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Effect of Responsiveness Practices on County Government Performance in Kenya: A Case Study in Makueni and Marsabit County Governments

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Abstract:
It is expected that public involvement through participation and incorporation of other good governances' practices in the developed governance process would enable policy makers legislate responsive policies that promotes performances in the county governments through timely delivery of services and efficient utilization of resources in the counties. The Constitution of Kenya has prioritized public participation in the devolved governance system, by acknowledging the right of local people to manage their own matters in advancing their political, social and economic expansion. However, previous studies indicate that counties are experiencing misappropriation and misallocation of resources, against the needs and priorities for the public. About 41 percent of Kenyans were unsatisfied with performances of their counties. This hinders effective performance. Conversely, some counties have performed well according to rating done by Policy Tracking Impact Public Affairs Consulting 2018, which ranked Makueni county government as the best performing county based on development projects and policies implied by counties. Therefore, the study sought to compare the effects of corporate governance practices on performances in Makueni and Marsabit counties. Marsabit County was chosen because despite Makueni being ranked the best, both counties experience almost similar challenges in their governance. The issues of low human capital development, cross-border community level conflicts, and low level of investment in infrastructure, high level of poverty, food insecurity, land degradations and poor health system are the common challenges that affect performance in the counties. Thus, this study sought to examine the effects of responsiveness governance practices on the selected counties in Kenya. To accomplish the objectives, the study adopted correlational research design and interpretivism research philosophy. The target population consisted of county officials, heads of groups and community leaders in the two counties. Primary data was collected and analyzed using a linear model to estimate the coefficients. The findings indicated that responsibility had significant positive effect of 13.6 percent on county government performance. In this regard, the study recommended the need for counties to ensure strict adherence of resource allocations in line with the county integrated development plans and annual development plans, developed through public participation.

Keywords: Corporate governance practice, responsiveness, government performance

1. Background

1.1. Introduction

The corporate governance stipulates the responsibilities and rights to be shared amongst diverse members in the corporation, for instance the board, executives, members of the organization, community, among other stakeholders, and demonstrate the guidelines and procedures for decision-making on community matters (Fung, 2014). Corporate governance helps the organization in coming up with the structure that assist in formulating their objectives, and the ways of accomplishing the set goals and monitoring performance (Fung, 2014). The goal of a good corporate governance system is to guide the public servantsrun the government onward effectively and responsibly (Brown, 2017).

Performance in public sector involves the general administrative actions important for the advancement and management of policies that perform sufficiently and effective service delivery (Iriya&Namusonge, 2015). The performance management in public service sector entails successful management of the policies and plans aimed at achieving the targets and the anticipated benefits (Holbein, 2016). The main function of the public is to influence how an

institution is governed to accomplish their individual goals; therefore, they are expected to accord the highest rank to those projects, which can maximize their welfare (Posner, Morton &Weyl, 2017). Regulators put more emphasis on building well-founded trust and promoting appropriate culture in financial services, ensuring the stakeholders understand their approaches such as; objectives, regulations and predictability (Posner &Weyl, 2014). Government officials concentrate more on policy, acquiescence, regulation and operational matters, while on the other hand, the public who are the employees ought to be productive in an organization for them to secure and continue in their employment position, and lastly other stakeholder's have concerns in various societal and environmental issues (Fung, 2014).

All around the world, the discussion relating to performance of public institutions has been steadily conjured in administrative, academic and political spheres, especially touching on sub-national governments. Application of different strategies is on an upward trend, in a bid to enhance the operations and initiatives of the local governments (Maurel, Carassus, Favoreu & Gardey, 2014). The approaches and strategies used by most organizations includes the quality approach, the comparative approach, behavioral approach, attribute approach, and result approach to measure the progress of their performance (Dey, 2017).

Performance of an organization is measured by its efficiency in allocation, utilization and responsiveness towards realizing the intended objectives (Onyango, 2010). It is the measure of accomplishment attained by a person, group, organization, government or process. Therefore, the study addressed performances in terms of efficiency in resource allocation to needs and demands for the public aid in attainment of intended goals and completion of projects on time along with the utilization of resources to curb wastage and mismanagement of public resources (Gutacker& Street, 2017).

