Level of community collaboration in the implementation of wildlife conservation and management policy in King'wal Wildlife Conservancy, Nandi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the extent of community collaboration in the implementation of Kenya's Wildlife Management Policy in King'wal Wildlife Conservancy in Nandi County, Kenya. It was guided by the Rational Choice Theory. The paper adopted a descriptive survey research design in which both a structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used to gather information from the sampled respondents. The target population comprised assistant chiefs, village elders, conservation administrators, Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs] chairpersons, and households, consisting of 855 people. A sample of 273 respondents was selected using the stratified sampling technique. Frequencies, means, and percentages were used to analyze the data and to describe and summarize the findings in terms of descriptive statistics. There was a pre-testing to improve the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, and open-ended responses and interviews were analyzed qualitatively with the use of thematic analysis and identifying the emerging patterns. The results revealed that community cooperation had a significant impact on policy enactment. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of a community collaboration was 0.567, and the standard error was 0.084, which means that a one-unit rise in community collaboration led to a rise in the implementation of the Wildlife Management Policy by 0.567 units, holding other variables steady. This means that an increasing degree of cooperation is linked with more efficient implementation of policies. The research established that the extent of community participation in wildlife management at King'wal Wildlife Conservancy was moderate, implying the existence of gaps in information sharing and representation. Based on the results and findings of this research, it is suggested that the conservation authorities ought to design more effective communication strategies in order to ensure that information regarding the management of wildlife policies is made available to all the segments of the community.

Keywords: Community Collaboration, Conservancy, Policy Implementation, Rational Choice, Wildlife Management

I. INTRODUCTION

Wildlife conservation and management remain a critical global concern due to increasing human pressure on natural resources, habitat encroachment, and rising cases of human-wildlife conflict. In response to this concern, the state in Kenya has developed and refined policies and legal frameworks to safeguard wildlife resources. The most recent policy is the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 which creates the management structure and stipulates the processes of wildlife management and conservation in National Parks, Reserves and Conservancies including community engagement for shared benefits. Though these frameworks emphasize community participation as an important attribute for sustainable wildlife conservation, its realization remains largely weak especially in the King'wal Wildlife Conservancy in Nandi County. This contrasts with the conservation conventions witnessed in the USA and Canada where community collaboration and engagement in natural resource conservation at various official levels is highly proactive and cherished. This paper examines the nexus between community collaboration and the implementation of Kenya's wildlife conservation policy in the King'wal Conservancy in Nandi County. The establishment of conservancies such as Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy in Nandi County reflected national and global efforts to balance biodiversity protection with community livelihoods. Despite these legislative milestones, the success of conservation initiatives largely depends on the degree of multilevel and multi-stakeholder collaboration between local communities, government agencies, and private stakeholders.

Community collaboration had been viewed as the cornerstone of effective conservation because it promotes local ownership, reduces conflicts, and enhances compliance with conservation regulations. In areas like Kingwal, where wildlife habitats coexist with human settlements and agricultural land, the active involvement of the local population is particularly essential. Communities living adjacent to the conservancy rely on land and other natural resources for their

livelihoods, and their cooperation determines how conservation policies are implemented or undermined by competing land-use interests. When communities are actively engaged in decision-making, monitoring, and benefit-sharing, they are more likely to support wildlife conservation measures. However, when excluded, they often perceive conservation as restrictive and imposed, leading to non-compliance and degradation of wildlife habitats (Solomon et al., 2015). The implementation of Kenya's Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy at the local level has nevertheless faced numerous challenges. In Kingwal Conservancy, despite the existence of policy instruments and conservation structures, there remain concerns about the actual level of community participation. Reports from conservation officers and local leaders have suggested that community members are not fully integrated into planning and decision-making processes. Moreover, disparities in benefit distribution, limited awareness of conservation policies and weak institutional linkages hindered effective collaboration. These challenges have created a gap between policy intentions and practical outcomes, thereby threatening the sustainability of conservation programs within the conservancy (Otianga-Owiti et al., 2021).

