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## **Abstract**

Tourism is a 'double edged sword', while it has immense potential to accelerate socio-economic development in a region; it can also put tremendous pressure and strain on environment and socio-cultural ethos. The issue of sustainability thus is of great importance. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the stakeholders' level of involvement and their influence on achieving sustainability tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County. The study adopted the mixed method design. Slovin's formula was used to proportionately select a sample size of 184 respondents from the target population of 349 who were enrolled for the study. Purposive sampling was used to sample tour operator managers, HOD of tourism training institution and managers of local NGO; census was used to sample senior county officers in charge of tourism, senior governmental officers and hotel managers; stratified sampling technique was used to sample registered members of local tourism association. The research instruments used to collect primary data were structured questionnaires and interview schedules. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics where frequencies, mean and standard deviation were used; inferential statistics was also conducted which included correlation and regression analyses. The results were disseminated through qualitative description and use of visual tools like tables, bars and pie-charts. It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform policy on how stakeholders engagement influence tourism development in a destination, contribute to the knowledge gap and create room for further researches. The study found that stakeholders' level of involvement had significant positive relationship with sustainable tourism and hospitality industry ( $p < .05$ ;  $\beta = 1.023$ ). Based on these findings, the study concluded that it is important for the tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County to emphasize the role of different stakeholders for its sustainability. This study hence recommended that managements of tourism and hospitality establishments in Kakamega County should develop a comprehensive and elaborate stakeholder' engagement plans aimed at enhancing sustainability of the sector in the County.

**Keywords:** *Stakeholders, Level, Involvement, Achievement, Sustainability, Tourism, Hospitality.*

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Tourism is currently one of the world's fastest growing economic segment that deals with challenges and opportunities of global competitive market. It is a great agent for change in general economic spheres creating significant impacts in other sectors of economic growth. In 2020 United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported the top ten global tourism destinations as France with 89 million arrivals, Spain with 83 million arrivals, the United States of America(USA) with 80 million arrivals, followed by China, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, Germany, Thailand, and the UK in that order (UNWTO, 2019). Top ten nation biggest spenders on tourism were China at USD 277 billion, the USA at USD 144 billion, Germany, the UK, France, Australia, Russia, Canada, South Korea, and Italy coming tenth with an expenditure of USD 30 billion. According to industry reports (Bargoret, 2019), in 2018 the Kenya's tourism earnings rose by 31.2% to stand at KSH. 157 billion with foreign tourists being 2,025,206 which were 37.33% increase from the figures recorded in 2017 (KNBS, 2020).

Sustainability of tourism and hospitality development is a positive approach intended to reduce the tension created by the complex interaction of visitors and hosts while benefiting all parties, this requires their informed participation (UNWTO, 2019). However, the success of sustainable tourism and hospitality management depends on the committed participation of all the relevant stakeholders and bold political leadership. Byrd, Cardenas and Greenwood (2017) developed a study tool in regard to sustainable tourism and hospitality development understanding among stakeholders (Bryd, Cardenas & Greenwood, 2008). We utilize these factors - which have been borrowed by key bodies such as the UNWTO, into this study; natural resources, planning, economic concerns, educational needs, and awareness of tourism.

Tourism and hospitality sustainability aim is grounded in the fact that tourism development activities have to be planned, managed and developed so as to be in line with the needs and attitudes of the stakeholders towards tourism development (Gursoy, Chi & Dyer, 2010; Sdrail, Ali, Hussain, Nair & Nair, 2017). According to (Nunkoo & Smith, 2014), sustainable tourism development is the aspect of retaining all things in a balance with rising tourists' numbers at a given expected rate and ensuring successful operations. Sustainable tourism and hospitality development entails the planning and implementation of strategies when aiming at evolving and expanding the tourism sector (Yiu, Saner, & Filadoro, 2011). For sustainable tourism development to be achieved, therefore, stakeholders must be part of planning and the continuous implementation.

