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Abstract

The main aim of the paper was to determine the influence of democratization on performance of governance in County governments in Kenya. The theories that guided the research study were; democratic theories and the policy guideline model. The study adopted a descriptive research design that also employed the quantitative research design due to its in-depth analysis of the influence of commitment to devolution principles on the performance of governance in county governments in Kenya. Purposive sampling probability and simple random sampling techniques were utilized in drawing a representative sample from a population of 47 counties in Kenya. Structured questionnaires and interview schedule were used in the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The hypothesis was analyzed using regression model which specified the significance level equal to 0.05 thus rejecting the null hypothesis if the P-value which was less than the significance level. Data was presented using tables, figures, graphs, frequency tables, charts and percentages. This was done by the help of the statistical results package for social science (SPSS) as a tool. The findings revealed that commitment democratization significantly influence the performance of governance in county governments in Kenya. The rule of law is observed in all devolved functions as well as transparency and accountability. As well, the improved performance at the county level is attributed to equitable sharing of national revenue and reliable income generating activities at the county. Consequently, it is important that citizen participation in issues of governance is encouraged and facilitated. Moreover, there should be raised awareness on citizen's rights in terms of decision making in governance.

Keywords: *Democratization, County Governments, Performance, Governance Devolution & Kenya.*

Introduction

Devolution is one among several forms of decentralization, which is a characteristic of all governments globally. Vertical decentralization offers a vote, from horizontal decentralization, which also offers voice (Kauzya, 2007). Thus, it is not whether governments decentralize, but rather, how and why they do considerations that are significant for the choice between alternative modes of decentralization. Devolution is focused on efficiency thus the expectation that decentralizing functions to the lowest feasible level of decision making and implementation will optimize information flows and reduce transaction costs. Thus, a decision to devolve is often based on the failure of central government to deliver, such as in revenue collection or in service delivery (CSCLGF, 2001). Devolution is further seen as an avenue to democratic deepening within a county, with constitutional or legal boundaries diminishing friction with the Centre that could otherwise undermine the county.

In Africa, good examples of countries where devolution has been successfully practiced include South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia. Sinddle (2011) asserts that South Africa has indeed undergone a radical transformation in its local government system, but although the transformation may in many respects have been dramatic, it was nonetheless carried out pursuant to a process of negotiation which resulted in a general consensus as to the course to be taken, with due provision having been made for the orderly and rational implementation of a system of decentralized governance. The introduction of the White Paper translated these objects into the notion of Developmental Local Government which it defined as "...local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives." In the course of the process, a new system of local government was constitutionally entrenched, and the end product is a battery of legislation which is intended to give effect to the constitutional features relevant to local government (Siddle, 2011). This has seen South Africa among the African countries manage to lead democratic governance that serves the interest of the public.

The old constitution of Kenya did not have a clear guideline on how to approach development issues in order to create equitable development. It was believed that devolution would help in reducing the disparities among various communities and regions that developed as a result of marginalization (Ghai, 2006). The devolution efforts in Kenya have, therefore, been done in five major phases. The first phase involved the Majimbo system immediately after independence, the local authority development fund, district development committee, constituency development fund and the current county government system. Commitment to principles of devolution is essential in supporting the devolution agenda. Devolution of powers from the central government to newly established counties is supposed to make governance more democratic and reduce regional disparities that are witnessed in most political forums in the country. Globally, country like Germany has shown success in introducing and implementing devolution that has seen the economic and social development of the local governments in the country something that can be done in any other country that adopts devolution (William, 2013).

The issue that necessitated this research was that, since the roll-out of county governments after the 2013 general elections, a section of Kenyan citizens expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the governance in county governments. According to a national opinion poll on devolution and governance conducted by Transparency International Kenya in 2014 titled "Is it

my business?, over half of the sampled citizens that is 53% stated that they were dissatisfied with the county governance, 28% were either satisfied nor dissatisfied and only 18% stated that they were satisfied. The question was, “Whether devolution principles had any influence on the performance of governance in county governments in Kenya?

