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Influence of Public Participation Practices on the Quality of Social Service Delivery in Rwanda

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Abstract:
Public participation in public institutions is important for the quality of social delivery of services. Public participation encourages citizen-focused service delivery and improves credibility among the citizenry. Public participation is the process through which stakeholders input and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of public participation practices on the quality of social service delivery in Rwanda. The investigation focuses on service providers' views of the qualities, as it is only through their understanding of the situation that service quality can be improved. This is a qualitative study based on interviews with employees of government organizations and document analysis. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population of the study was 7000 respondents. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires. A pilot test was conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation. The sample size of 378 respondents is determined using the Yamane's formula. The questionnaire was pretested before data collection for validation and reliability. The collected data was coded and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 was used. Testing of hypotheses was done using analysis of variance. Variance Inflation Factor was used to illustrate the significance of the association between governance practices on the quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda. Analyzed data was presented using tables and percentages. coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.658, which means that this variable alone can explain up to 65.8% of the variations in the dependent variable, quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda. The findings further confirm that the regression model of public participation practices on quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda is significant for the data F=156.122, p<0.01) since p-values was 0.00 which is less than 0.05. The study recommends that Public sector in Rwanda must provide training, workshops and sessions in the workplace to assist officials to understand the process of public participation. Manuals need to be provided to officials of the public sector guiding them on procedures of public participation.

Keywords: Public participation practices, quality of social service delivery, public institutions in Rwanda

1. Introduction

The concept of good governance practice is not new as its origin can be traced right from the beginning of civilisation (Al-Rodhan and Nayef, 2009). Available literature also shows that both eastern and western civilisation recognized and preached the principles of good governance. Religious studies like the Hinduism, Islamism, Christianism, Judaism, Buddhism and others have also been cited as advocates of good governance (Arndt and Oman, 2006).

In the modern world, the advent of good governance practices can be traced right from the Watergate scandal in the United States. Nevertheless, the practice become more popular with the Cadbury Committee Report in the United Kingdom (1992) or the recommendations of the National Association of Corporate Administrators of the US (1995) (Mimicopoulos, 2006). Since then, many occasional international conferences on the desirability of good governance have

been organised throughout the world as many countries had little knowledge about the concept and cared even less for its implications.

The seeds of governance practices continued to spread throughout the world. As a result, many countries in South-East and East Asian made reforms in their management systems due to 1997-98 crises that hit the countries (Afonso*et al.,* 2006). In this period of time, the countries in Asia were fiscally responsible, healthy, rapidly growing, export-driven economies going into crippling financial crises. As a result, governments, multilateral institutions, banks as well as companies began to understand that the devil lay in the institutional, microeconomic details – the nitty-gritty of transactions between companies, banks, financial institutions and capital markets; the design of corporate laws, bankruptcy procedures and practices; the structure of ownership and crony capitalism; sharp stock market practices; poor boards of administrators showing scant regard to fiduciary responsibility; poor disclosures and transparency; and inadequate accounting and auditing standards (Afonso*et al.,* 2006).

Since then, many organizations both private and public throughout the world employ governance practices to maintain their positions as well as increasing their quality due to constant socio-economic and technological changes (Park, 2005). To enhance this, many organizations put emphasis on continuous learning, research, development and strategic planning. This suggests that governance is regarded as a means to ensure that companies or organisations are run properly and at the same time, minimizing the risk of institutional failure (Murya, 2010). Thus, governance practice has been viewed as an assessment system that serves as a 'signal indicating' mechanism, not only can provide enterprise with a manoeuvrability basis and instruction for furnishing its governance, and provide governance assessment record to the society, but also at the same time, review timely the changes of strategic policy environment and provide a favourable environment for social mutual governance (Murya, 2010).

In 1995, Paul Myners report made various recommendations concerning the relationship between institutional shareholders and managements, including improving communications (Javed and Iqabal, 2007). Following this report, various groups of institutional investors have published guidance for their members and encouraged activism was deemed strategically cost effective. The significant reason of the Myners Report is that it put forward the fact that institutional shareholders to redefine their roles and responsibilities for ensuring good governance of the company they have invested in (Javed and Iqabal, 2007).

As a result, in 2001, Myners Report put forward a voluntary code of practice for the pension funds. The report aimed was on pension trustees and pension advisors. The reason behind this report was that pension trustees are required to be competent for their role and justify the reasonableness of their asset allocation and assumptions about future investment returns (Javed and Iqabal, 2007).

