

LAND GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND CONFLICTS, KWALE COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The lack of land regulatory measures and land public participation have played a role in victimizing Kwale County with frequent land disputes. In this research, the authors examined how land governance practices influence land conflict management in Kwale County. The Stakeholder Theory was incorporated in the investigation. The research objective aimed at assessing the effectiveness of land regulatory enforcement in the resolution of land conflicts. The enquiry utilized explanatory and descriptive research designs to evaluate the role of land governance practices on the control of land conflicts management. The target population was 255. Stratified sampling and purposive sampling methods were used in this research. The sample population was 156, and proportionate stratified sampling was adopted in selecting the sample population from the target population. The qualitative and quantitative data in the study were collected using interview schedules and questionnaires. To establish the validity and reliability of research tools, the study conducted a pilot study in the Tana River County. Research involved data analysis by applying descriptive analysis technique and inferential analysis technique through SPSS Version 25. The qualitative data collected was analyzed thematically using NVivo software grounded on the interview guide and questionnaire. Result revealed that land regulatory enforcement depicted a positive influence on the management of land conflicts. The research concluded that land regulatory enforcement practices which included eviction process adherence, action on illegal allocations, and court decisions were key in determinants for management of land conflicts.

Key words: Land Governance Practices, Land Regulatory Enforcement and Management of Land Conflicts

INTRODUCTION

Land administration has emerged as a significant policy concern in international policy/ development, especially in the setting where land constitutes a primary source of socio-economic power, identity and livelihood. Across many developing nations, limited public participation, weak land institutional capacity and land administration systems and inadequate land regulatory enforcement mechanisms have contributed to tenure insecurity and persistent land disputes. Globally, land is ranked as one of the most contentious and conflict-prone resources due to public interest, historical injustices, competing claims between private/ communal, population pressure and colonial land alienation. Despite the presence of regulatory frameworks/ legislation on land in many countries to enhance equity, accountability and transparency, land conflict continues to rise (Cotula, 2020). These conflicts have implications for sustainable development, tenure security and social cohesion, highlighting the need to assess how land governance practices shape the management of land conflicts.

Globally, land remains the most essential assets for economic development, human survival, political power, and economic development. As such, it is integral in shaping economic equity, agriculture, environmental sustainability and housing. However, the rising need for land resources, more so, in the context of population growth, industrialization and urbanization, has heightened escalated conflicts and competition over land resources globally (Zoomers, 2020). Admittedly, land-related conflicts are key drivers of civil unrest globally, and often result in overlapping legal framework, lack of secure tenure, poor governance structures and exclusionary land administration policies (Yawson, 2021).

The issue of '*land grabbing*' where the indigenous population are denied access to land through legal or quasi-legal acquisition by powerful elites or foreign investors, is equally an important global concern. Notably, it has sparked conflicts in Southeast Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa (Cotula, 2020). Empirical evidence reveals the factor that while international frameworks exist to protect land rights by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), they are frequently inadequately implemented nationally (Chitonge & Harvey, 2022). In addition, an increasing awareness has emerged that land governance must not only be about formal land registration but equally about accountability in decision-making processes, fair dispute resolution and inclusion of marginalized populations (Yawson, 2021).

Across the African continent, the issue of land governance is deeply rooted in the colonial legacy that enacted formal land legislation without recognizing the pre-existing customary systems. This has led to overlapping and frequently contradictory legal regimes governing land, which has subsequently led to land-related disputes and widespread tenure insecurity (Wubie, de Vries & Alemie, 2020). Land Policy Framework and Guidelines in Africa (F&G) formulated in 2009 by the African Union (AU) target to support land policy reforms in Africa. Nonetheless, although the framework highlights efficient use, peaceful conflict resolution and equitable access to land, its practical uptake and localization into national land governance has been inconsistent and limited across affiliated nations (Obeng-Odoom, 2013).

