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ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY BUILDING ON PERFORMANCE OF DEVOLVED UNITS IN SELECTED COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Civil society organizations play a prominent role in governance and are viewed as key to delivering government policy agendas of social action, open public services and grass root mobilization. A strong and positive relationship between democratic governments and the civil society has materialized to be a stable pillar in governance such that the civil society organizations are seen as an integral part of governance process. However, even in the most democratic and prosperous societies in the modern world, there are many services that are not adequately provided especially to the minorities therein creating a gap which is occupied by the civil societies. They therefore fulfill important duties of checks and balances in democracies with their ability to influence the government and hold it accountable. The objective of the study was to establish the civil society' capacity building on performance of devolved units in Kenya. The study used the descriptive survey research design to analyze and describe the relationship between civil society' civic participation and performance of devolved units in Kenya. The population of the study was all 1290 top management staff to be drawn from the civil society organizations registered in Kenya; 470 (county ministers and chief officers) in the county governments of Kenya. The data collection instruments were questionnaires. The study initiated a pilot study to pretest and validates the questionnaire. Content analysis was used to test data that is qualitative in nature or aspect of the data that was collected from the open ended questions. Regression analysis was carried out to test the nature of relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables at .05 level of significance. Results revealed that all the civil society' capacity building dimension had a positive and significant relationship with performance of devolved governance units in Kenya. The results support the current theories related to the study. Consequently, this study provides national and county governments with insights of how to improve performance of devolved units through the civil society capacity building interventions. The study recommended that national and county governments should adopt a culture of incorporating civil society capacity building interventions. This could go a long way in ensuring there is improved performance of devolved units in the county governments of Kenya.

Key Words: Civil Society Intervention, Capacity Building, Performance of Devolved Units

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Based on the capacity building, the civil societies are involved in solving societal needs by offering various services to the public in several sectors such as in health, education, governance and finance. Omedo and Bakare (2014) define participation as a process, through which stakeholders' input and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them. Munene and Thakhathi (2017) further describe it as a process whereby stakeholders influence policy formulation, alternative designs, investment choices and management decisions affecting their communities. Bhargava (2015) argues that civil Society Organizations are key players in the push for universal values around human rights, labor standards, operating environment and anti-corruption and he terms CSOs as agents of development in any given economy as they play a significant role politically, socially and economically. The other role of the civil society is in social justice and the CSOs play this role by improving the quality of governance through application of good governance principles which are transparency, accountability and openness.

Several scholars have studied the participation of civil societies and most have found out that participation of the CSOs in the governance process plays a vital role in the enhancement of democracy. Pauly, De Ryanck and Verschuere (2016) recognized importance of CSOs participation in the finance sector while Wachira (2014) appreciated their significance in citizen sensitization, however some CSOs actions have recently come under criticism and their role as a promoter of good causes has been called into question (Bang & Esmark, 2013) hence the need to study civil society participation in relation to governance.

Statement of the Problem

Civil society play a prominent role in governance and are viewed as key to delivering government policy agendas of social action, open public services and grass root mobilization (Phillimore & McCabe, 2015). A strong and positive relationship between democratic governments and the civil society has materialized to be a stable pillar in governance such that the CSOs are seen as an integral part of governance process (Piotrowicz & Ciancira, 2013). In a perfect society, the government should be able to provide all the required services to its citizens. However, even in the most democratic and prosperous societies in the modern world, there are many services that are not adequately provided especially to the minorities therein creating a gap which is occupied by the civil societies (Meriläinen, Fougère & Piotrowicz, 2019; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017). Therefore, globally, the civil society plays a hidden role of complimenting or limiting the provisions of the state, a function which CSOs achieve by providing a platform for checks and balances through advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of government duties of ensuring security, cohesion and credible elections which enhance the performance of devolved governance.

