Servant Leadership Style and Public Participation in the County Governments in Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: *The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of servant leadership style on public participation in the Kenyan county governments.*

Methodology: *The study adopted both descriptive and explanatory research designs. The study population comprised citizens who are registered voters in all the 47 counties in Kenya. A two stage sampling technique was used to select 8 counties and a sample of 400 respondents to participate in the study. A pilot test was conducted to detect and correct weaknesses in design and instrumentation. Of the 400 respondents, 296 completed the questionnaires properly giving a response rate of 74%. Cronbach's alpha was used to test for internal reliability of the survey items used in the study. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlations and regression analysis were used for data analysis.*

Findings: *From the descriptive analysis 53.24% of the respondents indicated that the practice of servant leadership was below average in their county. Further, servant leadership style as a predictor variable was found to have a strong positive correlation (r =.669, p <.001, 2 tailed) with public participation and explained 44.7% (R^2 = 0.447) of the variability in public participation. The regression results revealed that servant leadership had a significant positive coefficient (β = .579, p < .001) which imply that a unit change in servant leadership style will enhance public participation by 0.579 units. The study concluded that there is a statistically significant influence of servant leadership style on the public participation in the county governments in Kenya. Further, the study found that, modeling (β = 0.257, p < .05) and wisdom (β = 0.174, p < .05) were the strongest constructs of servant leadership style that we key in the style's influence on public participation.*

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: *The study recommended that county leader should be encouraged to exercise servant leadership style by upholding its constructs that enhance public participation. Thus leaders should make effort to model followers into servant leaders by leading by good example and be alert to surroundings and anticipate consequences of their decisions and solve complex problems. The study fills a gap in the literature on the influence of servant leadership on public participation and the main construct at play in the influence. The findings will benefit policy makers, county governments, citizens and other stake stakeholders in making better decision to achieve effective public participation.*

Key words: *Servant Leadership Style, Public Participation, County Governments, Governance*

I. Introduction

Servant leadership is "a practical altruistic philosophy that promotes people whose first priority is to serve and then lead as a means of giving services to people and institutions" (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leaders altruistically assist others before themselves, and develop their followers to their fullest potential by serving as role models of good ethical behavior, provide support, and build self-confidence to their followers and serve community interest (Sendjaya, Sarros&Santora, 2008 2008). The authors holds that servant leaders see others as equal partners, shared values, mutual trust and commitment while leading authentically by displaying humility, integrity and accountability. Servant leaders focus on and concern for the welfare of others.

Greenleaf (2002) argued that servant leadership is demonstrated whenever those served by servant leaders are positively transformed in multiple dimensions (e.g. emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually) into servant leaders themselves by setting a personal example for followers. The transforming influence occurs through behaviors such as role modelling, mentoring, empowering and trust (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Greenleaf (1998) identified of servant leadership as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, commitment to the growth of people, and community building. However there are many other scholars (Barbuto&Wheeler, 2006; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya, *et al.*, 2008) who refined

these characteristics and thus there is no agreed list of servant leadership constructs tough all of them are centered around the foundation of service to others.

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) hold that altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship are servant leadership style constructs that are conceptually and empirically distinct. Altruistic calling describes a leader's deep-rooted desire to make a positive difference in others'. Because the ultimate goal is to serve, leaders high in altruistic calling will put others' interests ahead of their own and will diligently work to meet followers' needs (Barbuto& Wheeler, 2006). Wong and Page (2003) refer to this quality as 'servanthood'. Servant leaders need to demonstrate authenticity by showing consistent display of humility, integrity, accountability, security and vulnerability" (Sendjaya, *et al*., 2008). Servant leaders accept people for who they are, engage with others as equal partners with concern for the other person's wellbeing (Sendjaya, *et al.,* 2008).

Emotional healing or empathy is putting oneself in another person's situation and observing it from their perspective, especially during hardship or trauma. From a leader follower situation, the follower feels validated and unique. Healing involves supporting the followers to overcome their problems and helping them take care of their well-being (Barbuto& Wheeler, 2006). Leaders high in persuasive mapping are skilled at mapping issues and conceptualizing greater possibilities and are compelling when articulating these opportunities. Persuasive mapping describes the extent that leaders use sound reasoning and mental frameworks to encourage others to visualize the organization's future and are persuasive, offering compelling reasons to get others to do things (Barbuto& Wheeler, 2006).

Wisdom is a combination of awareness of surroundings and anticipation of consequences where leaders are adept at picking up cues from the environment and understanding their implications. Such leaders are good at combining the height of knowledge and utility (Barbuto& Wheeler, 2006). Organizational stewardship describes the extent that leaders prepare an organization to make a positive contribution to society through community development, programs and outreach (Barbuto& Wheeler, 2006). Stewardship involves the leader taking responsibility for their leadership role (Greenleaf, 1996). Commitment to people's growth in the organization is a dedication to each person and commitment to help the growth of each individual both professionally and personally (Greenleaf, 1996; Northouse, 2016).