Admittedly, research undertaken in Uganda, Ghana and Nigeria show that elite capture, weak institutional frameworks and corruption have hindered successful implementation of land governance practices (Cotula, 2020). Moreover, Africa's political economy of land is structured in a way that land often functions as a tool of patronage, complicating efforts at accountability and decentralization. In addition, youths and women are not involved in land ownership due to patriarchal inheritance systems and cultural norms (Chitonge & Harvey, 2022). Although reforms are underway, limited empirical research have analyzed how land governance systems work in practice, more so in peri-urban and rural African contexts where both statutory and customary authorities function concurrently (Wubie *et al.*, 2020).

When it comes to reforms in land governance practices, Kenya has achieved considerable progress. Notably, the 2010 constitution established the basis for transparent administration and equitable access to land. The

National Land Policy (2019) has outlined guidelines for tackling weak institutional coordination, tenure insecurity and land fragmentation (Government of Kenya [GOK], 2012). Despite these efforts, Kenya continues to face challenges related to land governance. These challenges include weak enforcement mechanisms, delays in titling, politicizing of land ownership and corruption in land allocation (Musyoka, 2019).

Land conflicts in Kwale County often emanate from overlapping claims between government entities, private investors and community members. For instance, communities in Tiwi and Kinango have faced risk of displacement arising from contested land acquisition from mining and tourism projects (Soubry & Sherren, 2022). Conflict resolution mechanisms are often inaccessible, slow and opaque, especially for marginalized population. Kameri-Mbote, Kamunge and Yatich (2021) further highlight that customary land administration remains strong yet often undermined or ignored by formal legal mechanisms. Otieno, Lumumba, Odote, Akinyi, Wari, Ongesa and Nassef (2024) concludes that many communities in Kwale County are unaware of their land rights due to limited civic education and low literacy levels.

Statement of the Problem

Despite available literature on land governance practices, few studies have assessed how these practices are operationalized at county level, especially on management of land conflicts. The degree of participatory governance and dispute management strategies that have been operationalized is not well understood. As such, this research intends to explore the specific mechanisms regarding land governance practices and management of land conflicts which are understudied. This project bridges this knowledge gap by highlighting empirical evidence that informs context-specific interventions on land use and management.

Land conflicts continue to face persistent challenges despite land governance frameworks such as Community Land Act of 2016 and 2010 constitution. These frameworks were meant to provide institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution, secure tenure rights and promote equitable access of land. Nonetheless, practical implementation has revealed a consistent implementation gap. For instance, in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), land governance practices remain fragmented, poorly coordinated and weakly institutionalized (Mwathane, Makatimo, Kibugi & Nyukuri, 2022). Land conflicts in Kenya arise from weak enforcement of land laws, inadequate institutional capacity, historical tenure injustices, limited public participation and overlapping claims. These hurdles lead to frequent conflicts among government agencies, private investors and communities. As indicated by World Bank (2017), Kenya's land governance system displays weak accountability among land administration institutions, insufficient public awareness of land rights and low levels of transparency. These hurdles are highly evident in peri-urban and rural counties where land is communally owned.

In Kenya, existing literature on land governance is centered on national policy implementation or coastal historical injustices, with minimal empirical focus on how land regulatory enforcement directly shape the management of land conflicts. In addition, there is limited context-specific evidence to justify why land conflicts persist despite continued government efforts on land reforms and governance practices. Going by this, this research was instruments in generating context-specific empirical data regarding the relationship between land governance practices and management of land conflicts, thus guiding policy formulation and enhancing institutional frameworks.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to evaluate the effect of land regulatory enforcement on management of land conflicts in Kwale County, Kenya.

Research Questions

What is the effect of land regulatory enforcement on management of land conflicts in Kwale County, Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses empirical literature, the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework.

Empirical Literature

Srivastav and Singh (2023) conducted a study on greening our laws on the context of reviewing land acquisition laws for coal mining in India. The study investigated how legacy systems of land acquisition laws hinder enforcement of social and environmental safeguards in land governance practices. The study methodology was pegged into qualitative policy analysis anchored on comparative legislative study, stakeholder interviews and legal reviews. The study findings concluded that the older acquisition law (CBAA 1957) revealed insufficiency due to community participation requirements, diligence protocols and environmental safeguards, resulting in statutory protections unenforceable in practice. However, the study had limited discussion on informal/ customary enforcement mechanisms, concentrated on acquisition-level enforcement and national legislation rather than land conflict enforcement, and emphasized on environmental disputes rather than ongoing conflict management mechanisms. The study filled this gap by examining land governance practices in a county-level setting and assessed how enforcement of land laws influenced land conflict outcomes.