In a study done by Maurel, Carassus, Favoreu and Gardey (2014), it was noted that it is important to estimate the performance of government service delivery and public reporting since it creates motivations for better performance by supporting analysis of the nexus between programs and agencies as well as assisting governments coordinate policies within and across agencies. Additionally, measuring performance enhances transparency through enlightening the community and more so boosting ongoing performance improvements in service delivery and effectiveness through emphasizing on innovation and improvements.

Corporate governance should be developed in line with the essential values of accountability, transparency, responsiveness and fairness (ACCA, 2009). Additionally, Beerbaum (2016) outlines three key drivers of corporate governance as follows: first, is to ascertain that the board, which is the representation of the stakeholders in the government, safeguards resources and channels them towards strategic growth aiming at the organization's well-defined goals. Secondly, is making sure that those handling management and governance of an organization are responsive to its stakeholders, and lastly, to guarantee public and, at times stakeholders where appropriate, may hold management and boards to account (ACCA, 2009). Organizations should adhere to these values during the implementation of their pledges with the intention to develop and maintain stakeholders, investors and the society confidence (Olkkonen, 2015).

Jensen (2010) described effective corporate governance as the responsiveness of the management to the interests and desires of all stakeholders, as well as responsiveness to emerging initiatives, and changes in political, regulatory, social, and environmental issues. In this regard, stakeholders are keen on issues that influence performance, for instance, whether the intended outputs have been conveyed and results accomplished in a productive, effective, economic and just manner. They are additionally keen on in keeping up with the institution's capacity, for example, the institution's fiscal position and performance reported yearly. Public institutions ought to, in this manner, be profoundly transparent, and give top-notch information about all aspects of performance (Fredman, 2010).

The best practices and values defined in corporate governance codes have been embraced around the world, it can be acknowledged in some international codes to guide responsive practices. For instance, the Dutch Code is subjective to the international framework of governance regulation. Similarly, the South African King IV Code of March 2016 references the values of culture and lasting value-creation (Doni, Bianchi, Martini &Corvino, 2016).

There several responsiveness practices which influences performances of a government. According to Muna (2016), responsiveness of local government is important for the success of local economies since it ensure resources are efficient and effectively distributed to the local beneficiaries. In addition, Muna argued that participation is an essential factor when instituting a viable implementation system that will promote performance. Porter and Kramer (2018) added that an organization could not generate value if it disregards the interests of involved parties such as customers, employees, local communities, and suppliers. Active participation of all stakeholders is essential in corporate governance since it encourage effective negotiation, management, collaboration, including dispute resolution between parties involved (government, public and stakeholders) and amongst the stakeholders themselves (Barnett, Henriques&Corregan, 2018).

A strategic plan that includes all the stakeholders budgeting processes is essential for the performance to be achieved. Stakeholder must be represented by elected or selected representatives in budgeting forums discussing any interest that affect them, to ensure they are actively involved in decision-making relating to the distribution and prioritization of their interests (Muna, 2016). According to Nyanumba, Rotich, Gekara, Keraro, and Okari (2017), counties ought to discover numerous techniques to expand their local revenue sources over and above allocation from National Government, to enhance delivery of services to its public and address other financial obligation resulting to better performance in the county.

Further, Khiari and Lajmi (2018) argued that corporate governance as leadership and control method comprises a set of clear rules and principles such as transparency, honesty, integrity, sincerity and responsibility. It also includes control mechanisms and clear risk management important to comprehend and motivate public institution towards promoting the public desires. Weak governance practices adversely affect the fiscal performance of an institution as well as provision of timely services, which result to microeconomic and macroeconomic crises in economy (Sarbah& Xiao,

2015). Microeconomic issues involve problems that affect individuals, households, and firms in terms of decision-making and utility maximization, while macroeconomic issues consist of challenges that affect the whole economy such as economic growth and performance.