In order to achieve a sustainable tourism and hospitality development, a collaborative policy-making process is required where stakeholders including local authorities, government agencies, businesses and local communities must work together in planning and regulating tourism development (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Presenza, Chiappa & Sheehan, 2013). Residents' attitude towards sustainable tourism and hospitality development has gained much attention from tourism researchers because of its significance for the success of sustainable tourism hospitality development (Chen & Raab, 2012; Deccio & Baloglu; Gursoy, Chi, & Dyer, 2010).

The concept of sustainable tourism and hospitality has developed and matured during the last three decades into an orientation aiming for environmentally, economically, culturally, socially and politically sustainable development through changes in behaviour and societal systems

(Bramwel, Higham, Lane & Miller, 2017). Understanding stakeholders' perspectives can facilitate formulation of policies which in the long run minimize the potential negative impacts of STD and maximizes its benefits leading to community development and greater support for tourism (Timur & Getz, 2008). The various ways of engagement are based on the practices of the stakeholders. Practitioners such as hoteliers, security agents, and other business persons place the government agencies in charge of ensuring a smooth flow of support services. On the other hand, stakeholders have to engage one another to ensure a working business environment.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Issues of coordination, collaboration, partnership and stakeholders' engagement are now at the forefront of much tourism and hospitality research on finding new solutions to the sustainability of tourism and hospitality problems (Medina-Muñoz, Medina-Muñoz & Gutiérrez-Pérez, 2016). Ideally, it is expected that the engagement of stakeholders within the tourism industry would enhance and promote tourism development in the county, enhance both the national and county governments' ability to improve on tourism policy making, enhance the conceptual understanding of the political dimensions of tourism including tourism politics and the tourism policy making process and enhance sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry within the counties (Medina-Muñoz, *et al.*, 2016).

However, this is not the case as several stumbling blocks have impeded facilitating stakeholder involvement for tourism and hospitality development and sustainability in Kenya. The recognition of numerous problems arising in tourism and hospitality sustainability due to the lack of stakeholder engagement and cohesion among the vast number of players in the tourism industry has brought with it the need for formulating courses of action that can be utilized to enhance Public and Private Partnerships (PPP) to achieve sustainability in the sector. The tourism industry in Kenya is characterized by a plethora of actors, with different interests and values (Shantha, 2018).

The role of stakeholder engagement in a tourism destination has been widely acknowledged, however it's still one of the key stumbling blocks of sustainable tourism development practice (Nunkoo & Smith, 2014). Sustainable tourism and hospitality development entails all stakeholders being aware of each other's, activities and responsibilities, and openly engaging. This arrangement makes it possible to solve conflicts, address issues, and engage one another cordially both at personal level and business level. Considering the stakeholders' attitude is a moral and democratic approach to tourism and hospitality sustainability because of its significance influence on their stakes as well as the success of sustainability of tourism in a particular destination. (Ven, 2015)

Tourism bodies and governments across the world have worked on theoretical frameworks and stakeholders' engagement protocols, but the actual implementation is still wanting. Tourism Act Kenya, 2011, details each of the government bodies' mandates and operations in service (GOK, 2011). In regard to sustainable tourism development, the NTB 2030 documents that such issues cutting across different types of stakeholders, initiations, engagement and their management are aimed at creating cohesion and sustainability. STHD is pegged on product strategy, diversifying tourism experiences, upgrading and development of tourism resources and activities which should be undertaken by different stakeholders (GOK, 2017).

