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Effect of Policy Network Legitimacy on Policy Process Outcomes in the Road Transport Sector in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: The legitimacy of a policy network is an important factor in determining the success of a policy process. It can help to ensure that the policy process is conducted in a transparent and accountable manner, and that the decision-making process is based on sound evidence and effective consultation. It also ensures that the policy process outcomes are based on consensus rather than on the interests of any particular group, builds trust between stakeholders and the government, which can help to ensure that the policy process is implemented effectively as well as help to enhance public participation in the policy process, which can lead to better policy outcomes. Given the limited empirical focus of the previous studies on the role of policy network legitimacy in achieving policy process outcomes, this study sought to establish the relationship between the two.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive design. The target population of the study was 470 policy actors in the road transport sector within Nairobi City County out of which 407 were sampled to respond to the questionnaire and 45 were sampled to participate in focused group discussions as well as key informant interviews. The sampling approach adopted was a purposeful sampling procedure. A mixed methodology was adopted whereby both quantitative and qualitative data was collected through structured questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews and focused group discussions. The quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics that is mean, frequencies and percentages as well as regression analysis. On the other hand, qualitative data was analysed through thematic analysis and reported in a narrative format.

Findings: The study established that the level of policy network legitimacy in road transport sector within Nairobi City County, Kenya was very high and this was associated with a significant improvement in the policy process outcomes.

Recommendations: The study recommends a need for an increase public participation by the policy makers in the transport department in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study also recommend establishment of clear guidelines and rules for the policy network that all members must follow to ensure accountability. The study also recommend a transparent process for the policy network as well as promotion of accountability by ensuring all members of the policy network are held accountable for their actions.

Keywords: *Policy network, policy network legitimacy, policy process outcomes, transport sector, Kenya*

BACKGROUND

Public policy process is complex and many policy problems in various policy domains require collaboration of actors at all levels of government (World Bank, 2017). Complexity and fragmentation in public policy management is an issue of major concern, which calls for vertical and horizontal integration approaches in public policy making, and implementation processes (Peters, 2018). Almeida and Gomes (2019) posit that public policy process is the dynamic interaction of multiplicity of actors, ideas and beliefs with the assumptions that in the end, the result of interactions would be a public policy. Moreover, different actors have different capabilities to influence public policy processes at the micro, meso and macro levels (Almeida & Gomes, 2019). Yet governments must steer the policy process despite its complexity and multiplicity of actors involved (Peters, 2018). This calls for policy legitimacy, transparency and participatory policymaking (Larson, 2017) among various actors.

Policy network legitimacy is directly influenced by level of trust, deliberation, inclusivity, accountability and citizen support (Larson, 2017). Other empirical studies by several scholars focusing on policy networks within the European and Southern America context, reveal that deliberative dimension is central to legitimacy of policy outputs and outcomes (Di Gregorio *et al.*, 2019; Durnova, Fischer & Zittoun, 2016; Fischer, 2017; Fischer, & Schlapfer, 2017; Ingold, Fischer & Cairney, 2017; Larson, 2017; Schmidt, 2013). Findings from these studies collaborate on how policy legitimacy is affected by policy support and the mandate of the policy network. Consequently, level of trust, management strategies and network structure are influence collaboration outcomes.

On the one hand, type of policy network affects type of management strategies deployed. On the other hand, collaboration outcomes affect policy network characteristics influence on public policy process outcome (Howlett, Mukherjee & Koppenjan, 2017). Furthermore, Howlett *et al.* (2017) assessed the features of policy networks with specific focus on policy learning brokerage effects on policy process outcomes. Findings show that brokerage positively influence policy outcomes. However, effects of policy network legitimacy on policy process outcomes are not examined and therefore no conclusive evidence is provided from findings effects of the intersection of policy networks, network governance and collaborative governance variables on policy process outcomes.