Following one of the Cadbury's committee recommendations, a Study Group on Administrators' Remuneration was set up to review governance in UK-Listed companies (Chen, 2009). The resulting Greenbury Report was published in July 1995, focussing on administrators' contracts and compensation. Greenbury's recommendations consisted of mainly that remuneration committees should be made up to make decisions on senior executive pay, reduction of maximum notice period in a director's contract from three years to twelve months and bonuses should be linked to satisfactory quality criteria. Hence the overall aim of the report was that there should be clearer window in remuneration packages (Chen, 2009).

The Hampel Committee chaired by Sir Ronald Hampel was set up in 1995 to build on and to widen the scope of the Cadbury and Greenbury reports and led in due course to the publication in 1998 of the Combined Code on Good Governance (Chen, 2009). The combined code laid rules mainly concerning conduct of administrators, director's remuneration and relations with shareholders, accountability and audit. In essence, these rules were designed to increase the possibility of companies being run honestly and competently and shareholders being given adequate and reliable information. The combined code was divided into two main parts, namely best practice for companies and best practice for institutional investors (Chen, 2009).

In April 2002, Derek Higgs was appointed by the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to lead to a short independent 'Review into the role and effectiveness of non-executive administrators' (Chakrabarti, 2011). The Higgs' report envisaged a more demanding and significant role and focused on the effectiveness in promoting company quality as well as on issues of accountability (Chakrabarti, 2011). As a result, a new combined code was issued in July 2003 and came into force in November 2003. Although the new combined code was not legally binding, it directs companies and major organisation to observe the code's main provisions and supporting principles. The code also requires organisations to confirm or explain that they comply with the Code's provisions and provide an explanation to shareholders (Heenetigala, 2011).

This study intends to unearth the quality of social service delivery by local government authorities in Rwanda from the perspective of governance practices. The reason for embedding reference to governance practices in local government setting is that in many developing countries including Rwanda, the realities of implementing policies often deviates sharply from the rhetoric of official framework. Thus, policy documents can only give limited insight of what local government officials experience in the implementation process in their working places. In Rwanda for example, the decentralisation policy is still 'half dressed' as finance and budget remain the affair of the central government. This could have been one of the contributing factors towards shrunken social service delivery in the country. Thus, this study attempted to undress the governance practices from the decision-making perspective, accountability and areas of strategic planning and link them to social service delivery in Rwanda especially in health, education and water and sanitation. The focus of the study was local governments in Rwanda and in particular reference to five provinces in the country as they play a vital role in the implementation and monitoring of government programs at lower levels.

Different countries have different approaches and priorities towards socio-economic development. In the case of Rwanda, the country views good governance as prioritized national strategy towards achieving social and economic development. It is in this line that Rwanda in its Vision 2020 strongly stresses good governance practices at all levels. The content of Rwanda's Vision 2020 is embracing modernity, building strong national cohesions among nationals, bringing about patriotism among Rwandans and feelings of integrity and fundamental values to politically stabilize the country and to eliminate discriminatory tendencies amongst all citizens.

From the six pillars of Vision 2020, good governance has been perceived as the implementation backbone of Rwanda's socio-economic development agenda. To embrace good governance in the country, the country has been encouraging the involvement of its citizens and has emphasized the need for respect of the laws, protection of human rights and the promotion of democratic values like transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the management of public resources.

The participation of citizens in the governance practices in the country has been entertained through 'consultation and the coordination so that good governance is seen as an exercise of the power by various organs of government in effective, honest, equitable and responsible way'. However, professional incompetence, the pursuit of the personal interest irrespective of his or her duties among those exerting power have been cited as some of the key areas through which good governance has been abused. 'In this regard, good governance relies on the interactions between the people and the institutions and on the political leadership which allows the citizens to clearly express their interests or their rights, to fulfil their obligations, and to settle disputes'.

Nevertheless, to control the abuse of powers of administrators in Rwanda, different institutions have been mandated to cater for, safeguard the interest of citizens and intervene for the benefit of the citizen.

