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Influence of Accountability on Policy Implementation in Public Sector in Kenya

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Abstract

Public policy implementation is important since it shapes our daily lives and welfare of our societies and might lead to peace and harmony or lead to war and chaos with far reaching consequences. However, problems associated with policy implementation occur when the desired result on the target or beneficiaries are not achieved. Reforms that seek to disconnect policy implementation from political matters may face a more difficult task than had been thought. The study endeavored to determine if accountability influences policy implementation in public sector in Kenya. A descriptive correlation research design was adopted and the target population included 20 ministries, 153 parastatals and government agencies. The study adopted a census technique with respect to the unit of analysis which is the public sector. Questionnaires were used for data collection and pretested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings indicated that there was a linear positive relationship between accountability and Public Policy Implementation which means that an increase in accountability would lead to a linear increase in Public Policy Implementation. The study concluded that accountability was important factor that affects effective public policy implementation in the public sector. The study recommended that the government should have effective mechanisms that obligate public sector entities to the citizens and other stakeholders to account, and be answerable, for their policies, decisions, and actions, particularly in relation to public finances.

Keywords: Accountability, Governance, Public policy and Implementation

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Public policy implementation is important since it shapes our daily lives and welfare of our societies and might lead to peace and harmony or lead to war and chaos with far reaching consequences (Ndah, 2010). Torjman (2005) points out that policy is created in the context of perceived problems or needs in society, which seeks to achieve goals that are considered to be in the best interest of the whole society and can therefore be proactive or reactive. Factors that undermine effective policy implementation are therefore a concern since it affects the very livelihood of the citizenry. Matland (1995) observed that the field of policy implementation is split into two major models; top-down and bottom-up. Bottom-up theorists emphasize target groups and service providers, arguing that policy really is made at the local level. Studies about public policy by various scholars are implicit on the importance of governance in public policy implementation.

An expanded view of implementation is recognition and governing which entails far more than enacting policies and watching the chips fall as they may. Much rests after policy enactment on how policymakers and others advance the ideas that are central to a given policy approach, how institutional arrangements reinforce policy cohesion, and whether the approach engenders support or opposition among concerned interests (May, 2014). The presence of world-regional actors in spheres and practices of public policy-making and governance is taking hold as a vibrant subject of research and political agendas focused on on-going processes of restructuring of social policy-making and delivery (Riggiori, 2015).

In Kenya, lack of good governance is considered to be one of the factors undermining policy implementation. According to Chepkemoi (2015) Kenya's failures and episodic instabilities such as corruption, economic stagnation, inequality and poverty can be linked to the quality of governance. Since independence, Kenya has developed many important policies dating from the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its Application in Kenya, through the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 on Economic Reforms for Renewed Growth to the Kenya Vision 2030 and the Kenya Constitution 2010 (RoK, 1965, RoK, 1986, RoK 2008, RoK, 2010). Yet when one looks at the resulting socio-economic development indicators such as economic growth rates, level of unemployment, global and regional ranking on corruption, poverty levels, etc then it becomes apparent that policy formulation is not in sync with policy implementation.

The question is what could be causing this discrepancy? From a policy design perspective, as often is the case (May, 2012), the politics of crafting a politically viable reform may undermine the fashioning of a truly comprehensive policy. However, from policy regime perspective which enjoins policy enactment and implementation in conceptualizing regimes as governing arrangements for addressing policy problems, attention is drawn to the interplay of the ideas, institutional arrangements, and interests that undergird a given regime (Jochim & May, 2010; May & Jochim, 2013). Accountability rests on the establishment of criteria for evaluating the performance of public sector institutions. This includes economic and financial accountability brought about by efficiency in resource use, expenditure control, and internal and external audits. Accountability improves a government's legitimacy. Transparency and participation are essential ingredients in establishing accountability.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, lack of good governance is considered to be one of the factors undermining policy implementation. Problems associated with policy implementation occur when the desired result on the target or beneficiaries are not achieved (Dziani, 2011). Reforms that seek to disconnect policy implementation from political matters may face a more difficult task than had been thought (Hicks, 2014). It is acknowledged that most of public policies in Africa are beclouded with politics and implementation bottlenecks (Imurana, Haruna, & Kofi, 2014).

