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THE INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ON IMAGE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF THE NAKURU COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEGREE OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER 2025

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Samuel Njoroge, and my daughter, Leticia Wangari

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Almighty God for the gift of life, care, and the opportunity to write this dissertation. I also extend my gratitude to my family members for their unwavering support. I also wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank my supervisors, Christopher S. Khisa (PhD) and Mr. Shadrach Mwanthi, for their time, unrelenting support that has led to the successful completion of this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of feedback from both internal and external stakeholders on the public's perception of the Nakuru County Government. There is little research on how this

feedback shapes the County's image. The study had three main objectives which include: Identify and categorize at least five distinct forms of stakeholder input used by the Nakuru County Government in its image management efforts; evaluate the degree of integration of stakeholder input in the Nakuru County Government's image management strategies; and assess the correlation between stakeholder feedback trends and public perception of the Nakuru County Government's image from 2021 to 2025. A combination of research methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The total population consisted of 2.45 million people, with a sample size of 157 participants for quantitative data and 12 key informants and one focus group discussion for qualitative data**.** A stratified random and purposive sampling approach was employed to ensure all stakeholder categories were proportionately represented. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software. The study found that Nakuru County Government employs various feedback channels, with public forums being the most used. While residents generally find it easy to give input, actual engagement remains moderate. Stakeholders feel their feedback impacts policy and image, though departmental responsiveness varies. The County's image is seen as moderately positive, boosted by visible development and some responsiveness, but hindered by inconsistent communication, transparency, and selective feedback use. Though a foundation for participatory governance exists, challenges like poor responsiveness and limited structured mechanisms persist. The study recommends diversifying feedback channels, improving transparency, institutionalizing feedback tracking, enhancing civic education, and ensuring inclusive, timely follow-up to build trust and strengthen engagement, eventually enhancing the County's image.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIDP - County Integrated Development Plan

F.G.Ds - Focus Group Discussions

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

In contemporary organizational environments, stakeholder feedback has become indispensable to effective image and reputation management. Organizations must listen to what stakeholders are saying, not only to meet expectations but also to signal integrity, transparency, and responsiveness (Ablander & Marsh, 2021). Feedback provides early warnings of reputational risk, allowing timely corrective actions and helping maintain trust (Kamau, 2025). For instance, social media feedback can rapidly amplify both praise and criticism; organizations that monitor and respond well tend to enjoy more favourable perceptions than those that ignore or mishandle comments. Moreover, feedback influences identity alignment: internal stakeholders' awareness that their performance is seen and valued tends to boost their commitment and consistency with organizational values, thereby reinforcing external reputation (Sanchez-Iglesias, Garcia-Madariaga & Jerez, 2024). Organizations that embed stakeholder feedback into decision-making and reporting are often seen as more legitimate and trustworthy, which strengthens their image.

Globally, institutions that are both public and private now recognize that responsiveness to stakeholder input enhances transparency, fosters trust, and supports sustainable organizational legitimacy (Tench et al., 2021). This stakeholder-oriented paradigm aligns with Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, which posits that organizations can build a competitive advantage and strengthen their reputations by proactively engaging and satisfying stakeholder concerns (Maignan et al., 2011).

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In Africa, governance reforms have increasingly embraced inclusive participation as a critical strategy for enhancing service delivery, promoting transparency, and rebuilding public trust in public institutions. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), launched under the African Union, strongly advocates for inclusive participation in national governance self-assessment processes to ensure that citizens' voices shape governance outcomes (African Union, 2025). Moreover, grassroots monitoring and bottom-up reform mechanisms are gaining traction across the continent, enabling communities to hold leaders accountable and influence local decision-making. These participatory approaches have proven effective in reducing corruption and fostering legitimacy in governance structures (Stiglitz, 2024).

At the regional level, civic technology platforms have emerged across Africa to facilitate real-time citizen input and enhance participatory governance. Examples include Maji Voice in Kenya, which allows citizens to report water service issues via SMS or online portals, dramatically improving both feedback volumes and resolution rates (from 400 to 4,000 reports per month and resolution at 94%) (OECD, 2025). In South Africa, platforms like Gov Chat enable citizens to engage via WhatsApp, SMS, or USSD, fostering direct communication with government services (OECD, 2025).

In Kenya, the 2010 Constitution entrenched devolved governance and enshrined public participation, transparency, and accountability as foundational principles. County governments are entrusted with the responsibility to operationalize these ideals in service delivery (Njoroge et al., 2023). Specifically, the Nakuru County Government has demonstrated deliberate efforts to institutionalize stakeholder engagement. It has established a Directorate of Public Participation and Citizen Engagement, organized training for Sub-County and Ward administrators, and partnered with USAID to build frameworks that enhance grassroots outreach (Nakuru County

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Government Prioritizes Public Participation, 2024; Nakuru County Set to Partner with Development Organizations, 2024). Additionally, periodic stakeholder planning meetings, particularly in sectors like environment and climate change, underscore efforts to involve development partners, NGOs, and community groups in policy deliberations (County engages stakeholders in the Environment sector, 2023).

Despite these initiatives, existing academic literature reveals a gap in understanding how stakeholder feedback influences the public image of county governments. Prior studies have focused on the implementation of strategic plans (Omwenga, 2023), the relationship between governance attributes (e.g., transparency, accountability) and service delivery (Omondi, 2018), and the broader performance impacts of stakeholder participation across Kenyan counties (Waikenda, 2019). However, these largely omit an examination of how stakeholder input contributes to shaping or altering public perception or government image.

Moreover, while stakeholder consultation has been shown to improve service delivery evidenced in Meru County (Kainda & Njoroge, 2022) and in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru (Gikombi & Njoroge, 2018), the image management implications of feedback loops remain unexplored. In other words, there is little empirical insight into how feedback mechanisms are integrated into governance and how they translate into improved public image.

In the Kenyan county governance context, stakeholder inputs are elicited via multiple formal and informal channels. Public participation forums and town-hall meetings are frequently used during the budgeting and planning cycles, enabling citizens to voice priorities and concerns (Gwidi & Kilei, 2022). Written instruments, such as memoranda, petitions, or written submissions, also occur, particularly in communities where literacy and access permit. Digital

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channels are increasingly present; for example, e-government platforms and social media are used (Wairiuko et al., 2022) to allow residents to submit feedback or view policies. Stakeholder consultations are institutionalized in some counties during project implementation, as seen in Kitui, where stakeholder involvement was measured by how frequently and how early they were consulted in project planning (Kimanzi & Ngugi, 2017). Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is another input form: involvement in M&E allows stakeholders to monitor whether implementation aligns with the expectations set during consultations (Savayi, Karimi & Patrick, 2025). These varying input forms are unevenly deployed across counties; in some places, certain channels are more developed, while in others they are under-utilized or poorly publicized.

Feedback integration refers to the extent to which stakeholder input is processed, considered, and incorporated into decisions, and whether there is follow-through. Several Kenyan studies show gaps here. In the Narok County study, stakeholder communication and participation correlated positively with strategy implementation, implying that when feedback is well-integrated, outcomes improve (Murero & Linda, 2023). However, in Uasin Gishu County, although channels for public participation exist, many respondents felt that their opinions were not taken seriously indicating weak integration (Gitegi, 2020). In Makueni County, studies evaluating public participation in policy making found that awareness of opportunities to participate was low, and participation rates were modest; correspondingly, stakeholders perceived little in the way of input being acted upon (Nyong'a & Gachanja, 2021). Further, studies on transparency and accountability, such as in Kakamega County, show that transparency-focused social accountability actions only improve service delivery when accompanied by actual feedback loops, but these are often inconsistent (Barasa, Shitetswa, & Ngome, 2023).

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Feedback influence refers to how much stakeholder input is not just collected, but genuinely processed and acted upon, with visible follow-through in decisions. Several Kenyan studies illustrate significant gaps in this area. In Laikipia County, Ekale (2024) observed that counties that integrate feedback more effectively tend to deliver services more effectively, emphasising the importance of functioning feedback systems. Similarly, in Isiolo County, Ngoyoni (2021) found that although public participation forums are held, many residents felt that the county government failed to communicate how their input influenced final decisions, which weakened public trust and reduced the effectiveness of participation. In Nairobi City County, Gathumbi and Gatobu (2021) highlighted that while public involvement and information exchange positively affect service delivery, failure to respond to stakeholder input risks making participation processes feel tokenistic. In Elgeyo Marakwet County, Sabulei (2025) noted that weak feedback systems and poor communication limit the extent to which citizens can influence budgeting decisions, highlighting the need for stronger feedback loops to enhance genuine participation.

A growing body of empirical work in Kenya shows a strong relationship between how stakeholders perceive feedback processes and their views of county government performance and legitimacy. For instance, in the Bungoma County study, higher levels of public participation (in awareness, equitable notice, inclusive forums) were associated with better perceptions of governance and sustainable development outcomes (Chen, Simiyu & Hongo, 2022). In Uasin Gishu County, low awareness of participation opportunities and perceptions that input is not taken seriously correlated with lower levels of trust and satisfaction with county officials (Gitegi, 2020). In Kwale County, respondents who felt they had access to information and that participation was meaningful tended to have more positive evaluations of the county government's performance (Gwidi & Kilei, 2022). Conversely, when public participation is

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nominal or episodic, with little visible implementation, citizens tend to perceive governance as unresponsive, which erodes confidence and tarnishes the county's reputation (Nyong'a & Gachanja, 2021). These trends suggest that the quality of the feedback process (access, responsiveness, follow-up) is as important as its existence for shaping public perception.

Image management in county governments relates to how the government is perceived by stakeholders, including its reputation, credibility, and trustworthiness. Literature shows that a county's image is enhanced when it demonstrates transparency, responsiveness, and inclusive engagement. For example, in Narok County, strong stakeholder involvement and effective communication were found to support strategy implementation, thereby contributing to the perception of effectiveness and integrity (Murero & Linda, 2023). In Bungoma, participatory governance practices helped foster a better reputation among citizens, as participation was linked to sustainable development and improved governance scores (Chen, Simiyu, & Hongo, 2022). However, image is negatively impacted when feedback is not taken on board or when there is perceived opacity; counties where people report that public forums are held but input is ignored or project outcomes do not match promises tend to suffer in public trust and image (Gitegi, 2020; Nyong'a & Gachanja, 2021). Transparent mechanisms like publicizing budgets, showing evidence of how public input shaped decisions, and keeping communication channels open are highlighted in the literature as critical for image management (Barasa, Shitetswa & Ngome, 2023).

Given the current institutional emphasis on citizen engagement and the strategic importance of public image for political legitimacy, public trust, and investor confidence, it is essential to understand how stakeholder feedback is operationalized in image management. This study aimed

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to fill that critical gap by examining the forms of stakeholder input, evaluating how this input is integrated into decision-making, and assessing its impact on public perception of Nakuru County Government over the past three years.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In modern governance, image management is essential to maintaining public trust and institutional legitimacy. For county governments like Nakuru, stakeholder feedback should play a central role in shaping public perception. While formal mechanisms for collecting input exist, the county often fails to act on the input it receives. Reports by *Nation Media Group* (Lutta, 2023) highlighted white elephant projects worth over KSh 800 million, including a fish market and a social hall built without proper community consultation and later abandoned. Similarly, a 2023 Nakuru County Government cabinet reshuffle was conducted without public engagement, prompting criticism and reducing confidence in the county's leadership (Kerubo, 2023). The Constitution of Kenya clearly states that it is the right of Kenyan citizens to access information (Lillian Chebet Misoi, n.d., p. 22). These cases reveal a pattern of disconnected feedback loops, where input is gathered but rarely translated into policy or image-related actions as required by public participation(Njoroge et al., 2023, p. 11). Additionally, the County Government Act 2012 does not clearly indicate how stakeholders' feedback can be processed or acted upon (County Governments Act 17 of 2012). The result is growing public frustration and a decline in trust (Kivandi & Muna, 2020, p. 9). This study examined the role of stakeholder feedback in Nakuru County's image management efforts, addressing a critical gap in understanding the relationship between engagement and perception.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Identify the influence of stakeholder feedback on the image management of organizations

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1.3 General Objective

To identify the influence of stakeholder feedback on the image management of organizations

1.4 Specific Objectives

The research objectives of this study were to:

i. Identify and categorize at least five distinct forms of stakeholder input used by the Nakuru County Government in its image management efforts from 2021 to 2025.

ii. Evaluate the degree of integration of stakeholder input in the Nakuru County Government's image management strategies from 2021 to 2025.

iii. Assess the stakeholder feedback trends and public perception of the Nakuru County Government's image for the past five years.

1.5 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

i. What does the Nakuru County Government use the distinct forms of stakeholder input and categories in its image management efforts from 2021 to 2025?

ii. To what extent does the Nakuru County Government integrate stakeholder input into its image management strategies from 2021 to 2025?

iii. What are the stakeholder feedback trends and public perception of the Nakuru County Government's image for the past five years?