Globally, conservation efforts have tended to shift from top-down, government-driven approaches to more participatory, community-based models. This transition had been based on the recognition that local communities possess valuable traditional knowledge and a vested interest in the sustainable management of natural resources. In Kenya, this approach had been reinforced through policies promoting community conservancies, co-management structures, and participatory resource governance (Lesorogol & Lesorogol, 2024). Yet, despite these policy shifts, empirical evidence from smaller conservancies such as King'wal remain limited, and the effectiveness of community collaboration in actual policy implementation has not been adequately assessed. The need to understand the dynamics of community collaboration at Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy is, therefore, urgent. The conservancy, located in the highlands of Nandi County, is home to diverse wildlife species and serves as an important ecological corridor. However, the surrounding community depends heavily on agriculture, creating competition for land and resources. Human–wildlife conflicts, land encroachment, and limited financial support have been recurring problems, emphasizing the need for collaborative management strategies.

Evaluating how effectively the community participates in conservation activities and how such collaborations influence policy implementation is essential for identifying gaps and proposing evidence-based interventions. The arguments in this paper are thus guided by the recognition that successful wildlife conservation depends not only on policy formulation but also on the degree of community collaboration and engagement during implementation. By examining the level of community collaboration at King'wal Wildlife Conservancy, this paper attempts to bridge the knowledge gap between policy design and operational realities. It aims to determine how collaboration is practiced, to what extent it influences policy outcomes, and what barriers and facilitators shape its effectiveness.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The application of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 within the King'wal Wildlife Conservancy and its surroundings in the Nandi County in Kenya is generally ineffective as it is challenged by many factors. Although the principle of this policy was to ensure sustainable conservation by ensuring the involvement of the community in the process, what happens on the ground is the apparent low level of cooperation between the local community and conservation officials. Most of the members of the community are still more concerned with provisioning themselves in the short run through farming, charcoal burning and livestock grazing at the expense of conservation objectives (Biwott et al., 2024). This situation has led to the overexploitation of natural resources, degradation of habitats, and the growing conflict between the conservancy management and the local communities (Goswami, 2024).

Previous research on the conservation of wildlife in Kenya and other developing economies practicing wildlife conservation indicates that the success of conservation projects is largely dependent on community collaboration. The findings of Broome and Kothari (1998) have shown that local communities tend to advocate conservation policies only when they gain direct benefits such as employment or through a resource-sharing scheme. On the same note, Matloga et al. (2024) indicated that the poor consultation and the existence of poor communication set-ups between the local authorities and the residents usually negatively impact the proper implementation of the policy. Nevertheless, these analyses predominantly concentrated on national parks and large wildlife conservancies. The available literature scantily investigate community-controlled conservancies such as King'wal where humans and wildlife co-exist in a more dynamic relationship.

Moreover, Fariss, et al. (2022) stressed that the success of conservation at the community level is conditional on effective participatory governance frameworks and collective decision-making. However, the evidence from King'wal Conservancy indicate that most conservation decisions are top-down in nature with a limited level community collaboration. Ocholla et al. (2016) also opined that the inability to incorporate local cultural values and traditional ecological knowledge in management of wildlife generates mistrust and opposition among the locals.

Although the 2013 Wildlife Conservation and Management Act exists, there is scanty empirical research that has been conducted on the level of community collaboration in the implementation of this policy in Nandi County. Majority of the available literature concentrates on the development of policy for protection of wildlife, and not on the

way the local communities interacted with and affected the conservation status. There thus exists a gap in the research, especially the degree of community collaboration and its influence on the wildlife conservation policy implementation in Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy. This paper aimed to address this gap by finding out how community collaboration had impacted the success of the policy implementation within the region.