There was need to support devolution for the interest of the Kenyan citizen at both national and county levels. It was imperative that the devolved system of government created and strengthened a system of government where dignity, human rights, transparency, accountability, social justice, gender, rule of law, equity and meritocracy reigned supreme at all levels of government (Ghai, 2011). For instance, citizens were to be given chance to monitor and question spending, resource distribution, social welfare systems and processes, respect for human rights, access to medical care and that all appointments at the county level to be based on merit. Citizen participation strengthened legitimacy and accountability of democratic institutions, built social cohesion among communities and also improved the citizens’ self-esteem that made them politically aware of their roles as active citizens (Brodie, Cowling & Nissen, 2009).

According to Controller of Budget March 2018, it emphasized that the duty of the county governments is to be concerned to why the citizens are not satisfied with the performance. “Over 30 counties in Kenya registered zero development between July and September 2017”. Perhaps this could be attributed to not reinforcing the principles of governance or created lack of constitutional commitment that promotes good governance and the interests of the people as a whole.

Objective of the study

To determine the influence of democratization on performance of governance in County Governments in Kenya.

Hypothesis of the Study

H₀: Democratization does not have a significant influence on performance of governance in County Governments in Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

Democratic participatory theory by Carole Pateman (1970) considers the theory holds that for a democracy to exist, a participatory society must exist, including not only politics but all spheres of society, such as industry. Pateman, a British feminist and political theorist, critiques contemporary theories built on assumptions that increased political participation could upset the stability of the democratic system. This theory perceives the local government as an avenue for the local populace to participate in politics Osborne at el (2000). This school of thought believes that the local government provides the training ground for local populace to engage in democratic governance. It argues essentially that, the local government provides the citizen at the community level, the opportunities for political participation, interest aggregation, political education and political socialization.

Literature Review

Democracy

The essence of democracy was self-government. Democracy distributed administrative power to lower levels up to the very grass root level villages. Within a country, smaller administrative boundaries are drawn which were further divided among different blocks, each had its own self-government system. Though the smaller governments were subordinate to the national government, they provided enough exposure, administrative power and participation to people, increasing efficiency and in turn the government more accountable.

Democracy was built on the very pillar of fairness which gave clear advantage over alternative forms of government. In democracy every citizen had a fair chance to come to power. Free and fair elections were held from time to time under the supervision of an independent body (Diamond, 2003). Diamond goes on to argue that a true democracy was a platform of healthy competition, not subjected to muscle might or power play. Fair legal frameworks, enforced on an impartial basis, as well as an independent judicial system assist in building societies where individuals and organizations alike can feel safe (Goetz and Jenkins, 2005). They do this by affording legal protection for rights and entitlements, offering redress for those harmed, and guarding against corruption.

Public sector entities at all levels may be involved with creating or interpreting laws; such activities demand a high standard of conduct that prevents these roles from being brought into disrepute. Adhering to the rule of law also required effective mechanisms to deal with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions (Leftwich, 2005). Public sector entities and the individuals working within them should, therefore, demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of law as well as compliance with all relevant laws. Within this International Framework, they should also strive to utilize their powers for the full benefit of their communities and other stakeholders. The rule of law was also a means by which public sector entities and individuals within them were held to account through compliance with any constraints on resources voted by the legislature.

Moreover, based on the understanding political representation, Young provides an alternative account of democratic representation. Specifically, she envisions democratic representation as a dynamic process, one that moves between moments of authorization and moments of accountability (Young, 2000). It was the movement between these moments that makes the process "democratic." This fluidity allows citizens to authorize their representatives and for traces of that authorization to be evident in what the representatives do and how representatives are held accountable. The appropriateness of any given representative was therefore partially dependent on future behavior as well as on his or her past relationships. For this reason, Young maintains that evaluation of this process must be continuously "deferred." We must assess representation dynamically, that is, assess the whole ongoing processes of authorization and accountability of representatives. Young's discussion of the dynamic of representation emphasizes the ways in which evaluations of representatives are incomplete, needing to incorporate extent to which democratic citizens need to suspend their evaluations of representatives and the extent to which representatives can face unanticipated issues.