For instance, Free Primary Education (FPE) was a policy that elicited a lot of excitement among the population, teachers included a policy that was meant to get all children, irrespective of their family circumstances, into school (Oketch & Somerset, 2010). The excitement was short lived (Abuya *et al*, 2015). Indicating that access to school does not translate into quality education if the teachers' effective control of the classroom is compromised (Abuya, Oketch, & Musyoka, 2013). Strengthening of Science and Mathematics in Secondary Education (SSMASE) educational reform was also seen as a noble change in education to boost the teaching and learning of mathematics and sciences (MOE, 2007) but since it was implemented by top down strategy, it failed and has not worked. This is because the teachers who were supposed to implement SSMASE were not involved in the planning to introduce and implement SSMASE which is a key area in relation to vision 2030 to prepare the country's National Industrial Development. SSMASE reform in education has failed to produce results in many schools in the country (Wanyama & Chang'ach, 2013). The Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution (CIC) noted governance issues as the main challenges to effective implementation of Kenya Constitution 2010 including, selective reading and misinterpretation of provisions of the Constitution by implementing agencies, (CIC,2011). According to Chepkemtoi (2015) Kenya's failures and episodic instabilities such as corruption, economic stagnation, inequality and poverty can be linked to the quality of governance.

Poor governance, exemplified by poor accountability and transparency, corruption and limited engagement of communities, contributes to ineffective systems (Dieleman *et al*, 2011). The OECD have noted the need for improved governance, including an active civil society and open, transparent, and accountable policy and decision making processes, which can have a critical bearing on the way in which policies and institutions respond to the impact of policies on the poor (OECD, 2015). Empirical studies have provided the nexus between corporate governance and firm performance with Issarawornrawanich (2015) indicating that well-governed firms have higher firm performance. Premised on this, the study explored the influence of accountability on public policy implementation.

1.3 Specific Objective

To determine if accountability influences policy implementation in public sector in Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H_A: Accountability has influence on policy implementation in public sector in Kenya

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Steward Theory

These theoretical considerations argue a view of managerial motivation alternative to agency theory and which may be termed stewardship theory (Donaldson 1990a, 1990b; Barney 1990). The executive manager, under this theory, far from being an opportunistic shirker, essentially wants to do a good job, to be a good steward of the corporate assets. Thus, stewardship theory holds that there is no inherent, general problem of executive motivation. Given the absence of an inner motivational problem among executives, there is the question of how far executives can achieve the good corporate performance to which they aspire. Thus, stewardship theory holds that performance variations arise from whether the structural situation in which the executive is located facilitates effective action by the executive. The issue becomes whether or not the organisation structure helps the executive to formulate and implement plans for high corporate performance (Donaldson, 1990b).

2.1.2 Implementation Theory

The process of understanding who, how and why policy is put into effect can be conceptualized under the heading of implementation theory, a terminology initially used by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) during their study of job creation programmes in Oakland, California. Fullan (2007) rightly notes that many change attempts fail because ‘no distinction is made between theories of change (what causes change) and theories of changing (how to influence those causes)’. Therefore, it is important to point out that policy change goes hand in hand with policy implementation. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) define implementation as ‘the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions’.

2.2 Empirical Review

Accountability implies the responsibility to account to another party who has a stake in what has been done. Within the context of governance, it refers to holding bearers of the public office responsible for their performance (Cornwall, Lucas & Pasteur, 2000) Empirical literature on accountability and its application to various public sectors such as health remain scarce. Questions of lack of accountability often arise in health systems where different stakeholders with diverse lines of accountability between different sets of actors complement and compete with one another (Bruen, Brugha, Kageni & Wafula, 2014).

In 2011, CIPE and Global Integrity conducted an implementation gap study in select Kenyan cities: Kisumu, Nairobi, and Mombasa, using 177 indicators to better understand key governance issues and existing anti-corruption mechanisms. The research was led by Civil Society Organization Network, and Haki Jamii Haki Yetu. Implementation gaps in all three cities can be diminished by working with government officials to improve enforcement of existing laws, for instance by

creating “one stop shops” for licenses and tax payments and increasing accountability of high-ranking civil servants through having them sign a voluntary code of ethics monitored by the public. (Nadgrodkiewicz, Nakagaki & Tomicic, 2012).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is therefore a concise description of the phenomenon under study accompanied by a graphical visual depiction of the major variables of the study (Cooper & Schingler, 2008). The conceptual framework of this study sought to demonstrate the relationship between accountability and policy implementation in Kenya. This is illustrated in figure 1.