1.2 Research Objective

This study investigated the level of community collaboration in the implementation of Wildlife Management Policy on King'wal Wildlife Conservancy Nandi County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant relationship between the level of community collaboration and the implementation of the Wildlife Conservation Act of 2013 on Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy Nandi County, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The Rational Choice Theory (RCT) developed by an economist Gary S. Becker in 1968 led the study. The theory is used as a framework in the explanation of the decision-making process of human beings in a broad context. It assumes that people make decisions out of a rational analysis of the available options and consider the costs and benefits that each option would entail, to increase their personal utility or satisfaction (Becker, 1968). The major assumption made in this theory is that the preferences of individuals are ordered and consistent, and thus they can make choices that reflect their best interests and values. This logical analysis is very important in the prediction of the behavior of people concerning distribution of resources, acceptance of the policies and change of behavior.

The Rational Choice Theory has far-reaching effects in the application of the wildlife conservation management policy, especially in the knowledge of community involvement in conservation activities. In places such as King'wal Wildlife Conservancy, the community will be drawn into conservation after consideration of the advantages of being involved against the costs such as restricted utilization of the land, loss of earnings, or the time devoted to conservation efforts. Once it gets a sense of tangible economic benefits like income due to eco-tourism, sustainable harvest of resources or community development programs they would be more willing to participate actively in conservation programs. On the other hand, when perceived costs are more than the benefits, the community members would oppose participation or even poach or destroy the habitat.

In addition, the theory guides the development of good wildlife management policies. This theory helps policymakers understand how to develop incentive systems that can meet the interests of the community and conserve the environment. As an example, communities may be encouraged to assist in wildlife management programs by providing them with financial rewards, resources, or training. It assists in gaining insights in instances where communities are made to experience real value in conservation and are motivated to cooperate with wildlife managers, resulting into better conservation results. Therefore, RCT is a framework that does not only offer a platform of how to understand the motivation of individuals but also provides a guide in the formulation of policies that can help in promoting support towards conservation in the community.

2.2 Empirical Review

Community collaboration is a concept that implies collaboration with local communities to ensure that they actively participate in conservation programs and promote the implementation of policies (Gayo, 2025). Such collaboration is essential to successful wildlife management because it is based on the active involvement and cooperation of the community members. The extent of collaboration is greatly determined by values, social networks as well as community leadership. Once communities feel that they are a stakeholder in the management of the local wildlife resources, then there is likelihood that they will mobilize effectively and contribute to the conservation of the same. Effective community partnership can lead to increased backing of wildlife management policy, higher adherence to laws and regulations and conservation results. Knowing how to create a community partnership is the key to policymakers who would like to achieve effective wildlife management approaches that can appeal to the local communities (van Eeden et al., 2025).

The key elements of community collaboration are participation and ownership, as Daugstad et al. (2025) were able to establish in their study performed in Norway. The researchers concur with the assertion that communities that experience feeling of ownership to local resources and actively participate in making decisions related to the management of such resources have higher chances to mobilize in supporting the wildlife conservation policies. The paper demonstrates that good involvement is not just a matter of consultation but real collaboration where the people in the community actively participate in the decision-making process. According to their results, the development of shared responsibility and accountability in community members improves the work of

collaboration. When people feel that their interests and values are represented in the conservation strategies, they are willing to participate and engage in the process. Furthermore, community participation in the co-management of wildlife resources enhances the chances of communities coming up with innovative solutions that could tackle their conservation objectives as well as the local needs. This ownership contributes to the active attitude to wildlife management ensuring that the policies are not just enacted but supported and maintained by the community as well.