Rwegasira (2018) examined the hurdles in enforcing land-rights in Tanzania. The study employed a qualitative exploratory design entailing interviews with court officials and case reviews across Tanzanian districts. The study findings revealed that major barriers including frequent case dismissals on technicalities rather than merits, widespread legal illiteracy among land disputants, undermining enforcement and trust in judicial systems, and inconsistent application of laws. However, the study lacked integration with customary/ informal enforcement mechanisms and was limited to judicial enforcement. This gap was filled in the study by assessing not only formal court enforcement but also how eviction process adherence and action on illegal allocation, function or fail in enforcing land laws in Kwale County.

Maina (2015) explored the resolution of territorial conflicts in Kenya: examining the differences between land disputes, land tribunals and environment territorial conflicts tribunal. The study methodology employed an institutional analysis based on interviews with judges, litigants and registrars, and court document reviews. The outcomes of the research establish that while the supreme law created courts responsible for environmental and land matters to strengthen enforcement mechanisms, it still faces backlog delays, resource constraints and procedural complexity. However, the study fails to evaluate enforcement within county-level governance frameworks. The gap was addressed in the study by evaluating how land governance practices promote effective land regulatory enforcement and conflict outcomes in the local context.

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory

Robert Edward Freeman came up with the Stakeholder Theory in 1984. This theory gained popularity after Freeman wrote Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach. Freeman (2010) believed that institutions ought to take into consideration the influence and the interest among key actors when making decisions. The principle asserts that organizational governance systems coordinate within a system of stakeholders (actors) who possess recognized influence, claims and interests. Good governance depends on balancing and identifying these stakeholders/ actors to ensure equitable outcomes, legitimacy and '*conflict management*'.

In one of the studies, Sunkuyia and Kimencu (2023) conducted research on stakeholder participation and strategy execution in County Governments (case study- Narok County Government). The study utilized the basic assumptions of the theory to assess how stakeholder engagement influenced strategy implementation. The research style employed was descriptive-correlational mixed-method. This approach involved 87 respondents sourced from community project representatives and county administrators/ managers. The outcomes of the research found statistically strong and positive association between stakeholder involvement

factors (such as procedural compliance, communication and participation), and strategy implementation effectiveness in Narok County Government, Kenya. However, the study narrowed down on general county governance and strategy execution, rather than how stakeholder engagement or land governance practices affected land conflict management. The study filled these gaps by applying Stakeholder Theory to evaluate how engagement of different stakeholders (such as civil society actors, community leaders, local residents and county officials) shape land conflict management. This theory is linked to the research objective on land regulatory enforcement. Land regulatory enforcement conformed to the theory as it reflected the obligation of land institutions to safeguard stakeholder rights through compliance with court decisions, acting on illegal allocations, and eviction procedures.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of the study. It defines how the independent variables and the dependent variables are hypothetically related.

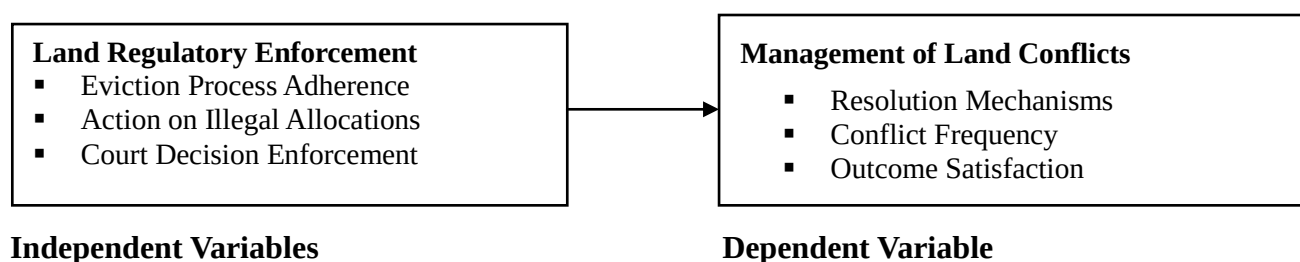


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Research Study (2025)