Increasingly, calls for transport sector governance put emphasis on the need for further studies on how key stakeholders' participation levels, accountability, transparency, effectiveness, credibility, legitimacy, and coherence influence public policy processes (Docherty *et al.*, 2018; Hoffmann *et al.*, 2017; Veneeman, 2018). Moreover, Rau, Hynes and Heisserer (2016) study findings reveal that in multi-level governance settings, quick economic growth, social and political oscillations are key contextual factors which influence transport policy process outcomes. Klopp and Petretta (2017) posit that policy environment, level transparency, inclusivity and exchange of information among policy actors influence policy outcomes. At same time, Scholars (Marsden & Reardon, 2017; Poku-Boansi & Marsden, 2018; Zhang, Geerlings, Makhoulfi & Chen, 2018) suggest further academic research on the effects of transport sector policy networks legitimacy on policy process outcomes.

Mabeya (2020) posit that perceived legitimacy of political regime influence the level of public participation in policy process. The implication of this study within the Kenyan context is that

increased public participation in policy process, political and policy contexts shape the legitimacy of policy networks. However, the study does not focus on road transport sector policy process and how outcome is affected by interactions and linkages of a multiplicity of actors. Mees and Driessen (2019) suggest policy network transparency influence policy outcomes, in addition high level of trust among members is a precondition for transparency. Transparency effects depends on the phases of policy process. Romzek, Leroux, Johnston, Kempf, Piatak (2013) study reveal that the level of transparency in the policy network is positively influence network performance.

In Kenya, since 1963 the policy environment for the road transport sector has been more oriented towards road infrastructure while the politicians and the government bureaucrats have continued to demonstrate little concern on public participation in policy process. Centralized government departments in the road transport sector established to coordinate policies and programs have not been ensuring public participation in the policy making process. Historically, the prevailing political regimes influenced transport sector policy environment and the president could give policy directives for implementation without consulting the key stakeholders in the transport sector leading to formulation of transport policy without inclusivity which can result to limited accessibility, safety and affordability to the citizenry (World Bank, 2014).

In addition, transport sector policies have not sufficiently responded to demands for efficiency and effectiveness in the road passenger transport services. From the mid of 1970 up to 1994, several donor driven reforms shaped the policy changes in the road transport sector. However, significant changes occurred after the change of political regime in 2000 and change of the Constitution of Kenya in 2010. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) entrenched public participation in problem identification, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review. The values and principles of equality, good governance, public participation, inclusivity, sustainable development, transparency and accountability form the fundamental tenets in all public policy processes (Constitution of Kenya (COK), 2010). Therefore, involvement of road transport sector policy networks in policy making and implementation is critical in the realization of sustainable transportation within Nairobi City County. However, there is little literature on the extent and nature of transport policy networks legitimacy influence on policy process outcomes within Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Problem Statement

Mitullah and Opiyo (2017) point out that policy integration and inclusion of multiplicity of actors, remains issues of concern. In particular, the role of policy networks in road transport sector policy process remains unclear. The position is supported by other scholars who also argue that the influence of policy networks on the road transport policy process outcomes is not clear (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2019; Klopp & Cavoli, 2019). Raje et al. (2018) posit that the transportation challenges facing Nairobi Metropolitan areas require behavior change sustainable development of, infrastructure, transport policy integration and regulatory reforms. However, the study does not discuss the road transport sector policy networks legitimacy role in sustainable transport policy making and implementation and how the nature of influences on policy outcomes.

Kloop (2015) study asserts that transport sector policy sub system in Kenya is complex and dynamic which involves interactions of multiplicity of actors with a variety of interests, beliefs

and values seeking outcomes. However, there is clarity on how road transport sector policy networks influence policy process outcomes in the road transport sector within Nairobi City County, Kenya. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) emphasizes on more transparent, deliberative, accountable, legitimate, collaborative and inclusive approaches to public policy processes and public management. Government of Kenya, the global ranking shows a persistently very low score in policy formulation and implementation, regulatory quality, voice and accountability and governance indicators (World Bank, 2020). Despite the contributions of these studies to the academic literature on policy networks in Kenya, it remains unclear how policy network legitimacy affects policy process outcomes in a multilevel governance setting. This gap was the premise for the current research.