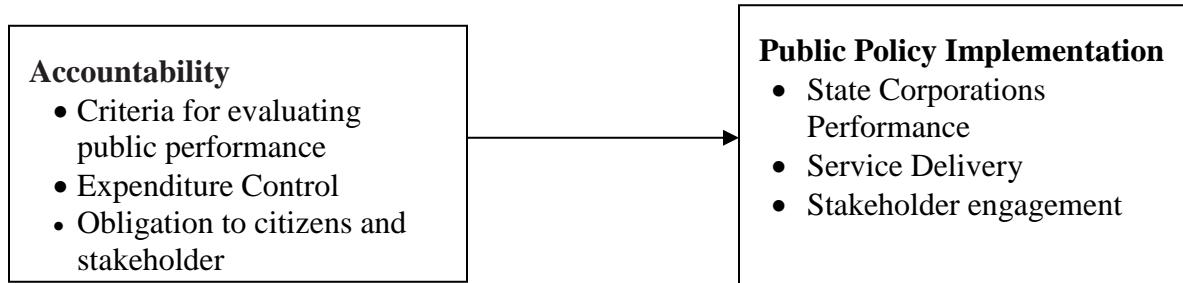


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Accountability

Accountability refers to the obligation of public sector entities to the citizens and other stakeholders to account, and be answerable, for their policies, decisions, and actions, particularly in relation to public finances (IFAC, 2013). This variable is important in explaining public policy implementation. Claasen and Alpín-Lardiés (2010) on their part see social accountability as “about how citizens demand and enforce accountability from those in power”.

2.3.2 Public Policy Implementation

Implementation implies processes and ability to convert policy into action by operationalizing the strategy in form of programmes. The poor implementation of laws and regulations can often be traced back to implementation gaps persisting in key areas of governance, such as government accountability, transparency, and citizen oversight (Nadgrodkiewicz *et al.* 2012). This is why the study seeks to establish the influence of accountability on public policy implementation.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed descriptive correlational research design. The targeted population for the study constituted all the institutions in public sector involved in public policy implementation. The targeted population included 20 ministries, 153 parastatals and government agencies. Census technique was adopted with respect to the unit of analysis which is the public sector. Questionnaires were used to collect the data which was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Data was presented using frequency tables, pie charts and bar charts.

The regression model used in this research was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

Y = Public Policy

X=Accountability

β_0 is the intercept

ϵ is the error term

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

Out of one hundred and seventy three questionnaires (173) which were distributed, only one hundred and forty two questionnaires (142) were completed and returned. This represented a response rate of 82.1% and none response rate of 17.9%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is considered good and response rate greater than 70% is considered to be very good. This was in line with Orodho (2009) that a response rate above 50% contributes towards gathering of sufficient data that could be generalized to represent the opinions of respondents about the study problem in the target population. 82.1% response rate is therefore a good representative of respondents.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response rate	Sample size	Percentage (%)
Returned	142	82.1
UnReturned	31	17.9
Total	173	100

4.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure which indicates the extent to which the research instrument is not biased (error free) thus ensuring consistent measurement across time and the various items in the instrument. Reliability of the instrument was conducted using Cronbach's alpha constant which is a measure of internal consistency and average correlation. According Zinbarg *et al.*, (2005), an alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicated it is reliable as it has a relatively high internal consistency and can be generalized to reflect opinions of all respondents in the target population. Higher alpha coefficient values mean there is consistency among items in measuring the concept of interest.

This also supports suggestion by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) using more stringent cut-offs going from 0.32 (poor), 0.45 (fair), 0.55 (good), 0.63 (very good) or 0.71 (excellent). Items on variable Accountability did not require any adjustment since the alpha constant was 0.845. The dependent (Public Policy Implementation) variable had alpha constant 0.726 so no factor was removed.

Table 2: Reliability of Instruments

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha before removing some items	Cronbach's Alpha after removing Some items	No of Items before removing some factors	No of Items after removing some factors
Accountability	0.845	0.845	13	13
Public policy implementation	0.726	0.726	4	4

4.3 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is mainly concerned with internal-correlations among data to come up with internally consistent surrogates of the variable (Mugenda, 2010). These correlations normally assist the researcher to formulate and interpret the components (variables). Cooper and Schindler (2008) suggest that variables with factor loading 0.7 are acceptable. However a minimum of 0.4 value of factor loading is allowed as suggested by other researchers.