Although the government of Rwanda emphasizes the need for better and quality service delivery to all citizens as presented in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) and Vision 2020 Umurenge program (VUP), many local governments in Rwanda have failed to deliver and sustain the required standards of social services. This was consecutively confirmed by the report by Rwanda Governance Scorecard (RGS) (2010) in which quality service delivery scored the lowest among other sectors investigated. In the report compiled by RGS (2010), quality service delivery scored lowest at 62.21 % while other areas such as safety and security, investing in people among others were from 70 % and above. Although there was some improvement in the sector of quality service delivery (2012), the sector remained the lowest rated with overall percentage of 70.44 % while other sector investigated scored from 75% and above. Additionally, in the highlights of sub-indicators, the RGS report (2012) rated service delivery in water sector among the lowest performing indicators with overall percentage rate of 56.7. These statistics clearly show that the quality of social service delivery in the country remains the lowest among other sectors and yet local governments have been empowered to enhance better and quality service delivery at lower levels.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

To manage the problem of quality-of-service delivery and ensure that public participation contributes towards improved service delivery, there is need to promote collaboration between municipal officials and the community. What is on ground is that many local governments in the country have not been in position to deliver and sustain the required standards or quality of social services to the people they serve (Rwanda Governance Scorecard (RGS, 2010; 2012). This comes amidst the government's efforts to uplift the quality of social service delivery to all the nationals in Rwanda through various policy approaches including Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) and Vision 2020 Umurenge program (VUP).

Existing studies reveal that public institutions in Rwanda officials 'tend to act as gate-keepers and controllers rather than as facilitative bodies that enable the Rwandan communities to have a greater voice and control over resources and quality of service delivery. Further still, Detailed Data and Scores of Quality-of-Service Delivery rated expert's satisfaction with service delivery in Local Government lowly (69 %) as compared to other sectors; this was also seen in Education Sector as it was lowly rated (65 %); similar trend was noted in water Sector (64 %). More still, citizen expressing satisfaction with service delivery in Water sector was even worse as it was rated at 49 % (Rwanda Governance Scorecard (RGS, 2010; 2012). The education sector in Rwanda is facing difficult problems such as lack of adequacy of class rooms, Teacher Pupil ratio, lack of enough desks, Instructional material and Staff motivation (RGS, 2010; 2012). Such indicators could let down governments efforts to eradicate poverty through the Vision 2020 Umurenge program (VUP) that aims to bring about massive changes in socio-economic lives of people and eradicate extreme poverty. Thus, as service delivery in areas of education, health and water have been among the worst performing in Rwanda such as lack of safe drinking Water, Near clean water, proper drinking water source maintenance, Garbage collection and cleaning services this arouses the desire to find out the core reasons behind service downfall in the country in relation to the role of local government officials especially in the areas of decision-making, accountability and strategic planning such that existing policy gaps can be bridged and socio-economic lives of citizens can be improved (RGS, 2010; 2012).

2. Literature review

2.1. Stakeholder Theory and Governance Practices

This theory was embedded in the management discipline in 1970 and gradually developed by Freeman (1984) incorporating institutional accountability to a broad range of stakeholders. Then Wheeler et al, (2002) derived stakeholder theory from a combination of the sociological and organizational disciplines. Thus, stakeholder theory is less of a formal

unified theory and more of a broad research tradition, incorporating philosophy, ethics, political theory, economics, law and organizational science.

This theory is thus defined as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organizations' objectives. Contrary to agency theory in which the managers are working and serving the stakeholders. Stakeholder theorists suggest that managers in organizations have a various relationship to serve, including the suppliers, employees and business partners. It is also argued that this relationship is more important than owner-manager-employee relationship in agency theory (Freeman and Evan, 1990). Subsequently, Sundaram&Inkpen (2004) contend that stakeholder theory attempts to address the group of stakeholders deserving and requiring management's attention. Whilst, (Donaldson& Preston, 1995) claim that all groups participate in a business to obtain benefits. Nevertheless, Clarkson (1995) suggest that the firm is a system, where there are stakeholders and the objective of the organization is to create wealth for its stakeholders.