Renewed governance reforms that lay emphasis on devolution of power as a way of promoting participatory democracy, improve systems of governance and foster economic growth in rural areas have been adopted in many nations in the world (World Bank, 2013). A key component of devolved governance is the public participation process which enhances decision making, reduces citizen cynicism toward government and builds stakeholder consensus in government (Sanoff, 2000; Weeks, 2000). However, Furia and Wallace-Jones (2000) show that in order for participation of public to be effective, the objectives of engaging the public should be met. Chompunth and Chomphan (2012) posit that effective public participation is the extent to which the public participation objectives are clear; extent to which participants influence the decision; levels of inclusiveness, transparency, empowerment of the people; fostering mutual communication and learning processes; consensus seeking as well as conflicts resolution between shareholders. Unfortunately, recent studies show that in most democracies, engaging citizens in public participation remains a challenge (Carreira, Machado &Vasconcelos, 2016).

Designing and implementing programmes related to public participation requires effective leadership (Crosby & Bryson, 2005) to ensure that different leadership roles such as sponsoring, defending and facilitating the participation processes are fulfilled (Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013). Although the role of leadership in improving participation has been emphasized (Cornwall, 2008; Riristuningsia, Wahyunadi& Harsono,2017), past studies have only focused on aspects of structures to meet legislative or fiscal requirements and building capacity as barriers to effective public participation (Ghartey, Ghartey&Essaw, 2016). The impact of leadership approaches on citizen participation remains understudied (Beer, 2014; Ghartey, Mensah, &Ghartey, 2016; Greasley& Stoker, 2008; Rathore, 2012; Van Wart, 2013).

In Kenya, there are two levels of government created on equal basis by the Constitution of Kenya 2010. There is a National government and 47 devolved county governments with clearly defined geographical boundaries. The two levels of governments have clear mandate to provide a range of significant services to the citizens. Further, the Constitution makes public participation a central part of Kenya's governance system and mandates leaders at both levels of governments to enhance and facilitate participation of the public in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them. Moreover, the High Court of Kenya warned that Public participation ought to be real and ought not to be treated as a mere formality for the purposes of fulfilment of the Constitutional dictates county leaders should ensure that the spirit of public participation is attained both quantitatively and qualitatively (County Public Participation Guidelines (2016). Despite the aforesaid constitutional imperatives, reports indicate that public participation still remains dismally low in the county governments in Kenya (ICPAK, 2014; Oxfam, 2017; Transition Authority, 2014). Undoubtedly, enhancing public participation requires leaders who stand on a foundation of good governance principles and

whether the leadership style is attributed to the low public participation is yet to be established through empirical research.

Gabris and Simo (1995) inferred that servant leadership should be a natural model in the public sector since leaders in public organizations ought to have stronger intentions to serve the people. These views were supported by Amah (2019) with a strong contention that servant leadership style is best value-based leadership style that would produce good leaders in Africa to ensure the continent derives the expected benefits of the new face of globalization. Further, Weinstein (2013)state that servant leadership paradigm applicability in public sector could provide a relationship of trust to address the problems affecting governments. Unfortunately, Slack *et al.,* (2019) observed that public sector leaders do not have strong intentions to serve and the expected outcomes of servant leadership are not necessarily guaranteed. These contradicting views, further justify an investigation on the impact of servant leadership style on public participation in the county governments in Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Good and inclusive governance is imperative for social and economic growth at all levels of governments (World Bank, 2013). To realize this aspiration, the Kenya Constitution 2010, mandates leaders in the county governments to facilitate and promote public participation as a governance approach that is widely accredited to deliver decisions that are transparent, accountable, responsive, participatory and inclusive of interested stakeholders. Accordingly and to instill public participation in the national values and principles of governance, numerous legal provisions and guidelines were instituted at the county government level.

Despite the aforementioned constitutional and legislative provisions, reports available indicate that public participation remains dismally low and is not effective in the county governments in Kenya (ICPAK, 2014; KIPPRA, 2015; Opiyo, 2017; Oxfam, 2017;Transition Authority, 2014). Moreover, where participation has occurred, it has mainly been rhetoric, ignored citizens' input, and no feedback provided back to the public (SID, 2016). Consequently, citizens are dissatisfied with county decisions (Gitegi&Iravo, 2016; Muriu, 2012) and in certain cases, citizens have filed court cases against their county governments where their leaders made decisions without their input (KSG, 2015). Undoubtedly, these challenges demonstrate the self-serving nature of the leaders and the need for effective leadership style is imperative in the county governments.