The findings presented in Table 3 shows that the factor analysis for Accountability with thirteen items, a factor loading of 0.668 was recorded. This implies that all items fall within the acceptable threshold based on the general rule of thumb and none of the items was dropped. The dependent variable Public Policy Implementation was also subjected to factor analysis. All the factor loadings were above 0.558 which implies that all items fall within the acceptable threshold as no item was dropped. It indicates that all the factor loading of all the items were above 0.4 and thus all were considered for further statistical analysis.

Table 3: Summary of Factor Analysis

Transparency	Number of Items	Factor Loadings
1 Accountability	13	.668
2 Public policy implementation	4	.558

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. The study used descriptive statistics to present the frequency and the percentages of the gathered data on factors influencing policy implementation in public sector in Kenya. The respondents were asked if there is a criterion for evaluating performance at their organization. Majority (65.23%) agreed while 35.77% disagreed. Table 4a shows the details of the findings. Among those who responded and agreed that there is a criterion for evaluating performance at their organization mainly highlighted appraisal for performance and performance contracting as a means of evaluating their performance. Besides that monitoring and evaluation is also commonly used to evaluate performance. These results corroborates with the findings of Fung, et al., (2012), and Reinikka and Svennson (2011).

Table 4a: Accountability Cross tabulation

	Criterion for Evaluation			total
	Monitoring and Evaluation	Performance appraisal		
Is there is a criterion for evaluating performance in your organization	Yes	42.20%	23.03%	65.23%
	No	10.50%	25.27	35.77%
	Total	52.70	48.30	100%

The study sought to determine the influence of Accountability on policy implementation in public sector in Kenya. The respondent were asked to rate the performance of their organization in expenditure control. The findings were as follows: Organization operates according to the budget was rated as 28.9% most common, 34.9% Very common, 22.3% moderately common, 16.4% fairly common, 1.4% Least common. Organization does not operate according to the budget was rated 31.0% most common, 32.8% very common, 15.9% moderately common 6.6% fairly common, 13.7% Least common. Organization fairly operates according to the budget was rated as 18.5% most common, 32.8% Very common 15.9% Moderately common, 6.6% Fairly common and 13.7% Least common. Organization fairly operates according to the budget was also rated as follows: 18.5% most common, 28.0%Very common 21.0% moderately common, 18.5% fairly common while 14.0% least common the rest of the findings are shown in table 4b. These results agrees with the findings of Fung, et al., (2012), and Reinikka & Svesson (2011).

Table 4b: Accountability Descriptive Analysis

Statement	Least common	Fairly common	Mode rately common	Very common	most common	Mea n	Std. Deviation
Organization operates according to the budget	1.4%	16.4%	22.3%	34.9%	28.9%	2.4	1.315
Organization does not operate according to the budget	13.7%	6.6%	15.9%	32.8%	31.0%	2.4	1.348
Organization fairly operates according to the budget	14.0%	18.5%	21.0%	28.0%	18.5%	2.9	1.302
Organization occasionally deviates from the budget	17.0%	12.5%	5.5%	21.0%	43.9%	3.6	1.546

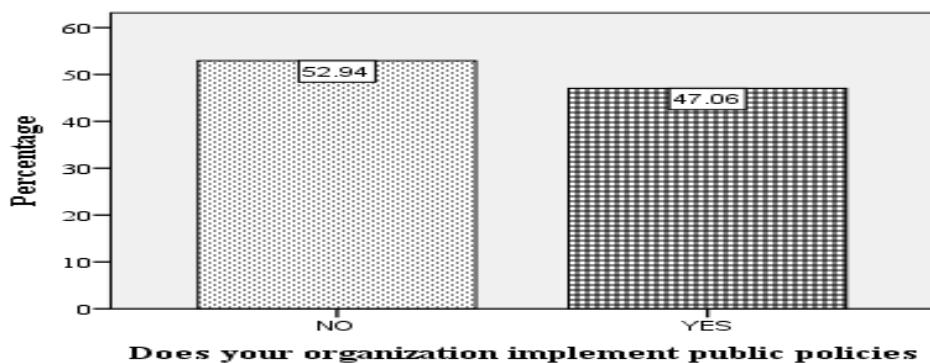
The respondent were asked what they think are the main purposes of obligation of public sector entities to the citizens to account, and be answerable, for their policies, decisions, and actions in the implementation of policy at their organization. The findings were as follows: To meet statutory requirements was rated as 30.4% least important, 28.7% fairly important 12.3% moderately important, 21.0% very important 7.6% most important. To increase public awareness was rated as 20.9% and 32.9% was rated least important and fairly important respectively. In addition to that, to gain information on public view, majority of the respondent 36.9% rated it least important. The details of the finding are shown in table 4c. These results are in line with the results of Cornwall *et al*, (2000).