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study was justified by the need to address a clear knowledge gap on how stakeholder feedback is integrated into image management practices within Kenya's county governments. While public participation is a constitutional requirement in governance (Njoroge et al., 2023),

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limited research has examined how such engagement directly influences the perception and reputation of county governments. Existing frameworks emphasize participation in policy and service delivery but rarely assess the role of feedback in shaping public image (Kivandi & Muna, 2020, p. 10).

The focus on Nakuru County Government provided a relevant case for understanding these dynamics in a real-world devolved context. As a high-profile and populous , Nakuru County offers insights that may reflect broader trends in County governance across Kenya. Moreover, there is practical urgency. County governments face growing pressure to demonstrate transparency, responsiveness, and legitimacy (Omwenga, 2023, p.11). Understanding how stakeholder input contributes to or is neglected in image-related decisions will help identify gaps in current engagement approaches and justify reforms. Finally, as trust in government institutions becomes increasingly tied to how citizens perceive their voice being heard and acted upon, this research offers timely relevance. Investigating the connection between feedback and image helps bridge communication practice with governance performance, thus providing a strong rationale for this study (Kivandi & Muna, 2020, p. 13).

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1.7 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to policymakers, the county government of Nakuru, theory, academic, and practical understanding of how stakeholder feedback shapes government image in a devolved governance setting. This study offers valuable insights to policymakers on the strategic role of stakeholder feedback in enhancing public image and governance credibility. By analyzing feedback mechanisms within Nakuru County Government, the findings can guide the formulation of inclusive public participation policies, transparency frameworks, and feedback integration systems. Understanding the link between citizen input and public image equips

policymakers with evidence to enhance responsiveness, accountability, and public trust. It also informs the development of legislative and regulatory instruments that institutionalize citizen engagement, making participation a consistent and structured practice rather than an ad hoc exercise across devolved units.

The study contributes to theory by applying stakeholder and public relations frameworks to a public sector context, specifically within devolved governance in Kenya. It helps validate and extend stakeholder theory by demonstrating how inclusive engagement and feedback loops contribute to image and trust-building in public organizations. Practically, it offers actionable recommendations on structuring feedback channels, institutionalizing responsiveness, and integrating communication strategies to manage public perception. This dual significance ensures that theoretical insights are grounded in real-world applications, enabling both scholars and practitioners to appreciate the dynamics between governance, participation, and organizational image in public administration.

For Nakuru County Government, the study provides a diagnostic view of how stakeholder feedback practices affect its public image and perceived legitimacy. It highlights areas of strength, such as existing forums for engagement, and identifies gaps—like inconsistent feedback integration and communication breakdowns. These insights support evidence-based reforms to make engagement more inclusive, transparent, and result-oriented. Implementing recommendations can improve service delivery, enhance trust among citizens, and strengthen the County's reputation. Furthermore, it helps departments benchmark their responsiveness, track feedback loops, and build a culture of participatory governance that aligns with the County's development agenda.

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The study contributes to academic discourse by bridging gaps between stakeholder theory, public administration, and reputation management. It offers empirical evidence on how feedback influences image in a devolved governance setting; an area that remains under-researched in developing countries, particularly Kenya. For researchers, it provides a framework for comparative studies across counties, sectors, or countries. It also expands methodological understanding by combining perceptions, policy analysis, and governance outcomes. Scholars can use this foundation to build longitudinal studies or explore sector-specific dynamics. Thus, it enriches literature and encourages interdisciplinary research across governance, communication, and management fields.

1.8 Scope of Study

The study focused on image management and stakeholder involvement in Nakuru County. Its geographic scope was restricted to Nakuru County, Kenya, incorporating multiple sub-counties to guarantee a thorough understanding of public perception and stakeholder participation. To assess how well various feedback mechanisms, shape the county's image, the study considered public forums like FGDs, interviews, and the use of questionnaires. The study was carried out within a given timeline. It concentrated on the opinions of stakeholders and the image management techniques used by the Nakuru County Government during the last five years. This time frame offered an appropriate framework for evaluating how public opinion has changed and how stakeholder involvement initiatives have affected image management. The study used a mixed-method approach in terms of methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Surveys, interviews, and FGDs were all used to gather information to provide a comprehensive picture of how stakeholder input received affects image management.

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1.9 Limitations of the Study

This study was geographically confined to Nakuru County, which limited the generalizability of its findings to other counties or national government bodies. Nakuru is relatively urbanized and economically active compared to many other counties in Kenya. Its stakeholder feedback structures, digital infrastructure, and governance practices may not reflect the conditions present in more rural, marginalized, or under-resourced counties. As a result, while the study provides valuable insights into how stakeholder feedback influences image management within Nakuru, these dynamics may differ significantly in counties with fewer resources, different political leadership, or lower civic engagement levels. This localized scope restricts the extrapolation of the study's conclusions across broader devolved governance systems in Kenya.

Another significant limitation of the study lay in methodological constraints, particularly the reliance on perceptual data from selected stakeholder groups. While surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions offer rich qualitative and quantitative insights, the findings were inherently shaped by respondents' personal experiences, biases, and expectations. For instance, public perceptions of Nakuru County Government's image may be influenced by political affiliation, individual service encounters, or broader socio-economic grievances unrelated to feedback mechanisms. Furthermore, the study primarily focused on stakeholder feedback from the past five years. However, historical factors shaping the image of Nakuru County Government may not be fully explored, as changes in public perception and image management strategies tend to unfold over longer periods. Finally, the official Secret Act can limit access to crucial government documents and reports. When information related to image management and stakeholder feedback remains inaccessible to the researcher, the depth and accuracy of the analysis are inevitably compromised.

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1.10 Delimitations

The research included only stakeholders who are accessible and willing to participate, excluding those who are unavailable or uncooperative. It focused on data from the past five years, without delving into earlier historical developments. The research used qualitative and quantitative data, with no independent verification of self-reported responses. Only publicly available documents and information were used; classified or restricted materials and data were not accessed. The research was limited to Nakuru County and did not generalize to other counties or national contexts.

1.11 Summary

This chapter presents the foundational elements of the study titled "To Identify the Influence of Stakeholder Feedback on Image Management of Organizations: Focusing on Nakuru County Government." It begins with the background of the study, outlining the growing importance of stakeholder engagement in shaping public sector reputation. The statement of the problem highlights gaps in feedback integration and inconsistent image outcomes in Nakuru County. The chapter further outlines the purpose, research objectives, and questions guiding the study. It includes a justification and significance for various stakeholders, defines the scope, and discusses limitations and delimitations, providing a comprehensive roadmap for the research.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the theoretical and empirical review of the influence of stakeholder feedback on the image management of organizations, focusing on Nakuru County Government. The review was guided by the study objectives, which included investigating the forms of stakeholder input that the Nakuru County Government has been receiving, to evaluate the extent to which the Nakuru County Government incorporates stakeholder input into its image management plans, and to examine how stakeholder feedback affects the County Government's reputation. The chapter consists of the general literature review, empirical literature review, literature review summary, research gap summary, conceptual framework, and theoretical framework focusing on the stakeholder engagement theory view and the public relations theory view.

2.1 General Literature Review

2.1.1 Stakeholders Inputs

The degree to which governance procedures are responsive, transparent, and inclusive has a significant impact on the public's perception of government institutions, especially those at the county level. Input from stakeholders is essential to this because it fosters legitimacy, accountability, and confidence. The Nakuru County Government has established several avenues for gathering and incorporating stakeholder input, which has a direct impact on its standing and public perception.

In accordance with Article 10(2) (a) of the Kenyan Constitution, which upholds public involvement as a national priority (County Government Act, 2012), Nakuru County frequently

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hosts public forums, or barazas. The goal is to gather public opinions on policies, projects, and objectives, especially when development planning and budgeting are underway. By exhibiting transparency and inclusivity, these forums foster public confidence and improve the county's reputation as being people-centered and responsive.

Stakeholders' inputs refer to the various forms of communication and information that stakeholders provide to an organization to express their needs, views, or experiences. These inputs can include suggestions, complaints, endorsements, or queries, and they represent the raw, unfiltered voice of the public or internal actors such as employees. In the context of public governance, such as Nakuru County Government, feedback inputs are crucial for understanding public sentiment, aligning services with citizen needs, and improving transparency. By collecting stakeholder input, organizations can identify performance gaps, anticipate concerns, and build stronger, trust-based relationships with the communities they serve (Macharia et al., 2025).

Feedback inputs can take both formal and informal forms. Common formal mechanisms include public participation forums, town-hall meetings, ward development committees, and structured public consultations. Informal forms may include social media posts, comments on county websites, emails, or suggestion boxes. Surveys and opinion polls also offer quantitative feedback, while participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) allows stakeholders to assess and report on project performance. In digital spaces, feedback may come through tweets, Facebook posts, or interactive GIS maps for reporting service failures. These tools offer a diverse and inclusive way for citizens to communicate with government institutions, if appropriately managed and integrated (Otieno, 2024).

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A study on Nairobi City County Government found that strong feedback mechanisms and structured stakeholder representation significantly contributed to transparency and positive governance outcomes. Public forums, budget hearings, and online feedback portals enabled citizens to express their views on service delivery and development priorities. This structured engagement promoted not only inclusive governance but also helped the county government adjust its strategies and improve service quality. Feedback was not merely collected but was analyzed and acted upon, leading to visible changes that boosted public trust (Macharia et al., 2025). Nairobi's approach serves as a model for counties seeking to institutionalize stakeholder participation effectively.

In Kenya's water and sanitation sector, stakeholder communication, including feedback mechanisms, has been positively associated with smoother project implementation and higher satisfaction. A study published by SAGE Publishers on rural water projects found that when implementers regularly reported progress and sought feedback from community members, there was improved alignment between project goals and community expectations. The use of status updates, community scorecards, and joint evaluation meetings allowed for two-way communication that strengthened trust and reduced project resistance. These feedback tools created an environment where users felt a sense of ownership, which in turn led to better maintenance and sustainability of the infrastructure (Njoroge, 2023).

Despite frequent engagement activities, a study on Kisumu's informal settlements revealed that feedback inputs were often superficial and underutilized. Although stakeholders regularly participated in community meetings and public discussions, their views were rarely incorporated into the final decisions. The study found that the county's failure to close the feedback loop by

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showing how stakeholder inputs were used led to frustration and declining public trust (Otieno, 2024). Feedback was perceived as symbolic, serving more to satisfy procedural requirements than to influence outcomes. This case underscores that collecting feedback is not enough—governments must demonstrate responsiveness and accountability to maintain credibility and legitimacy.

2.1.2 Feedback Integration

Feedback integration is the systematic process of analyzing stakeholder inputs and embedding them into organizational policies, practices, and decision-making frameworks. This process ensures that feedback is not only collected but also meaningfully utilized to influence outcomes such as policy reforms, service improvements, and strategic planning (Ndungu, 2024). Effective feedback integration involves establishing mechanisms like advisory boards, feedback management systems, and continuous monitoring to track how input shapes organizational change. Research by Mwangi et al. (2023) emphasizes that such integration increases governmental accountability and enhances citizen trust by demonstrating responsiveness to public concerns. Without this, feedback risks being superficial, limiting its potential to improve governance.

In practice, feedback integration manifests through clear communication channels where organizations report back to stakeholders about actions taken in response to their input. This can include public disclosures, revised policies, and modifications to service delivery models. For example, participatory governance frameworks in counties may involve quarterly feedback reports and community engagement forums to show responsiveness (Kamau & Wanjiku, 2022). Feedback desks and digital platforms can facilitate ongoing interaction, enabling dynamic

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adjustments to projects based on stakeholder needs. Conversely, inadequate feedback loops can erode public confidence; as Ndungu (2024) found in a study of urban service delivery, stakeholders who do not receive timely responses to their feedback often disengage, perceiving the process as tokenistic.

Porto Alegre, Brazil, is globally recognized for its successful participatory budgeting process, where citizen feedback directly shapes fiscal decisions. Through structured assemblies, community members propose, debate, and vote on budget allocations, ensuring that public priorities are reflected in real-time spending. Feedback integration is institutionalized, with formal follow-up and implementation tracking, which fosters civic trust and transparency. According to Cabannes and Lipietz (2018), this system has not only improved infrastructure and service delivery in marginalized areas but also deepened democratic engagement. The participatory framework has been replicated globally, serving as a model for feedback-driven urban governance.

