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The Impact of Economic Dynamics on Policy Implementation in Kisumu County, Kenya

By

Nyilima John Adongo
Mount Kenya University
P.O. Box 13495-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: +254 720 033951
jnyilima@gmail.com

&

Dr. Solomon P. K. Muhindi
Mount Kenya University
P.O. Box 13495-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: +254 715 112 507
E-mail: solomonpeterkavaimuhindi@gmail.com

Abstract

Various primary threats have been identified as a hindrance to effective execution of policies in devolved governments. This study sought to assess the effect of economic dynamics on policy implementation in Kisumu County, Kenya. The study was guided by Souffle theory. Descriptive survey research design was applied on a target population of 133 respondents from Kisumu County comprising of 9 cabinet secretaries, 9 sub-county administrators, 45 ward administrators, 64 Members of County Assembly, 1 County director-Human Resource, 1 Chief Officer-Finance, 1 Chief Officer-Public administration, 1 County Legal Officer, 1 chairman and 1 County Public Service Board Member. Proportionate simple random sampling was used to select 110 respondents as the sample size for the study. Questionnaires were used as the main data collection instruments. Descriptive and inferential statistics (Chi-Square test statistics) were used in analysis and the results obtained presented in form of tables. The main findings of the study demonstrated that the level of policy implementation in Kisumu County was average. Overall, the findings also indicated that allocation from national government, revenue generation and financial management as indicators of economic dynamics were not satisfactory in Kisumu County. The Chi-Square test statistics revealed a significant relationship between policy implementation and national revenue allocation and financial management. However, the results revealed no significant relationship between policy implementation and revenue generation. The study therefore concludes that revenue allocation and financial management have an influence on policy implementation while revenue generation does not influence policy implementation in Kisumu County. The study recommends that the national government should ensure that the disbursement of funds from the national treasury is on a timely basis. Further studies should be conducted to expose other variables that influence policy implementation in devolved systems.

Key Words: Economic Dynamics, Policy Implementation, Kisumu County

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Introduction

At the heart of Kenya's Constitution (2010), there is a critical departure from nation's trajectory that extensively alters the political and constitutional dispensation with a dramatic transformation of Kenya through the adoption of a devolved system of decentralized government; new accountable and transparent governance institutions, inclusive governance and equitable service delivery for all citizens through the newly established two tiers National and the 47 county governments. The Kenya constitution (2010) established devolved government which guaranteed minimum unconditional transfer of power and resources to the counties under the new dispensation (GoK, 2010). The devolved units started functioning immediately after the March 4th 2013 general elections and after the election of governors to run the 47 county governments, election of the senators to sit at the senate and election of the county assembly members. Since then, devolution in Kenya has been having implementation challenges with accusations and counter accusations on how it is being frustrated by the central government especially through inadequate funding from the exchequer (Okongo, 2015). Another biggest challenge now is how to effectively manage the newly created devolution structures to achieve the desired results and meet the high expectations of the people (Korir, 2013). The politics of decentralization highlights clearly the expectations and high intensity hopes that the Kenyan people have placed on devolution. It also means that there are high risks if not handled and implemented carefully.

Statement of the Problem

It is almost six years since the County Governments began operations after the general elections that were conducted by IEBC in 2013, 4th March. The purpose of these County Governments since 2013 is an achievement that has not been completely realized. For a case like Kisumu County a number of substantial challenges exist that have severely compromised the progress of devolved governments. There are number of primary threats that have been seen as a hindrance to effective execution of policies in devolved governments. The threats that have been identified as an impediment to devolved government of Kisumu County include: politicization of devolution leading to problems in budgeting which leads to delay in salary payments and reforms needed to be undertaken at institutional level together with limited focus on building institutions a huge problem being faced by all 47 counties; late implementation of a number of key transitional undertakings; a common behavior exhibited by government while discharging functions that are not within its purview; Legal, policy and institutional structures that do not recognize devolution; insufficient funding from the central government and low levels of public participation in developing policies on devolution (Okongo, 2015). This is an indication that in as much as the devolution governance is being implemented in Kisumu County, several factors that can be classified from a social, economic and political dimension hinders policy implementation in Kisumu County. For instance, Kisumu County (2018) outlines several financial challenges that affected the implementation of annual development plan for the financial year 2017/2018 as limited financial resources hampering budgeting of priorities, slow and late release of funds from the national treasury, award of tenders based on budget estimates resulting to pending bills and late budget approvals from the county assembly leading to delayed implementation of projects. It is against this background that the

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current study sought to assess the influence of economic dynamics on policy implementation in Kisumu County, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

This study seeks to assess the impact to economic dynamics on policy implementation in Kisumu County, Kenya.