Servant leadership is premised on giving services for the common good of the institution and the community served by the institution, and not about self-interest (Greenleaf, 1970). Extant literatures has linked servant leadership to positive outcomes, such as enhanced organizational performance (Liden, *et. al*., 2008), employee empowerment (Liden, *et. al* 2008; Murari& Gupta, 2012) and employee engagement (Carter &Baghurst, 2014). However, despite the enormous popularity of servant leadership in the modern age, there is limited research has examined the prevalence of servant leadership in public sector and its constructs weave their effects. The few studies in Kenya on public participation such as Gitegi and Iravo (2016), Kaseya and Kihonge (2016), Muriu (2012); Opiyo (2017) and Siala (2015) focused on other factors impacting public participation but did not explore the link between leadership styles and public participation. Given the centrality of public participation in governance, the present study was informed by the need to investigate the relationship between servant leadership style and public participation in the county governments in Kenya.

II. Literature Review
2.1 Servant Leadership Theory

The servant leadership model puts services to others as the first priority. Servant-leadership stresses a holistic approach to work; power sharing in decision-making; increasing services to others; and promoting a sense of community. The servant-leader is servant first (Greenleaf, 1996).

Robert Greenleaf originated this theory in an essay that he later published in 1970. The central tenets of the servant-leadership framework are service to others with organizational success as the indirect derived outcome. This means a holistic approach to work, that is, "The work exists for an individual as much as the individual exists for the work" (Greenleaf, 1996). Russell (2001) indicates that leaders empower others to act by giving others power and not hoarding it.

Though servant-leadership is a viable model for organizational leadership (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004), it has received much criticism for its lack of empirical validation. Servant leadership theory is also criticized because it ignores issues such as accountability and the aggression of people in the workplace. At the same time it fails to take into account of the widely varying levels of competence among individuals (Lee &Zemke, 1993).

As presented by Liu, Horsley and Levenshus (2009), those in the public-relations sector should possessservant-leadership behaviors to spur organization-wide shifts in the direction of increased satisfaction, consensus and reduced contention. This theory supports the variable servant leadership style by explaining the

link between the followers and leader, and sheds light on the implications of that relationship on impacting consensus building, power sharing and conflict resolutions that are key for effective public participation.

2.2   Participatory Democratic Theory

The principle of people's participation underscores representative democracies and underpins 'participatory democracy'. Thus, participatory democracy is among a number of democratic theories that are conceived as complements to or variants of representative democracies and stems its roots from an Athenian statesman called Solon in 7th and 8th century. This theory argues that, where there is higher degree of participation, people are more are likely to believe that the decisions of the state are binding and hence form a less estranged attitude towards the government (Pateman, 1970; Day, 2017).

Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) postulate that public servants should ensure equitable provision of public services and the behaviors that facilitates this to happen are found in humanistic, democratic, participatory administration. These attributes place value on the process of interaction between public servants and citizens, which is fundamental to servant leadership Democratic participatory administration incorporates the value of democracy and advocates the creation of mechanisms to encourage and enhance citizen participation (Feldheim& Johnson (2004).

In the Kenya context, public participation is a process in which the Citizens, governmental as well as non-governmental groups influence law making, policy decision making, delivery of service, oversight and matters of development that affect them. It is a mutual interactive process whereby the bearer of duty passes information in transparent and timely manner, involves the public in making decision, responds and is responsible to their needs. Active involvement of the public in the process takes place when problem at stake directly relates to the public (County Public Participation Guidelines, 2016). Based on this operational definition four constructs of public participation were explored. These are: use of public participation mechanisms; public involvement and influence in decision- making; timely and transparent communication of information; and responsiveness and accountability of the agent to the public.

2.2 Empirical Review

Malingumu, Stouten, and Euwema, (2016) studied servant leadership, organizational citizenship creativity and behavior, and the position of Team-Member Exchange as a mediator. They employed a field study design that was multi-sourced comprised of 184 distinct triads of supervisor-employees' dyads, to examine if employees are encouraged by servant leaders to cooperate, to take responsibility and to make high quality connections between themselves (team-member exchange (TMX)). The results showed that a positive correlation existed between servant leadership and team-member exchange and that servant leadership style predicts Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Servant leaders seek empowerment for their followers through integration of their ideas in the process of decision-making. Similar findings were echoed (Vondey, 2010). The study by Malingumu, *et al.,* (2016) and Vondey (2010) agrees with other scholars like Rezaei, *et. al.,* (2012) that servant leadership provides support and resources through creation of a working environment where participation is key, establishing a communal culture, being communicative and supportive and seeking enhancement of a high-quality resources exchange among employees.