Ghimire and Pimbert (1997) discuss the role of social networks in enabling collaboration between communities in managing wildlife. Their Nepal study established that robust social networks between members of a community are a great boost to the cooperation of conservation projects. The paper highlights the fact that social capital based on trust, reciprocity and collaboration is of paramount importance in facilitating interaction and group activity towards wildlife management. Social networks are effective at organizing, promoting conservation policies, and enforcing effective management strategies, but communities with strong social networks are better placed to do it. As an illustration, social networks can be used to share information on conservation practices, advance a collective action in managing resources, and mobilize community members during conservation events. Also, the availability of respected leaders in the community can be used to reinforce social networking and increase the efforts of collective cooperation. Therefore, to increase collaboration and conservation success, it is necessary to develop social connections in communities because such associations develop the required trust and cooperation to overcome the complicated wildlife management problems (Ghimire & Pimbert, 1997).

Although community cooperation is the key to wildlife management, various obstacles may hinder successful engagement. The researchers found these obstacles in their investigation carried out in the Philippines and found that the absence of trust in the authorities, insufficient communication, and insufficient access to resources are hindrances to community involvement in conservation efforts (Agduma et al., 2023). As an illustration, when communities lack trust in the intentions of the external agencies or government officials, they might be less likely to participate in conservation policies. Poor communication may result in lack of understanding and awareness on conservation activities and lack of access to resources including financial support, training and materials may limit the communities to be useful in conservation activities. The authors state that the barriers are essential to be addressed to increase the efforts of community collaboration. Wildlife management policies have the potential to enhance the engagement of communities and the overall implementation results by creating an open line of communication, developing trust, and offering the relevant resources and assistance. Policymakers must also collaborate closely with the local communities to find out and address these obstacles so that conservation efforts become inclusive and productive.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design which combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of community engagement in the implementation of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy in King'wal Wildlife Conservancy, Nandi County, Kenya. In this design, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and then integrated during interpretation to draw more robust conclusions. This design allowed the researcher to capture the lived experiences, opinions, and attitudes of participants through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in and around King'wal Wildlife Conservancy, Nandi County, Kenya. The conservancy is known for its rich biodiversity and significant wildlife populations. The conservancy covers several administrative divisions and locations, each with distinct characteristics that contribute to the socio-economic fabric of the region. It comprises key areas such as Mosop, Kabiyet, and Kaptumo from a comprehensive picture of community collaboration in wildlife conservation and management was derived.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study included stakeholders involved in the implementation of the wildlife conservation and management policy in King'wal Wildlife Conservancy, Nandi County, Kenya. These stakeholders were chosen based on their involvement and impact on the policy's implementation. The target population consisted of assistant chiefs, village elders, conservation administrators, NGO chairpersons, households, and members from different sub-locations within the conservancy (see Table 1) below.

Table 1

Target Population

Respondents	Location			
	Kapsisiywo	**Kaptiltil**	**Baraton**	**Total**
Assistant Chiefs	3	3	4	10
Village Elders	10	10	10	30
Conservation Administrators	3	3	4	10
NGO Chairpersons	2	2	1	5
Households	267	267	266	800
Total	**285**	**285**	**285**	**855**

Source: National Government documents (2025)

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size was derived from the sample frame in Table 1 using the Yamane's formula where necessary. As shown in Equation Table 1 the sample size was 855 derived from the represented target populations units.

n = N / (1 + Ne^2)

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (855)

e = margin of error (0.05)

Therefore, the sample size is 273 respondents, proportionally distributed among assistant chiefs, village elders, conservation administrators, NGO chairpersons, and households. Table 2 below presents the sample size and distribution.

Table 2

Sample Size Distribution

Respondents	Population	Sampling Technique	Sample Size
Assistant Chiefs	10	Purposive Sampling	3
Village Elders	30	Purposive Sampling	10
Conservation Administrators	10	Purposive Sampling	3
NGO Chairpersons	5	Purposive Sampling	2
Households	800	Random Sampling	255
Total	**855**		**273**

Source: National Government documents (2025)

3.5 Research Instruments

This study used both structured questionnaires and interview schedules as the main research instruments. The questionnaires include both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive data from the participants.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires are designed to collect data from many respondents, allowing them to share their thoughts and ideas through structured questions (Eckerdal & Hagström, 2017). The study used a questionnaire which was administered to the respondents as indicated in table 2. The questionnaire contained Closed-ended questions using a Likert scale (1-5) to measure respondents' agreement with various statements, ensuring consistency and ease of analysis. The open-ended questions provided an opportunity for respondents to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives, enriching the data with qualitative insights.