A number of studies have been conducted on stakeholders' engagement and sustainability of tourism and hospitality. For instance, Jernsand (2017) evaluated stakeholder engagement as transformation of tourism development project in Dunga by Lake Victoria, Kenya and found that participatory tourism development projects are effective and democratic since they engage people in interactive learning processes that change individuals and societies. Since the study



was conducted in Kisumu County a different context, contextual gap is evident. Birendra, Dhungana and Dangi (2021) while examining the relationship between tourism and the sustainable development goals focusing on Stakeholders' engagement from Nepal found that to varying degrees, the SDGs were applicable as well as achievable for Nepal; however, several issues impeded the full implementation of the goals. The study presents conceptual and contextual gaps since the study was conducted in Nepalese context and used one independent variable. To address the above gaps, the current study was unique as it explored stakeholders' level of involvement and their influence on achieving sustainability tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

To evaluate the stakeholders' level of involvement and their influence on achieving sustainability tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County.

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the stakeholders' level of involvement and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County.

### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

#### **1.5.1 Sustainability Model**

The Sustainability Model was postulated by Rene Passet in 1979. The model states that for sustainability to be attained in a social and business environment; there is need for compliance with social and environmental aspects (Rezaee, 2016). According to Sanders & Wood (2019), pillars of sustainability are social, environmental, and economic factors. For continuity of any business aspects, the pillars have to be set and cultivated. The model describes a lasting type of economy and society that can be implemented and lived globally (Childers, Pickett, Grove, Ogden & Whitmer, 2014). The model aligns with UNWTO characteristics of Sustainable tourism development, where a futuristic outlook produces a conserved natural environment, an economically empowered host, quality education, and reduced inequalities.

According to the UNWTO tourism is sustainable when it fully keeps into consideration the present and future economic, social and environmental impact on the territory meeting the needs of the visitors, the tourism industry, the environment and the host communities (UNWTO, 2017). Despite the increasing importance of sustainability in the management literature, theoretical development in sustainability has yet to yield a model that fully acknowledges: the changing organization-and-environment field and its implications in the long term; the interdependence and integration of relationships of humans, organizations, and society; and the paradoxical demands inherent in a dynamic society (Basiago, 1998). The model explains the need for compliance with social and environmental aspects for the purposes of achieving sustainability in tourism and hospitality development. This model was therefore relevant to the current study since it helped the researchers understand the link between social and environmental factors and sustainability in tourism and hospitality development in Kakamega County.

#### **1.5.2 Stakeholders Theory**

The theory was put forward by Freeman (1984). Stakeholder Theory states that shareholders, are one of many groups a corporation or organization must serve and that anyone that is affected by the organization or its workings in any way is considered a stakeholder, including employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, environmental groups, governmental groups, and more. Stakeholder theory holds that organizations and corporations should strive

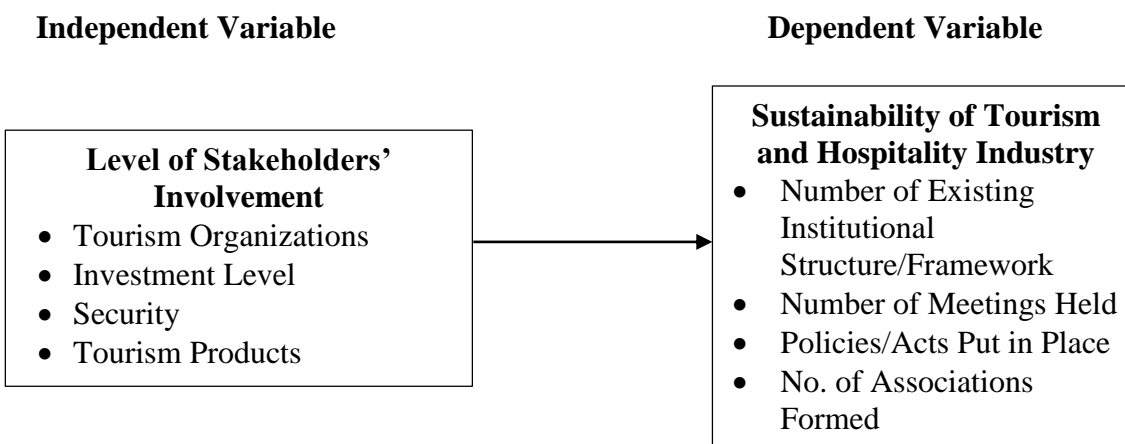
to do right by all these stakeholders and that in doing so, the organization will achieve true, lasting success.

