason for governments’ resistance to participation by the poor, who generally, have low literacy levels and hence deficient understanding of the policy process (Anwar, 2007).

Majority of the respondents believe that there are no designated or fixed venues for public participation and majority of the public cannot be reached because of their inaccessibility or inability to locate the venue. This has also contributed to the low attendance of public participation forums because the Trans-Nzoia County government and County Assembly hold their public participation forums in places that sometimes are not well known, exclusive and sometimes they keep on changing venues leaving the public not knowing where to go. Most of the time, public participation meetings are held only in the county headquarters for example in the social halls which are not known by people from the rural areas who may not even travel due to lack of transport facilitation. Sometimes these sessions are held in exclusive venues like Kitale Club that allow in members only. There is need to designate many places where public participation forums can be hosted and these venues should be located at the ward level if not village level to ensure majority attendance.

Majority of the citizens believe that political inclination influence the extent and quality of public participation and sometimes not everyone's views or contribution is
taken in. During public participation, elected leaders tend to discriminate against those who did not vote for them or those who have different ideologies such that only those who are politically correct are allowed to air their views and when they do so they give views as per the wishes of the politicians or in praise of the politicians. This discourages people who have genuine concerns or good ideas from raising them during the meetings. Some politicians transport their supporters to the public forums so that they can shut down their perceived political opponents and ensure that only their views are taken in, this has sometimes ended in public demonstrations and fights between rival groups.

Sometimes members of the public demand for meals, refreshments and fares during public participation meetings. This is because majority of the citizens are poor and therefore they feel they must be compensated for leaving their work to attend public participation forums. This is also contributed by the organizers of the meetings who host them in few venues that are far apart hence making it expensive for participants to attend. Most of the times, the meetings don’t start on time, meaning they have to hold people for many hours therefore people will demand for refreshments, meals and fares back home.

Majority of the respondents believe that most of the citizens lack time to attend public participation forums because most of them are busy trying to eke a living and therefore find attending such meetings as a waste of time and resources. The county government should organize the forums during weekends or market-days where people are free to attend.

The language used, for example, in budget making is too technical for common citizens to comprehend what the facilitators will be talking about. The public
participation documents should be translated to local languages, Kiswahili or simple English to avoid technical jargons and vocabularies that will put off the common citizens. It can also be translated orally during presentation. Therefore translators should be employed by the Trans-Nzoia County government for purposes of public participation forums.

Most citizens think that the notification for public participation forums is short and they have inadequate time to reflect on development plans/proposals which may not reach them. Public participation organizers put notices of public forums few days to the D-day hence majority of the citizens may fail to attend or prepare adequately for the said event. There is need to put the notice of public participation at least two weeks in advance and then keep on reminding the public otherwise majority will forget. The advertisements and announcements should be in popular media such as local FM radio stations, daily newspapers, posters and use of public address to remind the public and mobilize them to attend the meetings.

5.2.1 Two-way Communication in County Governance

Through the lens of Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action, communication can be suggested as a medium that improves democratic development contexts, in this case between county political leaders and the citizens in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. But even though leaders see the increased communication as a positive development, this process places some other types of demands on them.

Looking at these challenges in the light of the communicative action, Habermas (1984) suggests that for communicative action to occur, an ‘ideal speech situation’ defined by a number of factors need to be in place. Some of these factors are that nobody can be excluded from the discussion, that everybody has the same chance to
contribute and that the communication must be free from external as well as internal restrictions. But the different challenges that the county political leaders are facing when trying to communicate for accountability hinders them from achieving the ‘ideal speech situation’ through communication. What the communicative action theory does is to help reveal the constraints as well as the benefits of using communication in leadership. As O’Donnell and Henriksen (2002) and Unwin (2009) suggest this theory is helpful in establishing the impact, or in the case of my research, how politicians try to hold themselves accountable through communication with citizens and their experiences regarding that process.

By looking at the results from this research through Habermas’ theory of communicative action has helped making visible the prospects of communication in democratic development. The answers to my research questions are that the county political leaders in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya are appreciating the increased demands from the citizens through communication. The research shows that communication has eased the interaction between the county political leaders and citizens and has contributed greatly to increase two-way-communication between the leaders and the citizens. This increased two-way-communication does also contribute to closing the very important feedback gap between the leaders and citizens in this county, which is required to reach development in a society (Making All Voices Count, 2014).