Objective of the Study

The study sought to establish the effect of policy network legitimacy on policy process outcomes in the road transport sector in Nairobi City County, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have suggested that legitimacy, accountability, transparency and deliberation are very important aspects of democratic anchorage of policy networks. Public awareness and access to information on public policy in the domain areas of concern and public perceptions on the importance of the policy network is fundamental (Koliba *et al.*,2011; Ansell & Torfing, 2017; Larson,2017). The public policy processes are generally complex; the policy networks must interact with the public and facilitate deliberations on various complex wicked problems. The policy networks are required to uphold public values and ethical behavior to protect and promote human rights and equality, fair treatment, individual freedoms and openness. Policy networks must ensure citizen participation in all public policy processes. The voice of the citizens must be heard and views included in the policy process (Ansell & Torfing, 2017).

The implication of this is that accountability in the form of voice and due deliberation by informal and formal policy networks is necessary condition for legitimacy. The sufficiency of this is that of meaningful participation of citizens and diversity in representation to avoid the dominance of particular coalitions perceived not to be advancing public interest (Zyl, 2014; Larson, 2017). Policy networks must facilitate due deliberation through deliberative forums and open with interactive feedbacks on policy issues. The public feedback on the deliberations must indicate that the deliberations are fair, sharing of knowledge, possible solutions are explored, and exchange value took place in a free atmosphere of dialogue (Torfing, 2019).

Sandstrom, Crona and Bodin (2014) investigated legitimacy in governance of natural resource in Sweden. Findings reveal that historical and current institutional settings form the initial conditions influence support of network governance by stakeholders in the policy domain. Deliberate selection and exclusion of actors from various committed stakeholders increase the level of support to the policy network governance. In addition, deployment of various strategies to align processes and stakeholder goals. From the complexity perspective of the public policy process, diversity, flexibility and inclusivity tend to address the issue of uncertainty, ownership and sustainability. The embedment of these normative values in policy networks ensure they have the necessary and sufficient capacity to influence public policy process due their perceived legitimacy and public value (Larson, 2017).

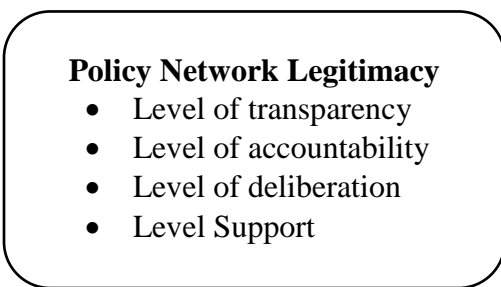
The citizens must exercise their power through their participation in public policy process (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). The assumption is that the more legitimate, accountable, transparent and participatory deliberative the policy network the more it will influence public policy processes. Barasa *et al.* (2015) found that transparency is enhanced when there no ambiguity in roles and responsibilities of various actors in the policy arena, and adherence to transparency procedural conditions. Mbithi *et al.* (2018) found that lack of transparency has negative influence on public participation in policy process at county levels of government in Kenya. Barasa (2019) posits that the level transparency in non-state actors influence inclusivity in policy making in Kenya. Transparency increases the level of public participation and collaboration among policy actors.

Konyago (2019) found that transparency influence policy process outputs and outcomes. Muthomi and Thurmaier (2020) posit that citizen influence policy process outputs and outcomes through participatory transparency. However, these studies have not examined the influence of policy network transparency on policy process outcomes in multilevel governance settings for the transport policy domain. Furthermore, these studies did not examine the democratic legitimate of in non-state actors and how the legitimacy of policy networks influence policy process outcomes. The literature review indicates that is knowledge gap on effects of policy networks on policy process outcomes in road transport sector in Nairobi City County, Kenya in Kenya (Klopp & Cavoli, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research hypothesizes the interaction between policy network legitimacy and policy process outcomes in the road transport sector within Nairobi City County, Kenya as shown in figure 1.