3.5.2 Interview

Interviews were conducted with both households and conservation administrators to gather qualitative insights on community engagement and the implementation of the Wildlife Management Policy in Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy, Nandi County, Kenya. Household interviews focused on understanding community members' awareness and perceptions of wildlife management policies, exploring the perceived benefits and challenges of conservation efforts, and examining the influence of cultural beliefs on engagement. Meanwhile, administrator interviews aimed to uncover the strategies employed in policy implementation, the challenges faced in mobilizing community participation, and successful initiatives that foster collaboration. This dual method enhanced the study by offering a holistic perspective on the dynamics influencing conservation efforts, facilitating an

in-depth comprehension of the interactions between local communities and administrative authorities within the context of wildlife management.

3.5.3 Focused Group Discussion

Focused group were based on effectiveness of community engagement in implementation of the wildlife management policy in kingwal wildlife conservancy, Nandi County, Kenya to provide varied perspectives on wildlife management and policy implementation. The moderator should facilitate the discussion impartially, encouraging all participants to share their opinions while ensuring that no one dominates the conversation. Create a respectful and open atmosphere where community members feel comfortable expressing their views and concerns without fear of judgment. With participants' consent, the discussion should be recorded or detailed notes should be taken to capture key insights, suggestions, and challenges raised during the discussion.

3.6 Pilot Test

As argued by van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) pilot studies are quite instrumental for a good study design and especially in framing of research questionnaires and collection of background information of the study. It is necessary for the refinement of the research approaches or customizing the efficiency of research instruments to meet the requirements. The pilot study was done in Uasin Gishu County. Bujang et al. (2024) argues that generally "a minimum sample size of at least 30 respondents shall usually be sufficient to assess the reliability of the questionnaire" (p.7). This concurs with studies that indicate that a sample size of 10-20 percent of the actual research would be adequate and representative in a pilot study (Herzog, 2008). Therefore, 10 questionnaires were used to ensure reliability of pilot test and increase validity and reliability of the research instruments. Pre-testing will be done on a sample of 30 respondents who will be selected in a neighboring sub-county, and this will involve rephrasing ambiguous questions and inclusion of feedback. Experts in the field review the instruments used to ensure that they are capturing the desired data appropriately. Statistical techniques such as Cronbach alpha were used to test the reliability of the instruments in question.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires was used to collect data through the administration of questionnaires, focused group discussion and carrying out interviews with the chosen respondents to reduce language barriers that could block the understanding of the queries (Zaza et al., 2000). The researchers ensured that the questionnaires are translated to Kiswahili to minimize the language barrier issues that may obstruct the understanding of the queries. The data collection process had to be observed so that there were high responses and the data collected was accurate. The interviews and focus group discussions are held in a comfortable and familiar setting to the participants, making them open and quite candid in their answers. The interviews and discussions are audio taped and exhaustively noted down all the pertinent information. To start with, the research was enabled by the approval at the Directorate of Research at Kisii University that facilitated the issuance of a research permit by the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Further permission was issued by of Nandi County Commissioner and Nandi County Director of Wildlife Conservation. Second, informed consent sought from the respondents to facilitate voluntary participation.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and percentages, to describe and summarize the findings. Responses from open- ended questions, key informant interviews were analyzed using content analysis to identify emerging themes. This involves coding the qualitative data and grouping similar responses to draw meaningful conclusions.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

All participants were asked to sign an Informed Consent Form, which was made available in both English and the Kalenjin languages. The study guaranteed the privacy and confidentiality of participants' information, assuring them that all data provided would be kept confidential. Anonymity was strictly observed in the reporting of research findings by not disclosing participants' names or identities. The study also ensured proper acknowledgment of other people's or researchers' ideas, including theories, models, and other reference materials, through appropriate citations and references. No fabrication or falsification of information occurred in the reporting of the study findings. Additionally, data collected were accurately recorded using voice recorders and notebooks, with participants' consent. The recorded information was securely stored and processed until the final study report was completed, after which it was archived.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Community Involvement in Wildlife Management

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding community collaboration in wildlife management policy implementation.