In addition, according to Mayne (2017), conflict of interest affects efficient delivery and utilization of services in an organization. Therefore, managing conflicts of interest cannot be ignored if performance is to be accomplished. If conflicts of interest are managed appropriately, it will not affect delivery of service in an organization. Properly pinpointing and handling conflicts of interest is crucial in encouraging accountability and transparency in an organization. Equally, responsible and transparent judgment making processes can help the organization manage conflicts (Agyemang&Castellini, 2013).

1.2. Makueni and Marsabit County Government Performances

The Council of Governors organization in Kenya has provided the county governments with an avenue for consultation amongst themselves, to exchange ideas on performances as well as build intergovernmental relations (IGRA 2012). This organization assists most of the county governments to exchange best practices of governances and more so have a collective push on policy issues (IGRA 2012).

About 41 percent of Kenyans are not satisfied with the county performances according to a survey conducted by Transparency International on County Governments Performance in Kenya in 2016. Majority of the respondents estimated performance of their County Governments based on how successfully counties are responding to the public needs and demands through allocation of budgets based on development plans and agendas outlined in the Annual Development Plans (ADPs) and County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) (GOK, 2016).

The second method of estimation includes the citizen fulfilment with services offered by the County Government. It comprehensively captures issues related to efficiency of delivery of services. The third measurement involves the internal control process that comprises the effectiveness of communication systems among the major stakeholders; timely reporting; and risk management by departments in the county and internal control practices for the benefit of the citizen. The fourth approach is the capacity of the County Government to create new opportunities to address high unemployment rates in the counties, promote small and medium enterprises through funding, promoting the agricultural outputs by expanding markets and encouraging tourism (GoK, 2016). Performance of a government is often estimated by how prompt services are delivered to the people and how efficient it utilizes its resources to support its residents.

The County Governments in Kenya experience a number of challenges that adversely impacts performance of the county governments in its operation and service to its citizens in the grassroots. Among these challenges are lack of accountability and transparency that is exhibited by ethnical profiling in employment, corruption, high level of wastage of resource and supremacy battle between executive arm and member of county assemblies (Hope, 2017).

The county government of Marsabit experiences numerous challenges in implementation of various projects and provision of public services to its people. Some of these challenges includes unreliable stakeholder's participation framework that adversely influences the embracing of collaboration of communities in developmental issues such as local tourism, environmental initiatives and solid waste management. This coupled with substandard strategies on allocation of economic resources such as provision of small and medium enterprises; distribution of county jobs, tenders and poor livestock programs adversely influences the economic performance of Marsabit county government (Scott-Villiers, 2017).

Makueni county government has advanced in terms of transparency, accountability, responsiveness and public participation on matters concerning development in the county. Through the Makueni county government website, the Makueni government announced the implementation of an online platform for managing and tracking county development budget. This platform tracks the resources devoted to the projects and performance statistics for over 1600 projects and programs within the 30 wards, so as to aid in realization of the county's vision 2025 (Makueni County Government, 2018). According to Makueni county government report (2018), the online program assists in minimizing the delays and unfinished projects and more so cutting down on the recurrent cost over-runs. The web-based platform works as an integrated project information repository, enabling coordination, monitoring, and evaluating on the development of projects in the county and therefore enables the public to keep track of the projects being implemented by the county government.

The program also strengthens responsiveness, accountability and transparency measures stipulated in the Kenya's 2010 Constitution, through enabling public participation and access to information on government expenditure. According to the report, positive feedback of public participation has been recorded since the implementation of the program. The system enables the public to react to projects and programs by raising their concerns to the respective authorities and acts as a platform through which accuracy of information and accountability is enhanced (Makueni County Government, 2018).

Makueni county government despite be ranked the best county government in Kenya (2018) in terms of development, the county still experiences high poverty levels, with population fraction below poverty line standing at 61 percent compared to 45 percent for the whole country. Additionally, the county faces serious scarcity of water due to recurring drought (Makueni County Government, 2013). To curb these challenges, Makueni county government has launched a number of projects to respond to needs and issues, such as, water projects and constructions of dams across different parts of the county (Makueni County Government, 2018).