Review of Related Literature

Devolution also entails the financial resources transfer from central to county governments while considering the mandates of these institutions (Okongo, 2015). This enables the county governments to manage their development projects in order to uplift the wellbeing of its people (Manor, 1996). In order to ensure that the devolution of financial resources is successful and supportive the central government should ensure that there is: allocation transparency, predictability of the resources available to local governments and regional independence in policy-making on resource use (Hanson, 1995). Hence, financial devolution can be defined as the downward transfer; where central governments relinquish influence over budgets and financial decisions of local or county government (Assefa, 1996).

In order to remain operational and execute their mandates of service delivery and Development County governments need financing. For instance, a vital issue in the South African devolved government system is still the level of self-sustenance by municipalities which determines the well-being of their habitants in an independent style. Separately from generating money on an individual basis, local governments are, as guided by inter-governmental fiscal relations system in South Africa, entitled to various grants from national and provincial government (Collin, 2001).

Whelan (2004), states that the Equitable Share (ES) of nationally raised revenue is the most vital unconditional grant to local government. These grants should be paid directly to all county governments in the country, and should be based on a formula that takes into account the operating costs required by each individual government, to deliver basic services to local communities, specifically those sections that are too poor to pay for these services. In this view, Whelan (2004) is of the opinion that the grant is only partially needs-based. Where it is wholly needs based, it should also take into account the revenue generated by each local government across all households, and thus their ability to render these services with their own money.

Equitable Share is broken down into specific components referred to as "funding windows" which represent suggestions as regards how the ES should be utilized (Fourie & Opperman, 2007). Though this does not amount to legally forced spending; it is an attempt by national government attempting to ensure that the grant is utilized towards basic services to poor local communities (Whelan, 2004). Therefore it is an effort by the national government to ensure that citizens gain from the grants, and that it is not used to cater for operational costs of the county governments, such as the payment of recurrent expenditure for example.

According to Huff (2015), policy implementation success in devolved units in South Africa has been attributed to zoning, leading to proper distribution of economic resources that can be effectively utilized for policy. This, in addition, enables key strategies to be aligned with each devolved government's development plan and local demands and avoids unnecessary competition by the devolved units. Eze (2013) while assessing the weak state governments in Nigeria argues that the centralization of Nigeria's oil revenues has fostered intense competition among local communities and states for access to national patronage, weakening further the political loyalty to the government of the day. Most states are insolvent and unable to sustain themselves without substantial support from the central government because of the state's weak resources and tax base.

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About 90 percent of the state incomes are received directly from the federal government, which includes lump sum based on the oil revenues. Plus a percentage of oil income based on population. Through the jimbos, decentralization by devolution (D-by-D) was introduced by the Tanzanian government through the transfer of functions, power and authority from the national government to the local government authorities (LGAs) to improve the delivery of public goods and services. This has led to several benefits of decentralization such as increased independence in local resource mobilization and use, an improved bottom-up planning approach, increased public sector workers' responsibility and accountability and reduction of bureaucratic procedures in decision making. Despite these benefits, institutional dynamics such as political differences/interference, differences in personnel/staff qualification, varying community support and differences in financial requirements have been some of the key challenges to devolution in Tanzania (Frumence *et al.*, 2013).

Based on the discussion above, it is evident that most regional governments are too reliant on financial aid from the central government. County governments cannot therefore be regarded as autonomous in the absence of financial dependence, thus those who control the public coffers inadvertently control the running of county governments.

Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by Souffle theory. The theory proposed by Parker (1995) states that the three major elements of decentralization are administrative, fiscal, and political decentralization. According to Parker (1995) decentralization is a multi-dimensional process with ups and downs. According to this theory, successful devolution requires the right combination of political, fiscal and institutional components to improve rural livelihoods (Farooq, Shamail, & Awais, 2008; Laryea-Adjei, 2006). Therefore, devolution initiatives should be subject to modification so as to reflect social, political and economic changes (Laryea-Adjei, 2006). This therefore calls for a need to integrate all dimensions of political, fiscal and administrative decentralization. Through the Souffle theory, Parker proposes a model which integrates the political, fiscal and administrative dynamics of decentralization so as to realize anticipated outcomes.

Soufflé theory, while being applied by Godda (2014) suggests that fiscal policies and procedures and social dynamics govern the practices of officials and also provide checks and balances for the system in place. In addition, Political dynamics determine how policies and legislative powers are transferred from the central government to the local authorities (Azfar, 1999). However, Elsageer & Mbwambo (2004) states that devolution may not be a success if the local officials are not answerable to the local population. Thus, accountability can be enhanced through third party monitoring by media and NGOs, extensive participation of citizens and central government oversight of local governments (Godda, 2014).