The devolved units in Kenya are underperforming and a report by Kenya Institute for Public Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) highlights key sectors like health, water and sanitation, education among others which have faced challenges in service delivery (Lubale, 2018) associated with issues of accountability and integrity in county governments of Kenya. A survey done by Transparency International (TI) (2016), reported that 41% of Kenyans were not satisfied with their county governments' service delivery and infrastructural development. According to the Controller of Budget (March 2020), 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 2019". Successful devolved government requires an efficacious design for the context within which it is to be undertaken as there was a great need to assess the capacity and other resource needed for the successful devolution agenda. This calls for the active participation of civil society to strengthen service delivery in the devolved units (Opiyo, Moronge & Guyo, 2018).

A number of studies have been done on the role of the civil society in different sectors and institutions. Omede and Bakare (2014) study focused on the impact of civil society organizations on sustainable development in developing countries, the Nigerian experience. It was established that that Civil Society

groups in Nigeria sanitized and strengthened service delivery through the creation of an enabling environment for their operation and that they should maintain a high degree of independence from the government. Bernauer and Gampfer (2013) study focused on the effects of Civil society involvement on popular legitimacy of global environmental governance. The study results indicated that civil society involvement enhanced global climate policy-making, improved attention to changes of the status quo than to static conditions and reduced the persistent stalemate in global climate negotiations.

Further, Muok and Kingiri (2015) study focused on the role of civil society organizations in low-carbon innovation in Kenya. The study findings indicated that that civil society played a crucial role in low-carbon innovation in terms of learning and competence-building in Kenya. Maingi (2016) study evaluated the developmental impact of civil societies and their contribution to sustainable economic development. The study examined the challenges faced by CSOs and how these challenges affect their performance in impacting developmental agenda setting. The legal, policy and institutional frameworks of these CSOs played a very important role in impacting the developmental agenda setting. Munene and Thakhathi (2017) analyzed the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in promotion of community participation in governance in Kenya. The study established that CSOs also need to be given training and exposure to programs to successfully address governance issues in the country

From the aforementioned studies, though the civil societies' interventions have gained a lot of popularity as a tool for improving service delivery and governance. They have their own challenges the role they play in different institutions and sectors which this study seeks to identify especially in the devolved governance units in Kenya. Further, due to the contextual, sectorial and managerial differences among institutions, countries and sectors, the role of civil society governance interventions on enhancing good governance cannot be assumed to be similar, unless empirical studies demonstrate so. It is on this premise the current study aim to fill the gap by examining the role of civil society (capacity building) on performance of devolved units in Kenya.

Research Objective

The purpose of the study was to establish the role of civil society capacity building on performance of devolved units in Kenya.

Theoretical Review

The new public management theory emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. The theory was proposed by Hood (1991) who argued that to reconfigure the state along more cost-efficient (and effective) lines. The protagonist recommended that the public sector is opened up to greater private sector influence. Riany, Were and Kihara (2018). (2011) citing Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) avers that new public management reforms were aimed at improving the county governance in terms quality of public services, saving public expenditure, increasing the efficiency of governmental operations and making policy implementation more effective. The belief that large and monopolistic public bureaucracies are inherently inefficient was a critical force driving the emergence of the new public management (Casady, Eriksson, Levitt & Scott, 2020). The theory represents a set of ideas, values, and practices aimed at emulating private sector practices in the public sector (Hyndman & Lapsley, 2016).

Recently, Christensen, Lægreid and Rovik (2020)citing Hyndman and Lapsley, (2016)further opined that there was a need to reinvent government and harness the entrepreneurial spirit to transform the public sector and later “banish the bureaucracy”. Wu (2020) posits that the new public management theory takes its intellectual foundations from public choice theory, which looks at government from the standpoint of markets and products, and from managerialism, which focuses on management approaches to achieve productivity gains. The three underlying issues which new public management theory attempts to resolve to include citizen-centered services; value for taxpayers' money and a responsive public service workforce (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020).

Notably, there are also studies that indicate that the new public management reforms do not necessarily lead to improved service delivery. For example, Selladurai and Selladurai (2020) analyzed governments' attempts at providing better health-care services for less in USA. The new public management is often mentioned together with governance (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020). Governance is about the overarching structure of government and the setting up of the overall strategy, while new public management is the operational aspect of the new type of public administration. The theory has also been supported by Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) who contends that the dominant theme of new public management is the use of market techniques to improve the performance of the public sector. The main features of new public management include performance management, e-governance, contracting out and outsourcing, decentralization and accountability among others (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020).