Russell and Stone (2002) conducted a review of servant leadership attributes with the aim of developing a preliminary practical model which would provide a basis for practical application, and also for future research. According to the study, service is the core of servant leadership. Another notable attribute of Servant leadership includes delegating responsibility and fostering participatory leadership. Servant leaders share their obligation and authority with others to meet a larger need. Such leaders enable their employees by giving them opportunities for them to do their best (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Zehir, Akyuz, Eren, and Turhan (2013) explored the indirect impacts that servant leadership behavior has on job performance and organizational citizenship behavior using organizational justice as mediating variable. A survey questionnaire administered to 400 randomly sampled teachers. The models were measured using exploratory and confirmatory factor. The study findings supported that servant leadership behavior has a positive relationship with organizational justice, and that organizational justice has a positive and significant relationship with job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, perceived leadership behaviors were significantly related to employee's perception of justice.

Feldheim and Johnson (2004) in their study argued that servant leadership is an established normative approach to public service with proven humanistic techniques for interactions that is based on authentic interactions, empowerment, integrity, social equity, and democratic participation in all aspects of administration. In their review of both servant-leadership and the public administration literature, they found that servant leadership style has focus on the values of empowerment, justice and fairness within society, and community building attained through participation. They conclude that the call for authentic public participation echoes the "prime directive" of servant-leadership (Feldheim, & Johnson, 2004).

Murari and Gupta (2012) investigated the impact of servant leadership on employee empowerment in high technology-oriented organizations in India using a sample of 114 questionnaires. The study concluded that foresight, persuading, awareness, and stewardship characteristics of servant leadership are very important for employee empowerment. Stewardship, persuading and conceptualizing characteristics of servant leadership have positive impact on consequences, organizational commitment, work environment satisfaction, role satisfaction and job involvement of employees leading to higher performance of the organization providing the competitive advantage to the organization.

III.   Methodology
The study adopted both descriptive and explanatory research designs. The study population comprised citizens who are registered voters in all the 47 counties in Kenya. A two stage sampling technique was used to select 8 counties and a sample of 400 respondents to participate in the study using questionnaires to collect data. A pilot test was conducted to detect and correct weaknesses in design and instrumentation. Of the 400 respondents, 296 completed the questionnaires properly giving a response rate of 74%. Cronbach's alpha was used to test for internal reliability of the survey items used in the study. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis. The study used correlation and regression analysis to analyze the association between the variables aided by SPSS software version 26. The presentation of the findings was done using tables and figures.

IV.   Results
4.1   Descriptive Findings for Servant Leadership Style
The research sought to assess the influence of Servant Leadership Style on public participation in the county governments in Kenya. Eight research questions were used to obtain feedback from the sampled respondents across the counties involved in the study in the country. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics results generated for the Servant Leadership Style. The results in Table 3 indicates that a majority of the county leaders, to a little extent (mean score result of 2.16 and a SD of 1.167) put the best interests of others ahead of their own and serve others before self; that a majority of county leaders to a little extent (mean score of 2.41 and a SD of 1.140) consistently display humility, integrity, accountability, security and vulnerability i.e. expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with their inner thoughts and feelings; that a majority of county leaders to a little extent (mean score of 2.56 and a SD of 1.151) have the ability to put people's accomplishments and talents in a proper perspective; that a majority of leaders to a little extent (mean of 2.487 and a SD of 1.116) positively transform others in multiple dimensions (e.g. emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually) into servant leaders themselves.

The results also indicate that a majority of the county leaders to a little extent (mean score result of 2.50 and a SD of 1.114 demonstrate genuine concern for other leaders' and citizens' growth and development by providing necessary support; that a majority of leaders to a moderate extent (mean score result of 2.60 and a SD of 1.149) are good at helping others with emotional issues and personal problems such as supporting the sick, and bereaved citizens; that a majority of county leaders to a moderate extent (mean score result of 2.65 and SD of 1.120) are alert to the happenings around the county and are good at anticipating the consequences of their decisions and solve complex problems; and that a majority of county leaders to a moderate extent (mean score of 2.60 and SD of 1.238) have the willingness to take responsibility for the larger county and deliver service instead of control and self-interest to remain at the top.

These results seem not to align well with the literature reviewed where servant leadership was viewed as one that puts service to others as the first priority and stresses a holistic approach to work; power sharing in decision-making; increasing services to others; and promoting a sense of community (Greenleaf, 1996)). This means that the respondents' perceptions of the counties leadership is of very little servant leadership. Robert Greenleaf, the author of the Servant Leadership theory contended that the central tenets of the servant-leadership are service to others with organizational success as the indirect derived outcome.