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The inquiry was anchored on explanatory and descriptive research designs to examine how the land governance practices affect the management of land conflict management. These designs are purely cross-sectional and facilitated the researcher's ability to present and systematically capture relationships, characteristics and status between variables without manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Consequently, explanatory research design facilitated capturing of elements and assessed the cause-and-effect relationship among land regulatory enforcement and management of land conflicts variables (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Notably, utilizing these designs facilitated the production of data-driven, accurate insights that reflect practices and real conditions within the county's devolved land governance system, contributing to the identification of opportunities, patterns and gaps for effective conflict management.

Unit of Analysis and Observation

The study examined land regulatory enforcement as units of analysis. The observation unit consisted of County Land Surveyors, County Physical Planners, County Land Registrars, Assistant County Commissioners, Sub-County Administrators, officials from the National Land Commission (NLC) within the county jurisdiction, community members and landowners, members of the Land Control Boards (LCBs) from each sub-county, Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs, and community from both the county and national governments.

Target Population

The target population was composed of County Land Surveyors, County Physical Planners, County Land Registrars, Assistant County Commissioners, Sub-County Administrators, officials from the NLC at the County level, community members and landowners who had participated in the processes of land disputes in the last five years, members of the LCBs from each sub-county, Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs, and community

elders involved in land conflict management. This target population is relevant since it included both local stakeholders (who experience and respond to land conflicts) and institutional actors (who implement and oversee land governance practices). The study focused on 255 participants as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

Representation/ Institution	Officer Category	Target Population
NLC (Kwale County Office)	Public Land Management Officers	5
	Land Dispute Resolution Officers	5
Kwale County Department of Land	County Land Registrars	7
	County Physical Planners	7
	County Land Surveyors	6
Ministry of Interior & National Administration (MINA)	Assistant County Commissioners	4
	Chiefs	15
	Assistant Chiefs	15
LCBs Members	Msambweni Sub-County	5
	Matuga Sub-County	5
	Lunga Lunga Sub-County	5
	Kinango Sub-County	5
Elders Councils	Community Elders	40
County Government of Kwale	Sub-County Administrators	4
Affected Community Members across the County	Community Members (involved in land disputes)	77
	Landowners (involved in land disputes)	50
Total		255

Source: Internal Staff Records - MINA, NLC and County Government of Kwale (2025)

Sampling Method and Sampling Size

Sampling Method

The inquiry utilized stratified and purposive sampling techniques. These approaches were relevant since the target population was made up of diverse categories of stakeholders such as community elders, LCBs members, NLC Representatives (Kwale County), local administrators, landowners, community members and county land officials, each fulfilling a specific function in land governance and conflict management in Kwale County. This population informed the observation unit. The analytical unit was comprised of Msambweni, Matuga, Lunga and Kinango Sub-Counties. Sampling was done using stratified sampling methods to guarantee coverage of all key stakeholder group, whereas purposive sampling method ensured ‘*selection*’ of targeted individuals who possess specialized knowledge and experience in land governance practices. These techniques were appropriate and are supported by Patton (2014), who asserts that purposive sampling method is most appropriate for obtaining in-depth understanding from information-rich participants.

Sample Size

The calculation of the sample size was estimated using the formula of Yamane (1967) as follows.

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

Where:

N = Target Population (255)

n = Sample Size

e = Margin of Error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{255}{1+255 (0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 155.74 \approx 156$$

Cochran (1977) formula on proportionate stratified sample was implemented to sample out the study population into the selected sample.