The theory is relevant to this study as it provides insights on various dimensions of devolution embraced by county governments in Kenya. Unlike in other countries where the decentralization process was sequential, Kenya achieved political, fiscal and administrative devolution at once with the ratification of the constitution in 2010 (Kobia & Bagaka, 2014). Therefore, the theory provides in-depth understanding of economic dynamics that influence policy implementation in any form of governance.

Methodology and Design

The study is quantitative in nature and therefore employed descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study therefore comprised of 9 cabinet secretaries, 9 sub-county administrators, 45 ward administrators, 64 MCAs, 1 County director-Human Resource, 1 Chief Officer-Finance, 1 Chief Officer-Public administration, 1 County Legal Officer, 1 chairman and 1

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County Public Service Board all from Kisumu County. This results to a total of 133 as the target population. Proportionate simple random sampling was applied for this study to select 100 respondents computed using Yamane formula. In order to account for possible attrition, 10% of the recommended sample size was added. Hence, the sample size in this case was 110 respondents. Questionnaires were used as the main data collection instruments. Descriptive and inferential statistics (Chi-Square test statistics) were used in analysis and the results obtained presented in form of tables.

Table 1: Target Population and Sample Size Determination

Department	Population size	Sample size selected
MCAs	64	53
Cabinet Secretaries	9	7
Sub-County Administrators	9	7
Ward Administrators	45	37
County Director-Human Resource	1	1
Chief Officer-Finance	1	1
Chief Officer-Public administration	1	1
County Legal Officer	1	1
Chairman County Public Service Board	1	1
Secretary-County Public Service Board	1	1
Total	**133**	**110**

Source: Field Data (2019)

Findings and Discussion

Response Rate

A total of 104 questionnaires were distributed. Out of these questionnaires, 102 were adequately filled and were deemed fit for analysis. This represented a response rate of 98.1%. According to Patten (2016) a 60% questionnaire response rate is appropriate in research while Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) noted a 50% questionnaire response rate as adequate, 60%-70% as good while response rates above 70% as very good. In this study, the response rate of 98.1% is adequate and excellent for analysis and generalization of the research findings as it is over 70%.

Policy Implementation in Kisumu County

The respondents were required to give their opinion on the level of policy implementation in Kisumu County and the responses are as tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Policy Implementation

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Above Average	18	17.6	17.6
Average	43	42.2	59.8
Below Average	19	18.6	78.4
Very poor	22	21.6	100.0
Total	102	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2019)

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According to the findings in Table 2, 42.2% (43) of the respondents indicate that the level of policy implementation in Kisumu County is average, 21.6% (22), 18.6% (19) and 17.6% (18) of the respondents indicate that the level of policy implementation is very poor, below average and above average respectively.

Economic dynamics and policy implementation in Kisumu County

The respondents were presented with questionnaire items pointing towards the indicators of economic dynamics (local revenue generation, allocation from national government and financial management). The findings for this objective are as outlined in the sub-sections that follow.

Presence of a Well-functioning County Treasury

The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on whether a well-functioning county treasury has been established and the findings are as tabulated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Availability of a Well-Functioning County Treasury

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	3.9	3.9
Disagree	9	8.8	12.7
Agree	15	14.7	27.5
Strongly Agree	74	72.5	100.0
Total	102	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2019)

From Table 3, majority of the respondents as shown by a response of 72.5% (74) of the respondents strongly agree that there is well-functioning county treasury, 14.7% (15) agree, 8.8% (9) disagree while 3.9% (4) strongly disagree.

Economic Dynamics in Kisumu County

The respondents were presented with Likert scale statements regarding the indicators of economic dynamics in Kisumu County and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. These findings are as shown in Table 4 below.

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Table 4: Level of Agreement on the Indicators of Economic Dynamics

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Allocation from national Government						
The budgetary allocation from the national government is adequate	4 (3.9%)	4 (3.9%)	5 (4.9%)	15 (14.7%)	74 (72.5%)	4.48
The time taken between requests and disbursement of funds to the county is satisfactory	6 (5.9%)	5 (4.9%)	8 (7.8%)	38 (37.3%)	45 (44.1%)	4.09
Revenue Generation						
Revenue collection within the county by the county government is satisfactory	9 (8.8%)	6 (5.9%)	7 (6.9%)	30 (29.4%)	50 (49.0%)	4.04
There are efforts to close budgetary deficits by the county government are satisfactory	9 (8.8%)	9 (8.8%)	9 (8.8%)	29 (28.4%)	46 (45.1%)	3.92
Financial Management						
Budgetary utilization and fund absorption by the county is satisfactory	4 (3.9%)	6 (5.9%)	1 (1.0%)	24 (23.5%)	67 (65.7%)	4.41
Staff possesses necessary technical skills required for financial management	13 (12.7%)	9 (8.8%)	14 (13.7%)	19 (18.6%)	47 (46.1%)	3.76
The budget preparation procedures are in place and adhered to	12 (11.8%)	11 (10.8%)	8 (7.8%)	12 (11.8%)	59 (57.8%)	3.93
The spending is in line with the guidelines or budgetary provisions	8 (7.8%)	4 (3.9%)	9 (8.8%)	15 (14.7%)	66 (64.7%)	4.24