In Johannesburg, South Africa, efforts to involve citizens in municipal planning through Integrated Development Planning (IDP) have often been criticized for poor feedback integration. Although public consultations are regularly held, research indicates that input from these sessions is rarely reflected in final decisions. Feedback is treated as a procedural formality rather than a transformative tool, leading to public frustration and disengagement. As highlighted by Nyalunga (2022), the lack of transparent communication about how input is used erodes trust and contributes to perceptions of elite capture. This weak integration limits the potential of participatory governance in addressing local service delivery gaps.

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2.1.3 Feedback Influence

Feedback influence refers to the real, observable impact that stakeholder feedback has on organizational policies, service delivery, institutional performance, and public image. It's about moving beyond just collecting input to ensuring that engagement produces changes. In many local governments, for example, when citizens contribute via public participation and feedback, policy implementation improves laws are revised, services are adjusted, or budgets are reallocated. A survey in Mogadishu, Somalia, found public participation significantly predicted both perceived responsiveness and trust in local authorities; when citizens felt their input led to action, trust increased markedly (Ali & Mohamed, 2025).

Another example is from Saudi Arabia, where new participatory urban planning policies enabled municipalities to use feedback from stakeholder workshops and digital platforms to adjust project designs, which altered development priorities and infrastructure planning (Alharbi, 2024). In Kenya, studies show that counties which align performance targets with their development plans and engage the public in setting those targets, see better service delivery and improved public perceptions. In Kisumu County, open dialogue between the county government and citizens improved service delivery outcomes; respondents reported enhanced satisfaction when input was considered in decision-making (Saliku & Mbirithi, 2024).

Feedback influence is mediated by perceived responsiveness: when people see that governments respond (i.e., act) to feedback, their trust, satisfaction, and perception of legitimacy rise. The study from Mogadishu indicates perceived responsiveness plays a mediating role between participation and trust (Ali & Mohamed, 2025). Without that responsiveness, feedback may be collected but have little influence, leading to disillusionment. Thus, feedback influence depends

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not only on mechanisms for collecting views but also on the organizational capacity, transparency, and genuine follow-up.

2.1.4 Image management

Image management refers to the strategies organizations use to shape, preserve, or restore how they are perceived by stakeholders, both internal and external. For public institutions like Nakuru County Government, image management involves communicating effectively, being responsive to citizen concerns, maintaining transparency, and delivering services consistently and ethically. It's about cultivating credibility, trustworthiness, competence, and legitimacy in public perceptions. The corporate image/reputation literature provides useful frameworks. Gray and Balmer (1998) differentiate between corporate identity (how the organization sees itself or wants to be seen), corporate image (how external audiences perceive the organization), and corporate reputation (a more enduring evaluation over time). Hatch and Schultz (2002) extend this by arguing that organizations must align their internal identity, their communicated identity, and how stakeholders (the "experienced identity") experience them to maintain a consistent image. These theories emphasize that image management isn't just about external messaging or branding; it's about a holistic alignment of what is promised, what is delivered, and what is experienced.

Recent studies illustrate how image management works in public sector/local government settings. In Somalia, citizens who perceived high responsiveness from local authorities (that feedback was heard and acted upon) reported greater trust (Ali & Mohamed, 2025). Trust is part of image: when people believe institutions respond, the institution's perceived legitimacy and credibility increase. In Saudi Arabia's urban planning, participatory workshops and digital

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engagement enhanced municipalities' images by incorporating community priorities into visible infrastructure projects; this reinforced perceptions of inclusivity and accountability (Alharbi, 2024). The study in Kisumu County, Kenya, by Saliku and Mbirithi (2024) also found that when public engagement is more than token, i.e., when citizen input influences service delivery and is visible, then county governments enjoy a stronger public image. Citizens report higher satisfaction and positive evaluations when they observe that development plans, budget allocations, or service improvements are aligned with community-raised concerns.

Gray (1986) emphasized that image programs must manage multiple constituencies, that is, employees, customers, and community members, and must include feedback loops, symbolic communication, visual cues, aligned behavior, and communication of real outcomes. Even though some of his works are older, the core idea is still cited: the image is built when what is communicated, the behavior, and the symbols (branding or performance) align. Balmer (2017) argues from an identity-based view that the "personality" and values of the organization must be clearly visible and consistent to shape a favorable image among stakeholders. Hatch and Schultz (2002) similarly highlight that internal perceptions, how employees view the organization, heavily influence the external image, especially in-service delivery, where frontline staff directly interact with the public.

For Nakuru County Government, image management means more than slogans or PR campaigns. It requires institutionalizing genuine feedback integration, ensuring responsiveness, aligning internal policies with public expectations, and demonstrating through actions—policy change, improved service delivery, transparent decision-making—that stakeholder input matters. When residents see consistent, visible actions in response to feedback, the County's reputation is

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bolstered, trust improves, and public image becomes more positive. Conversely, lack of action, inconsistent communication, or a mismatch between promises and performance can severely damage credibility. Thus, feedback influence and image management are intertwined: image is not just perceived, but built through consistent, ethical, inclusive, and responsive governance.

2.2 Empirical Framework

A study by Terer et al. (2019) showed that stakeholder participation is important for public institutions' change management procedures. The study was conducted on the National Police Service in Nakuru County. Data was collected using questionnaires, and analysis was done descriptively using the statistical package for sciences. Findings showed that effective change management requires identifying stakeholders clearly and keeping lines of communication open. According to the study's findings, active stakeholder participation improves the effectiveness of change implementation and boosts the organization's reputation by demonstrating a dedication to collaborative governance.

Sunkuyia (2024) researched to investigate the effect of stakeholders' involvement in strategy implementation in Narok County. The study targeted employees working for the County government from all cadres. Data was collected using questionnaires, and analysis was done descriptively using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. According to the article, communication, top management support, and adherence to stakeholder procedures, affect the successful implementation of strategic plans. The study added that solid stakeholder involvement is essential for county governments to implement strategies effectively. The success of strategic initiatives is greatly increased when stakeholders are involved through open lines of communication and their opinions are sought during the planning and execution stages. In

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addition to encouraging a sense of ownership among stakeholders, the researcher suggested that this participatory method enhances the organization's reputation by exhibiting inclusion and transparency.

Aligning stakeholder expectations with organizational objectives requires effective communication techniques. In order to engage employees, research conducted by Njoroge et al. (2023) found that Nakuru County frequently uses emails, conversations, trainings, and brief meetings, according to an evaluation of communication techniques used in performance contracting. The study also pointed out a deficiency in employee awards and recognition. The results imply that although the county government benefits from present measures in terms of productivity, adding recognition programs could raise staff morale even more.

Customer satisfaction and the general public's opinion of the effectiveness of government have been demonstrated to be greatly impacted by the adoption of e-government services. According to an assessment of the Huduma Centre in Nakuru County by Kiprop et al. (2024) customer satisfaction is favorably connected with services like e-business, e-visa, and e-citizen. In order to keep enhancing public service delivery and, in turn, the county government's reputation, the report suggested more research into other e-government services.

To maintain a positive organizational image, proactive participation and responsiveness to stakeholder feedback are essential. A company's image, according to Massey (2003), is a "holistic and vivid impression" created by the communications of the company and the sense-making processes of its stakeholders. This image is dynamic and changes because of ongoing discussions between the organization and its stakeholders. Through dialogic communication, firms can receive stakeholder interpretations, portray a desired image, and modify their tactics

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accordingly. By ensuring that stakeholder views and the organization's image are in line, this iterative approach promotes credibility and confidence. The approach emphasizes how ignoring stakeholder input might compromise effective image management. Inadequate monitoring and adaptation to stakeholder input puts organizations at risk of misaligning their projected image with stakeholder views, which could result in decreased support or damage to their reputation.

Slabbert (2015) investigated how important employee perceptions are in determining how an organization is perceived generally. He offered a methodology that combined employee participation with collaborative leadership to improve the internal business image because he understood that the opinions of internal stakeholders have a direct impact on outward perceptions. Through the adoption of a stakeholder-inclusive perspective, the study concluded that organizations can enhance their internal image by fostering an environment that encourages cooperation, inclusion, and collaboration.

According to Hassan (2021), social media activity alone is not enough to improve an organization's reputation; other elements, such as the level of interactions and the sincerity of communications, are more important. Social media offers a forum for communication, but without true stakeholder involvement, its ability to improve an organization's image may be restricted. Data analysis for the study, which involved 243 Malaysian internet users, was done using structural equation modeling. The results showed that social media use did not significantly affect corporate image, which was contrary to expectations.

It is essential to recognize and comprehend the demands and expectations of stakeholders. Stakeholder management and active participation are crucial to the success of any project. Miniti and Moronge (2018) investigated the impact of project management techniques on the execution

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of Nakuru county government projects. The study concluded that it is important to involve stakeholders at every stage of the project to guarantee positive results and improve the county's reputation.

Gagne, Berthelot, and Coulmont (2022) determined stakeholder engagement practices, whether they genuinely contribute to informing stakeholders or whether they are simply intended to manage stakeholders' impressions. The authors performed an exploratory content analysis on 113 sustainability reports published in 2018 in the Global Reporting Initiative database. The authors investigated disclosures tied to consulted stakeholders, communication modes, and material issues resulting from the engagement process. Data analysis showed that more than a third of Canadian firms tend to make generic disclosures on their stakeholders' engagement. As well, almost half of the engagement modes disclosed are unidirectional, and fewer than 33% of Canadian companies disclose on relevant sustainability issues. Furthermore, only 26% of the sample sought assurance on the information disclosed.

Forms of stakeholder input utilized by the Nakuru County Government and their effect on image management

A study conducted by Malusha (2023) indicated that consultations with stakeholders are essential during the budget cycle and the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). Prioritization and resource allocation took feedback into account. To support the budget deliberations, Nakuru County has been hosting community discussions and receiving written responses. Building financial credibility and a sense of fairness have been the goals of the discussions. According to research by Kivandi (2020), Nakuru County created WhatsApp platforms, a county website, and other social media platforms for public communication and feedback because of the increased

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use of ICT. This has improved real-time communication and created a tech-forward public image, particularly among young people. Since Nakuru became a city, the county has increased its interaction with stakeholders to develop inclusive urban growth plans, zoning regulations, and infrastructure development (Kariuki, 2022). The program has strengthened the government's reputation as forward-thinking, cooperative, and long-lasting.

The extent to which the Nakuru County Government incorporates stakeholder input into its image management plan

While the scope and regularity of this practice can vary depending on the type of involvement and the political or administrative setting, the Nakuru County Government considers stakeholder input in several ways when making decisions and managing its public reputation. In order to prepare the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) and annual budgets (Kariuki, 2022), the county holds stakeholder consultations and public participation forums. Gathered inputs frequently direct the choice of projects, distribution of funds, and emphasis on service delivery. By designating such programs as "community-prioritized," the county delivers results and builds public confidence.

Facebook, X, formerly (X), and WhatsApp groups are regularly used by Nakuru County for information sharing, feedback gathering, and sentiment monitoring (Omanga, 2021). Public opinion is then measured in real time using digital feedback. Online complaints and recommendations are occasionally forwarded to the appropriate departments for handling. Social media teams customize content to speak to popular public issues or achievements, enhancing the county's reputation as being approachable and involved.

The opinions expressed through different platforms impact Nakuru County's branding, media campaigns, and speeches. The concepts of "clean city," "youth empowerment," and "smart

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governance" are derived from the interests of the community. When organizing inclusive or donor-funded initiatives, the county collaborates with women's associations, youth organizations, NGOs, and disability activists (Chebore, 2015). Projects like public health campaigns and affirmative action monies are influenced by the information and recommendations these groups provide. The county's social inclusion is positioned through collaborative activities, including the Youth Innovation Challenge and Women's Empowerment Day.

How stakeholder feedback influences the image management of Nakuru County Government

The image of the Nakuru County Government is greatly influenced by stakeholder feedback, which also affects public opinion, leadership trust, and the perceived effectiveness of the government's service delivery. Citizens, businesses, development partners, civil society organizations, and the media provide this input, which can have both positive and negative effects on the county's reputation depending on how the government handles it.

According to Gutheil (2023), Nakuru County gave the impression of being a responsive and accountable government when it proactively addressed stakeholder concerns, such as enhancing healthcare services, fixing roads, or handling trash management. The Naivasha Sub-county's reputation as a citizen-centered county was enhanced when more money was invested in borehole sinking boreholes following complaints of water shortages made in the area. The concern was raised as residents' feedback was made in public barazas. Negative publicity frequently follows unresolved or poorly handled stakeholder feedback, particularly on social media and local media channels. For example, despite numerous complaints, the county has been portrayed as ineffective or reactive due to delays in correcting poor road conditions or hospital understaffing. Based on the public's response, the county modifies its platforms, content, and

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tone of public communications (Kivandi& Muna, 2020). The county created the Nakuru Youth Innovation Challenge and extensively marketed it after hearing from young people about the scarcity of employment options.