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable

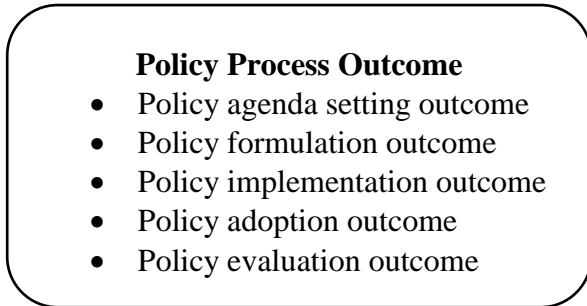


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive design where all the actors in the transport sector in Nairobi City County, Kenya were surveyed. The target population of the study was 470 policy actors in the road transport sector within Nairobi City County, Kenya out of which a sample size of 407 was determined through Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. The sample size of 407 was then selected through purposeful sampling procedures. A mixed methodology was adopted whereby both quantitative and qualitative data was collected through structured questionnaires and key

informant interviews. The quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics that is mean, frequencies and percentages as well as correlation and regression analysis.

On the other hand, qualitative data was analysed through thematic analysis and reported in a narrative format. The effect of policy network legitimacy on policy process outcomes in the road transport sector in Nairobi City County, Kenya was established through a univariate linear regression model of the form below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X + \varepsilon$$

Where Y is policy process outcome, X is policy network legitimacy and ε is the error term which is normally distributed with a mean of zero.

DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS

Response Rate

The study targeted 407 actors in the road transport sector to respond to the questionnaires. In addition, 45 respondents were targeted to participate in the key informant interview. Out of the number, 307 respondents responded to the questionnaires as required giving a response rate of 75% while 42 participated in the interview and Focused Group Discussions giving a response rate of 93%. This was satisfactory according to the argument by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who stated that a response rate above 50% was an adequate response rate for analysis.

Descriptive Statistics of Policy Network Legitimacy

Descriptive statistics ranging from measures of central tendency (Mean and Standard deviation) as well as frequency and percentages of the responses to statements on this variable are presented in this section. The study first established the perception of the respondents using a five-point Likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” on various items such as legitimacy, accountability, transparency, deliberation. Public support, participation mechanism, oversight mechanism, equity, sanction and rules, compliance with the law and rights to govern. The result of the perceived influence is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Perceived influence of policy network legitimacy on policy process outcomes

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	3	1.00%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	2.80%
Agree	123	40.00%
Strongly Agree	173	56.20%
Total	307	100%

Results in table 1 reveal that majority (96.2%) of the respondents in the survey were collectively in agreement (agree and strongly agree) with most items on network legitimacy and its influence on transport policy process outcome. About 2.8% were indecisive while 1% of the respondents disagreed with most of the items. This is in line with the qualitative findings which revealed that

network’s legitimacy had a strong influence in accountability (73.4%); transparency (67.5%); deliberation (61.5%); participatory mechanism (77.4%) and oversight mechanism (85.9%).

For example, there was a general consensus regarding agenda setting amongst most key informants who felt that policy network legitimacy plays a major role during agenda setting facilitating access to agenda prioritization arena. Policy network contribution to policy process depends level of perceived legitimacy by a variety of policy actors. Through their legitimacy, policy networks directly exert influence on policy problem definition, agenda setting, policy formulation, adoption, and implementation and evaluation outcomes (PKI-17, 2022). Policy network level of legitimacy dependent on how it attracts public support in the policy domain areas of expertise, and perceived influence by central players in the whole policy network (PKI-10, 2022). In addition, transparency and due deliberation in the two level of government strengthen policy network legitimacy. Policy network that is perceived to be legitimacy by a multiplicity of actors normally has strong support from the citizens (PKI-15, 2022).