The proponents of this theory advocate that the government should put in place social accountability mechanisms to increase efficiency in service delivery. The new public management theory is relevant to the current study as it informs citizen's participation, social accountability practices, and service delivery variables. The theory advocates for citizens participation in the process of evaluating public services since the new public management principle of customer responsiveness requires that the degree of the user satisfaction be measured (Wu, 2020). This study drew from the theory of new public management in understanding the county governance. The broad idea of new public management theory is the use of market mechanisms in the public sector to make managers and providers more responsive and accountable (Nielsen, Wæraas & Dahl, 2020).

The New Public management Theory recommends for an active and meaningful participation of CSOs in public affairs is the distinguishing feature of democratic societies, which are judged by the extent to which governments open up to citizen involvement in public affairs and the space they give for citizens to hold the government accountable (Ali & Noel, 2020). It is because of this that CSOs in Kenya and Africa in general continue to demand increased space for participation (Anthony & Nala, 2018). This theory is about the challenges of participatory democracy in county governance in Kenya; it applicable on the state of CSOs civic Participation in the country. It examines the political processes that would contribute to the consolidation of civic participation in county governance. The theory is anchored to the available instruments, such as the Constitution of Kenya (2010), to enhance CSPs civic Participation in county governance.

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

A conceptual framework is a concise description of the phenomenon under study accompanied by a graphical or visual description of the major variables of the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Michelle (2017) states that a conceptual framework is a diagrammatical representation that shows the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. This study's conceptual framework sought to demonstrate the relationship between civil societies' capacity building and performance of devolved units in Kenya. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

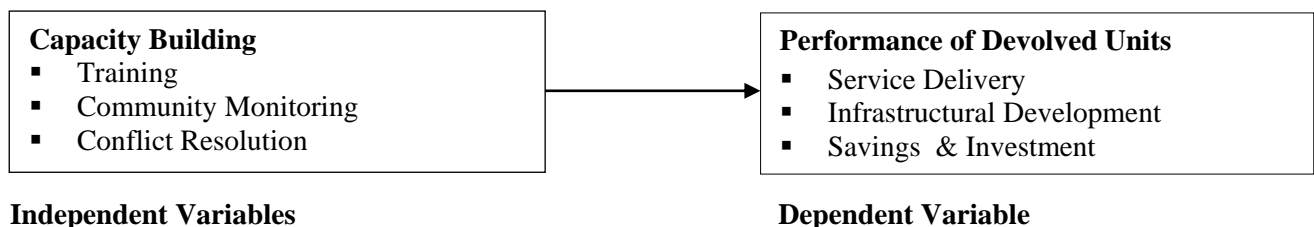


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako(2013) study Akala (2019) study sought to determine the effects of capacity building determinants for members of county assemblies in Kenya using the case of Nairobi City County Assembly. The study focused on all members of the County Assembly of Nairobi together with permanent staff. The study applied mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The study established that training needs assessment, training methods, training content had positive and significant correlation with capacity building. The study concludes that training needs assessment with p value had significant influence on capacity building. Training methods had significant influence on capacity building. Training content had significant influence on capacity building. Financial adequacy had significant effect on capacity building.

Wanaina, Wanjala and Iravo (2022) sought to determine the role of capacity building on women leadership in Kenya political elective positions. A mixed method research design was adopted with a positivism philosophy approach. The target population comprised of women elected in National Assembly and Senate. Regression results showed a positive and significant relationship between capacity building and inclusion of women in the elective positions. Capacity building has a positive and significant role on women leadership in Kenya political elective positions. The study concluded that capacity building empowers women in terms of equipping them with the necessary trainings, mentorship and necessary experience which is required to maneuver the difficult political terrain in Kenya to emerge successfully.