Stakeholder opinion is regularly picked up by the media, particularly through civil society reports and internet platforms, which in turn affects the country's overall image. Regular input from performance monitoring and public scorecards enables the county administration to pinpoint areas of weakness and implement remedial measures, which are subsequently utilized to highlight achievements. Maternal deaths decreased because of data-driven changes to maternal healthcare services in Gilgil and Subukia, for instance (Mary, 2024). This outcome was communicated through official reports and media campaigns, enhancing the county's reputation as being efficient and data responsive.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides the foundation for a research study by outlining the theories and models that explain the relationships among key variables. It offers a lens through which the problem is understood and analyzed. In this study, the framework draws from stakeholder engagement theory and public relations theory to explore how stakeholder feedback influences image management in Nakuru County Government, guiding the interpretation of findings and supporting the formulation of research objectives and questions.

2.3.1 Stakeholder Engagement Theory

Stakeholder Engagement Theory expands upon Stakeholder Theory, which was first introduced by R. Edward Freeman in his influential work, Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach (1984). Freeman argued that organizations must account for the interests of all stakeholders to

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achieve long-term sustainability. Building on this concept, stakeholder engagement emphasizes active participation and meaningful dialogue between organizations and their stakeholders, fostering transparency, strengthening governance, and enhancing institutional trust.

The theory is founded on several core principles. Inclusivity is essential, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are actively involved in decision-making processes (Freeman, 1984). Transparency promotes accountability and builds trust between organizations and stakeholders (Tench et al., 2021). Responsiveness requires organizations to acknowledge concerns and adjust strategies based on stakeholder feedback (Kim & Krishna, 2022). Furthermore, mutual benefit is a key aspect, as stakeholder engagement should create value for both the organization and its stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Lastly, ethical considerations play a crucial role in balancing stakeholder interests fairly to prevent reputational risks (Phillips, 2003).

Several scholars have contributed to the advancement of Stakeholder Engagement Theory. Donaldson and Preston (1995) developed a framework categorizing stakeholders based on legitimacy, urgency, and power, enabling organizations to prioritize engagement efforts effectively. Sachs and Ruhli (2011) positioned stakeholder engagement as a strategic management tool, emphasizing its importance in achieving long-term institutional goals. Kujala and Stutz (2017) further refined the theory by incorporating qualitative approaches to stakeholder dialogue, reinforcing the need for continuous and meaningful engagement to ensure organizational sustainability.

Despite its widespread acceptance, Stakeholder Engagement Theory has faced several critiques. One of the primary concerns is its complexity, as organizations often struggle to balance competing stakeholder interests effectively (Friedman, 2006). Ambiguity also arises in defining

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who qualifies as a stakeholder and how their concerns should be prioritized (Phillips, 2003). Additionally, implementation challenges persist, as some organizations fail to integrate stakeholder feedback meaningfully into decision-making due to bureaucratic inefficiencies or resistance to change (Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). This theory remains a crucial framework for examining governance and organizational effectiveness, particularly within public institutions like county governments. Understanding its principles and challenges provides valuable insights into how entities can enhance stakeholder relationships and improve overall reputation management.

Similarly, Nakuru County Government is subject to evaluation from a variety of stakeholders, including citizens, corporate owners, the media, civil society organizations, and regulatory agencies. These parties offer input on governance, policy execution, transparency, and service delivery. Public trust in the County Government is influenced by stakeholder input on infrastructure projects, healthcare services, and other governance practices. Complaints about corruption or poor service provision are examples of negative feedback that can harm the County's reputation. Therefore, including stakeholder input in policy decisions guarantees that the county's services meet the needs of the public.

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2.3.2 Public Relations Theory (Grunig and Hunt's four models)

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations have played a pivotal role in shaping both the theoretical and practical dimensions of the field worldwide. Their framework categorizes public relations practices into four main models: press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. These models represent varying

communication approaches, from one-way information delivery to interactive, two-way dialogue between organizations and their stakeholders.

The press agentry/ publicity model involves one-way communication aimed at attracting media attention and public visibility, often prioritizing persuasion over accuracy (Grunig,2013). It is commonly seen in celebrity promotions and political propaganda. In contrast, the public information model also relies on one-way communication but focuses on providing truthful information. This approach is frequently used by government agencies and non-profit organizations to ensure transparency and educate the public.

The two-way asymmetrical model incorporates a feedback mechanism, allowing organizations to gather audience responses and refine their messaging. However, this model remains tilted in favor of the organization's interests rather than fostering mutual benefit. It is widely used in marketing and corporate communications to enhance persuasive strategies. The two-way symmetrical model, considered the most balanced approach, promotes reciprocal communication aimed at achieving mutual understanding and resolving conflicts (Grunig, 2013).

This method encourages dialogue where both parties contribute equally, making it ideal for ethical public relations practices. Building on the foundational models, later scholars elaborated on their application and significance. For instance, Grunig et al. (1995) developed the Excellence Theory, asserting that the two-way symmetrical model is the most ethical and effective form of public relations. They emphasized that organizations engaging in balanced, reciprocal communication are better positioned to foster lasting, positive relationships with their publics. Likewise, earlier evaluations of the model highlighted its alignment with democratic values, such as transparency and participatory engagement (Bowen, 2009).

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Although Grunig and Hunt's models remain foundational in public relations theory, they have been criticized for their limited relevance in contemporary practice. Scholars contend that these models oversimplify communication dynamics and fail to capture the complexities of modern public relations, especially in the digital era (Waddington, 2012). With the emergence of social media, public relations has evolved into a more interactive and dynamic discipline, challenging the traditional one-way communication approaches outlined in the earlier models.

This theory is applicable while discussing the influence of stakeholder feedback to the image of the Nakuru County Government. The County depends on legitimacy and public opinion to function as a public institution. Its public relations and feedback-response strategies also influence its image in addition to the services it provides (Edwards, 2018). It shows accountability when the County Government listens to and addresses stakeholder complaints (Kivandi & Muna, 2020) through public relations channels such as social media outlets, radio, town halls, walk-in customer complaint boxes, and notices. For instance, if residents voice concerns about bad road conditions, the county may address the matter in a public statement and offer a reconstruction schedule.

If not handled appropriately, stakeholder feedback, especially negative feedback, can turn into a public relations disaster. Quick answers, clearing rumors, and announcing corrective actions are all components of successful public relations efforts. The theory states that organizations can create enduring partnerships through community participation initiatives and frequent communication updates (Edwards, 2018). The use of a two-way symmetrical model, in which stakeholder input is actively used to shape choices and public communication, is crucial to Nakuru County Government's ability to preserve a positive public image.

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2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured, visual, or narrative representation of the key variables, concepts, and presumed relationships among them in a study. It guides the research by illustrating how stakeholder input types, feedback integration, and feedback influence (independent variable) are expected to influence image management (dependent variable) within Nakuru County Government. The framework helps to clarify the path of inquiry, identify measurable indicators, and explain the underlying logic connecting feedback mechanisms to public perception outcomes.

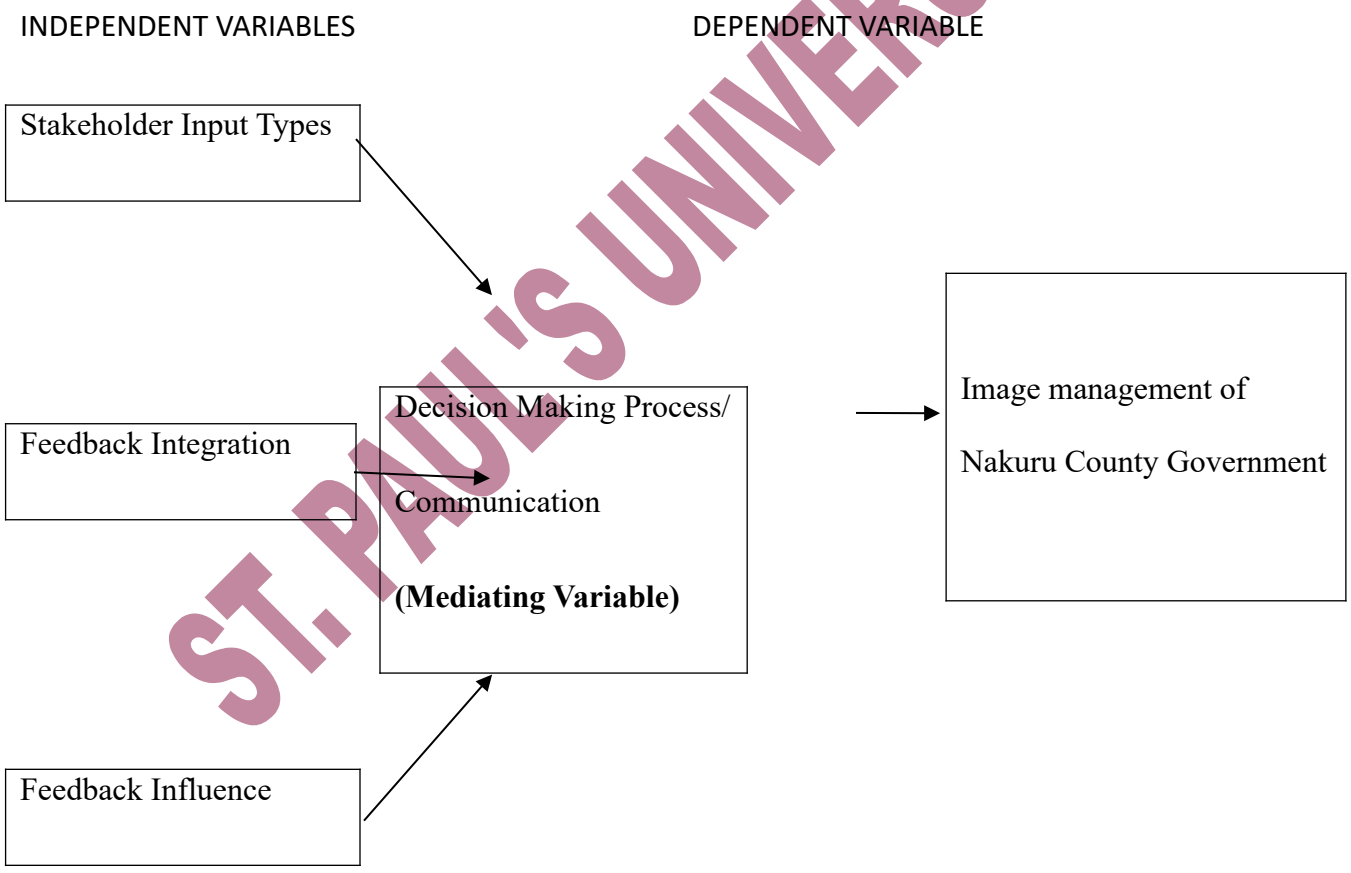


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

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(i) Stakeholder Input Types (Independent Variable)

These relate to the various ways that stakeholders (such as electorates, County officials, the media, and businesses) communicate with the Nakuru County Government. Examples include recommendations, complaints, policy recommendations, questions, worries, and praises, all of which are presented through town halls, online forums, petitions, and digital platforms like MajiVoice and Mzalendo.

(ii) Feedback Integration (Independent Variable)

This is a measure of how well the county takes stakeholder input into account when developing internal policies and reputation management plans. Evidence of approved proposals, response schedules, feedback monitoring tools, and stakeholder-inclusive decision-making are a few examples.

(iii) Feedback Influence (Independent Variable)

This speaks to how stakeholders' opinions are seen to affect or be visible in the county's communication or governance procedures. Changes in policy, media narratives, public concerns-driven image shifts, and public reports that acknowledge citizen participation are a few examples.

(iv) **Decision-Making Process (Mediating Variable)**

Refers to the internal administrative and operational processes that evaluate, filter, and respond to data from stakeholders. It serves as a bridge; feedback cannot affect public perception until it has passed through this layer. The connection between input and image management is reinforced by a transparent and responsive procedure.

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(v) Image management of Nakuru County Government (Dependent Variable)

This is the general perception of the Nakuru County Government held by its residents, which depends on perceived responsiveness, transparency, credibility, and trust. Public trust levels, citizen satisfaction scores, perceptions of accountability, sentiment on social media, and media representation are examples of indicators.