Policy network legitimacy creates a structure with high levels of formality making them more flexible, agile, adaptive, explorative and exploitative of influence opportunities within the complex dynamic policy agenda setting environment. They do so to allow deliberation and advocacy on road transport sector issues framed as problem for agenda setting by describing the causes of the problem and providing the policy solutions influence policy process outcomes (FGD1,2022). The study further rated statements on policy network legitimacy on a five-point Likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of policy network legitimacy

Policy network...	Response (% of 307)					Mean	Std Dev
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
...practices always ensures that there is accountability in all policy processes activities and operations to influence outcomes	3	5	5	14	73	4.50	1.00
... practices always ensures that there is transparency in all policy processes activities and operations to influence outcomes	1	4	5	22	68	4.52	0.84
... always ensures that concerns raised during policy deliberations are included in the final policy contents	1	4	5	28	62	4.47	0.84
... popularity, high level trust and social support by citizens endures it to policy makers	3	5	5	39	48	4.25	0.97
... practices always ensures that participation mechanisms in policy process are acceptable to all stakeholders	1	4	5	13	77	4.62	0.83
... practices always ensures that it provides oversight mechanisms within policy networks on policy process	1	4	5	4	86	4.71	0.81

Policy network...	Response (% of 307)					Mean	Std Dev
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
... practices always ensure that there agreed sanctions and rules on governance endures it to policy makers	3	4	5	52	36	4.15	0.90
... right to govern the road transport sector, makes more legitimate to public and policy makers	3	5	5	30	57	4.34	0.98
Average						4.44	0.90

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neither Agree or Disagree; A=Agree; D=Strongly Agree

Overall, the study established that the level of policy network legitimacy in road transport sector within Nairobi City County, Kenya was very high (Overall Mean = 4.44). There was a small variation in the respondent's responses as shown by a small standard deviation (Std Dev = 0.90) which implies that most of the respondents held related opinions.

Specifically, the study findings demonstrated a strong agreement among the respondents that the policy network practices always ensures that there is accountability in all policy processes activities and operations to influence outcomes (M = 4.50), policy network practices always ensures that there is transparency in all policy processes activities and operations to influence outcomes (M = 4.52) as well as an agreement that policy network always ensures that concerns raised during policy deliberations are included in the final policy contents (M = 4.47).

Majority of the respondents also agreed that policy network's popularity, high level trust and social support by citizens endures it to policy makers (M = 4.25) and strongly agreed that policy network practices always ensures that participation mechanisms in policy process are acceptable to all stakeholders (M = 4.62) and that policy network practices always ensures that it provides oversight mechanisms within policy networks on policy process (M = 4.71). It was also established that majority of the respondents agreed that policy network practices always ensure that there agreed sanctions and rules on governance endures it to policy makers (M = 4.15) and that the policy network right to govern the road transport sector, makes more legitimate to public and policy makers (M = 4.34).

Regression Analysis of Policy Network Legitimacy and Policy Process Outcome

Before running the univariate regression analysis, diagnostic tests for using the least squares estimator was conducted. The assumptions of using the least square estimator are that the predictor variables should not be highly correlated, the error term should be normally distributed (normality) with a constant variance (homoscedasticity) and a mean zero and that it should not be highly correlated across the predictor variables (serial correlation). These assumptions are tested under this section before running the regression model. One of the assumptions of least square regression is that the error term should be normally distributed. This study tested for this assumption graphically using P-P plots for regression standardized residual as well as the normality plot as shown in figure 2.