Table 2: Sample Size and Distribution

Representation/ Institution	Officer Category	Target Population	Sample Size
NLC (Kwale County Office)	Public Land Management Officers	5	3
	Land Dispute Resolution Officers	5	3
Kwale County Department of Land	County Land Registrars	7	4
	County Physical Planners	7	4
	County Land Surveyors	6	4
MINA	Assistant County Commissioners	4	3
	Chiefs	15	9
	Assistant Chiefs	15	9
LCBs Members	Msambweni Sub-County	5	3
	Matuga Sub-County	5	3
	Lunga Lunga Sub-County	5	3
	Kinango Sub-County	5	3
Elders Councils	Cummunity Elders	40	25
County Government of Kwale	Sub-County Administrators	4	2
Affected Community Members across the County	Community Members (involved in land disputes)	77	47
	Landowners (involved in land disputes)	50	31
Total		255	156

Source: Researcher (2025)

Research Instruments

Interview schedule and questionnaire were utilized in the research. Notably, data was obtained using interview schedule from selected senior officers working at the NLC and County Department of Land. On the other hand, questionnaires containing both closed and open-ended questions were utilized for data collection among officials from the MINA, LCBs, Elders Councils, Sub-County Administrators and affected community members across the County. The instruments had a direct connection to the study objective: examining land regulatory enforcement in relation to land conflict management in Kwale County.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in Tana River County to test for accuracy and consistency of research tools. Tana River County is an adjacent county that shares similar environmental and socio-political characteristics with Kwale County. As recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2017), a trial sample ought to be approximately 10% of the total sample size, thus, the research sampled 16 respondents who were purposively pursued for the exercise. The pilot exercise was applied to assess whether the research instruments measured the intended information and made the necessary corrections.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The analytical methods employed in the inquiry included both descriptive and inferential. The quantitative data was coded and uploaded into Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 to be analyzed. Descriptive statistics for instance mean percentages, standard deviations and frequencies aided in summarizing respondent's characteristics and trends relating to land governance practices, for example land regulatory enforcement. Inferential statistical techniques like Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) and multiple linear regression were utilized in the study to test the hypotheses and investigate the connection between independent and dependent variables. By using multiple linear regression, the researcher was able to consider the combined influence of a group of independent variable on a single dependent variable being considered.

Simple Linear Regression

The research used multiple linear regression to evaluate the influence of independent variable on the dependent variable as shown below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{LRE} + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 1$$

Where:

Y = Dependent variable (management of land conflicts)

β_0 to β_1 = Regression coefficients (slope)

LRE = Land Regulatory Enforcement; and

ε = error term.

Notably, the outcomes of the regression model reflected the coefficient of determination (R^2) that indicated the extent of variation in land conflict management attributable to the land governance practices in question. The inquiry also utilized the F-test that was utilized to examine the total extent of significance of the regression framework.

Qualitative Data Analysis

NVivo software was applied in analyzing qualitative data in both interview guides and questionnaires thematically. The data was first transcribed and cleaned, then using open coding, generated into categories, thereafter axial coding to form themes based on the study objectives. The themes illustrate narratives around the study variables.

Data Presentation

To facilitate ease of presentation, the study results are presented in tables and narrative reports. Besides, the expanding inferential statistics like regression output tables, correlation matrices, thematic maps provided by NVivo were integrated into the analysis to further support the mixed-methods analysis and allow triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

Table 3 below highlights the response rate based on the total of 156 distributed questionnaires. Out of the total 156 respondents contacted, 139 responded to the questionnaires, which represent 89.1% of the total sample. In contrast, 17 individuals failed to fill out and return the questionnaires, accounting for 10.89% of the sample. This indicates there was a relatively high response rate, signifying there was good engagement with the participants, showing reliability for the study. The high response rate is valuable for guaranteeing that the results reflect a diverse perspective on the target population.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics on Land Regulatory Enforcement

This part summarizes descriptive statistics revealing the view of respondents regarding various aspects of the variable land regulatory enforcement. On average, respondents agree that land regulatory enforcement was identified as ensuring management of land conflicts in Kwale County, Kenya. This variable was evaluated using three statements. The first statement was whether court decisions regarding land administration were executed without delay or bias; this statement also posted an average score of 3.7410, demonstrating a moderate level of support for the statement, with the Standard Deviation of 1.03096 indicating lower differences in responses.