However, there are reports that indicates that some counties are not adhering fully to the development agenda outlined in the ADPs and CIDPs in allocation of resources; as a result, some projects are missed out in the implementation. Further, some projects introduced outside the development plans are sometimes politically motivated but not aligns with

the demands or the needs of the public. In this regard therefore, the study sought to examine the effects of responsiveness on performance of county government of Makueni and Marsabit.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Literature–Social Equity Theory

The theory reviewed by the study is the theory of Social Equity.The theory of social equity supports the study by articulating the concept of governance practices especially the equity practice. The theory guides the study on the aspects to look at when assessing the implementation of equity and effects associated with it. The theory highlights that social equity should be embraced in health and education sectors, also in the social lifestyle for all the people including equity in resource distribution (water, proper housing, security, among others). The theory will support objective three of the study.

2.2. Empirical Literature

2.2.1. Performance of a Government

Performance can be based on service delivery, responsiveness to the public needs, and efficiency in utilization of resources. It assumes a vital role in gagging the country's development status and state capacity. In developing countries, basic service accessibility is limited in rural settings compared to urban regions. Performance of a government can be measured through service delivery to its citizens; however, several factors influence service delivery in different jurisdictions (Wangari, 2014). However, Wangari's study failed to show the extent of accountability and transparency in influencing service delivery.

The performance of any county government is measured by the prosperity of its citizens and its developments. Citizens have the responsibility to remitting taxes as a show of willingness to pay for performance improvements. According to Bratton (2012), responsiveness is singularly the key contributor of citizen perceptions of local government performance. Rumbul (2016) disagreed with the opinion of Bratton, that responsiveness is the only indicator for better performances, instead Rumbul's study added that openness and online participation influences performances in the local governments. According to Finch and Omolo (2015) building sub-national government responsiveness and performance needs a deliberate effort to link county government with the public so as address their needs and preferences adequately. Therefore, the current study sought to assess the policy frameworks established by the county government to enhance responsiveness.

Effective usage of public resources is crucial to achieving expansion goals by any country. According to Di Meglio, Stare, Maroto and Rubalcaba (2015) and Peterson (2015) an increase in public expenditure is weekly correlated with the benefits accrue from development outcomes in majority of developing nations. Government inadequacy arises in the form of waste, inefficiency and corruption where government officials are largely responsible. Considering that public spending is multi-layered process, there is a possibility of having loopholes in the process leading to mismanagement of funds. Budgeting process normally go through a progression of stages including definition by particular Ministries, examination by steering committees, and assent by assembly, sharing of resources between the two governments and departments, and end-point administration conveyance. Accountability is disadvantaged by constraints such as limited documentations, closed-door meetings and decisions, and poor data reliability (Onuorah&Appah, 2012).

Service delivery by any government confirms the willingness and ability to respond to citizen's demands and needs (Brinkerhoff &Wetterberg, 2016). To a point where citizens of a country acknowledge government as fulfilling its basic services and security concerns, in which they are additionally enthusiastic to acknowledge the administration and legality of a government (Levi, Sacks & Tyler, 2009). Several beneficial outcomes are linked with positive relationship between state and society, for instance, dispute reduction, stability, and resilience (OECD, 2008). Residents who perceive state to be active in delivering significant and fundamental services to the people are pleased to be involved aggressively in delivery of service and in remitting taxes to the government (Brinkerhoff, Wetterberg&Wibbels, 2018). In summary, service provision takes centre stage in ensuring accountability governance. Expectation-disconfirmation theory of public gratification suggests a straight link between reduction in quality, access to service and the negative perception of the public to the state.

Different scholars like Stel and Ndayiragije (2014) and Mcloughlin (2015) have contributed immensely on the debate on whether improvement in government performance benefits the central government, local (county) government or both. Some are of the opinion that acknowledgments grounded on provision of service are probably centered on the kind of regulation in place together with visibility of the government (Marvel & Girth, 2016). Since the rural citizens relative to the distant national government leaders can easily reach local leaders, it is expected that their interactions and discussions associated with service provision should improve the service delivery performance. However, Stel and Ndayiragije (2014) and Mcloughlin (2015) studies dwelt on the beneficiaries of performances but failed to show the magnitude of the effects.