Source: Field Data (2019)

On allocation from national government, it is evident that majority of the respondents as shown by a combined total of 87.2% (89) strongly disagree and disagree that the budgetary allocation from the national government is adequate; a total of 81.4% (83) of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that the time taken between requests and disbursement of funds to the county is satisfactory. On revenue generation, 78.4% (80) of the total respondents strongly disagree and disagree that revenue collection within the county by the county government is satisfactory; also a total of 73.5% (75) of the total respondents strongly disagree and disagree that there are efforts to close budgetary deficits by the county government are satisfactory. Statements regarding financial management have 89.2% (91) of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that budgetary utilization and fund absorption by the county is satisfactory while 64.7% (66) of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that staff possesses necessary technical skills required for financial management. The findings also show that a total of 69.6% (71) of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that the budget preparation procedures are in place and adhered to. Lastly, on whether the spending is in line with the guidelines or budgetary provisions, 79.4% (81) of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree respectively. The economic dynamics were assessed on whether they are satisfactory and the findings reported in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Satisfactory Level of Indicators of Economic Dynamics

Statement	Satisfactory	not satisfactory
Allocation from national government is satisfactory	15 (14.7%)	87 (85.3%)
Revenue generation is satisfactory	27 (26.5%)	75 (73.5%)
Financial Management is Satisfactory	18 (17.6%)	84 (82.4%)

Source: Field Data (2019)

Evidence from Table 5 suggests that 85.3% (87) of the respondents are of the opinion that the allocation from national government is not satisfactory while 14.7% (15) are of the opinion that the allocation is satisfactory. In addition, 73.5% (75) of the respondents are of the opinion that revenue generation is not satisfactory while 26.5% (27) are of the opinion that it is satisfactory. The table also demonstrates that 82.4% (84) of the respondents are of the opinion that financial management is not satisfactory while 17.6% (18) are of the opinion that it is satisfactory.

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Cross-Tabulation between Economic Dynamics and Policy Implementation

Chi-Square test statistics were conducted to test whether there was any relationship between the indicators of economic dynamics and the results are as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Results for the Relationship between Indicators of Economic Dynamics and Policy Implementation

Economic Dynamic Indicator	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Policy and allocation from national government			
Pearson Chi-Square	6.619[a]	3	.023
Likelihood Ratio	9.536	3	.085
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.357	1	.037
Policy and Revenue Generation			
Pearson Chi-Square	2.714a	3	.438
Likelihood Ratio	2.640	3	.451
Linear-by-Linear Association	.040	1	.841
Policy and financial management			
Pearson Chi-Square	6.740a	3	.016
Likelihood Ratio	10.384	3	.081
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.122	1	.077
N of Valid Cases	102		

Source: Field Data (2019)

From the chi-square test results in Table 6, the findings indicate a significant relationship between policy implementation and both allocation from national government and financial management as both the Pearson Chi-square p-values of 0.023 and 0.016 respectively are both less than 0.05 (level of significance). Therefore, it can be concluded that both allocation from national government and financial management influence policy implementation in Kisumu County. However, the Chi-square p-value of the relationship between policy and revenue generation, that is p=0.438, is greater than 0.05 indicating that there is no relationship between revenue generation and policy implementation. According to Okongo (2015) devolution also entails the financial resources transfer from central to county governments while considering the mandates of these institutions. This enables the county governments to manage their development projects in order to uplift the wellbeing of its people (Manor, 1996).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings revealed a significant relationship between policy implementation and national revenue allocation and financial management. However, the results revealed no significant relationship between policy implementation and revenue generation. Therefore, revenue allocation and financial management have an influence on policy implementation while revenue generation does not influence policy implementation. Since revenue allocation from national government influences policy implementation, the study recommends that the national government should ensure that the disbursement of funds from the national treasury is on a timely basis. This will ensure that policies are well implemented on a timely manner. Counties should also ensure that

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funds allocated from national government are well utilized through well-constructed budgets that are devoid of political influence either locally or nationally. In addition, county assemblies should ensure that they oversight the resources to ensure that they are utilized for the functions in which they were budgeted for. Further studies should be conducted to expose other variables that influence policy implementation in devolved systems.

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