EFFECTS OF TRANSPARENCY-FOCUSED SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACTIONS ON PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, KENYA

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Abstract

The provision of public services in the Republic of Kenya has encountered difficulties over the years. The implementation of many policies, such as performance contracts and measurement and evaluation, has not produced the desired outcomes. Therefore, it was necessary to concentrate on alternative approaches to enhance public service delivery, such as the implementation of social accountability measures. By encouraging openness through social accountability initiatives, corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies are reduced, which enhances the delivery of services. Few studies have examined the link between the acts of social of accountability and delivery of services in Kenya, despite the fact that they are, thought to increase service delivery in the public sector. This study therefore sought to interrogate the effect of transparency-focused social accountability actions on public service delivery in Kakamega County Government Ministries, Kenya. The study was centered on Vance, Lowry, and Eggett's Accountability theory (2015). The research used a descriptive survey research approach. The employees from different ministries, county assembly members, as well as chief officers, who take part in public decision-making processes, made up the target population. A population of 1,904 persons was targeted. Accordingly, using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, a sample size of 322 was obtained. To analyse the quantitative data, the researcher employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Content analysis was, used to look at qualitative data. The research instruments' validity was certified by the experts in the area of study, while reliability of the research instruments was determined by use of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This was meant to check on the internal consistency of the research instruments. A standardized questionnaire and interviews was used to collect the data, which was then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented using tables. For this investigation, a multivariate regression analysis was, used. The findings revealed that transparency focused (β=.652, p<.05) had a positive significant effect on service delivery and accounted for 41.7%. The employees of Kakamega County may gain from this research because it will allow them to engage in more discussions with the county by engaging in advisory boards, project implementation, and project feasibility analysis, all of which can enhance the county's provision of public services.

INTRODUCTION

On a larger scale, this research implies that cooperation entails hybridization public service delivery in situations where it serves as a dominating characteristic of relationship between organizational, and maybe even more so in circumstances in which it serves as a supplementary component. This incorporates more complex issues than are often addressed in the scholarly literature on the subject, including production rates and preconditions, to determine if it will succeed or fail (Wu, Ramesh and Howlett 2015). The framework of power challenges created by Howlett and Ramesh (2014, 2016) is, both embraced and stretched on the circumstances in addition to corridors leading to the achievement of multiple methods of in the delivery of public services. This volume also highlights significant gaps in the quantitative reasoning, corporate development, as well as competences in politics- or "Achilles Heels" - of controlling companies in various governance provisions. The effective generation and analysis of policy choices together with the implementation of governing methods with a higher chance of success require analytical skills in this model. Government agencies power denotes to the requirement for any associations towards supporting sustainable assistance for successful planning and governance, regardless of how it is, carried out. Core competencies looks to influence the effectiveness of deploying of both jurisdiction alongside collective resources to achieve policy objectives. However, the use of each type of talent is heavily reliant on the resources or abilities that are available at various levels of political-societal connections. Individual resources therefore consist of abilities that allow executive politicians, public administrators, lower-level employees, and users to participate independently in the creation, execution, and assessment of policy (Howlett &Walker, 2012).

Organizational resources are components of interaction as well as aspects of an organization's makeup or structure that are significant to policies that limit the activities that its members may accomplish that are connected to policy or governance (Gleeson et al. 2011). Finally, it is critical that the general public and political figures accept and trust in a government agency or its non-governmental collaborations at the system level (Blind 2016). Such elements affect organizational capacities, which in turn affect policy actors' capacity to carry out their obligations (Howlett and Ramesh, 2016). According to Rotberg et., al (2014), these three types of knowledge and skills are crucial for the accomplishment of course of action alongside governance correlated activities, but they may or may not be present in any specified implementation scenario. The fundamental argument of the book is that in order for each of the six service delivery models to be highly functional and realize its theoretical potential, they require a specific quantity of each type of capacity at each location of resources or capabilities (Howlett and Ramesh 2014, 2016). Cooperative service delivery often ask officials to possess, at the absolute least, political competences at the interpersonal basis that go above their leadership qualities and include their outstanding expertise on when and how they should incorporate non-governmental partners throughout the service delivery process. Such organizational-level decisions must be, followed by the political determination of the circumstances that will shape the monitoring programs towards legislative priorities as well as the enablement of public administrators to support it. All forms of partnership must succeed if the government can maintain its credibility and citizens' confidence in its actions (Howlett, & Ramesh, 2018).

According to another interpretation, "achieving the stated objectives will only be effective if government is able to create meaningful chances for engagement and encourage varied participants actively offer labor, resources, and talents in jointly building public services." However, these political abilities are essential for governments to coordinate and direct the upcoming investment of non-governmental entities into the implementation stage in any of the six options mentioned above. The same significant portions of on-the-ground modes do not always operate to their full potential. It is a typical requirement. Regardless of the fact that almost all co-creative service delivery approaches need on political savvy to be effective, each cooperative arrangement has a unique, compelling intellectual or administrative demand that operates as its own (Kekez, Howlett and Ramesh 2018: 247).

Methodology

The study utilized an exploratory-descriptive survey research approach and a descriptive survey research design. According to Nieswiadomy (2008) and Rubin (2001), exploratory research designs are utilized when there is little existing knowledge on the subject being studied. Due to a lack of evidence about the effects of social accountability initiatives on the provision of public services, this design was required for this study. In the same breadth, Kerlinger (2000), and Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that descriptive survey research involves obtaining data towards answering questions regarding the present position of the study's participants or test theories. This study's research design was pertinent because it helped the researcher examine the county government stakeholders' behaviour, attitudes, opinions, perceptions, and characteristics regarding transparency-focused social accountability actions; collaborative-focused social accountability actions; confrontational-focused social accountability actions and compliance-focused social accountability actions on public service delivery

All of the chief officers and employees of the several ministries under the Kakamega County Government made up the target population. The study also focuses on the County Assembly members, who serve as the executive branch's "watchdog" in county governments. There are 14 Ministries, according to the Kakamega County Public Service Commission (TCG, 2022). The study used a stratified random selection approach to choose the study participants due to the size of the targeted population.