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Table 1: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

Variable	Type	Operational Definition	Indicators / Measures	Data Collection Methods	Measurement scale
Stakeholder Input Types	Independent Variable	Methods and forms through which stakeholders provide feedback to the county government.	- Types of input (e.g., forums, surveys, digital platforms) - Frequency of use - Nature of feedback (complaints, suggestions, praise, etc.)	Interviews with officials Stakeholder surveys	Nominal (types) Ordinal (frequency) Frequency counts.
Feedback Integration	Independent Variable	The degree to which stakeholder input is considered in policy and strategy development.	Number of stakeholder recommendations implemented - Existence of feedback tracking systems - Response rate to feedback	Policy document analysis Interviews with county officials Stakeholder surveys	Ratio (response rate) Ordinal (integration level)
Feedback Influence	Independent Variable	The degree to which stakeholder input leads to visible changes in governance or communication.	- Documented policy changes linked to stakeholder feedback - Stakeholder mentions in public reports - Media coverage of stakeholder concerns	Content analysis Media review Interviews.	Frequency counts Ordinal (influence level)

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Decision-Making Process	Mediating Variable	Internal systems for processing and responding to stakeholder input.	Presence of formal procedures Transparency of processes Inclusion of stakeholders in the decision-making stages	Document analysis Key informant interviews Observations	Nominal (yes/no) Ordinal (low to high transparency
Image Management	Dependent Variable	Public perception of Nakuru County Government is based on responsiveness, trust, and transparency.	Citizen satisfaction scores Trust levels Sentiment on social media Tone of media coverage	Public opinion surveys, Social media analysis Media content review	Interval (satisfaction ratings) Ordinal (sentiment) Ratio (positive/negative mentions)

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Stakeholder Engagement Theory justifies why and how stakeholder inputs are gathered and integrated into decisions, emphasizing participatory processes. Public Relations Theory explains the role of communication in managing perceptions and relationships, linking feedback and decision-making to the organization's image management. For this case, the communication must be balanced to achieve the objective. They provide a theoretical foundation for examining how different types of stakeholder inputs influence image management through decision-making and communication.

2.5 Research Gap Summary

Although public participation and stakeholder engagement are becoming increasingly important in Kenya's devolved governance structures, limited empirical research has been done explicitly looking at how stakeholder feedback is incorporated into image management tactics used by county governments, especially in Nakuru County. In Kenya, most of the research on stakeholder involvement and public relations focuses on the private sector or national-level organizations. Few studies have examined how county governments, such as Nakuru, use stakeholder feedback to modify or improve their image.

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2.6 Literature Review summary

Table 2 : Summary of literature review

Author, Title, year of publication	Broader topic	Specific topic	Research problem	Research question	Theories used	Research design	What is known	What is not known
Terer, L. C., Mwangi, J., & Gichuhi, D. (2019). Effect of Stakeholder Involvement on Change Management in the National Police Service in Nakuru County, Kenya.	Management	Effect of stakeholder involvement on change management in the National Police Service in Nakuru County.	Determine the effect of stakeholder involvement on change management in the National Police Service in Nakuru County.	To identify the effect of stakeholder involvement in the National Police Service.	stakeholder's theory	Descriptive survey design and Correlational research design	There exists a statistically significant positive relationship between stakeholder involvement and change management in the National Police Service in Nakuru County.	There is no clear stakeholder identification criterion, and open and clear stakeholder communication channels.
Sunkuyia, J. (2024). Stakeholder Involvement and	Strategic management	Stakeholder involvement and strategy implementation	Ascertain the effects of stakeholder involvement on	To what extent does stakeholder compliance	Stakeholder's theory, Public	Descriptive research design	The county government actively solicits perspectives and	The impact of stakeholder participatio

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Strategy Implementation in Narok County Government, Kenya		in Narok County government, Kenya	strategy implementation in Narok County Government in Kenya.	with the organization's procedures affect strategy implementation at Narok County Government?	Management Theory		opinions from various stakeholders throughout the process of plan implementation, while also facilitating their active involvement in such implementation.	n on the accomplishment of strategic initiatives.
Njoroge, J. M. U., Khaemba, J., &Mareri, L. (2023). Communication Strategies Used in Performance Contracting in the County Government of Nakuru, Kenya. American Journal	Communication	Communication strategies used in performance contracting in the County Government of Nakuru.	To assess the communication strategies used in the process of performance contracting for employees within the county government of Nakuru.	What are the communication strategies used in the process of performance contracting for employees within the Nakuru County Government?	Bureaucracy theory	Mixed Research Design	Communication strategies used in the process of performance contracting had a positive and significant effect on the productivity of Nakuru county government employees.	A channel to effectively communicate to all employees and its efficiency.

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of Communication								
Kiprop, A. (n.d.). *Assessment of E-Government Services and Customer Satisfaction in Public Sector: case of Huduma Centre County Government of Nakuru*.	Public Administration and Management.	Assessment of e-government services and customer satisfaction in the public sector: case of Huduma Centre county government of Nakuru	Effect of e-government services on customer satisfaction in the public sector, Huduma center in the County government of Nakuru.	Examine the significance of e-citizen and customer satisfaction in the public sector, a case of Huduma center in the County government of Nakuru?	Theory of technology acceptance and theory of planned behavior.	Case study research design	E -government enhances customer satisfaction on service delivery in the public sector in County Government of Nakuru.	The effectiveness of E-government on all the other government bodies.
Slabbert, Y. (2015). Towards a new stakeholder-inclusive conceptual framework to strengthen internal corporate image.	Communication	co-change-orientated communication: a collaborative approach to making sense of change	To examine theoretical developments beyond mainstream assumptions by drawing from contemporary, critical	What are the theoretical developments beyond mainstream assumptions by drawing from contemporary, critical	Stakeholder's theory	Qualitative Design	Organizations can enhance their internal image by fostering an environment that encourages cooperation, inclusion, and collaboration.	The accurate representation of organizational documents and how organization

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			developments in strategic communication.	developments in strategic communication ?				al members perceive situations in the organization .

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter three of the proposal outlines the research methodology to be used in the study for the influence of stakeholder feedback on the image management of Nakuru County Government. The methodology includes research design, methodology, population and sampling technique, sample size, data collection methods, reliability and validity, ethical consideration, and analytical plan.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed research design, which involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, analyzing them separately, and then merging the results for comprehensive interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This design is particularly useful when the goal is to cross-validate findings and provide a fuller picture of the research problem. In this case, it allowed the researcher to explore stakeholder feedback both numerically and contextually, enriching the understanding of its influence on image management within Nakuru County Government. The design supports triangulation, enhancing reliability, reducing bias, and strengthening the validity of the findings (Sharma et al., 2023).

Qualitative research design focuses on exploring how individuals perceive, interpret, and derive meaning from their lived experiences, social environments, and the phenomena they encounter (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative methods are increasingly valued for their capacity to uncover nuanced, in-depth understandings that often elude traditional quantitative approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Quantitative research design is a systematic method for analyzing numerical data to identify patterns, relationships, or causal effects, based on the positivist view

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that reality is objective and measurable (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative design helped identify forms of feedback and measure their incorporation. Combining the two provided more detailed findings with a blend of numerical and in-depth narrative. In addition, the two designs supplemented each other's weaknesses (Asenahabi, 2019).

3.2 Methodology

The research used both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the quantitative method, questionnaires were used, while the qualitative methods interviews and focus group discussions.

3.2.1 Population

As of 2025, Nakuru County's population was projected to be approximately 2.45 million people (Stats Kenya, 2024). The estimation is inclusive of the eleven sub-counties (Molo, Njoro, Naivasha, Gilgil, Nakuru East, Nakuru West, Subukia, Rongai, Bahati, Kuresoi North, and Kuresoi South) that constitute the Nakuru County Government. The research targeted a variety of stakeholders from Nakuru County Government. The stakeholders were both external and internal. Internal stakeholders were the Nakuru County Government employees and elected leaders. External stakeholders included residents and community leaders, media representatives, civil society organizations and business stakeholders. Additionally, para-internal stakeholders were considered because they also contribute to image management of an organization. The diverse target population provided a holistic understanding of stakeholders and its influence on the image management.

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Table 3: **Target Population**

SUB-COUNTY	ESTIMATED POPULATION	PERCENTAGE

MOLO	177,247	7.25%
NJORO	270,039	11.04%
NAIVASHA	401,854	16.43%
GILGIL	209,442	8.57%
KURESOI SOUTH	175,647	7.18%
KURESOI NORTH	197,990	8.09%
SUBUKIA	96,318	3.94%
RONGAI	226,066	9.25%
BAHATI	246,614	10.09%
NAKURU EAST	219,352	8.97%
NAKURU WEST	224,625	9.19%
TOTAL	2,445,196	100%

Source: Nakuru County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027

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3.2.2 Sampling Technique

The research adopted a combined sampling technique since it uses a mixed research design. Stratified random sampling was used for the quantitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It ensured representation across stakeholder groups. Purposive sampling was used for the qualitative research design. This technique was used to select participants who had in-depth knowledge and direct involvement with the county's communication and image management department.

3.2.3 Sample Size

A sample size is described as a group from an entire population that is taken as a representative of the entire population (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The sample size for the quantitative data was identified using the Nassiuma 2000 sample size formula. Nassiuma's formula is well-suited for efficiently determining sample sizes in large populations, such as Nakuru County's estimated 2.45 million residents (Nassiuma, 2000). The formula is

$$n=\frac{NC^2}{C^2+(N-1)e^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size,

N = Population,

C = Coefficient of variation, which is less than or equal to 30%,

e = Margin of error, which is between 2% and 5%.

Therefore,

25% coefficient of variation was used to ensure that the sample is wide enough to justify the results being generalized for the whole county

e = 0.02 was used because it is characterized by minimal variation across its constituents

$$n=\frac{2445196(0.25)^2}{(0.25)^2+(2445196-1)0.02^2}$$

$$n=\frac{152,824.75}{978.078}$$

n =156.25

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The sample size was 157 since the decimal cannot represent a respondent.

Before identifying the sample after stratifying the population, simple random sampling was used. This technique is a basic sampling technique where everyone in a population has an equal chance of being selected. It ensures that the sample is unbiased and representative, reducing selection bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Stratified random sampling was used to sample respondents across the eleven sub-counties. The respondents were divided into eleven strata. The formula for getting the sample size for every sub-county was;

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Table 4: **Sampling Frame**

SUB-COUNTY	ESTIMATED POPULATION	POPULATION PROPORTION	SAMPLE SIZE
MOLO	177,247	7.25%*157	11

NJORO	270,039	11.04%*157	17
NAIVASHA	401,854	16.43%*157	26
GILGIL	209,442	8.57%*157	14
KURESOI SOUTH	175,647	7.18%*157	11
KURESOI NORTH	197,990	8.09%*157	13
SUBUKIA	96,318	3.94%*157	6
RONGAI	226,066	9.25%*157	15
BAHATI	246,614	10.09%*157	16
NAKURU EAST	219,352	8.97%*157	14
NAKURU WEST	224,625	9.19%*157	14
TOTAL	2,445,196	100%*157	157

Source: Nakuru County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027

A sample size of 12 key informants and focus group with stakeholders was considered for the purposive sampling. The 12 key informants included 6 internal stakeholders (County officials) and 6 external stakeholders. A sample size of 12 key informers allowed extensive interaction considering they were selected according to experience and expertise. The FGDs was 1 involving the three groups of stakeholders as identified for the key informers. Each FGD had a total number of ten respondents. A group of ten was manageable and it allowed everyone in the group to contribute. The selection aimed to gather in-depth insights from knowledgeable individuals directly involved or affected by the subject matter.

Table 5: Key informants

Key informants	**Number**

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County Secretary	1
County Executive Committee Member for Health	1
County Executive Committee Member for Finance and Economic Planning	1
Chief Officer – Agriculture	1
County Director of Education	1
County Executive Committee Member for Legal Affairs and Governance	1
Village elder	1
Religious leader	1
Media Representative	1
Civil Society Organizations	1
Local entrepreneur	1
Youth leader	1
Total	**12**

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3.3 Data Collection Method

The research used several data collection tools. These are questionnaires, interviews and focused group discussions.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a set of questions given to respondents. They were used to collect quantitative data. Questionnaires are well-suited for gathering data from individuals dispersed across a large geographic area, especially when in-person contact is impractical or unavailable *(Methods-of-Data-Collection-A-Fundamental-Tool-of-Research.P*df, n.d., p. 3). Structured questionnaires were administered to a cross-section of stakeholders. Questions included multiple-choices and Likert-scale items to measure stakeholder feedback, awareness, and satisfaction.

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews were used to collect qualitative data. It entails delivering spoken prompts and receiving verbal responses in return, typically conducted through Face-to-face or through telephone *(Methods-of-Data-Collection-A-Fundamental-Tool-of-Research.P*df, n.d., p. 2). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with communication officers, civil society leaders, media representatives, and selected business/community stakeholders. The interviews explored participants' perceptions, concerns, and expectations regarding the county's image and communication efforts. Interviews are appropriate especially when participants are afraid of giving response in public (Tümen Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021, p. 6).

3.3.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) provide a natural and interactive setting that encourages participant influence and synergy, leading to richer discussions. They are especially useful when resources are limited, offering an effective way to collect high-quality, contextually grounded data when properly understood and conducted(Tümen Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021, p. 6). FGDs were conducted with selected community groups to gain collective insights and explore common themes about stakeholder feedback and its impact. Just like interviews the data from FGDs were used to collect qualitative data.