According to Freeman (1984), the network of relationships with many groups can affect decision making processes as stakeholder theory is concerned with the nature of these relationships in terms of both processes and outcomes for the firm and its stakeholders. Donaldson & Preston, (1995) also noted that the stakeholder theory focuses on managerial decision making and interests of all stakeholders have intrinsic value, and no sets of interests are assumed to dominate the others.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

The independent variable is grouped towards a more holistic theory after review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature and the study of the existing models related to research findings. This conceptual framework has been schema is built on the relationship between the public participation practices as independent variable and quality of social service delivery as dependent variable. It assumes that the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variables is linear and the details are presented in Figure 1.
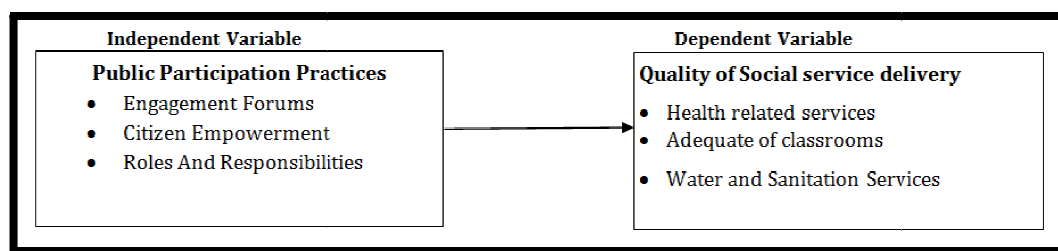

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a triangulation method. Qualitative and Quantitative survey studies are used to collect information using a highly structured questionnaire or interview guide (Oso&Onen, 2011; Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The study adopted a Positivist Research Philosophy. According to the information from Rwanda Governance Board (2010), there are approximately 500 officials per rural district and 700 officials per urban district. This suggests that from four rural districts the total number of officials will be 2000 while those from the urban districts will be 4200, making the total number of district officials 6200while members of civil society organisations are estimated to 80 per district making the total number of members of CSOs from all the ten districts 800 people from ten districts. In this regard, the total target population was 7000 people. Since the population size is quite large, that is 7000, Yamane's formula will be used to determine the sample size. Formula is proposed for this study because there was need to have the 95% confidence interval be less than 0.06 units wide.

$$n = \frac{7000}{1 + 7000 \times 0.05^2} = 379$$

The study used a cross-sectional survey research design. Cross-sectional surveys involve data collection from a population, or a representative subset, at one specific point in time and have an advantage over other research designs that only seek individuals with a specific characteristic, with a sample, often a tiny minority, of the rest of the population (Kothari, 2011).

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires which had both close ended and open-ended questionnaires. The pre-test questionnaires were distributed randomly to 38 selected officials from the MINALOC who did not form part of the study sample during the main study to gather a cross-sectional feeling of respondents. This helped in ascertaining the reliability and validity of the instrument.

The study collected and analyzed primary data which was keyed into an excel table, before the same subjected to meaningful analysis through SPSS version 21. The process involved the identification and correcting of errors in the data (data cleaning), coding the data and storing it in excel form. Data was coded and analyzed simultaneously using content analysis method.

The following measurement scale was used to examine governance practices and the quality of social service delivery. The following mean ranges and interpretations were used for independent variable (public participation practices).

The study also adopted a regression analysis to further determine the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

3. Analysis for Public Participation Practices

3.1. Descriptive Analysis ForPublic Participation Practices

The study sought to establish the influence of public participation practices on the quality of social service delivery in Rwanda. Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the findings on the independent variable; public participation.

The results show that 52.9% strongly agreed with the statement that the district administrators consult staff members before setting strategic plan. 48.8% strongly agreed that experts are hired to help in drawing strategic plans for the districts, 64.7% strongly agreed that retreats are organized before strategic planning is done, 64.1% strongly agreed that district strategic plan is in accordance with the needs of communities, 51.2% strongly agreed that plan drawn is carefully followed and monitored for its effectiveness, 40% strongly agreed that effective and working recommendations are forwarded and followed after evaluation of each plan drawn while 60.3% strongly agreed Strategic plans are always in accordance with the country's development agenda. The overall mean of the responses was 4.56 which indicates that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements on public participation. The standard deviation of 0.68 indicates that the responses were closely varied. The study is consistent with that of Brynard (2009) who posits that public participation encompass an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision making. As such, the process includes engaging people, deciding, planning and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their lives. It is important the public participation is understood in its appropriate context.