The results also revealed that respondents strongly agreed that the eviction processes strictly complied with legal procedures. This was revealed by the result reflected by the average score of 3.6691. The relatively low Standard Deviation of 1.03131 suggests that there was consistency among the views of the respondents regarding whether the eviction processes strictly complied with legal procedures. Thus, there were very minimal variations in responses. Lastly, the statement regarding the action instituted against unlawful land allocation also received a favorable response, shown by a mean of 3.7482. However, the higher Standard Deviation of 1.16776 highlighted differences in the responses. Thus, the average value of 3.719433 and Standard Deviation of 1.076677 suggested that land regulatory enforcement predominantly shows a favorable and considerable influence on the management of land conflicts in Kwale County, Kenya; however, the Standard Deviation of 1.076677 highlights some differences in the responses in terms of land regulatory enforcement. The observed distribution is shown in Table 6 as presented below.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Land Regulatory Enforcement

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Court decisions regarding land administration are executed without delay or bias.	139	3.7410	1.03096
The eviction processes strictly comply with legal procedures.	139	3.6691	1.03131
Action is instituted against unlawful land allocation.	139	3.7482	1.16776
Valid N (listwise)	139		
Average		3.719433	1.076677

Source: Field Data (2026)

In addition, respondents were requested to highlight some of the failures and successes of land regulatory enforcement within the institutions. The responses were thematically analyzed. From the responses. The key findings highlighted were: there was one key success that emerged, which is improvement in monitoring and enforcement of development approval retirement. Thus, the institution has made a remarkable milestone in promoting compliance and the usage of land regulations.

On the other hand, some of the failures that emerged were inconsistent enforcement, coordination challenges and institutional capacity constraints. Inconsistent enforcement emerged as a significant concern, where respondents observed that there are different levels of enforcement across different cases. Also, institutional capacity constraints, particularly limited financial resources, inadequate staffing, and insufficient technical capacity, were issues that were limiting effective enforcement. Thus, generally, the four responses indicated that despite the notable successes in land regulatory enforcement, consistency, institutional capacity, and coordination constraints remained key areas that required improvement to achieve the objective of managing land conflicts.

Descriptive of Management of Land Conflicts

This section reports the results of the descriptive analysis reflecting respondents' views regarding various aspects of the management of land conflicts. This variable was evaluated using three statements to assess the aspect of management of land conflicts. The results are presented in Table 7 presented below. The first indicator was whether most stakeholders are contented with the results of land conflict resolution mechanisms. The results revealed that the statement attained a mean score of 4.3597, implying that there was strong agreement with the statement that most stakeholders were contented with the results of land conflict resolution mechanisms, with a Standard Deviation of 0.94060 suggesting a high level of agreement in the responses with very minimal variations.

Also, on the statement whether there are well-defined mechanisms for resolving land conflicts. The results indicated that study participants showed strong agreement in relation to the statement that there were well-defined mechanisms for resolving land conflicts. This was revealed by an average score of 3.7482, suggesting a moderate level of agreement. The relatively low Standard Deviation of 1.18623 implied that there was consistency across the reported ratings by the respondents regarding the statement that there are well-defined mechanisms for resolving land conflicts. However, there were some variations in responses.

The last statement was whether instances of land-related conflicts have reduced in the recent past. The result based on this statement indicated that respondents moderately endorsed the statement that there was a general reduction of land-related disputes, as indicated by the average score of 3.661. However, the moderate Standard Deviation of 1.18293 indicated some level of variations in the responses. This meant that the respondents provided different opinions regarding this statement on whether instances of land-related conflicts have reduced in the recent past, necessary to improve land management of disputes. The average score of 3.92327 and Standard Deviation of 1.10325 suggested that management of land conflicts in Kwale County, Kenya had improved; however, the Standard Deviation of 1.10325 indicates variation in the responses in terms of management of land conflicts.