The theory is a view of capitalism that stresses the interconnected relationships between a business and its customers, suppliers, employees, investors, communities and others who have a stake in the organization (Fontaine, Haarman & Schmid, 2006). The theory argues that a firm should create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholder theory posits that an organization should be in a position to create value for all stakeholders and not just the owners (Bonnafeous-Boucher & Rendtorff, 2016).

Paskaleva-Shapira (2007) asserts that diverse management organizational structures, operating strategies and personalities can greatly affect who the stakeholders are perceived to be, and may also impact the manner in which their needs are perceived. Growth of tourism, specifically policy-design and strategy involves the basic factor of stakeholders since sightseeing as a business, in its growth, has also seen parallel increase in complexity of the situation through stakeholders' interests and understanding of return on investment on growth of tourism.

This theory from the management point of view suggest that all related stakeholders should engage in the total tourism and hospitality development process in a destination and failure to identify and incorporate a single primary stakeholder group may cause the failure of the entire process Gwenhure and Odhiambo (2017). For sustainable tourism development to be successful stakeholders must be involved in the process. The questions that should be considered though are: who should be considered stakeholders in tourism development, and how should planners and developers involve stakeholders in the development of tourism? Stakeholder theory provide answers to all these questions and that is why it in important for this study.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 0: Conceptual Framework**

**Source: (Researcher, 2020)**

## **2.1 Empirical Review**

According to Nunkoo and Smith (2014), sustainable tourism and hospitality development is the aspect of retaining all things in a balance with rising tourists' numbers at a given expected rate and ensuring successful tourism operations in terms of activities, services, and resources. Sustainable tourism and hospitality development entails the planning and implementation of strategies when aiming at evolving and expanding the tourism sector (Yiu, Saner, & Filadoro, 2011). The objective of sustainable tourism hospitality development (STHD) according to UNWTO is to maintain both economic and social advantages of development in tourism while diminishing negative impacts on the natural, cultural environment, historical, social environment, and the general biodiversity (UNWTO, 2017). The baseline of sustainable tourism and hospitality development is to see that development brings positive experience to stakeholder' and the tourists themselves.

Stakeholder engagement is a process that organizations can follow in order to listen to, collaborate with, or inform (or a combination of all three) their existing stakeholders (Stocker et al., 2020). This process of stakeholder engagement entails identifying, mapping and prioritizing stakeholders to determine the best tactics for effective communication while making the best use of available resources. Stakeholder engagement helps organizations to proactively consider the needs and desires of anyone who has a stake in their organization, which can foster connections, trust, confidence, and buy-in for your organization's key initiatives (Iazzi et al., 2020). When done well, stakeholder engagement can mitigate potential risks and conflicts with stakeholder groups, including uncertainty, dissatisfaction, misalignment, disengagement, and resistance to change.

The benefits of collaboration in tourism activity by destination stakeholders are many and consist of positive outcomes for individual organisations and the destination (Schimperna et al., 2020). Collaboration allows individual organisations to benefit through the pooling of resources and complementary capabilities, which afford collective economies of scale and/or experience and thereby enable organisations to achieve more collectively than individually (Schimperna et al., 2020). Collaboration amongst destination stakeholder also endows added-value to destinations through the collective acquisition of knowledge and insight which can enhance innovativeness and adaptability in dynamic competitive environments (Bramwell & Sharman, 2019). The ability for individual tourism to access resources and participate in destination decision-making in a constructive manner brings definitive benefits to the destination whilst additionally building a sense of destination community, shared responsibility and strengthening inter-organisational ties (Thompson, Perry & Miller, 2017).