Performance of County Government in Kenya

The World Development Report (2003) strongly supports devolution for making service delivery work for the poor. (Thomas, 2000) asserted that development was a vision or description of how desirable a society was. Therefore it was the responsibility of the county government to ensure that it serves the citizens with the necessary empowerment to realize their development economically. Development is an action deliberate effort to change things for the better.

Development involves empowering groups and individuals to make their own choices. Individuals and social movements were the agents of change.

The United Kingdom's government focused strongly on developing and strengthening local community as mechanisms for both increased efficiency and effectiveness (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). In Ireland, deliberative democracy structure promoted a significant level of participation among people in county development for a better local democracy (Teague, 2007). Countries such as Australia and United Kingdom (UK) had hierarchical institutions and strong bureaucratic government that attracted participation among people for county development (Gaventa, 2004). Effective and efficient governance was integral to any country's wellbeing. Governance is the exercise of power or authority, political, economic, administrative or otherwise to manage country's resources and affairs. It comprised the mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulated their interests, exercised their legal rights, met their obligations and mediated their differences. The main strategy had effective and efficient governance related to the functioning of the public sector focused on accountability and scrutiny. It also related to the performance of the public sector on the connection between policy and implementation.

(Abuodha, 2011) argued that accountability was a critical part of public governance. As a concept, accountability went beyond the domain of the public finance and applied to a wide array of important decision and authorities that were responsible to make those decisions. At the center of the concept of accountability was the checked and balanced of abused power by public officials in limited corruption of public office and officials. There demanded governments, public institutions and officials granted access to information controversial actions and decisions, which created the trust from the citizen and the institutions were accountable. In the devolution process, participation of local government and communities should be advocated as powerful means for improved service delivery. Pro-decentralization advocates generally argued that this brought decision makers closer to the people that would increase the responsiveness of local officials to needs that may not be served by the central government (Hooda, 2016). Service delivery was an essential function in the relationship between government and citizens (Abe and Manisola, 2014). Governance performance was measured through service delivery to its people (Eigema, 2007). A government performance of good governance is through service delivery to the people.

Research Gap

Literature review showed that there was imbalance on the attention that had gone into studies on the influence of commitment to devolution principles on the performance of devolved county governments in Kenya. COG (2015) reported that as much as devolution had been embraced there is still much to be put in place to its achievement. It reported that there is need for institutional restructuring and thus the Constitution required extensive restructuring of institutions at the national and county levels to pave way for the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The process of institutional restructuring implied a fundamental realignment of functions as well as accompanying resources. There is still a lot to be committed in restructuring of institutions which is delaying a full implementation of devolution.

Material and methods

This study adopted a descriptive research design that also employed the quantitative research design due to its in-depth analysis of the influence of commitment to devolution principles on the

performance of county governments in Kenya. This study focused on the ten ministers and ten chief officers in the ten devolved functions at each county which include Finance & Accounting, Agriculture & Livestock, Environment & Natural Resources, Health services, Education, Culture & Social, Physical planning/housing, Public works & Utilities, Public Service Management, Trade, Industry, Development & Registration and Roads & transport. The results from the study generally reflected how commitment influenced devolution principles and the performance of devolved governments in Kenya. From the target population of the study which was 200 (Two hundred), the researcher adopted a stratified sampling technique which is regarded as the most efficient system of sampling as there is minimal possibility of any group of population being completely excluded (Gupta and Gupta 2009). In this study the researcher used the formula given by Kothari and Garg (2014) to give 132 respondents. The researcher used questionnaires in collecting the primary data. The researcher employed Cronbach’s coefficient alpha method to determine internal consistency of the items to be measured in each independent variable. The results showed that performance of governance in County Government ($\alpha=0.774$), and democratization ($\alpha=0.741$). Scales were reliable as their reliability values exceeded the prescribed threshold of 0.7.