Table 3
Level of Community Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
The community is actively involved in discussions about wildlife	49 (22.0%)	87 (39.0%)	34 (15.2%)	40 (17.9%)	14 (6.3%)	3.5	1.1
Statement	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Mean Score**	**Standard Deviation**
management policies							
Local organizations effectively mobilize community members for wildlife conservation initiatives	56 (25.0%)	94 (42.0%)	27 (12.1%)	36 (16.1%)	11 (4.9%)	3.7	1.1
Community meetings are regularly held to address wildlife management issues	40 (17.9%)	76 (33.9%)	47 (21.0%)	43 (19.2%)	18 (8.0%)	3.4	1.2
There is a high level of participation from community members in wildlife conservation programs	34 (15.2%)	81 (36.2%)	38 (17.0%)	54 (24.1%)	17 (7.6%)	3.3	1.2
Information about wildlife management policies is effectively disseminated within the community	27 (12.1%)	65 (29.0%)	49 (21.9%)	58 (25.9%)	25 (11.2%)	3.1	1.2
The community collaborates with government agencies on wildlife conservation initiatives	61 (27.2%)	99 (44.2%)	29 (13.0%)	22 (9.8%)	13 (5.8%)	3.8	1.0

Source: (Field Data, 2025)

The results were discussed in connection to the independent variables of the study (dimensions of community involvement: participation in discussions, effectiveness of local mobilization, frequency of community meetings, level of participation in programs, effectiveness of information dissemination, and collaboration with government agencies) and the dependent variable (implementation effectiveness of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy at Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy). The discussion herein set each of the measured indicators to the variables, summarized the indicators as contributed to policy implementation, and compared the findings to the reviewed literature.

To start with, the indicator that was used to display a significant component of the independent variable participatory engagement was community collaboration in the discussions regarding the management of wildlife (mean = 3.5, SD = 1.1). The moderate mean was also positive, indicating that a significant number of the respondents within the community said that they were involved in discussions and this in turn was correlated with improved perceptions of policy implementation. This was in line with Kipkeu et al. (2014) who found that communities were more inclined to embrace and endorse conservation regulations when communities were engaged in dialogue. Nevertheless, the qualitative data also showed that this collaboration was basically consultative, but not deliberative: the citizens of the community came to meetings and influenced the final decisions to a lesser extent. This subtext was in line with the Rodriguez (2022) discussion that the process of consultation accompanied by lack of actual shared decision-making diminished the power of participatory governance.

Second, the mobilization of the people by the local organizations was rated as rather effective (mean = 3.7, SD = 1.1). The local groups were significant sources of recruitment into conservation activities and raising awareness quantitatively and qualitatively. The result was consistent with that of Salerno et al (2021) who indicated that robust local organizations enhanced community buy-in. However, the interviews revealed that mobilization by such groups did lead to short term or incentive-based participation as opposed to long term commitment.

Third, there was moderate agreement, but more variation among respondents on the frequency of community meetings (mean = 3.4, SD = 1.2) and the level of participation in conservation programs (mean = 3.3, SD = 1.2). Those findings suggested that meetings and programs existed but unevenly distributed. These findings align with the findings by Gayo (2025) who argues that "conservation success is contingent not merely on ecological factors, but on addressing local governance structures, power relations, and historical inequalities that influence who controls, manages, and benefits from conservation initiatives" (p.10). This related to the fact that irregular or improperly organized meetings inhibited broad-based involvement which the current study confirmed when it found that forums were dominated by elders and local leaders leaving women, young people, and the marginalized groups with lesser say.