Table 7: Management of Land Conflicts

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Most stakeholders are contented with the results of land conflict resolution mechanisms.	139	4.3597	0.94060
There are well-defined mechanisms for resolving land conflicts.	139	3.7482	1.18623
Instances of land-related conflicts have reduced in the recent past.	139	3.6619	1.18293
Valid N (listwise)	139	3.92327	1.10325

Source: Field Data (2026)

Simple Linear Regression

The primary objective of the research was to examine the association between land governance practices and management of land conflicts. To achieve this objective, the study developed one objective from this independent variable. Notably, the regression analysis produced three outputs, which include a model summary to check overall model's fit and the percentage of the changes in management of land conflicts resulting from the changes in land governance practices. The second output was an ANOVA table to check whether the regression model as a whole is statistically significant, lastly, the coefficient table to check the strengths and direction of the relationship.

Model Summary

Table 8 below summarizes the estimated model to check model fitness and the percentage of changes in the management of land conflicts resulting from changes in land governance practices. The results revealed that the predictor variables depicted a moderate and a pronounced positive association with the response variable (management of land conflicts). This was revealed by the correlation coefficient ($R = 0.605$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$), suggesting that improvements in the one aspect of land governance practices are associated with improvements in the management of land conflicts resulting from them. Further, the R-square measure of 0.367 revealed that 36.7% of the variation in the management of land conflicts in Kwale County can be accounted for by the land governance practices. On the other hand, 63.3% can be associated with other determinants not captured by the model. Thus, 36.7% of the variations in the management of land conflicts remained unexplained.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.605 ^a	.367	.348	.60752	.367	19.381	4	134	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Land Regulatory Enforcement (LRE)

Source: Field Data (2026)

ANOVA

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out to examine the model fitness that is applied to predict the association between land governance practices and management of land conflicts.

Table 9: ANOVA

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	28.613	4	7.153	19.381	.000 ^b
1 Residual	49.457	134	.369		
Total	78.070	138			

a. Dependent Variable: Management of Land Conflicts (MLC)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Land Regulatory Enforcement (LRE)

Source: Field Data (2026)

The ANOVA results demonstrated by the p-value (0.000) revealed that the estimated model was significant at the specified level and that there was an association depicted by the F-change, indicating that the overall the estimated model is statistically significant $p < 0.001$ with F-static being 19.381 $p < 0.001$). This implied that land regulatory enforcement depicted a significant influence on the management of land conflicts (MLC). Consequently, the null hypothesis that no statistically significant association exists between land governance practices and management of land conflicts was rejected. Thus, a significant linkage exists between land governance practices and management of land conflicts.

Coefficient table

The simple regression analysis conducted produced a coefficient table to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between land governance practices and management of land conflicts. Table 10 below presents the distributions of the relationship.

Table 10: Coefficient Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.526	.481		1.093	.001
1 LRE	.207	.149	.175	1.392	.000

a. Dependent Variable: MLC

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 10 presents the coefficient table, which reveals that the analysis indicates that land governance practices (land regulatory enforcement) had a positive influence on the management of land conflicts. Results revealed that, holding other factors constant, management of land conflicts in Kwale County would improve by 0.526 units at a significant level of 0.001. Further, land regulatory enforcement depicted a positive influence on management of land conflicts as evidenced by its positive standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.207) and the significant t-value (1.392) with a p-value of 0.000. The results concur with those of Adepoju, Audu and Adewoyin (2024) regarding the positive effect of land regulatory reforms that enhance land conflict management.

The model was formulated using these results:

$$\text{MLC} = 0.526 + 0.411 \text{ LRE} + \varepsilon$$

Based on this regression model, from this regression model, land regulatory enforcement depicted a positive coefficient of 0.526 with a p-value = 0.001 < 0.05). Suggesting that, holding all other variables constant, a one-unit change in land regulatory enforcement leads to a 0.526 increase in the management of land conflicts. This result is supported by those of Dietz and Engels (2020) that revealed that land crises intensify ongoing land disputes; where conflicts escalate quickly, and governance institutions are weak and key factors reducing this was land regulatory enforcement.