The results negate the benefits of Servant Leadership based on a study by Feldheim and Johnson (2004), who concluded that servant leadership is an established normative approach to public service with proven humanistic techniques for interactions that is based on authentic interactions, empowerment, integrity, social equity, and democratic participation in all aspects of administration. From the literature reviewed, servant-leadership focuses on the values of empowerment, justice and fairness within society, and community building attained through participation.

The results from this study reveal that counties in Kenya do not have true servant leaders, going by the majority of responses. County leaders are so keen to champion their personal interests over those of citizens. The results reveal that county leaders consistently display contempt and total disrespect of the people, as well as lack accountability. A majority of the leaders lack the basic skills to be good leaders, and do not demonstrate genuine concern towards citizens' growth and development. These results conform to SID (2016), Jesuit

Hakimani Centre (2013) and KSG (2015) who found that country leaders practiced nepotism, had poor facilitating and organizational skills.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Servant Leadership

Research Item	NA %	LE %	ME %	GE %	VGE %	Mean	Std. Dev.
The county leaders put the best interests of others ahead of his/her own and serves others before self.	37.5	28.7	18.2	11.5	4.1	2.16	1.167
The county leaders consistently display humility, integrity, accountability, security and vulnerability i.e. expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with their inner thoughts and feelings.	25.3	31.1	25.7	13.2	4.7	2.41	1.140
The county leaders have the ability to put people's accomplishments and talents in a proper perspective.	19.7	31.6	27.6	14.6	6.5	2.56	1.151
The county leaders positively transform others in multiple dimensions (e.g. emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually) into servant leaders themselves.	22.1	32.0	27.2	14.3	4.4	2.47	1.116
The leaders demonstrate genuine concern for other leaders' and citizens' growth and development by providing necessary support	21.8	29.3	30.3	14.3	4.4	2.50	1.114
The county leaders good at helping others with emotional issues and personal problems e.g, support sick, bereaved citizens etc.	20.6	26.9	29.0	18.5	4.9	2.60	1.149
The county leaders are alert to what's happening around the county and are good at anticipating the consequences of decisions and solving complex problems	16.6	30.5	29.8	17.3	5.8	2.65	1.120
The county leaders have the willingness to take responsibility for the larger county and go for service instead of control and self-interest to remain at the top	21.7	30.5	22.7	16.3	8.8	2.60	1.238

NA= Not at All, LE=To a little extent, ME=To a moderate extent, GE=To a great extent, VGE=To a very great extent, Std Dev. = Standard Deviation

The results in table 2 disclosed that servant-hood/altruistic calling existed only to a little extent (mean score 2.16), authenticity/humility (mean 2.4848) and modeling (2.4848) were above to little extent but below average while empathy (mean 2.6014), wisdom (2.6508) and Organizational stewardship (mean 2.60) tended towards moderate. This meant that the leaders are seen as taking responsibility for their leadership role. The overall perception of servant leadership style practiced in the counties had a mean score of 2.5 which was below the average means core of 3.0. The findings indicate that the respondent's perception was that though below average, the constructs of empathy, wisdom and organizational stewardship were generally higher than altruistic calling in the county governments. The study finding concur with Murari and Gupta (2012) who found stewardship and wisdom or awareness as key construct for enhancing employee engagements.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Servant Leadership Style Components

Servant Leadership Style Components	NA %	LE %	ME %	GE %	VGE %	Mean	Std. Dev.
Servant-hood/Altruistic calling	37.50	28.70	18.20	11.50	4.10	2.1588	1.16668
Authenticity/Humility	22.50	31.35	26.65	13.90	5.60	2.4848	1.03118
Modeling	21.95	30.65	28.75	14.30	4.40	2.4848	.97717
Empathy	20.60	26.90	29.00	18.50	4.90	2.6014	1.14946
Wisdom	16.60	30.50	29.80	17.30	5.80	2.6508	1.12037
Organizational stewardship	21.70	30.50	22.70	16.30	8.80	2.6000	1.23828
Total - Servant Leadership Style	23.16	30.08	26.31	15.00	5.45	2.4971	.87399

NA= Not at All, LE=To a little extent, ME=To a moderate extent, GE=To a great extent, VGE=To a very great extent, Std Dev. = Standard Deviation

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Public Participation

The research sought to establish the influence of leadership styles on public participation in the county governments in Kenya. Eleven research questions were posed to the respondents. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics results generated for public participation. From the results presented on Table 1, it is evident that to a moderate extent (mean of 3.03 and a spread or SD of 1.191), counties use different channels for public participation such as holding public hearings, neighborhood meetings, citizen surveys, and internet. The results also indicate that to a moderate extent (mean of 2.9 and a spread of 1.111), respondents agreed that during public participation forums, there is a two-way interactive communication process where county government representatives convey countyinformation and public views. On the question of whether the county

governments have sufficiently skilled and well-trained officers or experts who facilitate public participation meetings, an affirmative mean score of 2.83 (to a moderate extent) and a spread/SD of 1.167 was achieved.