Table 4c: Accountability Descriptive Statistics

Statement	Least important	fairly important	Moderately important	Very important	most important	Mean	Std. Deviation
To meet statutory requirements	30.4%	28.7%	12.3%	21.0%	7.6%	3.56	1.371
To increase public awareness	20.9%	32.9%	14.4%	11.1%	22.1%	2.89	1.472
To gain information on public views	36.9%	14.0%	27.7%	14.0%	7.4%	3.26	1.307
To decide between particular options	34.3%	22.5%	18.6%	12.5%	13.2%	3.23	1.412
To empower the organization	24.2%	22.6%	28.4%	12.7%	13.5%	3.45	1.512

4.4.2 Information on Public Policy Implementation

The respondents were asked if their organization implement public policies. Majority (52.94%) disagreed that their organization does not implement public policies while 47.06% agreed that their organization do not implement public policies. Among those who agreed that their organizations implement public policies, majority said that they strictly follow organizations rules and regulations. Figure 2 below shows the result of the findings.

**Figure 2: Implementation of Public Policy by Organization**

The respondents were also asked to rate the performance of their organization during the last Performance Contracting (PC) as per the Evaluation done by the PC Board. The finding shows that many organizations are rated fairly in terms of performance. The results are displayed in table 4.86a and are validated by the findings of Hicks, (2014).

Table 5a: Public Policy Implementation Descriptive Statistics

Ratings	Percentage
Excellent	11.8
Very Good	11.8
Good	29.4
Fair	35.3
Poor	11.8
Total	100.0

Also the respondents were asked to state whether their organization comply with the requirements of National Cohesion and Integration Commission on Gender and Regional balance. The outcome suggests that many organizations do not comply with the requirements of National Cohesion and Integration Commission on Gender and Regional balance since majority at 76.32% said no while 23.7% said yes. These findings reveal National Cohesion and Integration Commission requirements are violated. For those who said yes many of them said they normally follow rules and guidelines based on constitution and other requirements. For those who said no, majority of the organizations said it is mainly due to nepotism, tribalism, and lack of good will to follow the constitution. In some cases some respondent said that they are willing to consider gender and regional balance but in many cases there are some professions which are less represented by members of marginalized communities thus making it difficult to have regional balance. The same argument applies for gender imbalance.

Again the respondents were asked to rate monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation in their organizations. The results were as follows: M&E indicates Organization implements policies according to plan were rated as 41.1% least common, 27.7% fairly common 10.3% moderately common, 16.3% very common 4.6% most common. M&E indicates that Organizations which do not implement policies according to plan were rated as 16.9% least common, 14.9% fairly common 19.4% moderately common, 21.1% very common 32.1% most common. M&E indicates that Organization which fairly implements policies according to plan were rated as 12.5% least common, 15.0% fairly common 17.7% moderately common, 34.0% very common 17.4% most common. M&E indicates that Organization which occasionally implements policies according to plan were rated as 12.5% least common, 15.0% fairly common 17.7% moderately common, 34.0% very common 17.4% most common the findings are shown in table 5b. These results corroborates with the findings of Fung, et al., (2012).

Table 5b: Public Policy Implementation Descriptive Statistics

Statement	Least common	Fairly common	Moderately Common	Very common	most common	Mean	Std. Deviation
M&E 1	41.1%	27.7%	10.3%	16.3%	4.6%	3.56	1.371
M&E 2	12.5%	14.9%	19.4%	21.1%	32.1%	2.89	1.472
M&E 3	16.9%	15.0%	17.7%	34.0%	17.4%	3.26	1.307
M&E 4	34.3%	22.5%	18.6%	12.5%	13.2%	3.23	1.412

4.5 Inferential Statistics

4.5.1 Accountability Linearity Test

Linearity of variables was tested using correlation coefficients as suggested by Cohen, West and Aiken, (2003). To establish whether there is a linear relationship, the study adopted the Pearson moment's correlation coefficients which are presented in table 6a. The results indicate that the variables Public Policy Implementation and Accountability had a strong positive relationship as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 539. This implies that there is a linear positive relationship. Thus an increase in Accountability would result in a linear increase in Implementation of policy. The results of the current study corroborates with the findings of Alpin-Lardies, (2010), Cornwall, *et al.*, (2000), and Bruen, *et al.*, (2013).