Qualitative Data Analysis

To support the quantitative analysis on descriptive and inferential statistics, the study further undertook a qualitative analysis. A total of five key informants were involved in the interview. The informants were asked whether court decisions were linked to the effective implementation of land governance practices; the responses revealed that court decisions always provided guidance on land ownership, disputes, and boundaries. This clarifies conflicting claims to strengthen land laws. Moreover, they provided and established legal interpretations that communities and institutions should follow. This is evidenced by their responses;

“Court decisions provide important guidance on land ownership, boundaries, evictions, and disputes”

KII 001

“Court decisions contribute significantly to land governance, particularly where there are disputes over ownership and boundaries”

KII 002

“Promoting proper land governance”

KII 003

Also, they were asked to respond to what level the organization and local community adhere to proper procedures during evictions. Results from thematic analysis revealed that court decisions were generally linked to land governance. Moreover, the decisions are usually linked to areas where there is eviction, and where laws are supposed to be considered appropriately.

“Where evictions are necessary, that the legal procedures must be followed by responsible authorities, by allowing affected persons reasonable time to comply with the notices that has been issued.”

KII 001

“Most formal evictions attempt to follow the required procedures, but compliance is not always complete”

KII 002

“The community generally expects evictions to follow the law” KII 003

“Adherence to proper eviction procedures has improved, particularly where institutions work together”

KII 004

Respondents were further requested to assess how open the process of land allocation is and the success of the process of corruption reporting systems. The respondents indicated that the process of land allocation was open; however, a lot was missing in the process of reporting corruption cases. These results were supported by the key important responses below;

“The land allocation process is fairly open which does document verification, approval although this information is not available to the public”

KII 001

“Normally, the land allocations are guided by procedures formally formulated however they lack transparency at some point affecting the process”

KII 002

“There are some influential individuals who consulted before allocation decisions are made, although they can occasionally affect the process and create perceptions of unfairness.”

KII 003

“The allocation process shows great openness in where proper procedures are followed. Although community members are not fully aware of the procedure followed.”

KII 004

“The process has improved through better documentation and stakeholder involvement. Nevertheless, more resources, budgetary allocation and adequate staffing, to ensure smooth working to the process.”

KII 005

Lastly, the respondents were asked whether there are systems in place to provide adequate representation of community members in decision-shaping committees on land governance practices. The responses revealed that the responses suggest given the fact that there are mechanisms in place, their effectiveness is limited by timely communication, absence of inclusiveness, and the extent to which community views influence final decisions. These findings are supported by the responses below:

“Yes. There are mechanisms for involving community representatives through public participation forums, community organizations, local leadership structures, and other stakeholder consultations responsible for providing information to the public”

KII 001

“Community representation exists, particularly through stakeholder meetings and local administrative structures”

KII 002

“There exists various consultation forums and committees’ forums that provided opportunities for community members to participate in land governance decisions.”

KII 003

“There are systems for public participation, which include consultation forums including community meetings before important land decisions are made”

KII 004

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first objective was the effect of land regulatory enforcement on management of land conflicts in Kwale County, Kenya. Given the results, it was revealed that land regulatory enforcement depicted a positive and statistically significant effect on the management of land conflicts ($\text{sig } 0.000 < 0.05$) therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. This is because land regulatory enforcement was found to positively influence management of land conflicts in Kwale County. Thus, these results underscore the essence of having and following land regulatory enforcement guidelines that organizations are built on. Land regulatory enforcement is a significant determinant of the management of land conflict in Kwale County. This highlights the need to improve regulatory enforcement practices. The regulatory enforcement practices, which include eviction process adherence, action on illegal allocations, and court decision enforcement, enhancing the management of land conflicts within the Kwale County.

Therefore, for improved management of land conflicts, institutions should adopt proper land governance practices (land regulatory enforcement) which are significant in enhancing management of land conflicts, Kwale County, Kenya. Further, the study emphasizes the significant role of land governance practices, which was found to be significantly enhancing the proper management of land conflicts. Hence, the county government of Kwale County should embrace practices for land governance practices for better, improved, timely management of land conflicts with the county government.

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