This study reveals that leadership accountability in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya has improved through communication, since communication has contributed to improve the interaction between the leaders and the citizens as well as the service delivery, but is still far from optimal. In the far flung areas of the county, away from the seat of the Trans-Nzoia County government in Kitale town, the citizenry feel they are not as
engaged in communication as they ought to be. The concept of a digital divide is clearly communicated within the challenges the leaders face. Working with democracy through communication must accommodate these gaps, because an enabling environment is necessary if leadership accountability through communication is to be fully realized. The study focused on communication between citizens and leaders on county governance of Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. In order to answer the study questions, the study investigated accountability of county leaders.

The study findings therefore stress the fact that achievements of community projects or satisfactory services are tied to community participation which calls for active involvement of all community members in need assessment, influencing the direction and execution of projects, rather than merely receiving a share of project benefits from a distance. Working as a team helps to tap the energies and resources of individual citizens within the community for the benefits of the entire community as emphasized in communicative theory of which this study is grounded on. It also ensures that varying interests of stakeholders are balanced and the decisions are made in a rational, informed and transparent fashion contributing to overall efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions (Oloo, 2006).

The role of communication and information is a critical component of governance and democracy. It is therefore important that both national and county governments as a matter of policy endeavour to integrate their functional roles in the political and development agenda. Furthermore, the role of communication and information remains a critical component of generating information needed for decision making processes, analysis and interpretation of core issues of governance by citizens.
As O’Donnell and Henriksen (2002) and Unwin (2009) suggest this theory provides a foundation on which critical evaluations of communication between citizens and political leadership in county governments in Kenya can be developed.

Even though the literacy level among the Trans-Nzoia County citizenry is good, communication between citizens and the leadership is still poor. Much of the population has no problem in communicating through the Kiswahili national language. Some of the participants, however, even though doubtful about the communication that goes on between them and the county leadership, wished that the leaders could come closer to them as suggested by the following participant:

As a citizen of Trans-Nzoia County, I will appreciate if our political leaders will be more close to us wanainchi and talk to us always. This will ensure efficient communication of county development policies. (Respondent 3)

The introduction of county governance in Kenya in March, 2013, meant that the local communities are to be more involved from the initial stages of county policy implementation. There ought to have been more interactions between citizens and county governments especially in Trans-Nzoia County, in such a way that workshops and seminars on various aspects of county governance are discussed.

5.2.2 Leadership Accountability Demands and Challenges through Communication

When citizens become increasingly engaged through communication channels they also use these communication channels gadgets to demand accountability and service delivery from their political leaders (Alissandrakis et al, 2013, Baguma, 2014, Edwards, 2006). The Trans-Nzoia County political leaders in this research agree that the leadership demands have increased, but they do not look at it as something
negative but positive, both for themselves at their workplaces as well as for the citizens they serve. The county political leaders in this research feel that the demands from the citizens keep them on their toes to do an even better job, and to reach common understanding with citizens. This common understanding is the core of successful communication from which both the leaders and the citizens benefit (Habermas, 1984), which ultimately enhances development.

One factor towards achieving social development and transformation in a society is good leadership, and governance that promotes and supports involvement of citizens in government agendas (Asiimwe et al, 2013). The increased societal demands through communication channels contribute to the mentioned involvement in government agendas.

As respondent 14 underlines:

As leaders we have to get issues right from citizens at the grass roots (‘mashinani’) then we take them up.

This statement shows how the promotion of citizen involvement drives leaders to collect information from the grass root level and without this crucial communication and information from ‘the grass roots,’ sustainable development cannot be reached (Unwin, 2009).

The increasing demands from citizens motivate the county leaders in different ways, as the following quote suggests:

For sure, it has also boosted us as leaders to also demand from our governor.