Table 6a: Correlations Coefficients

		Implementation policy	Accountability
	Pearson Correlation	1	.539**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Implementation policy	N	173	173
	Pearson Correlation	.539**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Accountability	N	173	173

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

However, in the presence of moderator, correlation coefficient r-value increased from 0.539 to 0.611 and the relationship between independent variable (Accountability) and dependent variable (Implementation policy) was significant as seen in table 6b.

Scatter plot between Public Policy Implementation and Accountability as shown in figure 3 shows clearly that there was linear relationship between Public Policy Implementation and Accountability.

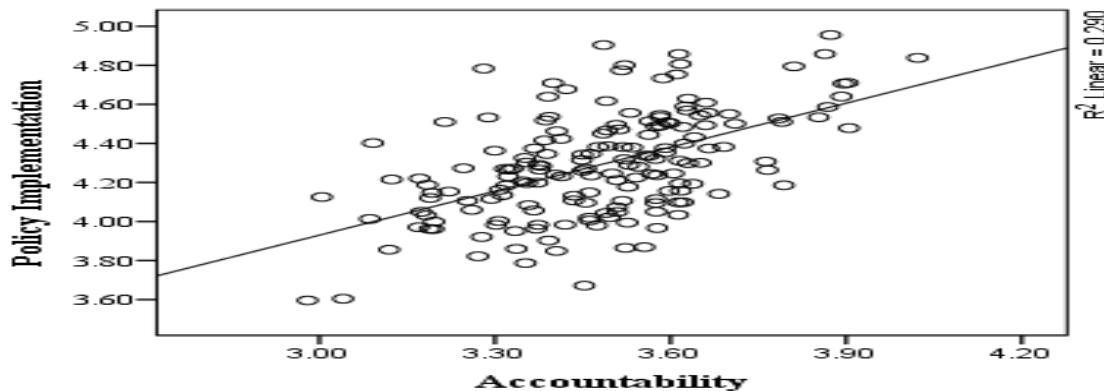


Figure 3: Scatter plot between Public Policy Implementation and accountability

4.5.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between the Accountability and Public Policy Implementation. From the finding an R-square value of .290 was recorded indicating that 29.0% of Implementation policy is explained by Accountability.

Table 7a: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.539 ^a	.290	.286	.22598

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transparency

The F-statistics presented in table 7b indicated that the overall model was significant, that is, the independent variable, Accountability was a good joint explanatory variable for Public Policy Implementation with F-value of 69.95. P-value =0.000<0.05 also indicates that the model was fit.

Table 7b: ANOVA.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.572	1	3.572	69.947	.000
	Residual	8.732	171	.051		
	Total	12.304	172			

From the regression coefficient table 7c, there was positive and significant relationship between Accountability and Public Policy Implementation. The model is given as $Y=1.678+0.751X_2$. The regression coefficient of 0.751 indicates that an increase in Accountability by 1unit leads to an

increase in Public Policy Implementation of by 0.751units.The results of the current study corroborates with the findings of Alpin-Lardies, (2010), Cornwal, et al., (2000), and Bruen, *et al.*, (2013).

Table 7c: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.678	.313		5.361	.000
Accountability	.751	.090	.539	8.363	.000

4.5.3 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis of the study was that accountability influences the policy implementation in public sector in Kenya. The acceptance/rejection criteria was that, if the p value is less than 0.05, the HA is rejected but if it's greater than 0.05, the HA fails to be rejected. Results in Table 7c above show that the calculated f-statistic of 69.947 was higher than the tabulated/critical f statistic ($F \alpha_{0.05} = 3.84$). The findings were further supported p-value of 0.000. This indicated that the alternative hypothesis was accepted hence accountability influenced on policy implementation in public sector in Kenya.

5.0 Conclusions

Accountability is an important factor that affects effective public policy implementation in the public sector. Accountability has a positive influence on effective public policy implementation. According to the study findings, accountability factors such as criteria for evaluating public performance, Expenditure Control and obligation to citizens and stakeholder to a large extent affect effective policy implementation in public sector in Kenya.

6.0 Recommendations

Regarding the Accountability, the study recommended that the government should have effective mechanisms that obligate public sector entities to the citizens and other stakeholders to account, and be answerable, for their policies, decisions, and actions, particularly in relation to public finances.

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