### **Stakeholders' Level of Involvement and Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Industry**

Tourism network structures provide an administrative or coordinating framework but it is ultimately the policies and practices of the convening network that determine the levels of stakeholder engagement within the tourism and hospitality industry. Stakeholder Engagement (SE) is defined as the practices an organisation undertakes to involve stakeholders (Greenwood, 2017) and can be distinguished from Stakeholder Integration (SI) which is defined as being the strategic capability of an entity to establish positive collaborative relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders (Plaza-Ubeda, Burgos-Jiminez & Carmona-Moreno, 2019).

Stakeholder engagement activity in tourism sector can be broadly divided into iterative phases of stakeholder catching and stakeholder keeping (Touminen, 2017) and include three strategic levels of engagement; stakeholder attraction, stakeholder integration and stakeholder management. The attraction level being the initial communication process aimed at building stakeholder awareness and interest in participation, the Integration level involving interactive

networking aimed at developing positive stakeholder relationships thereby enabling the pursuit of shared objectives, while the management level constituting activities of monitoring and motivation that enhance practice and optimise collaborative outcomes (Waligo, Clarke & Hawkins, 2013).

Wanner and Pröbstl-Haider (2019) examined the barriers to stakeholder involvement in sustainable rural tourism and hospitality development with focus on experiences from Southeast Europe. The study found that participative planning approaches were vital to sustainable development in rural areas. However, stakeholder involvement also faced many barriers. In Danube region case study, barriers to stakeholder involvement across eight rural regions were investigated. With the standardized conditions provided through European Union (EU) funded projects, special attention could be paid to socio-cultural barriers, specifically concerning perception of sustainability and conflicts of interest. The effects of these barriers to the planning process were seen in the comparison of awareness concerning overall goals, indicators and the regional self-assessments.

According to Wanner and Pröbstl-Haider (2019), the implications for planning and management in rural tourism areas found that the perception of sustainability varied greatly, perceived deficiencies increased awareness and that crucial indicators needed to be understood by stakeholders beginning a participative planning approach. The study concluded that the benefits gained through stakeholder involvement is, a more transparent and better-accepted tourism strategy and results. It increases equity of decision-making and incorporates marginalized groups and also it helps to understand the diverse range of (potentially conflicting) interests and navigate the regionally specific issues.

Duarte Alonso and Nyanjom (2017) conducted a research study whose aim was to investigate the role of local stakeholders in tourism development. Data were gathered among business owners and residents of Bridgetown, Western Australia. Four key groups of participants emerged, each emphasizing participants' role as community, and therefore, as tourism stakeholders. Alignment with various perspectives of role theory, including functional, "symbolic interactionist", structural and cognitive was noticed; similarly, consensus, conformity and role taking were identified as key concepts. Whether currently involved in tourism or not, participants' pro-active role suggesting practical ways to enhance the sustainability of local tourism could be a powerful tool in this and other communities seeking to build their destination image.

According to Ali, Hussain, Nair and Nair (2017), in many cases, the size and financial muscle of a stakeholder determines their level of engagement in many settings and in some cases gives big shareholders possess some unfair advantage. However, governments have the policy development responsibility that would control big stakeholders and create a niche for small local stakeholders to participate and hence while at it get economic empowerment for the region as a whole (Holden, 2013). Peripheral services and activities could be systematically transferred to the locals. Stakeholders in many industries join organisations that address their career and practitioner interests (Christie, Fernandes, Messerli, & Twining-Ward, 2014). By joining such organizations, many stakeholders get to participate in policy preparation and other governance. Individuals' voices are amplified through these organisations.

Wanga, Hayombe, Agong and Mossberg (2014) examined stakeholder involvement in tourism destination development in Dunga Beach and Wetland, Kisumu County, Kenya by adopting systems thinking approach. The study used the qualitative approach of data collection over six-month period between July 2013 to February 2014 to gather the data for this study. Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations were used. The



study identified a number of leverage points, from which efforts on intervention can be placed. The leverages include: tourism infrastructure, marketing, tourists number, beach population and attractiveness of the beach.