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3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed separately.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS Version 25 (Sharma et al., 2023, p. 5). Before analysis, data were cleaned to eliminate errors, incomplete responses, and

inconsistencies. The cleaning process ensured the accuracy and reliability of results. After cleaning, responses were coded by assigning numerical values to qualitative data to facilitate analysis. The coded data were then entered SPSS for processing. Descriptive statistical analysis, including frequencies and percentages, was used to summarize the data. This approach provided a clear overview of respondent characteristics and response patterns, supporting easy interpretation and informed decision-making based on the collected data.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data collected from interviews and focus group discussions was transcribed and analyzed thematically. This followed Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 12) thematic analysis framework, which involves a six-step approach. First, familiarization with the data was done through repeated reading of transcripts. Second, initial codes were generated to identify important features. Third, related codes were grouped into potential themes. Fourth, themes were reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the data. Fifth, themes were clearly defined and named. Finally, the sixth step involved writing the report, linking themes to research questions. This method allowed systematic identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns within the data, ensuring depth and reliability in qualitative findings.

Integration of Findings

Data from both quantitative and qualitative methods were compared during the interpretation stage to enhance the depth and reliability of the findings. While mixed method research often generates a large volume of data, careful analysis helped to identify convergent themes—areas where both data sets aligned. Divergent results were also examined closely to uncover contextual meanings and explore underlying factors. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research issues. By integrating findings from both methods, the study

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ensured a more balanced and well-rounded interpretation, capturing multiple perspectives and enriching the overall conclusions (Sharma et al., 2023, p. 5).

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted to refine its clarity, relevance, and overall effectiveness before full-scale data collection. The piloting was conducted in Nakuru East Sub-County. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), it is recommended that approximately 10% of the total sample size be used for piloting purposes. Accordingly, 16 respondents representing 10% of the total intended sample will be selected for the pilot phase. Their feedback was used to identify ambiguous, unclear, or misleading questions, as well as to assess the flow and structure of the tool. Necessary adjustments were made to wording, formatting, and question order to improve respondent understanding and ensure alignment with research objectives. This process helped enhance both the reliability and validity of the instrument, ensuring it accurately captured the intended data.

Validity refers to the extent to which the research accurately measures what it intends to measure (Saunders et al., 2019). In quantitative research, validity was achieved through careful questionnaire design, expert review, and pre-testing to ensure questions captured relevant variables. Construct and content validity were considered. In qualitative research, validity was ensured through triangulation; comparing data from interviews, focus groups, and documents. Member checking was conducted by sharing key findings with participants for verification. Additionally, prolonged engagement with respondents and detailed contextual descriptions enhanced credibility, ensuring that the findings truthfully represented participants' views and the studied phenomena.

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Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of research findings over time and across different contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In quantitative research, reliability was ensured using standardized questionnaires and pre-testing them to confirm clarity and consistency. SPSS software was used to check internal consistency using reliability tests such as Cronbach's alpha. In qualitative research, reliability was maintained by using an interview guide, audio recordings, and detailed notetaking to ensure accurate documentation. Consistent coding procedures and peer debriefing further supported reliability, allowing the research process to be replicated with similar results in comparable settings.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The research considered several ethical issues to ensure accuracy of the results. Some of the issues were;

Informed consent is one of them. This means that the participants received adequate information about the research, its aim and the impact before they were involved. They were also informed of their rights as they embark on the exercise. Confidentiality was ensured. To preserve respondents' privacy, data was anonymized, and identifiable information eliminated. Conflict of Interest, to maintain openness, the researcher declared any connections or tie with the Nakuru County administration.

Participation was voluntary. Participants were free to leave the study at any time without facing any repercussions. They were also free to hold information that they felt was not appropriate to share. Data Security: All information gathered was safely stored, and only authorized individuals can access it. A research authorization letter from St. Paul University and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) were obtained to introduce the purpose of the study and to render the study ethical.

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3.7 Summary

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for the study. A mixed-research design was employed for the research. The target population included the Nakuru County Government stakeholders from the eleven sub-counties. Stratified random sampling and purposive sampling were used. Data was collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and an FGD. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis were used to analyze data. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were also addressed.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive discussion of the descriptive statistics related to the study variables, directly addressing the stated research objectives. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 25, with results summarized through frequencies, percentages, and presented using tables and figures to enhance clarity and interpretation. Additionally, qualitative findings from key informant interviews and focus group discussions are integrated to provide deeper context and understanding. Themes from the qualitative data complement the quantitative results.

4.1 Response Rate

This study had a sample size of one hundred and fifty-seven (157) respondents, out of which 123 questionnaires were received back for analysis (Table 6). This response rate was achieved by filling the questionnaires on-site and constant follow-up for the respondents who were not available to fill the questionnaires immediately.

Table 6: Response Rate

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percent
Responses	123	78.3
Non-responses	34	21.7
Total	**157**	**100.0**

A 78.3% response rate obtained in this study is generally regarded as acceptable and robust for statistical analysis in social science research, as it significantly reduces the risk of non-response bias and enhances the representativeness of the sample. High response rates are crucial for ensuring the validity and generalizability of findings, especially in survey-based studies where

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participant engagement directly affects data quality (Fowler, 2014). Typically, response rates above 70% are viewed favorably, suggesting strong participation and credible results (Babbie, 2020). Therefore, the 78.3% achieved in this study supports the reliability of the findings and meets the standards of rigorous social science research.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

To present sample characteristics, frequency distributions were used to indicate variations of respondents based on age, gender, occupation, and relationship with the county government. Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

4.2.1 Age of the Respondents

The target respondents were to state their age. Table 7 has the results.

Table 7: Age of the Respondents

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent
18 years and less	2	1.6
18-25years	13	10.6
26-35 years	23	18.7
36-45 years	27	22.0
46-60 years	30	24.4
Above 60 years	28	22.8
Total	123	100.0

The age distribution of respondents in the study to identify the influence of stakeholder feedback on image management of organizations in Nakuru County government reveals that 22.8% were aged above 60 years, 24.4% were between 46–60 years, 22.0% were aged 36-45 years, 18.7%

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were aged 26-35 years, 10.6% were aged 18-25 years and 1.6% were 18 years or younger. The age distribution of respondents in the study indicates a predominantly mature population, with 69.2% aged above 36 years. This demographic composition is significant, as older individuals often possess more experience and engagement in civic matters, potentially offering informed perspectives on organizational image and stakeholder feedback (Nguyen et al., 2020). The largest group, aged 46–60 years (24.4%), likely represents long-term stakeholders familiar with Nakuru County government's operations. In contrast, the relatively low representation of younger respondents, particularly those aged 18 years or younger (1.6%), may reflect limited interest or involvement in governance issues among youth, which is consistent with trends observed in civic participation studies (Kimathi & Wamalwa, 2022). Understanding the age-related dynamics is essential, as different age groups perceive and respond to institutional image and communication differently (Miller & Wang, 2021), influencing how feedback is both given and received in public sector contexts.

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4.2.2 Gender of the Respondents

The target respondents were to state their gender. Figure 2 displays the results.

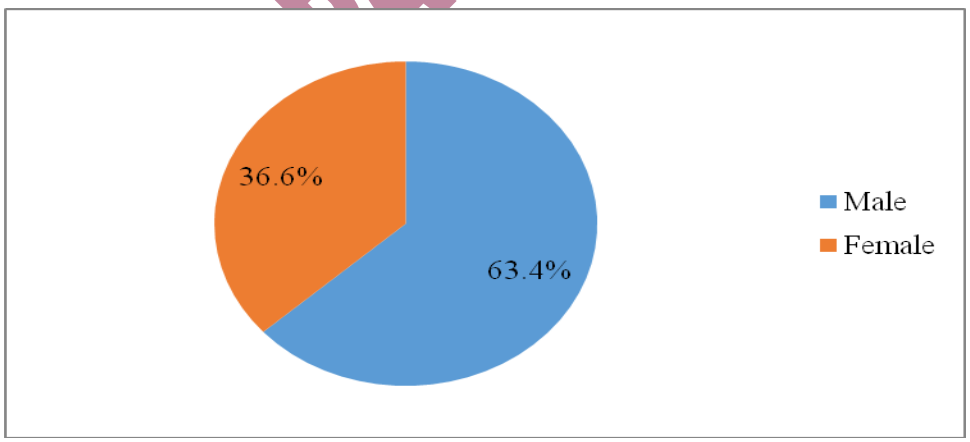


Figure 2: Gender of the Respondents

The study's gender distribution reveals a notable imbalance, with 63.4% male and 36.6% female respondents. This disparity may reflect broader gender participation trends in governance and civic engagement, where men often dominate decision-making spaces in Kenya (Ombati & Mokua, 2020). Such imbalance can influence the nature of feedback collected, potentially skewing organizational image assessments towards male perspectives. Gender representation is critical in stakeholder research, as diverse viewpoints contribute to more inclusive and accurate evaluations of public institutions (Kariuki & Maina, 2023). Addressing gender gaps enhances democratic engagement and organizational responsiveness.

4.2.3 Occupation of the Respondents

The target respondents were to state their occupation. Table 8 has the results.

Table 8: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Public servants	68	55.3
Business owners	41	33.3
NGO representatives	9	7.3
Students	5	4.1
Total	123	100.0

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The occupational distribution of respondents shows that public servants (55.3%) formed the majority, indicating that internal stakeholders significantly influenced feedback on image management within Nakuru County government. Public servants often have firsthand experience with organizational processes and may provide informed, yet potentially biased, perspectives (Mwangi & Kilonzo, 2021). Business owners (33.3%) represent a critical external stakeholder

group whose perceptions are shaped by service delivery and regulatory interactions. The presence of NGO representatives (7.3%) introduces the viewpoint of civil society, important for evaluating transparency and accountability in public institutions. Students (4.1%) contributed minimally, possibly due to lower engagement with governance issues, yet their feedback remains valuable for assessing youth perception (Mutiso & Gikandi, 2023). A diverse occupational mix enriches stakeholder feedback and enhances the robustness of image management strategies in public institutions.

4.2.4 Relationship to Nakuru County Government

The target respondents were to state their relationship with the Nakuru county government. Figure 3 displays the results.



Figure 3: Relationship with the Nakuru County Government

The findings reveal that residents (47.2%) constituted the largest group of respondents, highlighting the importance of public perception in assessing organizational image. Residents, as primary service recipients, provide critical feedback on service quality and governance (Wambua

& Chege, 2021). Employees (27.7%) also played a key role, offering internal insights that shape how organizations respond to stakeholder expectations. Partner organizations (25.2%) represent external collaborators whose views are essential in evaluating institutional effectiveness and inter-organizational relationships (Njiru & Mworia, 2023). This stakeholder diversity enhances the credibility and depth of image management assessments.

4.3 Forms of Stakeholder Input

The study's first objective was to identify and categorize at least five distinct forms of stakeholder input used by the Nakuru County Government in its image management efforts.

4.3.1 Ways of providing input

The respondents were to indicate the ways which they have provided input to the Nakuru County Government. Results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Ways of providing input

Ways	Frequency	Percent
Public forums/barazas	55	44.7
Online platforms/social media	32	26.0
Written submissions (letters, emails)	5	4.1
Surveys or feedback forms	29	23.6
Direct meetings with officials	2	1.6
I have not provided any input	0	0
Total	123	100.0

Results showed that 44.7% of the respondents provided input to the Nakuru County Government through public forums/barazas, 26.0% through online platforms/social media, 23.6% through surveys or feedback forms, 4.1% through written submissions (letters, emails) while 1.6%

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provided input to the Nakuru County Government through direct meetings with officials. The findings indicate that public forums or *barazas* (44.7%) remain the most common channel for stakeholder input in Nakuru County Government. These forums are deeply rooted in Kenyan participatory governance and offer accessible, face-to-face engagement, especially in rural and peri-urban areas (Mwanzia & Kimathi, 2021). Online platforms and social media (26.0%) reflect a growing shift towards digital engagement, aligning with global trends in e-governance and youth participation. Surveys and feedback forms (23.6%) suggest a structured approach to gathering stakeholder opinions, though their effectiveness depends on accessibility and literacy levels (Mutua & Wekesa, 2020). Written submissions (4.1%) and direct meetings with officials (1.6%) were the least used, likely due to perceived inefficiency or lack of access to officials. These diverse feedback channels highlight the need for a multi-platform approach to stakeholder engagement for improved image management.

Participants in the focus group discussions identified several ways through which the County collects feedback from the public. Common mechanisms mentioned included public barazas (community meetings), suggestion boxes at County offices, SMS platforms, radio talk shows, and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Some also noted the use of County websites and public participation forums held during budget planning or project initiation phases. However, many participants felt these methods are not consistently applied or well-publicized, leading to limited awareness among citizens.