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Target Population
Members of county assembly	91
Members of staff from ministries	1,796
Chief officers	17
Total	**1904**

Source: Kakamega county government Office (2022)

Often, sampling means examining a section of a population to gain better insight into the entire group (Kothari, 2014).The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was, used to determine the sample size for the study. According to the Table, a target of 1904 yields a sample size of 322. Thus, all Chief Officers were purposefully selected to participate in the survey, thus there were 17 chief officers, 15 county assembly members, and 290 staff workers from various ministries, making 322 respondents.

Once the data was captured from the completed survey instrument, the process of analyzing the data commenced with the questionnaires being keyed into SPSS computer software and subjected to preliminary checks. Data from the qualitative research was processed using codes and subjected to theme analysis while some was reported using verbatim. In addition to the descriptive and qualitative data analysis, inferential analysis was also carried out using regression analysis models.

Results

The first objective of the study was to establish the effects of transparency-focused social accountability actions on public service delivery in Kakamega county government ministries. Three items as described in this section, measured the forms of transparency-focused social accountability, and how, they relate to public service delivery in Kakamega county, government ministries. These were therefore measured using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5, (Strongly agree), Indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements: **5** = Strongly Agree (SA); 4 = Agree (A); 3 = Neutral (N); 2 = Disagree (DA); 1 = Strongly Disagree (SDA). The findings are presented as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Transparency-focused social accountability

Transparency-focused social accountability	1	2	3	4	5	M	STD
Civic education sessions improves public service delivery	83(27.8)	113(37.8)	12(4)	70(23.4)	21(7)	2.44	1.303
Awareness campaigns improves public service delivery	83(27.8)	75(25.1)	59(19.7)	37(12.4)	45(15.1)	2.62	1.396
Independent budget analysis improves public service delivery.	78(26.1)	65(21.7)	124(41.5)	24(8)	8(2.7)	2.39	1.042
Overall mean & std						2.48	.9728
a. Dependent Variable: Public Service Delivery							

Source (Field Survey Data, 2023)

From the findings shown in Table 5, it emerged that majority, 113(37.8%) of the respondents disagreed that civic education sessions improve public service delivery and were supported by 83(27.8%) who strongly disagreed. A low mean (M=2.44, STD=1.303) and high standard deviation were realized thus confirming the low level of improvement of public service delivery by civic education, although with high variations. Majority of the respondents, 83(27.8%) strongly disagreed and 75(25.1%) also disagreed that awareness campaigns improve public service delivery, which was confirmed by a low mean (M=2.62, STD=1.296) although with high standard deviation showing high variations in the responses. The findings further shows that majority, 124(41.5%) of the respondents however remained neutral on whether independent budget analysis improves public service delivery. However, 78(26.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 65(21.7%) disagreed. A low mean (M=2.39, STD=1.042) indicated that indeed there was little improvement of independent analysis on service delivery. An overall mean (M=2.48) and standard deviation (STD=.97) confirmed that there was low transparency-focused social accountability.

Further analysis was also carried out using simple linear regression model in order to find out the magnitude of change in service delivery as a result of change in transparency-focused social accountability. This was done to ascertain the effect, through regressing service delivery on transparency-focused social accountability. However, the level of adherence to national government policies was controlled for in the model. The findings are presented as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Effect of Transparency-focused social accountability on Service Delivery

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	.028[a]	.001	-.003	.63385	.001	.234	1	297	.629
2	.647[b]	.418	.414	.48457	.417	212.177	1	296	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Government policies
b. Predictors: (Constant), Government policies, transparency-focused social accountability

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.459	.083		41.914	.000
	Government policies	-.018	.037	-.028	-.484	.629
	(Constant)	1.825	.129		14.185	.000
2	Government policies	-.076	.029	-.119	-2.668	.008
	transparency-focused social accountability	.521	.036	.652	14.566	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Public Service Delivery
a. Dependent Variable: Public Service Delivery

Source (Field Survey Data, 2023)

The findings in Table 6 show that adherence of government policies did not account for a significant variance in service delivery. After controlling for it, transparency focused social responsibility was found to account for 41.7% variance in service delivery, R Square Change=.417, F (2, 296)=212.177, p<.05. Using the model coefficient results, it was also established that transparency-focused social accountability had a positive and significant effect on service delivery, (β=.652, p<.05). This implies that transparency focused social responsibility has a positive and significant effect on service delivery hence, improving transparency-focused social accountability leads to improvement in service delivery by a magnitude of 0.652 units. During an interview, one of the Chief Officers observed that:

"......we are trying to enhance transparency-focused social accountability which is effective on service delivery and we shall achieve it......."

This means that transparency-focused social accountability is important to service delivery but has not been fully achieved in the county. These findings also agree with those of Howlett and Ramesh, (2018) who advocated for transparency-focused social accountability as one of the important factors that can enhance service delivery. It can thus be concluded that transparency-focused social accountability has a significant effect on service delivery.

Conclusion

From the findings of the first objective of the study, it can be noted that transparency focused social accountability is a practice that has not received much attention in the county. Despite having some civic education sessions, awareness campaigns and independent budget analysis, there is low service delivery. This means that these practices are there very minimally and hence not fully practiced. It can however be commended that whereas they are practiced very lowly, they have a significant effect on service delivery

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