	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	M	Std. Dev.
The district administrators consult staff members before setting strategic plan	5.8%	7.8%	5.4%	28.1%	52.9%	4.1458	1.18197
Experts are hired to help in drawing strategic plans for the district	7.1%	14.6%	4.1%	25.4%	48.8%	3.9424	1.32483
Retreats are organized before strategic planning is done	0.0%	2.7%	2.7%	29.8%	64.7%	4.5661	.68129
District strategic plan is in accordance with the needs of communities	0.7%	5.8%	1.4%	28.1%	64.1%	4.4915	.84057
The plan drawn is carefully followed and monitored for its effectiveness	4.1%	6.4%	12.9%	25.4%	51.2%	4.1322	1.11856
Effective and working recommendations are forwarded and followed after evaluation of each plan drawn	16.6%	20.3%	2.4%	20.7%	40.0%	3.4712	1.56873
Strategic plans are always in accordance with the country's development agenda	3.4%	2.0%	6.4%	27.8%	60.3%	4.3966	.94868

Table 1: Responses to Public Participation
Key: N= 295, SD= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree,
SA=Strongly Agree, M=Mean, Std. Dev. =Standard Deviation

3.2. Regression Analysis for Public Participation Practices

Regression analysis was performed in order to determine whether the independent variable, public participation practices could be reliable for explaining the change in the dependent variable quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda. The coefficients obtained indicate that the correlation coefficient (R) between the independent variable and the quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda was 0.811 which is a positive correlation relationship. Table 2 shows a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.658, which means that this variable alone can explain up to 65.8% of the variations in the dependent variable, quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.811[a]	.658	.656	.420123

Table 2: Model Summary Showing Public Participation Practices
A. Predictors: (Constant), Public Participation Practices

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results are shown in Table 3. The findings further confirm that the regression model of public participation practices on quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda is significant for the data F=156.122, p<0.01) since p-values was 0.00 which is less than 0.05.

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51.431	1	51.431	293.042	.000a
	Residual	26.811	82	.617		
	Total	78.242	83			

Table 3: ANOVA for Public Participation Practices
b. Dependent Variable: Quality of social service delivery
c. Predictors: (Constant), Public participation practices

The coefficients of post-election phase processes are presented in Table 4 which indicate that the model has a significant p-value =.000. The study at 95% confidence interval solved the third research question by indicating that the variable public participation practices is statistically significant in the quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.580	.205		2.826	.000
	Public participation practices (X1)	.793	.046	.811	17.118	.000
a. Dependent variable: Quality of social service delivery						

Table 4: Coefficients of Public Participation Practices

Using the summary of Coefficients presented in Table 4, a linear regression model of the form, $Y = \alpha + \beta X_i$ can be fitted as follows:
Y = 0.580+0. 793X1..Equation 3
This implied that a unit change in public participation practices would increase quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwandaby the rate of 0.539.
Hypothesis Testing for public participation practices
The Hypothesis to be tested was:
- Ho1: Public participation practices does not have a significant relationship with quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda.

The hypothesis was tested by using multiple linear regression and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criteria were that, if the p value is less than 0.05, we reject the H_{A3} but if it is more than 0.05, the H_{A3} is not rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is that Public participation practices has a significant relationship with quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda. Results in Table 4 shows that the p-value was 0.025. This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 5.850 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The alternate hypothesis was therefore not rejected. The study therefore adopted the alternative hypothesis that public participation practices have a significant relationship with quality of social service delivery by local governments in Rwanda.

4. Conclusion

The study concluded that public participation practices were statistically significant in explaining the quality of social service delivery in Rwanda. These results concur with those by Mensah (2012) who held the view that creating a link between service planning, provision and performance, and citizen feedback, based on a two-way communication channel is one suitable way to provide service delivery for improved performance of institutions. It can also be concluded that ideal strategic approaches that have strong impact on improvement of service delivery across the counties; reducing competition among state agencies and counties and concentrating on delivering citizen-targeted service; development of and strict adherence of service charters by different county institutions within agreed timelines; officers handling service provision need to be equipped with the necessary technologically attuned tools; and availing adequate resources to enhance service delivery; adequate remuneration to the county officers and workers involved in service delivery. The study concluded that public participation practices are essential to improved quality of social service delivery in Rwanda.

5. Recommendation

The study recommends that Public sector in Rwanda must provide training, workshops and sessions in the workplace to assist officials to understand the process of public participation. Manuals need to be provided to officials of the public sector guiding them on procedures of public participation.
Public sector must encourage the importance of education of both officials and community members on the objectives of public participation. This may be done during the opening of local meetings. Public sector must actively engage with community members so that they can realize that public participation is important. A related issue concerns the

municipality not giving constant feedback to the communities; the Public sector must provide feedback to community members. Community members must utilize other forms of participating in the activities of the local government in Rwanda.Lastly, the public sector should avoid imposing decisions on the communities such as installation of water management devices without the consent or knowledge of community members' therapy.

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