Wanga et al. (2014) found that ecotourism in Dunga beach and wetland represents a dynamic and complex system. The process of developing the tourism conceptual model has significantly helped the relevant stakeholders within the destination. The interaction among tourism stakeholders has created a better understanding of the dynamic and complex relationships in the system among these stakeholders. This was done through the participatory process of sharing and aligning divergent mental models of the different stakeholders. This process provided a platform for the stakeholders to engage in co-creation of experiences and activities in Dunga with aim of developing a sustainable tourist destination.

### 3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods design in which the researcher combined elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches (for instance use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson, et al, 2007). The study was undertaken in Kakamega County within the Western Tourism Circuit Kenya. Kakamega is County number 37 of the 47 counties in Kenya. Stakeholders in the Kakamega Tourism and hospitality Industry drawn from the public sector, private sector and the local communities formed part of the target population. The Slovin's sample size formulae was used to determine the sample size of the local tourists registered members and hotel managers who were the respondents. The sample size for the study was 184 respondents. A combination of data collection instruments was used in which Semi-structured questionnaire was administered to collect data from hotel managers and local communities and interview schedule was used to collect data from senior government officers and tourism professionals. The quantitative data collected was organized and checked for completeness then keyed into statistical package for social science (SPSS) software for the purposes of analysis. The data was then analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

## 4.0 Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Stakeholders' Level of Involvement**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
	%	%	%	%	%		
I understand the importance of being a member of a tourism organization.	4.40	6.30	15.60	39.40	34.40	3.931	1.071
There are several tourism organizations in Kakamega County.	2.50	3.10	35.00	30.60	28.70	3.800	0.976
The existing tourism organizations in Kakamega County are serving the particular interests of their members.	7.50	8.80	46.30	20.00	17.50	3.313	1.094

The Kakamega County tourism sites are easily accessible by tourists.	7.50	10.60	35.00	27.50	19.40	3.406	1.140
We have sufficient accommodation and other tourism related facilities.	15.00	18.80	19.40	28.10	18.80	3.169	1.342
Transport and communication is well developed in Kakamega County.	5.60	9.40	26.90	35.00	23.10	3.606	1.111
All tourism stakeholders' observe strict security measures by following laid down procedures.	8.10	13.10	41.30	22.50	15.00	3.231	1.112
Private security service providers are readily available to compliment the Governments efforts.	6.90	11.30	40.00	26.90	15.00	3.319	1.078
Tourism Stakeholders' in Kakamega County have adopted modern security technology such as CCTV cameras.	11.90	10.60	23.80	29.40	24.40	3.438	1.292
Tourism stakeholders' have diversified the products portfolio in Kakamega County.	6.30	11.90	21.90	31.30	28.70	3.644	1.194
Kakamega County has a rich culture which is a niche tourism product.	1.30	4.40	15.00	38.80	40.60	4.131	0.912
The tourism products in Kakamega County are evenly distributed within the County.	8.10	16.30	30.00	23.10	22.50	3.356	1.225
There is a lot of unexplored tourism products in Kakamega County.	1.90	2.50	21.30	36.30	38.10	4.063	0.930
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.570</b>	<b>1.114</b>

The results in Table 1 show that most of the respondents (73.80%) understood the importance of being a member of a tourism organization, 15.60% were not sure, while 10.70% did not understand the importance of being a member of a tourism organization. The study also found that 59.30% of the respondents agreed there were several tourism organizations in Kakamega County, while most (46.30%) were not sure whether the existing tourism organizations in Kakamega County were serving the particular interests of their members, while 37.50% of them were in agreement with the fact that the existing tourism organizations in Kakamega County were serving the particular interests of their members.

The results further show that most (46.90%) of the respondents agreed that the Kakamega County tourism sites were easily accessible by tourists; however, 18.10% had a contrary opinion. Additionally, 46.90% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that they had sufficient accommodation and other tourism related facilities, 58.10% believed that transport and communication was well developed in Kakamega County, while 41.30% were

not sure whether all tourism stakeholders' observed strict security measures by following laid down procedures.