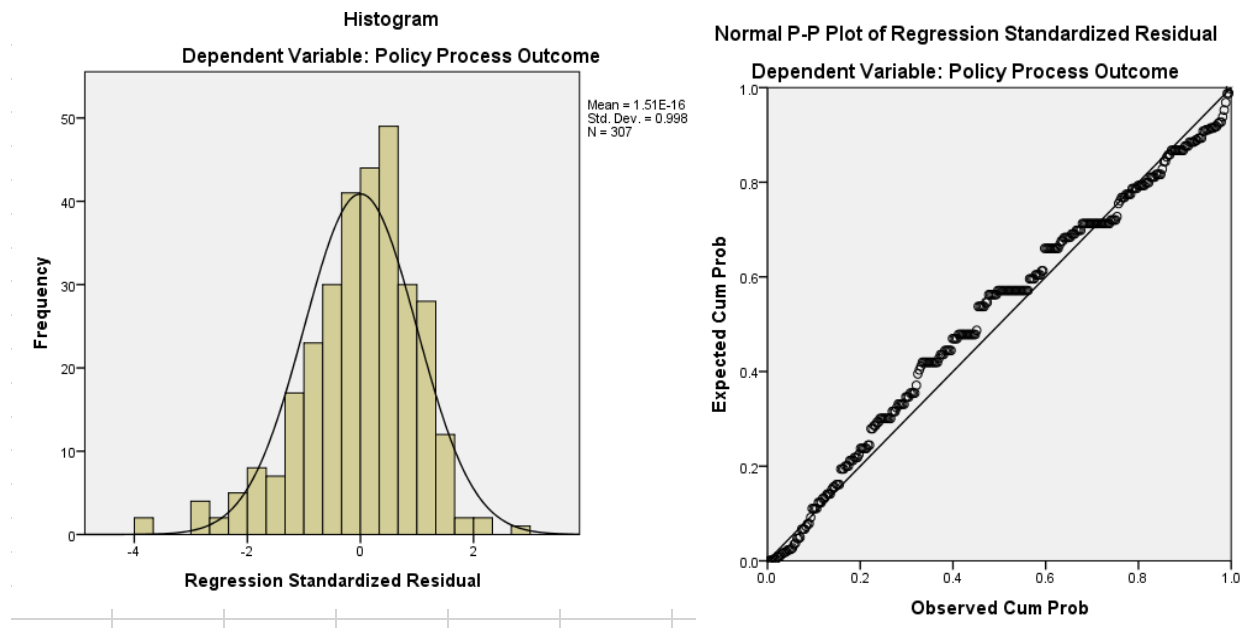


Figure 2: Normality Test of the Regression Residual

The findings in Figure 2 indicated that the error term adopted a normal distribution which is a requirement of using least square. Therefore, it was suitable to use a least square estimator regression model. The assumption of serial correlation was tested using Durbin Watson method which requires the DW statistic to be between 1.5 and 2.0 to imply absence of serial correlation. The findings were indicated in table 4.40.

Table 3: Durbin Watson Test of Autocorrelation

Durbin Watson (DW)

1.678

Predictors: (constant), policy network legitimacy

As shown in table 3, the DW value is 1.678 which is between the recommended value of 1.5 to 2.0. Therefore, it was concluded that there is absence of serial correlation hence it was suitable to use a regression least square estimator regression model. The assumption of Heteroscedasticity was also tested through Breusch Pagan method which requires that the P-Value is not significant so that the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity is upheld. The results for this method are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Breusch Pagan test of heteroscedasticity

Breusch Pagan test of Heteroscedasticity

Chi ² (1)	0.097
Prob > Chi ²	0.348

As shown in table 4, the P-Value (0.348 is greater than 0.05) meaning that the null hypothesis homoscedasticity is upheld. This implies that the error term had a constant variance and therefore it was suitable to use a least square estimator regression model. Since the assumptions of regression model ascertained the suitability of using a regression model, it was conducted. The coefficient of determination results (R-square) presented in Table 5 shows the variation in the dependent variable (policy process outcome) accounted for by the independent variable (policy network legitimacy).