From the interviews conducted, stakeholders reported using a variety of channels to give feedback to the County Government. The most common methods included attending public participation forums (barazas), submitting written complaints or suggestions through ward

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offices, using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, calling designated County hotlines, and, in some cases, speaking directly with local administrators or MCA representatives. A few also mentioned mobile-based platforms or WhatsApp groups created for community updates.

4.3.2 Frequency of providing input

Respondents were to indicate how often they provided input to the County Government. Results are shown in Table 10

Table 10: Frequency of providing input

Frequency	Frequency	Percent
Frequently	20	16.3
Occasionally	62	50.4
Rarely	10	25.2
Never	31	8.1
Total	123	100.0

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The findings show that while most respondents (50.4%) occasionally provided input to Nakuru County Government, only 16.3% did so frequently. This indicates moderate engagement levels, reflecting both interest in public affairs and potential barriers to consistent participation (Dalton, 2020). The fact that 25.2% rarely and 8.1% never provided input suggests gaps in inclusivity or accessibility of feedback mechanisms. Low engagement levels are often attributed to limited awareness, lack of trust in government responsiveness, or perceptions that feedback does not influence decisions (Fung, 2021). Enhancing regular stakeholder input is essential for improving image management, as continuous dialogue fosters transparency and accountability. For effective

governance, county governments must invest in outreach, civic education, and responsive systems that encourage consistent participation across all population segments.

4.3.3 Ease of providing feedback

Respondents were to rate the ease of providing feedback to the County Government and the results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Ease of providing feedback

Ease	Frequency	Percent
Very easy	45	36.6
Easy	63	51.2
Neutral	5	4.1
Difficult	9	7.3
Very difficult	1	0.8
Total	123	100.0

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Results showed that 36.6% of the respondents indicated that it was very easy to provide feedback to the County Government, 51.2% indicated that it was easy, 4.1% were neutral, 7.3% indicated it was difficult while 0.8% indicated that it was very difficult easy to provide feedback to the County Government. The finding that 87.8% of respondents found it "easy" or "very easy" to provide feedback to the County Government suggests a relatively accessible civic engagement environment. Globally, ease of access to participatory platforms is closely linked to citizens' willingness to contribute to governance processes (Jantti et al., 2023). However, accessibility alone does not guarantee meaningful participation. Studies show that unless feedback mechanisms are perceived as influential and responsive, engagement may remain superficial. Moreover, citizens are more likely to participate when governments demonstrate transparency,

responsiveness, and policy impact from public input (Davies, Arana-Catania & Procter, 2022). While Nakuru's high "ease" ratings are promising, the low rate of frequent participation (16.3%) points to underlying challenges like trust deficits or perceived inefficacy. Thus, improving feedback responsiveness and demonstrating the real impact of citizen input are essential for fostering sustained civic engagement and institutional trust.

Results from focus group discussion regarding accessibility and ease of use, opinions were mixed. While tech-savvy participants found online platforms convenient, others especially older adults and those in rural areas felt excluded due to limited digital access or literacy. Physical meetings were more inclusive but irregular and often dominated by political voices. Suggestion boxes, while simple, were viewed as ineffective due to lack of follow-up.

From the interviews conducted, many interviewees felt that physical forums such as barazas are inclusive for rural communities but not always held consistently or at convenient times. Digital platforms were faster and more convenient for youth and urban dwellers, but older or less tech-savvy residents felt excluded. While some acknowledged receiving responses or seeing changes after giving feedback, others expressed frustration, noting that feedback is often acknowledged but not acted upon. Several emphasized that the lack of follow-up diminishes trust in the system.

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4.4 Incorporation of stakeholder feedback into image management

The study's second objective established the extent to which the Nakuru County Government integrated stakeholder input into its image management strategies from 2021 to 2025.

4.4.1 Actively listening to stakeholder feedback

Respondents were to indicate if the Nakuru County Government actively listens to stakeholders' feedback. Results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Actively listening to stakeholder feedback

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	32	26.0
Agree	67	54.5
Neutral	15	12.2
Disagree	8	6.5
Strongly disagree	1	0.8
Total	123	100.0

Results showed that 26.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that the Nakuru County Government actively listens to stakeholder feedback, 54.5% agreed, 12.2% were neutral, 6.5% disagreed while 0.8% strongly disagreed that the Nakuru County Government actively listens to stakeholder feedback. That over 70 % of respondents perceives that Nakuru County Government actively listens to stakeholder feedback indicates a robust foundation for civic trust and perceived responsiveness. Evidence from Visakhapatnam, India, highlights how trust in public service managers positively correlates with citizens' willingness to participate, forming a reinforcing cycle where perceived listening enhances trust and engagement (Ati, Satpathy, & Saxena, 2024). Similarly, OECD data reveal that providing opportunities for citizens to voice opinions before local decisions significantly bolsters institutional trust, underscoring the importance of perceived receptiveness in government (OECD, 2024). Organizational studies

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further affirm that listening capacity is critical for inclusive stakeholder engagement, allowing organizations to genuinely incorporate diverse inputs and thereby sustain legitimacy (Fu, Cooper, Woo, & Kwestel, 2024). Thus, while Nakuru County's listening scores are encouraging, continued efforts to support responsive channels and visibly act on feedback remain essential to deepen civic trust and strengthen participatory governance.

During focus group discussions, most participants expressed a belief that the County does listen to stakeholder feedback, though the degree of responsiveness varied. Many acknowledged improvements in service delivery, road maintenance, and market cleanliness after public complaints, suggesting that feedback can influence change. However, some participants felt that while the County listens, it is selective in what it acts upon, with politically sensitive or highly visible issues addressed more quickly than everyday concerns.

Interview responses indicated that the County does act on stakeholder feedback, although the level of responsiveness varies by department and issue. Several respondents recalled specific examples where public input led to tangible action, such as the rehabilitation of feeder roads following complaints during barazas, or improved waste collection in urban areas after repeated feedback on social media. Others mentioned that market vendors' concerns about sanitation were addressed after engagement with the County Health Office. However, not all feedback is acted upon consistently. Some interviewees felt that only high-profile or politically sensitive issues receive prompt responses, while everyday concerns are often delayed or ignored.

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4.4.2 Incorporating stakeholder feedback into its communication and image management strategies

Respondents were to indicate their level of agreement on the statement "The County Government incorporates stakeholder feedback into its communication and image management strategies". The results are shown in Table 13

Table 13: Incorporating stakeholder feedback

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	32	26.0
Agree	60	48.8
Neutral	16	13.0
Disagree	11	8.9
Strongly disagree	4	3.3
Total	123	100.0

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Results showed that 26.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that the County Government incorporates stakeholder feedback into its communication and image management strategies. Further, 48.8% agreed with the statement, 13.0% were neutral, 8.9% disagreed, while 3.3% strongly disagreed that the County Government incorporates stakeholder feedback into its communication and image management strategies. That 74.8% of respondents (26.0% strongly agree and 48.8% agree) believe that Nakuru County Government incorporates stakeholder feedback into its communication and image management strategies suggests a generally positive perception of responsiveness. For instance, a study of the Ghana Highway Authority emphasizes

that when stakeholder perspectives are integrated into public relations and communication strategies, institutions achieve greater transparency, accountability, and trust (Ackah & Bimpong, 2024). Additionally, participatory governance research highlights that inclusion of public voices in strategic messaging enhances institutional legitimacy and public satisfaction. While I didn't find a direct peer-reviewed study outside Kenya on feedback incorporation in image management specifically, conceptual analyses in sectors like oil and gas highlight the importance of dialogue and storytelling in building a trusted organizational image (Emeka-Okoli et al., 2024). Thus, Nakuru County's relatively high agreement scores indicate a favorable environment for stakeholder-informed communication. However, given that nearly a quarter of respondents are neutral or in disagreement, strengthening mechanisms that ensure visible incorporation of feedback would likely bolster stakeholder confidence and institutional credibility.

Interview responses indicated that some respondents believed that feedback is reviewed during departmental meetings or forwarded through administrative reporting channels. However, there was a lack of clarity among many about the specific mechanisms or timelines for follow-up. While a few had received confirmation or updates on their issues, most noted the absence of formal communication after feedback submission. They recommended a more transparent and structured follow-up process to enhance accountability and public trust.

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4.4.3 Extent feedback influenced any policy or decision towards image management

Respondents were to indicate the extent they felt their feedback influenced any policy or decision towards image management. Results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: The Extent feedback influenced any policy or decision towards image management

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Very significantly	45	36.6
Significantly	39	31.7
Slightly	28	22.8
Not at all	9	7.3
Don't know	2	1.6
Total	123	100.0

Results showed that 36.6% of the respondents felt their feedback influenced any policy or decision towards image management very significantly, 31.7% significantly, 22.8% slightly, 7.3% not at all, while 1.6% didn't know whether their feedback influenced any policy or decision towards image management. The finding that 68.3% of respondents (36.6% very significantly and 31.7% significantly) felt their feedback influenced policy or decisions related to image management reflects a relatively strong perception of governmental responsiveness. This aligns with global research indicating that when citizens perceive their input as impactful, it fosters higher trust and strengthens democratic legitimacy (Schneider & Ingram, 2021). However, the 22.8% who felt their feedback only slightly influenced decisions and the 7.3% who felt no influence highlight persistent challenges in fully realizing participatory governance (Taylor & Sanders, 2020). Studies in European municipalities demonstrate that clear feedback loops—where governments communicate how citizen input shapes policy—are critical to maintaining engagement and preventing disillusionment (Fung & Wright, 2019). Moreover, transparent mechanisms for incorporating stakeholder feedback enhance institutional image and promote sustained public participation (Michels & De Graaf, 2023). Therefore, Nakuru County could

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benefit from strengthening these feedback mechanisms to boost perceptions of influence and overall civic trust.

During focus group discussions, when asked for specific examples, several recalled instances where public outcry on social media led to faster garbage collection or repairs to public infrastructure. Others mentioned barazas where residents raised concerns, followed by follow-up visits by County officials or changes in local operations. Still, a few participants expressed frustration, saying they rarely saw outcomes from their input.

4.5 Impact on County Government Image

The study's third objective assessed the correlation between stakeholder feedback trends and public perception of the Nakuru County Government's image for the past five years.

4.5.1 The current image of the Nakuru County Government among the public

Respondents were to rate the current image of the Nakuru County Government among the public. The results are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: The current image of the Nakuru County Government among the public

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	30	16.3
Good	63	24.4
Fair	20	51.2
Poor	10	8.1
Very poor	0	0
Total	123	100.0

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Results showed that 51.2% of the respondents rated the current image of the Nakuru County Government among the public as fair, 24.4% as good, 16.3% as excellent while 8.1% rated the current image of the Nakuru County Government among the public as poor. The results indicating that 51.2% of respondents rated Nakuru County Government's public image as fair, 24.4% as good, 16.3% as excellent, and 8.1% as poor reflect a moderately positive perception overall. Similar studies reveal that public image ratings often correlate with perceived transparency and service delivery quality (Kim & Lee, 2021). Furthermore, research highlights that consistent citizen engagement and effective communication strategies improve public image and trust in governance institutions (Lee & Park, 2023). The significant portion rating the image as fair suggests room for improvement in communication and responsiveness to stakeholders to elevate the County's reputation (Schubert & van den Broek, 2022). Therefore, focusing on these areas could enhance Nakuru County's institutional image further.

During focus group discussions, participants generally described the current image of the County Government as "improving but inconsistent." Many noted that the County has made visible progress in areas such as infrastructure, health services, and market organization, which has positively influenced its image among the public. However, they also pointed out lingering issues such as delays in service delivery, poor communication, and perceived favoritism in resource allocation. When discussing whether the County's image has changed over time, most agreed that it has improved compared to previous years, citing increased visibility of County officials and more frequent public engagements. Others, however, felt that while the County's physical developments are noticeable, transparency and accountability remain weak, which limits overall image improvement.

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Interviewees generally described the County Government's current public image as "moderately positive but still evolving." Many acknowledged improvements in infrastructure, healthcare access, and public cleanliness, especially in urban areas. These visible developments have enhanced the County's image among residents, particularly those who have seen direct benefits. However, others pointed out that issues like inconsistent service delivery, limited transparency, and political favoritism continue to negatively affect public perception, especially in marginalized or rural areas. Respondents noted that while some progress is visible, the County's image is often shaped more by perceptions of fairness and responsiveness than by physical development alone.