Other researchers including Stel and Ndayiragiie (2014, argued that the performance of a leader and trust gain from the people forms a basis for the acceptability of top-level representatives and administration at large. Borzel and Risse (2015) suggest that in regions associated with partial statehood, local administration can enhance trust in national government even in absences of hierarchical governance. 'The more (local) governance services are provided in an impartial and procedurally fair way, the more they help generate and maintain generalized trust as an enabling condition for the up-scaling governance, even in absences of functioning state institution'. Stel and Ndayiragije (2014) showed cases

where regional leaders with provisional duties received -endorsement for developments and performance at the sub-national level, however, the study failed to show the impact of those developments.

2.2.2. Responsiveness and Performance

According to McGee and Edson (2014) responsiveness is the point to which government addresses the needs of the public by ensuring the public policies and institutions react to the needs of citizens and uphold public rights. The authors further differentiated the shallow and deep responsiveness. Deep responsiveness brings up about the development by both citizens and the government of democratic system that identifies deliberation and negotiation as the centre stage of civic involvement, while shallow responsiveness involves established, operative and transparent communication loops. Shallow responsiveness relates to internal reporting and accounting systems within government and external communication to the public (McGee & Edson 2014). Therefore, to give sense to responsiveness, local government needs to form appropriate and adequate processes for citizen engagement in local affairs. According to Faguet, Fox and Poeschl (2014), democratic control serves to strengthen responsiveness in local governance; however, the study did not go further to examine the impact of responsiveness on the performances of a government.

Liberal democracy in Africa overtime has worked contrary to the growing democracy in several African republics. Furthermore, it has engrossed the government in societal flaws, which hinders successful intervention of government actions and processes, precisely on matters of accountability, justice, and responsiveness of government to the public and service delivery (Adetula, 2011). For instance, African countries, particularly countries which had earlier on implemented the organizational adjustments programs including Kenya in 1980s (Heidhues and Obare, 2011) embarked at once on both economic and political liberalization programs with unimpressive outcomes. Neo-liberal economic reforms implementation programs, especially economic deregulation through free market resulted to the setting for the consolidation of liberal democracy along with its effects and shortcomings (Amable, 2010).

The relations between political and economic reform programs in Africa's democracies resulted to some challenges in the running of the state, associated with lack of capacity to effectively design and implement economic reform programs. Once the countries noted their lack of capacity to effectively enforce the economic settings necessary to support the liberal democracy, it opened room for authoritarianism, which was characterized by irresponsiveness of government to the public needs, suppression, misuse of power, disobeying the set laws, procedures and lack of public participation and involvement in decision-making (Adetula, 2011). Several African states have become rapidly exclusionary following political incapacity and illegitimacy. On many occasions, the administration way of operations of upcoming independent nations have estranged the several residents, particularly those their lifestyles have not been directly impacted by the transformation programs and policies.

The people in dictatorial countries re-joined to the dictatorial system of government with absence of confidence and trust in the governing bodies, which were damaged with absence of transparency, liability, and corruption. The public also were unsatisfied with the burden of economic reform programs, which are less adaptive and not responsive to the governments and were more engaged in societal disagreements (Adetula, 2011). Non-performance in delivery of services, democratic growth, and the frequency of dismal poverty are the main risks elements for conflicts in several countries in Africa. Adetula (2011) observed that revolution is difficult in states experiencing conflicts of any kind and those that have irresponsive administrations, non-accountable governments, or basically not effective. Adetula (2011) however did not take into account that transformation has to be in line with the constitution of a country and therefore it makes difficult to transform an economy of the country without doing the amendments in the constitution.

According to Benequista (2010), most of the existing donor programs did not recognize the full capacity of citizen engagement in governance's matters resulting to misunderstanding of the multifaceted relations between the state and the citizens, which ought to shape the governance performance. Benequista further argued that citizens require greater political awareness and knowledge concerning their rights and that of the agency to boost in addressing their rights and playing their role in accessing the responsiveness of a state. Engagements by different stakeholders have become successful in boosting contribution of ideas from the public as well as enhancing citizen involvement, which contributes to a more responsive state. Jordaan (2013) further added that equity in society is important to the field of public administration to make the government responsive to the necessities of all the citizens.