I request for a service from the county that is needed within my Ward, and
my people have the right to access the said service. Then I also put a lot of
demand pressure from the governor’s office for implementation (KII 7)

This quote is very encouraging to read from a development perspective; that the
increased communication between the county leaders and the citizens also strengthens
the county leaders to demand more from the Trans-Nzoia County government,
working from the grass roots and up (Unwin, 2009, p.39). And since these increased
demands are conducted through communication channels, therefore it can be claimed
that communication channels also have changed the communication quality between
different political levels, and in that case be suggested as a medium that improves
communication in democratic development contexts, not just between county political
leaders and citizens, but also within the government structure.

The public sector is responsible for promoting public accountability, but faces
different challenges and constraints in doing so (Kim, 2009). Some of the different
challenges and constraints the county political leaders in Trans-Nzoia County face
when it comes to public accountability through communication are weak
infrastructure and lack of skills, access to communication gadgets and an inadequate
budget for communication.

Looking at these challenges in the light of the Theory of Communicative Action,
Habermas (1984) suggests that for communicative action to occur, an “ideal speech
situation” defined by a number of factors need to be in place. Two of these factors are
that nobody, regardless of position, can be excluded from the discussion, and that
everybody has the same chance to contribute. Already here Habermas’ Theory of
Communicative Action helps to highlight that the county political leaders in Trans-
Nzoia County have a hard time achieving the “ideal speech situation”. Statements like:

Power blackouts are quite common here…my mobile phone battery goes off and communication is cut completely. (KII 2)

Communication network is unreliable (KII 3)

We don’t have personal computers/laptops and if we want to use internet or computer we need to go to a cyber cafe. (KII 3)

I have no access to it. (KII 5)

This goes against the ‘ideal speech situation.’ The absence of electricity and network and even access to the communication gadgets, challenges the county leaders and their ability to be accountable, or be held accountable through communication. When Habermas lists the factors required for this achievement the external restrictions should therefore be given greater emphasis, especially as they have the power to counter the “ideal speech situation”. The absence of a basic infrastructure is also a main reason why so many Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects fail, since they have not considered the basic needs or the situation of the citizens in question (Unwin, 2009).

Another factor that needs to be fulfilled in order to reach the ‘ideal speech situation’ is a communication free from external as well as internal hindrances. Besides the weak infrastructure, the county leaders communicate other challenges. Six out of the eight respondents for example, mention that their skills and knowledge about how to use different communication gadgets are non-existent or very limited.
There is willingness to use the internet, but we don’t have the computer knowledge? Even somebody can give you a laptop with a modem but you fail to use it to do a simple task. (KII 7)

And KII 6, states that: Instead of photocopying, scanning or emailing a document, you travel to deliver it physically when you only needed the skill to send the same.

These statements do not only show restrictions towards reaching an “ideal speech situation”, they do also suggest that just physically providing communication channel tools to leaders will not be enough to close the feedback inadequacy. Just as citizens are gaining knowledge on how to use communication channels to demand accountability, leaders require the same assistance to be able to respond to the demands effectively (Making All Voices Count, 2014). Another constraint is the one concerning literacy and interpretation. Statements like;

At times we inform people and they misunderstand or misinterpret the information. (KII 1)

There is low computer literacy level. It means you have to translate, and when you do the translation, the message may lose its original meaning. (KII 2)

This shows that the citizens and their leaders do not always communicate on the same level. The receiver is not decoding the message in the way the sender encoded it (Hall, 1973) due to many different factors such as language skills, amount of background information, power structures, and context which makes the “ideal speech situation” fail.
Then there are the costs regarding communication which require budgets that will enable leaders to respond to citizens’ demands. But according to this research the county political leaders in Trans-Nzoia County do not have such a communication budget.

Money for communication (airtime and bundles) is not given by the Trans-Nzoia County government. So the accountability might become a problem because you have not reached your people and told them what you are supposed to do because of lack of money. (KII 2)

KII 6, Jan 2014 states that:

Trans-Nzoia County budget gets constrained and as leaders we find ourselves not communicating or not being accountable to our areas of representations. There is no money given from both the National or County governments for communication, and even if it is there, it is never enough.

How are the county leaders supposed to communicate if they are not given a budget that enables them to do so? All the six respondents I called to ask some complementary questions mention that they all have to use their own money every month in order to be able to communicate to the citizens. Because there is no money in their budgets targeted for communication with the citizens, and both radio announcements, calls and internet cost money.