Fourth, the mean of dissemination of information was the lowest (3.1, SD = 1.2), which showed that there were divided views regarding the effectiveness of the information dissemination to the community. This weakness directly affected the dependent variable: inadequate dissemination had an adverse effect on community awareness about policy goals and procedural processes, which weakened compliance and active engagement. This finding was aligned with that of Woolaston et al. (2021) who had reported that poor communication channels compromised the policy implementation and supported the current study results of the finding that poor feedback mechanisms left any concerns unattended.

Fifth, the highest mean was registered in the community cooperation with government agencies (3.8, SD = 1.0), showing that the formal cooperation between the conservancy and governmental agencies was rather high and was positively perceived. This was in line with (Paavola 2015), who focused on the significance of multi-level governance and institutional support in relation to successful conservation. However, qualitative evidence puts this positive image into its context: collaboration was more formal and agency-driven, but not co-produced, whereby community ownership of decisions was constrained when institutional collaboration was not accompanied by real community empowerment (Pawan et al., 2026).

In these measures, the independent variables varied in their impact on the dependent variable: policy implementation effectiveness. The indicators that had a high score (mobilization and government collaboration) were related to more favorable implementation, including more visible conservation activities and a certain degree of compliance. On the other hand, the implementation gaps such as continuing unsustainable use of resources and unresolved human-wildlife conflict were associated with lower scores (information dissemination, inclusive participation). This tendency justified the frame of the rational choice theory when there was a sense of benefits, fairness, and clarity, the community members were more likely to endorse the policy implementation. Whenever perceived benefits were ambiguous or not evenly shared less support was given to conservation.

The findings of the study are verified and reinforce the assertions made in the literature review. Similar to Kipkeu et al. (2014), the research established that the community engagement yielded better conservation when it entailed real advantage and local ownership. Like Sterling et al. (2017), the research also concluded that tokenistic participation and a lack of good communication hindered the success of wildlife policy implementation. The need to incorporate the local cultural values and shared governance schemes had already been noted by Infield and Mugisha (2013). The current research supported these arguments by demonstrating that the use of traditional leaders and top-down decision-making had marginalized key voices and negated just participation.

Qualitative variables of economic incentives and human-wildlife conflict also offered literature consistent reasons as to why implementation varied. In situations where income or employment could be observed made, and respondents were participating more often, predictions of rational choice theory were found to have paralleled previous empirical research. Equally, a lack of trust and desire to participate due to continued human-wildlife conflict was reflective of other conservation studies in other Kenyan ecosystems (Kipkeu et al., 2014).

4.2 Implementation of the Wildlife Management Policy at King'wal Wildlife Conservancy.

The research determined the degree to which Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy had been applied in Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy.

Table 4

Implementation of the Wildlife Management Policy at Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy

Policy Implementation Indicator	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Adoption of policy guidelines	178	3.45	0.94
Enforcement of conservation rules	178	3.68	0.89
Monitoring & evaluation mechanisms	178	3.38	1.04
Resource allocation for policy activities	178	3.16	0.82
Community awareness of policy directives	178	3.43	0.91
Institutional support from conservancy management	178	3.4	0.97
Composite Implementation Index	**178**	**3.42**	**0.93**

The results showed that the general adoption of the policy was moderate with a composite mean of 3.42. This meant that though certain elements of the policy were being operationalized, there are still few areas that needed to be bolstered to reach full and effective implementation. Out of the indicators, the conservation rules were the most effective with the highest mean score of 3.68. This implied that the conservancy was effective in enforcing wildlife protection regulations. The respondents seemed to accept that the rules concerning the prevention of poaching, protection of habitats and monitoring of wildlife were implemented relatively well within the period in question. Implementation of policy guidelines was moderate with a mean of 3.45. This means that the conservancy management had applied conscious efforts to coordinate its operations with the provisions of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy but maybe not exhaustive in all aspects.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms had a mean score of 3.38 and indicated that despite the presence of monitoring structures, the same was not always implemented and even when implemented, it was not well resourced. This observation indicated the lack of systematic monitoring of conservation efforts and results.