According to McGee and Edson (2014), accountability should be seen from both internal and external levels of governances that serve the community. McGee and Edson 2014 argued that without accountability governance would be neither responsive nor responsible according to their interpretations of deep responsiveness. The proficiency for responsible and responsive local governance should comprise the skilled personal who understand the scope of the work and their responsibilities, and more so, who are able to adhere through the implementation process of various projects. The key features for responsible and reactive local governance are the relevant arrangements of financial, technical, operational, administrative, and strategic and public relations skills. Emphasis was laid on communication, facilitation and coordination skills, to make sure that the public is better informed and significant processes for citizen involvement are set in place (Webler&Tuler, 2000).

According to Bratton (2012) analysis on citizen perceptions of local government responsiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa, only a third of the leaders listen and act regularly to what their constituents raises. The study also found out that local leaders are more responsive, and that tax compliance is weakly linked to responsiveness. The study, however, failed to show the impact of responsiveness on the performances of a country.

Participation of both state and citizens is essential for good governance. Participation may direct or indirectly affect performances of a government through representation. Participation plays a vital role in accessing the

responsiveness of a government. Daudi (2016) conducted research on the contributing factor of citizen participation in decentralized governance in Kenya, citing a case of Machakos County. The findings in the study showed that public was involved in county governance through invitation to attend development meetings and consultative meetings. The study revealed that the county government lacked proper channels for feedback, cases of corruption, lack of transparency, tribalism and nepotism; all these affected the performance of the county adversely. Limitation to the study was that it only focused on citizen participation, ignoring the broad social responsiveness and accountability elements, which the current study ought to dwell on in building the study.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter comprises the research design, target population, sampling technique and sample size determination, data collection instruments and procedure, data analysis, and empirical model.

3.1. Research Design

The current study adopted correlational research design because of its strengths in explaining the phenomenon at different stages of the study. There is no influence from any extraneous variable because the design enables the researcher to assess, measure, and understand the relationship between two variables. Also, provides a multifaceted approach for data collection that gives a wider view of the information. Additionally, it provides a unique form of data collection by examining life experiences, which are crucial in observing the impact that governance practices have on the performance of the county government. Correlational design also was helpful in the study during the analysis stage by presenting the possibility of errors and subjectivity at an early stage. This enables the researcher to have a proactive decision on how to handle the errors (Saldaña, 2015).

This methodology suited the existing study since it enabled the scholar to understand the changes in lifestyle and behaviors of the citizens in Marsabit and Makueni Counties by giving them the chance to express their assessments and opinions about the performance of the government through a questionnaire and during interviews. Additionally, the design allowed for a comparative methodology between the county government performance and the governance practices using both quantitative and qualitative paradigms adopted by the study (Hyun, 2015).

3.2. Target Population

The target population in this study focused on County Government Official: County Executive Committee members (CECs); Chief Officers (Cos); County Directors, Community leaders and heads of special and interest groups (Youth Groups, Women Groups, Business community, Special Interest groups and Persons with disabilities) in Makueni and Marsabit counties.

Respondents	Makueni	Marsabit	Total
County Executive Committee members (CECs)	10	10	20
Chief Officers (Cos)	14	16	30
County Directors)	14	16	30
Community leaders	60	40	100
Heads of groups	150	150	300
Total	248	232	480

Table 1: Target Population

3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for the study was calculated using the Yamane (1967) which provided a simplified formula of calculating the sample sizes (Singh &Masuku, 2014). The formula assumes a 95% confidence level and a P value of equal to 0.5. The formula is as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size and eare the level of precision. The entire sample size for the study will be given as;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{232}{1 + 232(0.05)^2} = 146.84 \approx 147$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{248}{1 + 248(0.05)^2} = 153.086 \approx 153$$

The sample size of 147 respondents was drawn from Marsabit and 153 from Makueni's study population. The study adopted purposive sampling technique to pick the respondents from the entire population in each of the counties. The distribution of the simple size across the population in the two counties is as illustrated on the table below:

Respondents	Target Population		Sample size $(\frac{T.P}{Total} * 147)$	
	Makueni	Marsabit	Makueni	Marsabit
County Executive Committee members (CECs)	10	10	6	6
Chief Officers (Cos)	14	16	9	10
County Directors)	14	16	9	10
Community leaders	60	40	37	25
Heads of groups	150	150	92	96
Total	248	232	153	147

Table 2: Sampling Frame

3.4. Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study essentially used primary data, which was collected using both self-administered structured questionnaires for quantitative data and interview schedules for qualitative data, which was administered to county government and community leaders' officials since they were the one who were mostly involved in the formulation of the policies and implementation.