Communication is considered as a fundamental need in society (Unwin, 2009 and Habermas, 1984 with others) and it inevitably plays a crucial part within the role of leadership. Studies show that leaders spend around 70-90 percentage of their work on communication (Johansson et al., 2011, and Heide et al. 2012). So the fact that a
substantial portion of these leaders does not have a budget for communication complicates the accountability process. Many county political leaders claim that they end up using their own money (salary and allowances) in order to hold themselves accountable to the citizens.

   Most of the time, I use my personal money to communicate with my people on the ground (at the grassroots). I sometimes spent my personal money, which is not good because I am married and I have a family which I am supposed to provide basic needs for. As leaders we need to talk to citizens, but we don’t have money to do so. (KII 5)

This issue is a big constraint that definitely makes the “ideal speech situation” unattainable.

Even the fact that none of the eight respondents that I forwarded the complementary questions indicates that the respondents face constraints when trying to communicate through communication gadgets. In this light one can question if communication channels really improve communication and contribute to achieving the “ideal speech situation” or not. Bauman (1998, in O’Donnell and Henriksen, 2002) state that in the Habermas Theory of Communicative Action communication channels are not considered important in the developed part of the world. That those who do not have access to either the skills or the infrastructure of communication gadgets are excluded and marginalized to the “immobility” of the no man’s land of the digital divide (ibid, p. 93). So if we are living in a world where communication channels are taken for granted in our everyday life and communication, then there is not only the hierarchy of democracy, but also a hierarchy of digital access, where those not having access are excluded and cannot be part of an “ideal speech situation”. The following statements
from the respondents further highlight the complex situation leaders’ have to face when using communication gadgets, under such conditions:

Computer training facilities are missing for the county staff. The Trans-Nzoia County government has not provided any communication gadgets education, but they say that it’s a requirement that a leader should get individually. (KII 6)

Going into an internet era, a global public sphere, one should think that it is in a county government’s own interest to educate and enlighten their staff in those skills. Since, as KII 7 put it;

As Trans-Nzoia County leaders we are expected to be all knowledgeable in computer and yet we are unable because of those limitations.

Certainly these leaders are leading citizens into a communication digital era yet they are not yet compliant (still analogue). How will the leaders be able to do a good job keeping up with the world and lead citizens into the future when they are not getting any facilities or training in the most basic communication skills? Communication is of fundamental importance in a society to achieve development, so if communication through communication channels is today’s standard and county leaders are missing the resources, skills, access, and infrastructure to use these means, then one of the most important requirements towards sustainable development is missing and the county political leaders are excluded to the no man’s land of the digital divide.

5.2.3 Way Forward on Citizens-Leaders Communication in County Governance

Access to information is critical for enabling citizens to exercise their voice, to effectively monitor and hold the county government to account, and to enter into
informed dialogue about decisions which affect their lives. It is seen as vital for empowering all citizens, including vulnerable and excluded ones, to claim their broader rights and entitlements. But the potential contribution to good governance of access to information lies in both the willingness of the county government to be transparent, as well as the ability of citizens to demand and use information – both of which may be constrained in low capacity settings. A key question in this regard is: To what extent can access to information and county governments’ transparency, advance the claims of poor and marginalised groups and make the governments accountable?

Why is the right to information important? How can it be used, and how can it be effectively implemented by county governments? This thesis provides case studies to show that information empowers citizens to demand adherence to the whole range of their human rights. By establishing the right to information in law and by setting up public information systems, county governments can enhance citizens' participation in governance, advance equitable economic development, reduce poverty and fight corruption.

Leaders should be transparent, free with citizens and accessible at the same time, avoid using middlemen and organise meetings between themselves and citizens frequently. They should avoid using their personal assistants to get information from the citizens and the latter should not shy away from the county government offices but should be aggressive and let their voices be heard. Leaders should offer their phone numbers for direct communication with citizens. The offices of these leaders should be decentralised in all county wards and not only at the county headquarters.
The issues of employing kinsmen in the offices (nepotism) and tribalism should be discouraged and each citizen given an equal chance to access leaders at all times. Educate citizens on the need to freely communicate with leaders without fear. County leaders should be advised to move to the far-flung areas of the county and reach the common citizens. There should be awareness to the citizens on the importance of participating in county governance affairs. The governor should strive to reach citizens in person and leaders should be educated on the need for a free flowing information system. Leaders should be open to the public and questioned to be answerable on their actions. There should be direct communication between the county government and the citizens through forums.