The lowest mean score of 3.16 had been registered on resource allocation in the policy implementation. This meant that the available funds, equipment and manpower were not enough to serve the conservation activities wholly. A good number of the respondents have indicated that the financial and logistical support constraints have reduced the overall effectiveness of the policy.

Policy directive awareness by the community was moderate (Mean = 3.43) indicating that sensitization was done but had not effectively targeted all community members equally. Similarly, conservancy management was rated moderately in terms of institutional support (Mean = 3.40), which means that although the management offered some level of leadership and coordination, this could have been done better.

In general, the descriptive findings indicated that the Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy implementation at King'wal Wildlife Conservancy was partially successful. The moderate scores on the various indicators represented the achievements and challenges; hence, a clear basis on the regression analysis to be performed.

4.3 Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between the level of community collaboration and the implementation of the Wildlife Management Policy at Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy.

Table 5: Regression Analysis

Model Summary						
Statistic		**Value**		**Interpretation**		
R		0.612		Strong correlation		
R^2		0.375		37.5% of variance in policy implementation explained		
Adjusted R^2		0.369				
F-statistic		45.56				
Regression Coefficients						
Predictor Variable	**Unstandardized Coefficient (B)**	**Std. Error**	**Standardized Beta (β)**	**t- value**	**Sig. (p- value)**	**Interpretation**
Constant (α)	1.245	0.312	–	3.987	0.000	Significant
Level of Community Collaboration (X)	0.567	0.084	0.612	6.750	0.000	Significant

The findings indicated that community collaboration significantly influenced policy implementation. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for community collaboration was 0.567 with a standard error of 0.084, indicating that for every unit increase in community collaboration, the implementation of the Wildlife Management Policy increased by 0.567 units, holding other factors constant. This implied that higher levels of collaboration was associated with more effective policy implementation.

The standardized beta coefficient (β) was 0.612 demonstrated a strong positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The corresponding t-value of 6.750 and a p-value of 0.000 further confirmed that the relationship was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis, which stated that there was no significant relationship between community collaboration and policy implementation, was rejected.

The model summary revealed that the R-value was 0.612, reflecting a strong positive correlation between the two variables. The R^2 value of 0.375 indicated that approximately 37.5% of the variance in policy implementation would be explained by the level of community collaboration. The adjusted R^2 of 0.369 suggested that the model retained adequate explanatory power even after accounting for possible sampling errors. Furthermore, the F-statistic of 45.56 with a significance value of 0.000 demonstrated that the overall model was statistically significant. The regression analysis provided clear evidence that community collaboration was a significant role in the implementation of the

Wildlife Management Policy at Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy. This highlighted the importance of engaging local communities in decision-making, benefit-sharing, and conservation activities to ensure that policy goals were effectively achieved.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The researcher found that community collaboration in wildlife management at Kingwal Wildlife Conservancy was moderate but there were lapses in information dissemination and inclusive representation. The presence of community-based organizations gave an opportunity to implement an organized interaction, but the level of such collaboration was not very high due to lack of effective communication channels and poor representation especially of women and youth groups. The partnership between communities and government agencies, despite its functionality, needed to be enhanced so that conservation efforts would be able to reflect local needs and priorities.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the findings and conclusions it is incumbent on the relevant authorities to sustain the prompt delivery of information on wildlife management policies using dedicated and efficient communication strategies. This ought to involve translation of policy documents into local languages, the use of visual mediums to the illiterate members of the community and the diversification of the channels of communication to incorporate both the traditional media and the digital media.

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