Questionnaires are sets of written or printed questions with a choice of answers, developed for the purposes of a survey or statistical study. According to Skarupova (2014), self-administered structured questionnaires allow the researcher to collect more information from the respondents within a shorter period of time and its cost efficient. Additionally, this study adopted the self-administered structured questionnaires because of its practicality in that they can easily be targeted to specific groups of respondents. Bryman (2016) added that most questionnaire providers allow an easy analysis of results and are quantitative in nature

The questionnaire involved both open ended and closed-ended questions. Qualitative data was gathered using the open-ended questions while quantitative data using closed-ended questions. For the open-ended questions, the respondents were expected to provide individual answers; they are a means of getting the respondents opinion and views or explanation of experience. This instrument is essential to the study, in that, it gives room the respondent to have a well thought out answer as well as free it is free from biasedness from the interviewee. A list is provided by the researcher for the closed-ended questionnaires where the respondents were required to choose answers from; they helped the respondents and the study come up with fast decisions to choose from among the several alternatives provided hence enabling easy coding of the information for subsequent analysis. All questions using ordinal, nominal, ratio or Likert scales are considered closed ended. Survey questionnaire was chosen in this study due to its ability to provide an inexpensive, quick, accurate and efficient means of assessing information about a population as well as logical flow of information (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Money, Samouel& Page, 2015).

The questionnaire was sub-divided into different sections. Each section having questions relating to the specific variable for the study, for instance, section relating to responsiveness, and other sections addressing other governance practices. The questions were modified to suit specific respondents, that is, some questions concerning the CECs will not be necessarily be the same as the questions addressed to the community leaders.

Interview schedules constituted a set of open-ended questions prepared to serve as the guide for the interviewers and the researcher. According to Alshenqeeti (2014), interview schedules is very useful in studies that require extensive enquiries and can lead to reliable qualitative data. Also is essential when asking questions related to experience or behaviors of the respondents (Qu &Dumay, 2011). Interview schedules was directed to the executive arm of county government.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The current study analyzed information from all the self-administered structured questionnaires by adopting the deductive approach. The study adopted thematic form of analysis in analyzing the qualitative data. Thematic is useful in qualitative research since it emphasizes on examining themes within data. Thematic method goes past simply counting words or phrases in a text and moves on to identifying implicit and explicit ideas within the data. Coding was done to the data as a way of developing themes within the raw data. Once the qualitative data was coded to numerical form, it was easier to combine all the quantitative data both from secondary and primary sources, and from regression analysis done. Interpretation of these codes included theme frequencies and graphically presenting relationships between different themes.

The empirical analysis of the data was divided into various categories consisting of descriptive statistical analysis; linear regression analysis and the analysis for verifying the hypothesis of the study. Descriptive statistics was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). SPSS is suitable for the study since it enables the analysis and manipulation of highly complex data and more, so it is designed for both interactive and non-interactive (batch) uses.

3.6. Empirical Model

There are a number of models that can be employed in analyzing the quantitative data such as Logit, Probit and Regression models (Hox, Moerbeek& Van de Schoot, 2017). Probit and Logit are used when the dependent variable is dichotomous (Njoroge et al. 2015). However, the current study adopted a Multiple Linear Regression model since the

dependent variable is continuous. Multiple regression models were used in assessing the combined effects of all the independent variables (transparency, accountability, equity and responsiveness) on the dependent variable. Direct regression Model given as;

$Y= \beta_0+\beta_1 A+ \varepsilon$ 3.1

Where, Y is County government Performance, β_0 is beta constant, β_1 is beta coefficient for responsiveness, A is responsiveness, and E is error term