As indicated on the table, most of the respondents 41.90% agreed that private security service providers were readily available to compliment the Governments efforts or not, while 40.0% were not sure whether they were readily available or not. Most of the respondents (53.80%) were in agreement with the statement that Tourism Stakeholders' in Kakamega County had adopted modern security technology such as CCTV cameras, 60% agreed that tourism stakeholders' had diversified the products portfolio in Kakamega County, while another 79.40% believed Kakamega County had a rich culture which according to them was a niche tourism product. Similarly, 45.60% of the respondents were of the opinion that the tourism products in Kakamega County were evenly distributed within the County, while 74.40% agreed with the fact that there was a lot of unexplored tourism products in Kakamega County.

The responses on stakeholders' involvement level had an average mean and standard deviation of 3.570 and 1.114 implying that most of the respondents agreed with the statements and that their responses slightly deviated from the mean response. These results are consistent with the findings of a study by Wanner and Pröbstl-Haider (2019) which indicated that stakeholder involvement faced many barriers; the benefits gained through stakeholder involvement is, a more transparent and better-accepted tourism strategy and results. In addition to the questionnaire, the researchers administered interviews to National and County government tourism officers, Local NGO managers and professionals and they were asked to indicate how to motivate an investor to invest in Kakamega County's tourism sector and they had the following to say:

*...personally I believe investors can be motivated by creating an enabling and conducive environment for investment. By creating an enabling environment, investors in tourism and hospitality industry will be encouraged to come and invest in Kakamega. The county government in collaboration with other stakeholders can do this by boosting the security in the area and by not imposing stringent tax regulations on investors''*

## 4.2 Inferential Analysis

### Correlation Analysis

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

		<b>Sustainable Tourism and hospitality Development</b>	<b>Stakeholders' Level of Involvement</b>
Sustainable Tourism and hospitality Development	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Stakeholders' Level of Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.722**	1.000
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	

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

Results revealed that the variable stakeholders' level of involvement had significant positive association with sustainable tourism and hospitality development ( $p < .05$ ;  $r = 0.722$ ). The results are consistent with the assertions of Presenza, Chiappa and Sheehan (2013) that, in order to achieve STHD, a collaborative policy-making process is required where stakeholders including local authorities, government agencies, businesses and local communities must work together in planning and regulating tourism development. Residents' attitude towards STHD has gained much attention from tourism researchers because of its significance for the success of sustainable tourism development. The results are also in agreement with the conclusion made by Timur and Getz (2008) that, understanding stakeholders' perspectives can facilitate formulation of policies which in the long run minimize the potential negative impacts of STHD and maximizes its benefits leading to community development and greater support for tourism.

### Regression Analysis

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.722 <sup>a</sup>	0.522	0.519	0.57908

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholders' Level of Involvement

The results (Table 3) show that the coefficient of determination (R squared) is 0.522 and adjusted R squared of 0.519 at 95% significance level. The R squared of 0.522 implies that stakeholders' level of involvement explains 52.2% of the variation in achieving sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry. The remaining 47.8% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by other factors other than stakeholders' level of involvement.

**Table 4: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	57.86	1	57.86	172.546	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	52.982	158	0.335		
	Total	110.843	159			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), stakeholders' level of involvement

The results (Table 4) show that the model was statistically significant in explaining the influence of stakeholders' level of involvement on achieving sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry and it is indicated by a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ .

**Table 5: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-0.254	0.282		-0.901	0.369
	stakeholders' level of involvement	1.023	0.078	0.722	13.136	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability

$$Y = -0.254 + 1.023x_2$$

Where



Y = Achieving Sustainability of Tourism and Hospitality Industry

X<sub>2</sub> = stakeholders' level of involvement

The regression coefficient results show that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between stakeholders' level of involvement and achieving sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry ( $\beta = 1.023$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ). This implies that a unit change in stakeholders' level of involvement leads to an improvement in tourism and hospitality industry sustainability by 1.023 units.