A question posed to respondents as to whether county governments involved citizens in county activities such as budget making processes, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and service delivery in the county resulted into a mean score of 2.48 and a SD of 1.150 (meaning a majority agreed to a little extent). Respondents were also asked whether the public is involved in the vetting of county government public officers and the results were a mean score of 2.14 and SD 1.189. This meant that respondents agreed only to a little extent to the research question asked. A majority of respondents agreed that to a moderate extent (mean of 2.84 and SD of 1.116), people involved in the participation exercise are inclusive of the diversity of communities, gender, disabilities and minorities. A majority of respondents also agreed to a little extent that the turnout in public participation forums is high enough to give reliable results (a mean score of 2.55 and SD of 1.186). These result support KIPPRA (2015) whose study concluded that county leadership has not effectively engaged the public and Mitullah (2016) who found that only 29 of the citizens indicated that they were satisfied with the extent of public participation in their county.

On whether citizens easily understand the information provided by the county governments during public participation, a majority agreed to a moderate extent (mean 2.64 and a reduced variability of a SD of 1.094). A similar moderate extent response with a mean of 2.60 and a SD of 1.166 was achieved on the question of whether the public participation process is transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how the county government makes decisions. A mean score of 2.25, means that respondents agreed to a little extent to the questions that county governments respond to any public inquiries in a timely manner and comprehensively and that the public is informed of the output of their public participation i.e. whether or not their ideas were taken up by the county governments. The two last research questions had SDs of 1.055 and 1.096 respectively. These results support the notion that the leaders ignored citizen input and did not give feedback (SID, 2016; KSG, 2015; Transparency International, 2015).

A number of the responses to the research questions on public participation indicate that a majority (mean scores 2.59) of the respondents either agreed to a little extent or to a moderate extent that their counties engaged actively in public participation activities. With 10 out of 11 means scores below 3.00, these results corroborate empirical findings that public participation remains generally low and should be improved (Oxfam, 2017; Carreira, Machado &Vasconcelos, 2016;Transition Authority, 2015; Khan &Anjum, 2013). In addition, the study results reinforce arguments by Bevir (2013) that governance matters have gone past government and so, there is need and scope for public to be more involved in enhancing participation. The results further concur with findings by UN (2015) and Rowe &Frewer (2000) that contemporary balanced governance systems result into better accountability results when citizens are adequately engaged in determining their destiny.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Public Participation

Research Item	NA %	LE %	ME %	GE %	VGE %	Mean	Std Dev.
The county government uses different channels for public participation in the county e.g. county government holds public hearings, neighborhood meetings, citizen surveys, internet	10.9	25.5	23.8	28.9	10.9	3.03	1.191
During public participation forums, there is a two-way interactive communication process where county government representatives conveys county information and public views are collected	11.0	22.7	31.6	27.5	7.2	2.97	1.111
The county government has sufficiently skilled and well-trained officers or experts who facilitate public participation meetings	15.3	24.3	30.2	22.6	7.6	2.83	1.167
The county government involves the citizens in county activities such as budget making process, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and service delivery in the county	23.6	29.8	25.7	16.4	4.5	2.48	1.150
The public is involved in vetting of county government public officers	41.1	22.9	20.7	11.4	3.9	2.14	1.189
People involved in the participation exercise are inclusive of the diversity of people in the community, including women, disabled persons, minority groups etc.	10.6	31.7	28.7	21.2	7.8	2.84	1.116
The turn out in public participation forums is high enough to give reliable results	23.0	26.1	30.6	13.1	7.2	2.55	1.186
The citizens easily understand the information provided by the county government during public participation	15.1	33.7	29.2	16.5	5.5	2.64	1.094
The public participation process is transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how the county government makes decisions	18.0	33.9	25.1	15.5	7.4	2.60	1.166
The county government responds to any public inquiries in a timely manner and comprehensively	28.1	34.6	24.1	10.8	2.4	2.25	1.055
The public is informed of the output of their public participation i.e. what ideas were taken up by the county government and those ignored and why	27.5	39.3	18.3	10.8	4.1	2.25	1.096

NA= Not at All, LE=To a little extent, ME=To a moderate extent, GE=To a great extent, VGE=To a very great extent, Std Dev. = Standard Deviation

  The mean scores for the public participation constructs used in the study were generated as detailed in table 4. The respondents perception was that the participation process mechanisms were moderate (mean score 2.94), public involvement and influence in decision making was tending towards moderate (mean score 2.5), transparency, sufficient and provision of timely communication of information was tending towards moderate (mean score 2.6) while responsiveness and accountability were only to a little extent (mean score 2.24).