Data Analysis and model specification

To ascertain the correlation coefficient between the independent variables and dependent variable, data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively which addressed the research objectives. Quantitative data was analyzed by means of statistical models to give reliable information about the data. The researcher applied regression analysis to determine the relationship between dependent and the independent variables. This was done by the help of the statistical results packaged for social science (SPSS) as a tool. Descriptive statistics was used to present the results, which were tabulated in frequency distributions, percentages and graphs. The study used both simple regression models and multiple regression model to test hypothesis to estimate the coefficient

$$\beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\epsilon.....1.2$$

Where:

Y – County performance (Dependent variable)

X₁ – Democratization

B₀ – the constant

β₁ – The coefficient

ε - error term

Results

Sample Characteristics

The study takes into consideration the respondents personal characteristics to give general information about respondents and to assist the researcher understanding on the findings. Variables included here are gender, age and highest educational level.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	77	63.6
	Female	44	36.4
	Total	121	100
Age	18-25	23	19
	26-35	43	35.5
	36-45	39	32.2
	46-55	16	13.2
	Total	121	100
highest level of Education	primary	3	2.5
	secondary	17	14
	college	49	40.5
	university	52	43
	Total	121	100

Descriptive statistics

Democratization is aimed at distributing power right from the administrative power to the grass root level villages. The study therefore sought to find out democratization at the county level. Table 2 illustrates the results. To start off the study established that the rule of law is observed in all devolved functions in the county (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.728). As such, the likelihood of mismanagement of public funds are marginally reduced. Further, the citizens' participation in issues of governance is practiced in the county (mean = 3.9, SD = 1.052). In that regard, development at the county level will be people centered driven by the local leadership to address local needs.

As well, there is transparency and accountability in governing all the functions devolved at the county levels (mean = 3.9, SD = 0.995). Through devolution, accountability has been enhanced by bringing the politicians and the resources closer to the citizenry they are intended to serve. The problem is that the citizens lack awareness on their rights in terms of decision making in governance (mean = 3.21, SD = 1.29). This is a hurdle in terms of realizing the goal of democratization with devolution. The citizenry may be left out in key areas of policy making process such as public participation. Similarly, it is undefined whether human rights are respected at the county level (mean = 3.27, SD = 1.252).

On a positive note, citizens are given fair treatment and equal distribution of projects development in the county (mean = 4.03, SD = 1.08). Resources are therefore distributed equitably and each individual has an opportunity to benefit from the services being offered by

the county. Nonetheless, certain individuals are of the opinion that county government has not been accountable to county assembly in a satisfactory manner (mean = 3.62, SD = 1.185).

Furthermore, there is uncertainty as to whether the county government promotes social, economic and cultural development of the citizens (mean = 3.39, SD = 1.369). The implication is that the county government has not made sufficient efforts towards ensuring that the citizenry develop socially, culturally and economically. Likewise, there is doubt if the county government allows public forums in the county for citizen participation (mean = 3.4, SD = 1.129). Public participation is instrumental in the policy making process. In the event there is no involvement, the citizenry will not be receptive to policies designed to address their needs. Finally, it is undefined if the county government promotes free and fair appointments in the county (mean = 3.39, SD = 1.128).

Factor analysis was carried out on democratization. In general, the extraction method was principal component analysis and the rotation method was varimax with Kaiser Normalization and the findings were presented in Table 2. The findings in Table 2 show that all the items related to democratization were significantly loaded on their respective factors thus all were retained for analysis. Furthermore, factor 1 and 2 accounted for a cumulative variance of 45.245% while all three, accounted for 61.902% of the total variation in democratization. Sampling adequacy was tested using the Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO) Measure of sampling adequacy. As evidenced in Table 4.12, KMO was greater than 0.5 (0.894), and Bartlett's Test was significant, $\chi^2 (66) = 2236.15$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$.