Onyiego and Njoroge (2020) study sought to examine the effect of capacity building on the management of county resources in Machakos County, Kenya. This research used descriptive survey design. The target population of this study was a staff working in the departments in the County government of Machakos and the Members of County Assembly. The relationship between the research variables was established through use of inferential statistics which comprised of correlation analysis together with regression analysis. The study further established that capacity building has a positive and significant effect on management of resources in Machakos County. The study revealed that training policy, scholarships and on-job training had an effect on management of resources.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a positivist research paradigm. Cooper and Schindler (2017) assert that the positivism research paradigm takes the quantitative approach and is based on real facts, objectivity, neutrality, measurement, and validity of results. The study adopted a descriptive research design to obtain the correct information on the role of civil society capacity building on performance of devolved units in Kenya.

The formula for calculating sample size for a large population is as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where n=required sample size

p and q =Population proportions which are set at 0.5 each

Z=Level of confidence

Typically, the level of confidence for surveys is 95% in which case Z is set to 1.96.

e= Sets the margin of error of the sample proportion. This will be set at 0.05.

This being a large (binomial) population, the sample will, therefore be worked out as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384.16$$

Therefore, the sample size was 384 key staff of the civil society who were selected through simple random

sampling. Further analysis was done to test the significance of the model by the use of Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and R^2 was used to measure the extent of the goodness of fit of the regression model. The statistical significance of the hypothesized relationship was interpreted based on F and t-test values at a 95% confidence level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the proportion of performance of devolved units (dependent variable) which could be predicted by capacity building (independent variable). A regression analysis was conducted to establish the role of capacity building in the devolved units in Kenya. The null hypothesis stated:

H₀₁: There is no significant role of civil society capacity building on performance of devolved units in Kenya

Therefore, to test this hypothesis, the model

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$ was fitted. Where y is performance of devolved units and X_1 is capacity building

Regression model summary results in Table 1 indicate the goodness of fit for the regression between capacity building and performance of devolved units in Kenya was satisfactory in the linear regression model. An R squared (coefficient of determination) of 0.579 indicates that 57.9% of the variations in performance of devolved governance units in Kenya are explained by the practice of capacity building in civil society. However, the model failed to explain at least 42.1% of the variation in performance of devolved units. This means that there are other factors associated with performance of devolved units which were not explained by the model. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.761 indicates capacity building has a positive correlation with performance of devolved units in Kenya. The standard error of 0.42631 shows the deviation from the line of best fit results is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.761	.579	.577	.42631

The ANOVA results in Table 2 shows that ($F(1, 281) = 386.403, p < 0.05$). This shows that the overall model is significant. The findings imply that capacity building was statistically significant in explaining performance of devolved units in Kenya. Therefore, at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{a3}) which states that “There is a significant relationship between capacity building and performance of devolved units in Kenya” is accepted implying that capacity building has a significant influence on performance of devolved units in Kenya.

Table 2: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	70.226	1	70.226	386.403	.000 ^b
Residual	51.070	281	.182		
Total	121.297	282			

Further, the study results of as presented in Table 3 revealed that there was positive relationship between capacity building and performance of devolved governance units in Kenya ($\beta_3 = .649, t = 19.657, p - \text{value} < 0.05$). To test the relationship the Regression Model to be fitted was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_3 + \varepsilon$. Therefore, the fitted model equation is $Y = 1.418 + 0.649 X_3$, where, Y is performance of devolved governance units, X_3 , is capacity building. This implies that, one (1) unit increase in the practice of civil society capacity building to an increase of 0.649 in Performance of devolved units index. This is displayed by Table 3.

Table 3: Beta Coefficients for Capacity Building

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.418	.130		10.905	.000
Capacity Building	.649	.033	.761	19.657	.000

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that civil society capacity building is statistically significant in explaining performance of devolved units in Kenya. Despite civil society capacity building playing an important role in ensuring successful performance of devolved units, it faces challenges. The study recommends civil society to engage in capacity building involved in county governance require stronger organizational capacity to fully participate in dialogue and development in the devolved units. Capacity-building for participation by the civil society is essential to develop the conditions, capacity and skills of locals so that they may be actively involved in policy formulation, project development and service provision. Capacity-building includes training seminars to improve the understanding of the reciprocal roles of civil society and public authorities in this engagement, as well as exchange programmes with public authorities to facilitate the understanding of each other's realities in the devolved units. To realize this goal, the civil society should an intensive capacity building model focused on mentorship, supervision, and coaching.

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