**H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the stakeholders' level of involvement and achieving sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County.**

The hypothesis was tested using linear regression model and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criterion was that, if the p-value is  $p < .05$ , then H<sub>0</sub> is rejected but if  $p > .05$ , then H<sub>0</sub> is not rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis was that there is no significant relationship between the stakeholders' level of involvement and sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County. Results showed that the  $p < .05$ . The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study adopted the alternative hypothesis that there is significant influence of stakeholders' level of involvement on sustainability of tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concludes that stakeholders' level of involvement significantly positively influences sustainable tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County. The study also concludes that: most stakeholders in the tourism sector in Kakamega County understands the importance of being a member of a tourism organization, there are several tourism organizations in Kakamega County, the existing tourism organizations in Kakamega County are serving the particular interests of their members, the Kakamega County tourism sites are easily accessible by tourists, in Kakamega County there are sufficient accommodation and other tourism related facilities and that there is a lot of unexplored tourism products in Kakamega County.

The study also concludes that there are various hindrances which lead to ineffective stakeholders' involvement in implementation of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in Kakamega County. Apart from that, mistrust and misperceptions amongst stakeholders due to insufficient communication, political practice of a more centralized authority sets barriers to stakeholders' involvement. In addition, insufficient financial resources at the county level, limited expertise, experience, and competence of tourism planning authorities, and limited commitment by some stakeholders were identified as the challenges which set barriers to stakeholders' participation.

## 6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that the managements of tourism and hospitality establishments in Kakamega should develop a comprehensive and elaborate stakeholders' engagement plans aimed at enhancing sustainability of the sector in the County. Managers should adopt new and latest methods of engaging stakeholders to realize full potential of the sector.

This study adds to existing theory and practice of tourism and hospitality industry. The study contributes to stakeholder theory. This study recommends the need to engage stakeholders in matters of tourism and hospitality development in Kakamega County. This study stresses the

interconnected relationships between tourism industry and its customers, suppliers, employees, investors, communities and others who have a stake in the industry. The theory argues that a firm should create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders. From Freeman's theory of stakeholder, scholars attempt to integrate business, social and humanity giving rise to words such as social entrepreneurship. In an integration attempt to practice all-round entrepreneurship, stakeholders are requiring representation in tourism industry in the County.

This study makes recommendations that have multiple areas with policy implications. The county government of Kakamega public policy making organs should involve all stakeholders in the design of strategies and policies for promoting tourism and hospitality industry in the county. This will ensure representation of all the stakeholder perceptions and welfare related with the management of stakeholders' engagement process in the industry. The political climate of a country, city, or destination greatly affects both the tourism and hospitality industry. Issues regarding national security, political stability, suppression of democracy, etc. affect how visitors, tourists, and guests view a destination. This means, a negative perception through media affects tourist arrivals, affects cancellations in hotels and other ancillary services, which in turn means less revenue. This also means less employment opportunities for tourism and hospitality professionals because of the political aspect of the destination. This study hence recommends that the policy makers should come up with policies cushioning tourism and hospitality industry against harm by political atmosphere in the country.

Further, the findings of the study indicated that business environment in which the tourism and hospitality industry operates had a very strong partial intervening effect on the relationship between stakeholders' engagements and sustainable tourism and hospitality development in Kakamega County. The study therefore recommends that both national government and county government of Kakamega should put in place measures to ensure support of the hospitality industry through enacting laws that promote and protect organizations in the tourism and hospitality industry in the county against government policies and political environment negatively affecting the industry. Also government should enact effective policies that strengthen coordination between hospitality industry players and the tourism related organizations; Ministries of Tourism, ICT and Finance. This will facilitate the execution of mandates bestowed to them like training, marketing, financing, facilitating and regulating various tourism industry ventures.

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