Communication is a very important tool that enhances the development of the county as it is a way of making the county government know the desire and needs of the people. I suggest that communication is important and its seriousness should be uplifted to develop the county. Communication is very vital for development in the county and should therefore be upgraded and upheld. Communication is critical because it will inform the citizens about the development programmes in the county. It is through communication that leaders and citizens will plan about the future and enable citizens to understand the goals of the county that will bring about economic growth. It also enables leaders to understand the challenges that citizens face at county level hence develop strategies to counter them. Communication helps leaders to work effectively as they will know the issues to be given priority in the development agenda. Good communication enhances development of any country peace and unity among citizens fostering development and understanding among the leaders and citizens.
Good communication is key and a cornerstone to any development to occur in a certain setup of governance. For any modern society to develop, channels of communication must be opened. Information is power and leaders should not fear criticism. Communication is a vital component for any county to achieve any significant economic development. This is so precisely because it enables the elected county leaders to get to know the problems affecting the citizenry and also provide an assessment to the county leaders based on the feedback from the citizens. Communication is crucial since it is the pillar for the success of any institution, and without it everything is prone to fail and the government shall persistently be in blame from all corners. It is better for leaders to communicate to the citizens and tell them what they are doing even when they have done nothing. Empowers citizens, gives mandate to the leaders to formulate and implement policy, development of trust and openness in governance and it is evaluative in nature of the situation i.e. gives situational analysis. Communication is crucial to success as far as devolution is concerned. Leaders should actively engage citizens in development agenda through dialogue and other consultative forums.

There should be communication between leaders and their citizens to enhance development and social welfare of the citizenry. The importance of communication is to bind both leaders and citizens for better development and growth in the county. It also helps leaders to know whether the citizens are dissatisfied with their service delivery and do the necessary adjustments on their leadership. It is one way in which the leaders or the government can identify the problems that affect the citizens or the entire nation. Good communication ensures transparency in county governance and makes citizens to have confidence in their leaders. Helps the leaders and citizens to pull together and work towards a common course. Proper formal communication
promotes better leadership in a county. Communication is very important in that when both leaders and citizens come together they can brainstorm on various views on how to improve the county in terms of economic status, levels of education, poverty eradication among others. When there is communication with the leaders and citizens, they will not blame each other for failure in providing the basic services for their county. Therefore the county government should come up with better ways of getting views from citizens other than use funeral gatherings to hear from its citizens.

Citizens will always raise their opinions in order for them to be tackled. What is planned for should be implemented and everything evaluated and monitored. Communication is important so that the leaders can pass policy issues to the citizens while citizens give feedback to the government. Communication serves to strengthen governance if utilized well but can otherwise bring down governance if not utilized well. It is important therefore to give people of all ages to air out their views and participate in some of the committees set up. If communication is there between the two (citizens and leaders) then we shall move in the same direction in solving problems. It brings harmony between the citizens and leaders. It brings or informs citizens, it enables the citizens to know what work has been covered and the one not yet.

Communication is very important in understanding the root causes of some problems affecting people and should be the key virtue but in most cases there is very low or no communication at all. Communication is very important for every successful organization and the county is such an organization and it should be two-way. If communication is not enhanced there will be a fall out between the leaders and the citizens. It encourages democracy that leads to good governance. They need to
encourage more open forums to get the real issues rather than using representatives who at times serve their own interests.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that the following are challenges of integrating communication in the devolved governance for sustainable development: negative attitude towards communication, lack of willingness of the citizens to participate, lack of political goodwill from elected leaders, lack of awareness of public participation meetings, lack of capacity to participate, lack of designated public participation venues, political interference/inclination influence the extent and quality of participation, demand for incentives and lack of time by the citizens, the nature of language during public meetings and citizens are given short notice about public participation forums and inadequate time to reflect on development plans/proposals.