Table 5: Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.295	0.087	0.084	0.3136

Predictors: (constant), policy network legitimacy

The results are presented in table 5 demonstrate that policy network legitimacy has a positive association with policy process outcome to mean that an improvement in policy network legitimacy is associated with an improvement in policy process outcome (R = 0.295). In addition, the results showed that policy network legitimacy account for up to 8.7% of the variation in policy process outcome (R-Square = 0.087). Other than that, the remaining variation can be predicted by other factors. ANOVA was also used to test for the fitness of the regression model linking the two variables. The results are presented in table 6.

Table 6: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.857	1	2.857	29.059	.000
Residual	29.987	305	0.098		
Total	32.844	306			

Dependent variable: policy process outcome

Predictors: (constant), policy network legitimacy

Through the F test, it was established as shown in table 6 that the F-calculated value of 29.059 was greater than the F-critical ($F_{0.05,1,305}$) value of 3.872 implying that the model was significant. This is confirmed by a significant P-value (Sig = 0.000 < 0.05) implying that the regression model linking policy network legitimacy to policy process outcome was significant and fit. Therefore, any conclusions drawn from it are relevant. The regression model coefficients were finally presented in table 7.

Table 7: Regression model coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.242	0.221		14.66	0.000
Policy Network Legitimacy	0.267	0.05	0.295	5.391	0.000

Dependent variable: policy process outcome

The regression model coefficient results in table 7 indicate that other factors held constant, policy network legitimacy has a positive and significant effect on policy process outcomes ($\beta = 0.267$; $t = 5.391 < 1.96$; $P\text{-value} < 0.05$). This implies that a unit improvement in policy network legitimacy would result to an improvement in the policy process outcomes by up to 0.267 units. These findings are supported by finding by scholars (Ansell & Torfing, 2017; Larson, 2017; Torfing, 2019), who established that policy network legitimacy influence policy process outcomes in various policy domains and contexts.

CONCLUSION

The study findings led to the conclusion that the level of policy network legitimacy in road transport sector within Nairobi City County, Kenya was very high. The level of transparency, accountability and deliberation was established to be high in the road transport sector within Nairobi City County, Kenya. It was also concluded that an improvement in the aforementioned policy network legitimacy indicators would result to a significant improvement in the policy process outcomes.

This is because the legitimacy of a policy network is an important factor in determining the success of a policy process. It can help to ensure that the policy process is conducted in a transparent and accountable manner, and that the decision-making process is based on sound evidence and effective consultation. It also ensures that the policy process outcomes are based on consensus rather than on the interests of any particular group, builds trust between stakeholders and the government, which can help to ensure that the policy process is implemented effectively as well as help to enhance public participation in the policy process, which can lead to better policy outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends a need for an increase public participation. The policy makers in the transport department in Nairobi City County, Kenya should make sure to involve the public in policy-making decisions. This can include public hearings, surveys, and other forms of public engagement. The policy makers in the transport department in Nairobi City County, Kenya should also establish clear guidelines and rules for the policy network that all members must follow. This will help to ensure everyone is following the same process and are held accountable for their actions.

There is also a need for the policy makers in the transport department in Nairobi City County, Kenya to foster transparency by establishing a transparent process for the policy network. This

includes making sure all documents and communications are available to the public. This will help to ensure the public can understand and trust the process. They should also promote accountability by ensuring all members of the policy network are held accountable for their actions. This can include sanctions for breaking rules or regulations.

The policy makers in the transport department in Nairobi City County, Kenya should also foster policy networks legitimacy by encouraging deliberation between members of the policy network and citizens. This will help to ensure that all perspectives are taken into account when making decisions. Finally, there is a need to develop public policy participatory process evaluation system for policy network legitimacy. The policy makers in the road transport sector in Nairobi City County, Kenya should create an evaluation system to ensure the policy network is held to the highest standards of quality. This will help to ensure the best outcomes are achieved.

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