  The overall level of public participation in the county governments had a mean score of 2.6 which was below the average mean score of 3.00 and corresponds to 40%. The results were consistent with Mitullah (2016) who found that only 29% of the citizens indicated that they were satisfied with the extent of public participation in their county. The results further corroborate with Oxfam (2017) and Transition Authority (2015) that public participation remains low and KIPPRA (2015) that the County leadership has not effectively engaged the public in participation. The mean score for timely receipt of transparent information was 2.63 or 40.75% which was consistent with KIPPRA (2015) who observed that only 32.8% respondents were involved to the extent of receiving information.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Public participation Components

Public participation Components	NA %	LE %	ME %	GE %	VGE %	Mean	Std Dev.
Participation process mechanism	12.40	24.17	28.53	26.33	8.57	2.9493	.94961
Public involvement & influence in decision making	24.58	27.63	26.43	15.53	5.85	2.5068	.85418
Transparency, sufficient & timely communication of information	16.55	33.80	27.15	16.00	6.45	2.6301	.97814
Responsiveness & accountability	27.80	36.95	21.20	10.80	3.25	2.2475	.92017
Total - Public Participation	20.38	29.50	26.18	17.70	6.23	2.6013	.75670

NA= Not at All, LE=To a little extent, ME=To a moderate extent, GE=To a great extent, VGE=To a very great extent, Std Dev. = Standard Deviation

4.3 Correlation between the Variables

The findings in table 5 indicated that there is a strong positive correlation (r = 0.669, p-value <0.01) between transformational leadership style and public participation. This implies a unit linear change in transformational leadership will results to .0669 change in public participation.

Table 5: Pearson's Correlations Matrix

		Servant Leadership Style	Public Participation
Servant Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Public Participation	Pearson Correlation	.649[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	296	296

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

4.4 Regression Analysis
4.4.1 Servant Leadership Style and Public Participation
Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between servant leadership and public participation in county governments in Kenya with the hypothesis that:

H_{04} There is no significant relationship between Servant Leadership Style and public participation in the county governments in Kenya.

  As shown in Table 6, R^2 =.447, implying that servant leadership style explains 44.7% of the total variability in the public participation in the county governments in Kenya. The remaining 55.3% of the variation is unexplained by this one predictor but by other factors not included in the model. The ANOVA shows that p<.05 (F-calculated (1, 294) = 237.786, P < 0.01) which means that the model is statistically significant as the p-value is less than .05, meaning that servant leadership style significantly predicts public participation.

  The regression coefficient indicates a positive and significant relationship between servant leadership style and public participation in county governments in Kenya (β = 0.579, p value < 0.05). A unit increase in servant leadership style varies positively by 0.579 units in public participation. The null hypothesis H_{04}, that there is no significant relationship between Servant Leadership Style and public participation in the county governments in Kenya was rejected and therefore, the study concluded that servant leadership style had a positive and significant influence on public participation in the County governments in Kenya. This implies that

if the county government leaders exercise more servant leadership style, it will result to increased public participation in the county governments in Kenya.

Using the results presented in Table 6, the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$ was fitted as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 1.156 + .579X_4$$

Where Y = Public Participation, X_1 = Servant Leadership Style and ε = Error term

The study supported Zehir, *et al.,* (2013) observation that servant leadership behavior has a positive and significant relationship with job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Their conclusion arose from a study on servant leadership behavior impact on job performance and organizational citizenship behavior using organizational justice as mediating variable. Similarly, the study agrees with Malingumu, *et al.,* (2016) and Vondey (2010) who found that servant leadership provides support and resources through creation of a working environment where participation is key.

Table 6: Regression Results for Servant Leadership Style and Public Participation

		Model Summary		
R	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	
.669	0.447	0.445	0.5636	

		ANOVA			
	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	75.531	1	75.531	237.786	0.00
Residual	93.386	294	0.318		
Total	**168.917**	**295**			

		Coefficients			
	Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	1.156	0.099		11.636	0.00
Servant Leadership Style	0.579	0.038	0.669	15.42	0.00

3.2.2 Servant Leadership Style Components and Public Participation

Multiple regression results in Table 7 indicates an R^2 of 0.447 showing that 44.7% of changes in public participation in county governments in Kenya can be explained by servant-hood/Altruistic calling, authenticity/humility, modeling, empathy, wisdom and organizational stewardship. Analysis of variance indicates that there was a significant relationship between servant leadership style components and public participation in county governments in Kenya with a p-value < 0.05 (F-calculated (6, 289) = 38.988, P < 0.01).