The results of this research clearly show that there should be increased communication between the county political leaders and citizens. This increased two-way-communication will contribute to closing the feedback gap between leaders and citizens in Trans-Nzoia County, which is required to reach societal development (Making All Voices Count, 2014). Through Habermas’ theory of communicative action, communication can therefore be suggested as a medium that improves democratic development. The county political leaders in this research feel that the increased demands of the citizens motivate them to do an even better job and that they now give citizens the services they want and need thanks to the increased communication.

I hope this study will generally contribute to the field of communication for development in Kenya and specifically in the Trans-Nzoia County government.
Furthermore I hope that the County government of Trans-Nzoia through this study will get a better understanding and knowledge of how to go about future interventions in the county towards increased communication for development at all levels. Communication has the opportunity to promote human and social development. But it is important to emphasize that building momentum from a county perspective is more important than achieving quick success, in order to ensure good leadership in this information-age. The study will be beneficial to both citizens and the county leadership as they will get empirical data and interpretations upon which they could gauge and improve on their communication for good governance.

5.4 Recommendations

The following are some of the key recommendations, possible policy options and legal matters relevant to communication between citizens and leaders in Trans-Nzoia County governance. Given the centrality of communication to leadership and society, I recommend that:

(a) Developing mechanisms for participation entailing citizen participation being encouraged at the smallest unit of the devolved governance like villages similar to the chiefs’ “barazas” of the former Provincial Administration

(b) Develop positive attitude by the citizens towards public participation by explaining to them the benefits of public participation for sustainable development

(c) County government leaders to provide political goodwill towards public participation, this can be achieved if the citizens elect good county government leaders right from the MCAs to governors

(d) Improve capacity of the citizenry to participate through civic education and have designated and accessible (inclusive) venues for public participation
(e) Practice objectivity and political tolerance/neutrality for quality of deliberation and also increase citizen awareness and provide adequate information on public participation.

(f) Give a long notice to citizens about two to four weeks on public participation forums to give enough time to reflect on development plans/proposals.

(g) Trans-Nzoia County leadership should establish television and FM Community radio stations for easy and faster communication of the county government’s policies.

(h) There ought to be county newspapers or magazines in national languages both English and Kiswahili that will enhance information flow and feedback to the citizenry. These should be availed at minimum or no cost in all county wards.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The focus of this study was to investigate communication between citizens and leaders in county governance with a focus on Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. Communication is a very broad area and therefore for the purpose of enhancing research activities and general public awareness, other researchers may carry out studies in the following areas:

a) Explore strategies on how to improve communication in the devolved system of governance for sustainable development.

b) Analysis of the effect of communication between citizens and leaders on service delivery by County Governments in Kenya.
5.6 Summary

I hope this study will generally contribute to the field of communication for development in Kenya and specifically in the Trans-Nzoia County government. Furthermore I hope that the County government of Trans-Nzoia through this study will get a better understanding and knowledge of how to go about future interventions in the county towards increased communication for development at all levels. Communication has the opportunity to promote human and social development. But it is important to emphasize that building momentum from a county perspective is more important than achieving quick success, in order to ensure good leadership in this information-age. The study will be beneficial to both citizens and the county leadership as they will get empirical data and interpretations upon which they could gauge and improve on their communication for good governance.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM MOI UNIVERSITY

MOI UNIVERSITY
ISO 9001:2008 Certified Institution
OFFICE OF THE DEAN
SCHOOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

P.O. Box 3900
Nairobi, Kenya

REF: MU/SHRD/PO/77

22ND April, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

REF: NATEMBEYA KISIANGANI MARTIN—SHRD/PGC/24/12

The above named is a Master of Science student at Moi University, School of Human Resource Development, Department of Communication Studies.

It is a requirement of his Masters Studies that he conducts a research and produce a Thesis. The topic of his Thesis is “Communication Between Citizens and Leaders on County Governance: A study of Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya.”

Any assistance accorded to him will be highly appreciated.