4.5.2 Stakeholder feedback has improved the County Government's image

Respondents were to indicate if they thought stakeholder feedback has improved the County Government's image. Results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Stakeholders' feedback has improved the Nakuru County Government's image

	Frequency	Percent
Yes, significantly	93	75.6
Yes, slightly	23	18.7
No impact	7	5.7
Negative impact	0	0
Don't know	0	0
Total	123	100.0

Results showed that 75.6% of the respondents indicated that stakeholder feedback has improved the County Government's image significantly, 18.7% slightly while 5.7% indicate that stakeholder feedback has no impact on the County Government's image. The finding that 75.6%

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of respondents believe stakeholder feedback has significantly improved Nakuru County Government's image highlights the critical role of participatory governance in shaping public perception. Studies show that when citizens see their input acknowledged and reflected in policy or communication, institutional legitimacy and image improve (Mergel et al., 2021). Additionally, responsive feedback systems foster a sense of inclusion and transparency, which strengthens public trust. Conversely, the 5.7% who see no impact may reflect gaps in communication or visibility of implemented feedback, a common issue noted in public administration research (de Graaf & Van Asperen, 2022).

During focus group discussions, stakeholder feedback was recognized as a key factor in shaping public perception. Several participants said that when the County responds visibly to community concerns such as repairing roads or addressing water shortages, the public's confidence increases. Conversely, failure to act on feedback contributes to frustration and cynicism. Many emphasized that consistent action based on public input, along with better communication about what is being done, would greatly enhance the County's image and rebuild trust with residents over time.

Stakeholder feedback was widely recognized as a contributing factor in shaping the County's image. Several interviewees believed that the County has become more responsive in recent years, especially when issues are raised through community forums or social media. They cited cases where public complaints about road conditions or sanitation were followed by corrective action, which in turn improved public opinion. However, others emphasized that when feedback is ignored or there is no follow-up, it damages the County's reputation.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of empirical findings, conclusions drawn from the results, and recommendations made based on research findings. The objectives of the study guide the conclusions and recommendations.

5.1 Summary of the Key Findings

The overall objective of the empirical study was to identify the influence of stakeholder feedback on the image management of organizations. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, an interview schedule, and focus group discussions.

The first objective identified and categorized at least five distinct forms of stakeholder input used by the Nakuru County Government in its image management efforts from 2021 to 2025. The study found that public forums or barazas were the most common feedback channel used by stakeholders, followed by online platforms and surveys. While most of the respondents found it easy or very easy to provide feedback, only a few did so frequently, indicating moderate engagement. Accessibility varies, with digital platforms favoring youth, while older adults prefer physical forums. However, inconsistent application and lack of follow-up reduce trust and perceived effectiveness. Focus group and interview data confirmed these patterns, highlighting that while mechanisms exist, gaps remain in inclusivity, consistency, and the demonstrable impact of stakeholder input.

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The second objective evaluated the degree of integration of stakeholder input in the Nakuru County Government's image management strategies from 2021 to 2025. The study revealed that most of the respondents believe Nakuru County Government actively listens to stakeholder feedback, with a majority agreeing it is incorporated into communication and image management strategies. Additionally, most felt their feedback significantly influenced policies related to image management. Focus group and interview data confirmed that while the County responds to feedback, response levels vary by department, and formal follow-up mechanisms are unclear. Despite notable improvements, concerns remain about selective responsiveness, inconsistent communication, and lack of transparency, all of which limit public confidence in the effectiveness of the feedback process.

The third objective assessed the correlation between stakeholder feedback trends and public perception of the Nakuru County Government's image for the past five years. The study revealed that most respondents rated the current image of Nakuru County Government as "fair," indicating a moderately positive perception. Most of them believed that stakeholder feedback had significantly improved the County's image. Focus group and interview participants noted visible improvements in infrastructure and services, yet highlighted concerns about inconsistency, transparency, and favoritism. They emphasized that public image is shaped not only by development outcomes but also by responsiveness to stakeholder input and the visibility of follow-up actions, which remain inconsistent across departments and issues.

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5.2 Conclusion

Regarding feedback channels, the findings suggest that while Nakuru County Government has made notable efforts to provide multiple feedback channels, actual stakeholder participation

remains moderate. Public forums and digital platforms dominate, but engagement is hindered by accessibility challenges, inconsistent feedback mechanisms, and a perceived lack of responsiveness. Despite most respondents finding it easy to give feedback, the low frequency of input and concerns over lack of follow-up signal the need for deeper institutional reforms. Strengthening the feedback-response cycle and building public trust are essential for improving participatory governance, which in turn can enhance the County's image and citizen satisfaction.

Regarding use of feedback, the findings suggest that Nakuru County Government has made commendable progress in listening to and incorporating stakeholder feedback into its image management strategies. High levels of perceived responsiveness demonstrate a foundation for civic trust and participatory governance. However, inconsistencies in feedback processing, selective action, and limited communication about outcomes hinder the full realization of inclusive governance. While the public acknowledges positive change, the lack of transparency and structured follow-up mechanisms prevents broader engagement and long-term trust. Strengthening institutional practices around feedback integration is essential for building credibility, enhancing stakeholder satisfaction, and supporting sustainable improvements in the County's public image.

Regarding the county image, Nakuru County Government's public image is perceived as moderately positive, with ongoing improvements noted, especially in infrastructure and service delivery. The study confirms that stakeholder feedback plays a crucial role in shaping this image, particularly when input leads to visible changes. However, challenges remain around inconsistent responsiveness, limited transparency, and the need for clearer communication on actions taken. These gaps hinder stronger public perception gains. While the County has laid a

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solid foundation through participatory practices, it must now focus on strengthening institutional responsiveness, ensuring equal attention across all communities, and improving the visibility of outcomes to sustain and enhance its image.

5.3 Recommendations

To enhance stakeholder engagement regarding feedback channels, Nakuru County Government should strengthen and diversify its feedback mechanisms. First, increase the regularity and inclusivity of public forums by ensuring they are accessible to marginalized groups. Second, improve digital literacy and infrastructure to expand the reach of online platforms. Third, establish transparent follow-up procedures and communicate actions taken based on feedback to build trust. Fourth, invest in civic education campaigns to raise awareness about available feedback channels. Lastly, institutionalize structured feedback analysis and reporting processes within departments to ensure stakeholder input meaningfully informs policy and service delivery, ultimately improving the County's public image.

To strengthen stakeholder trust and improve image management regarding use of feedback, Nakuru County Government should formalize and publicize feedback processing procedures. This includes creating clear communication pathways that inform citizens how their input influences decisions. Departments should adopt standardized feedback tracking and reporting systems, ensuring consistent responses across all sectors. Regular updates through community forums, social media, and official websites can improve transparency. Training County staff on participatory practices and responsiveness will also enhance effectiveness. Finally, introducing civic education initiatives can raise awareness about the role of public input, thereby fostering deeper engagement and reinforcing the County's commitment to inclusive governance.

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To improve its public image, Nakuru County Government should institutionalize structured feedback-response systems that ensure timely, inclusive, and transparent action. Communication of feedback outcomes should be prioritized across platforms to build public confidence. County departments must address not only high-profile concerns but also everyday issues, particularly in underserved areas. Establishing performance indicators linked to responsiveness and accountability will help standardize departmental practices. Additionally, community engagement strategies should target all demographic groups to reduce exclusion and enhance equitable participation. These measures will reinforce stakeholder trust and contribute to a more consistently positive and credible public image.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

Future research should explore the long-term effects of stakeholder feedback on policy sustainability and service delivery outcomes in Nakuru County. Comparative studies across different counties could identify best practices in feedback integration and image management. Investigating the role of digital platforms in enhancing participation among marginalized groups, especially rural and elderly populations, would provide insights into bridging digital divides. Additionally, qualitative studies focusing on barriers to consistent feedback utilization and follow-up mechanisms within county departments can deepen understanding of institutional challenges.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: APPROVAL LETTER

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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REF: SPU/522/2025 **Date: 19th August 2025**

TO: Elizabeth Gitonga
St. Paul's University

Dear Elizabeth,

==========

REF: The Influence of Stakeholder Feedback on Image Management of Organizations: A Case Study of the Nakuru County Government

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 532, for the period between 19th August 2025 – 19th August 2026 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours
v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

APPENDIX II: NACOSTI PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **993225**

Date of Issue: **16/September/2025**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms.. ELIZABETH wangui gitonga of St. Pauls University, Kenya, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru on the topic: THE INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ON IMAGE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS- A CASE STUDY OF NAKURU COUNTY ASSEMBLY for the period ending : 16/September/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/4179045**

993225

Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

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See overleaf for conditions

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

Data Collection Instrument

Instructions

My name is Elizabeth Gitonga. I am a student at St Paul's University taking a Master of Arts in Communication Studies. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for the analysis of the research topic: The influence of stakeholder feedback on the image management of organizations- A case study of the Nakuru County Assembly.

Please answer the questions below on Stakeholder Engagement and Reputation Management in Nakuru County, Nakuru County Government

1. **Section A: Demographic Information**

1**. Age:**

☐Under18
☐18–25
☐26–35
☐36–45
☐46–60
☐Above60

2. Gender:

☐Male
☐Female
☐Prefer not to say

3. Occupation:

☐ Public servant
☐ Business owner
☐ NGO representative
☐ Student
☐ Other: _____

4. Relationship to Nakuru County Government:

☐ Resident
☐ Employee
☐ Partner Organization

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☐ Other: _____

Section B: Forms of Stakeholder Input

5. In which of the following ways have you provided input to the Nakuru County Government? (Check all that apply)
☐ Public forums/barazas
☐ Online platforms/social media
☐ Written submissions (letters, emails)
☐ Surveys or feedback forms
☐ Direct meetings with officials
☐ I have not provided any input

6. How often do you provide input to the County Government?
☐Frequently
☐Occasionally
☐Rarely
☐Never

7. How would you rate the ease of providing feedback to the County Government?
☐ Very easy
☐ Easy
☐Neutral
☐ Difficult
☐ Very difficult

Section C: Incorporation of Stakeholder feedback into image management
8. The Nakuru County Government actively listens to stakeholder feedback.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

9. The County Government incorporates stakeholder feedback into its communication and image management strategies.

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☐ Strongly agree

☐Agree

☐Neutral

☐Disagree

☐Strongly disagree

10. To what extent do you feel your feedback influenced any policy or decision towards image management?

☐ Very significantly

☐ Significantly

☐ Slightly

☐ Not at all

☐ Don't know

Section D: Impact on County Government Image

How would you rate the current image of the Nakuru County Government among the public?
☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor
☐ Very poor

Do you think stakeholder feedback has improved the County Government's image?
☐ Yes, significantly
☐ Yes, slightly
☐ No impact
☐ Negative impact
☐ Don't know

In your opinion, what more could the County Government do to better manage its image through stakeholder feedback?

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Please share an experience where your feedback (or someone else's) visibly influenced the County's public communication or services.

APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Study Title:

The Influence of Stakeholder Feedback on Image Management: A Case Study of Nakuru County Assembly

Instructions to Interviewer:

Briefly introduce the study, assure confidentiality, and obtain consent. Use open-ended questions and probe where necessary.

Section A: Background

1. What is your role or connection with Nakuru County Government?

2. How long have you been engaged with the County in that capacity?

Section B: Feedback Channels

1. How do stakeholders typically give feedback to the County Government?

2. Are these channels accessible and effective?

Section C: Use of Feedback

1. Does the County act on stakeholder feedback? Please give an example.

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2. How is feedback processed or followed up?

Section D: County Image

1. How would you describe the County Government's current public image?

2. Has stakeholder feedback played a role in shaping or improving that image?

Section E: Suggestions

1. What can the County do better in using feedback to manage its image?

2. Any best practices you'd recommend?

Closing:

Thank the participant and remind them of how their input will contribute to the study.

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APPENDIX V: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Study Title:

The Influence of Stakeholder Feedback on Image Management: A Case Study of Nakuru County Government.

Purpose:

To explore group perspectives on how stakeholder feedback influences the image and communication strategies of the Nakuru County Government.

Instructions to Moderator:

Introduce yourself, the purpose of the study, and assure confidentiality.

Obtain verbal consent from participants.

Encourage open, respectful dialogue.

Use prompts or follow-up questions as needed.

Discussion Themes and Guiding Questions

1. Introduction and Engagement

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What is your relationship with Nakuru County Government?

Have you ever participated in any form of engagement or communication with the County?

2. Stakeholder Feedback Mechanisms

How does the County collect feedback from the public?

Are these channels easy to access or use?

Which methods do you feel are most effective?

3. Perception of Feedback Use

Do you believe the County listens to and uses feedback from stakeholders?

Can you recall a time when feedback led to visible action or change?

4. County Government Image

How would you describe the current image of the County Government?

Has this image changed over time? Why or why not?

What role has stakeholder feedback played in shaping that image?

5. Recommendations

What could the County Government do to better manage its image using stakeholder input?

How can feedback processes be improved?

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Closing Remarks

Thank participants for their time and input.

Reassure them of confidentiality and briefly explain how the findings will be used.

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