Table 2: Democratization

	Mean	Std. Deviation	loadings
That the rule of law is observed in all devolved functions in the county.	4.23	0.728	0.589
That the citizens’ participations in issues of governance is practiced in the county.	3.9	1.052	0.519
There is transparency and accountability in governing all the functions devolved at the county levels.	3.9	0.995	0.666
Citizens understand their rights in decision making in governance.	3.21	1.29	0.736
Human rights are respected at the county level	3.27	1.252	0.756
Citizens are given fair treatment and equal distribution of projects development in the county	4.03	1.08	0.68
Your county government has not been accountable to county assembly in satisfactory manner	3.62	1.185	0.797
The county government promotes social, economic and cultural development of the citizens.	3.39	1.369	0.697
Your county government allows public forums in your County for citizen participation	3.4	1.129	0.615
The county government promotes free and fair appointments in the county	3.39	1.128	0.636
democratization	3.987	0.748	
			Cumulative
Total Initial Eigenvalues	% of Variance	%	
2.725	22.705	22.705	
2.705	22.54	45.245	
1.999	16.658	61.902	
KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.894		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	2236.15		
Df	66		
Sig.	0.000		

Inferential Statistics/Hypothesis Testing

This is a method of statistical inference that explains the test of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The findings also showed that democratization

did have a positive and significant relationship with performance of governance in county governments ($r = 0.808$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$).

The hypothesis postulated that there is no significant effect of democratization on performance of governance in county government. However, the findings in Table 3 showed that democratization has a positive and significant effect on performance of governance in county government ($\beta_1 = 0.808$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, hypothesis was rejected. this can be explained further by assessing the value of the t-test which indicates that democratization would be attributed to the regression model 14 times more compared to the effect of the standard error associated with the estimated coefficient ($t = 14.962$) The findings in Table 3 revealed that the R value indicates a relatively weak correlation between democratization and the response variable (performance of governance). This is because the R squared value is positive (0.653). This means that the variation in performance of governance was attributed by 65.3% change in democratization.

The results on democratization revealed that the rule of law is observed in all devolved functions in the county. In fact, citizens' participation in issues of governance is practiced in the county. Further, there is transparency and accountability in governing all the functions devolved at the county levels. The citizens are given fair treatment and equal distribution of projects development in the county though the county government has not been accountable to county assembly in a satisfactory manner. However, the citizens lack awareness on citizens' rights in terms of decision making in governance and it is unclear if human rights are respected at the county level. Also, adequate efforts have not been made towards promoting social, economic and cultural development of the citizens. Likewise, there are gaps in terms of citizen participation in public forums and the promotion of free and fair appointments in the county. Concurrently, Diamond, (2003) elucidated that democratization brought about fairness in that every citizen had a fair chance to come to power. In such a case, free and fair elections are held from time to time under the supervision of an independent body. Furthermore, Goetz and Jenkins, (2005) argued that democratization strengthened the legal frameworks and assisted in building societies where individuals and organizations alike can feel safe.

Table 3: Regression Results for Effect of democratization on Performance of governance in County government

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Correlations			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	0.883	0.162		5.45	0.00			
Democratization	0.752	0.05	0.808	14.962	0.00	0.808	0.808	0.808
Summary Statistics								
R		.808a						
R Square		0.653						
Adjusted R Square		0.65						
Std. Error of the Estimate		0.51028						
Change Statistics								
R Square Change		0.653						
F Change		223.871						
Sig. F Change		0.000						
a Dependent Variable: performance								

Conclusion

In conclusion, democratization has been instrumental in enhancing the performance of governance in county governments in Kenya. Despite the county governments being subordinate to the national government they have been key in observing the rule of law in all devolved functions as well as transparency and accountability. There is fair treatment and equal distribution of project development in the county. The implication is that democratization has brought about fairness and has been key in building legal frameworks necessary to make the government more accountable. Though the issue of human rights as well as empowerment of the citizenry are pervasive, limited efforts have been made to address these important issues in the scope of democratization.

Recommendations

With respect to democratization, it is important for the individuals tasked with running the county governments to uphold the rule of law in all devolved functions. Besides, it is crucial for the citizens to participate in issues of governance to enhance transparency and accountability in governing all the functions devolved at the county level. To facilitate this, there should be raised awareness on citizen's rights in terms of decision making in governance. Moreover, there is need for fair treatment and equal distribution of projects development at the county level.

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