Regression coefficients indicates that servant-hood/Altruistic calling had a negative and not significant relationship with public participation (β = -0.028, p-value > 0.05). Authenticity/humility has positive and significant relationship with public participation (β = 0.114, p-value < 0.05). Modeling has positive and significant relationship with public participation (β = 0.257, p-value < 0.05). Empathy has positive and significant relationship with public participation (β = 0.027, p-value > 0.05). Wisdom has positive and significant relationship with public participation (β = 0.174, p-value < 0.05). Organization stewardship has positive and not significant relationship with public participation (β = 0.016, p-value > 0.05). In terms of influence on public participation, modelling had the highest contribution, followed by wisdom, authenticity/humility, servanthood/altruistic calling, empathy and organization stewardship. The resultant equation is of the form:

Public Participation=1.168-0.028*Servanthood/Altruistic calling + 0.114*Authenticity/Humility + 0.257*Modeling + 0.027*Empathy + 0.174*Wisdom + 0.016*Organization stewardship.

Table 7: Regression for Servant Leadership Style Attributes and Public Participation

		Model Summary		
R	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	
0.669	0.447	0.436	0.56835	

		ANOVA			
	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**

Regression	75.564	6	12.594	38.988	.000
Residual	93.353	289	0.323		
Total	**168.917**	**295**			

	Coefficients				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	1.168	0.101		11.509	0.000
Servant-hood/Altruistic calling	-0.028	0.038	-0.043	-0.747	0.456
Authenticity/Humility	0.114	0.048	0.155	2.352	0.019
Modeling	0.257	0.055	0.332	4.666	0.000
Empathy	0.027	0.036	0.042	0.748	0.455
Wisdom	0.174	0.041	0.26	4.203	0.000
Organizational stewardship	0.016	0.034	0.027	0.473	0.637

The results indicate that modeling (β = 0.257, p-value < 0.05) had the strongest influence on public participation followed by the perceived wisdom (β = 0.174, p-value < 0.05) of the leaders. Modelling requires leaders to set a personal example for followers whereas wisdom means that the leader has awareness of surroundings and anticipation of consequences. These results affirm   Hussain and Ali (2012) who investigated the impact of servant leadership on followers' job performance in Pakistan. They found that modeling (empowerment) had the strongest positive and significant influence in the level of employees' performance. They argued that followers will perform more if they are modeled and empowered by their leaders they would be more willing to achieve higher level of performance.

V.   Summary, Conclusions And Recommendations

Summary
The study sought to assess the influence of servant leadership style on public participation in the county governments in Kenya. The study descriptive statistics of servant leadership style revealed that 53.24% of the respondent felt that the level of servant leadership style practiced in the counties in Kenya was below average. The result indicated that leaders exhibited a near moderate level of wisdom and modelled their followers only to a littler extent. Further, servant leadership style as a predictor variable was found to have a strong positive correlation (r =.669, p <.001, 2 tailed) with public participation and explained 44.7% (R^2 = 0.447) of the variability in public participation. The regression results revealed that servant leadership had a significant positive coefficient (β = .579, p < .001) which imply that a unit change in servant leadership style will enhance public participation by 0.579 units. Further, the results indicated that the servant leadership style construct of modeling (β = 0.257, p < .05), wisdom (β = 0.174, p < .05) and authenticity/humility (β = 0.114, p < .050) had positive statistically significant influence on public participation. Thus, the study concluded that there is a statistically significant influence of servant leadership style on the public participation in the county governments in Kenya. Further, the study found that, modeling, wisdom and authenticity/humility were the significant constructs of servant leadership style that were key in the style's influence on public participation.

Conclusion
The study concluded that there exists a positive and significant relationship between servant leadership style and public participation in the county governments in Kenya. Further, the study concluded that, servant leadership style positive influence on public participation is through the servant leadership style construct of modeling, wisdom and authenticity/humility.

Recommendations
The study recommended that to enhance public participation in the county governments in Kenya, leaders should practice servant leadership style so that the benefits of public participation can be realized. Literature reviewed indicated that the challenges of ineffective public participation was partly because of poor leadership behaviors and theory indicated   servant leadership attributes may be naturally suited for public sector of which the county governments fall under. Leaders should make effort to erase the perception that leaders vie for positions to satisfy their personal interest. Instead, leaders should model their followers into servant leaders themselves, provide necessary support, be very alert of the surroundings, anticipate

consequences of decision, and be authentic by displaying humility, integrity and accountability. Servant leadership style accounted for 44.7% of the variance in public participation and hence further research should be conducted on other factors that account for the balance of 55.3%. Further research is also required on the altruistic calling and organizational stewardship which in this study were found to have insignificant effect on the relationship.

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