PROF. I. KONYIKE
DEAN, SCHOOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
APPENDIX 2: AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. MARTIN NAYIHERA KINJAMANI
of MOI UNIVERSITY, P.O. BOX 81 000,KITALE, has been permitted to conduct research in Trans Nzoia County on the topic: COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITIZENS AND LEADERS ON COUNTY GOVERNANCE: A STUDY OF TRANS-NOZIA COUNTY IN KENYA for the period ending:
9th October, 2010

Applicant's Signature

Permit No. : NACOSTI/RP/23288/2010
Date of Issue: 9th October, 2010
Fee Rendered: Ksh 1000

Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013
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Republic of Kenya
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
Research License
Serial No: A 21421
Conditions: See back page
APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD)

Dear Participant,

Re: Request for consent to participate in this study

I, Natembeya Kisiangani Martin, am a Masters student at Moi University-Eldoret, researching on:

Communication between citizens and leaders on county governance: A study of Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya

I would like to seek adequate information from you as opinion leaders in this county that will assist me draw relevant conclusions on this topic. Your informed consent, willingness and freedom to give information for this study is sought. Anonymity of your identity will be kept and confidentiality of information provided shall be held and used for this research purpose only.

Would you be willing to participate in this discussion as a group?

Yes________________________________

No________________________________

If Yes, kindly sign below;

I__________________________________

On behalf of the group append my signature stating that this assessment and its requirements have been explained to us as stated above, and that we, as a group, have understood and accepted, on our own accord without pressure at all to participate in this discussion.

Witness: I______________________________________________

Hereby, on behalf of the group, append my signature as witness to the above mentioned process, as confirmation that consent was sought and given as stated.
APPENDIX 4: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR GATEKEEPERS

I am willing to participate in this research project. I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from the research at any time. The purpose of the research has been explained to me and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that any information gathered in the course of this study is confidential and that neither my name nor any other identified information will be used or published without my written permission.

I understand that if I have any complaints or concerns about this study, I can contact;

Natembeya Kisiangani Martin,

Moi University - Eldoret.

Signed________________________

Date_________________________
APPENDIX 5: LETTER OF CONSENT FOR KEY INFORMANTS

P.O. Box 3900-30100,

Eldoret

1st December, 2013.

Dear Participant,

My name is Natembeya Kisiangani Martin, a Masters student at Moi University - Eldoret. I am conducting research on Communication between citizens and leaders on county governance: A study of Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. The purpose of this interview is to seek information from you as a County/Ward leader because I believe you have adequate information that will assist me draw relevant conclusion on this topic. You have been purposely selected to participate in this study and I will be pleased if you kindly sign the informed consent letter provided to enable us proceed with the interview. Our interview procedure will be guided by the following:

Your informed consent is sought and your willingness to participate in this interview follows your freedom in giving information for this study.

Anonymity of your name will be kept and matters discussed in this interview will be reserved for research purpose only.

Confidentiality in all your information provided shall be held and treated with confidence and will not be disclosed or no reference of your direct words will appear in the final report.

Duration of interview will be thirty minutes.

Gender____________________________

Date____________________________

Time____________________________

Consent Declaration

I have read and understood the above information and the procedures pertaining to this interview for research purposes. I also understand that by signing this consent letter, I have agreed to participate in this study with consent and willing to provide information required voluntarily.

Signature___________________ Date_________________
APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. Tell me about the communication that goes on between you and the citizens in this county/ward?

2. What are the issues that you communicate about with the citizens in this county/ward? or What are the issues that citizens communicate about with you in this county/ward?

3. How do the citizens in this county/ward communicate to you? or How does your office communicate with citizens in this county/ward?

4. How do you get feedback from citizens on policy implementation on county/ward governance? or How do citizens get feedback from you on the issues they have raised on county/ward governance?

5. Please tell me about any factors that sometimes hinder the flow of information between the citizens and the county government leadership?

6. What issues should be dealt with to encourage communication between citizens and you on county governance?

7. How can communication between citizens and you be used to encourage their participation in county governance?

8. What is your comment on the seriousness/importance of the communication between citizens and the leaders in this county/ward?

9. How can barriers to free flow of information between citizens and you in county governance be removed?

10. Do you have any other suggestions/opinions/views you may wish to share with me on communication between citizens and leaders in county governance?
### APPENDIX 7: RESEARCH SCHEDULE

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# APPENDIX 8: RESEARCH BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget item</th>
<th>Unit cost in Kshs</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Total in Kshs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinks for the participants</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing materials</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio recorder</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying, printing and binding</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fare</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>97,500</td>
<td>97,500</td>
<td>97,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>