4. Findings and Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The study recorded a response rate of 94.6 percent, with male accounting the largest population of 53 percent. In terms of age groups, majority of the respondents (41 percent) ranged between the age of 30-39 years, followed by those between the age of 40- and 49-years accounting 23 percent. According to the education levels, majority of the respondents had achieved the highest education level of bachelor's degree, accounting 36 percent of the population, followed by those with diploma levels accounting 32 percent, with only 10 percent having master's degree and above. Reviewing the level of education of respondents in the study was important in ensuring the respondents understands the functions of the government and can identify the loopholes related to accountability practices.

In terms of descriptive summary statistics relating to responsivenessgovernances' practices in the county, majority of the residents were in agreement with the statement that responsiveness had influence on performances of a government. In a scale of 1 to 5, (5 – Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree & 1 – Strongly Disagree) respondents were asked to ranked their levels of agreements with the statements provided in Table 3 below.

Statement	Number	Makueni		Marsabit	
		Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev.
Engagement of stakeholders in distribution and allocation of resources	283	3.41	1.026	2.85	0.928
The County responds to citizens complain in a timely manner	284	2.92	1.089	2.86	0.965
The County adequately balances stakeholders demand	284	3.33	1.075	2.73	0.871
Continuously assess citizen satisfaction	284	3.12	1.126	2.84	0.906
Community participation in decision making	284	3.26	1.026	2.9	0.89
Relevance of projects to people's needs	284	3.46	1.12	3.16	0.708
Aggregate scores		3.25	1.077	2.89	0.878

Table 3: Responsiveness Descriptive Statistics
Source: Field Data (2020)

The descriptive analysis results for 284 respondents on responsiveness in line of duty statements show that the aggregate mean score was 3.07 (mean score of 3.25 in Makueni and a mean of 2.89 in Marsabit county) and the aggregate standard deviation was 0.9775 (1.077 in Makueni and 0.878 in Marsabit) showing that the respondents agree that responsiveness affect the performance.

The mean values of items under consideration range from 2.73 and 3.46. Relevance of projects to people's needs had the highest mean of 3.46 and 3.16 (Makueni and Marsabit respectively) and standard deviation of 1.12 and 0.708 (Makueni and Marsabit respectively), which is an indication that respondents agreed to the statement. The second item was about the engagement of stakeholders in distribution and allocation of resources, which had a moderate agreement as presented by a mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 1.026; however, it was lower in Marsabit with a mean moderate score of 2.85. The lowest rank item was concerned about the county responds to citizens complain in a timely manner whereby the respondents disagreed.

The results also show values range of standard deviation from 0.708 to 1.126. The low variability attest that the respondents view the undertakings considered for gauging responsiveness almost equally. The narrow variability prove that the aggregate sample mean is a reliable and stable estimator of the population mean and is very applicable when making final conclusions of the performance of Makueni and Marsabit County Governments of Kenya.

In conclusion, the low variability of responses proves that the relevance some projects to people's needs is minimal, and that indicates the lack of sufficient and comprehensive public engagement in identification of projects. This proves to be an essential practice affecting the performance of Makueni and Marsabit County Governments of Kenya.

4.2. Empirical Results

This study applied linear regression analysis to scrutinize effects of corporate governance practices on performance of Makueni and Marsabit County Governments of Kenya. In this case, accountability, transparency, equity, and responsiveness were regressed on performance.

Goodness of Fit	Test Statistic	P-value	
Adjusted R-squared	0.751		
F-statistics	72.081	0.000	
Dependent Variable = Performance	Linear Regression Results		
	Coefficients	t-statistics	P-value
Responsiveness	0.136	3.432	0.001*
(Constant)	0.134	1.461	0.095**
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square
Regression	76.771	3	4.567
Residual	24.948	276	0.036
Total	101.718	276	
a. *Significant at 5% level; **Significant at 10%			
b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness			

Table 4: Results of Regression Analysis
Source: Field Data (2020)

The estimated coefficient of the model is summarized in the equation below.
Performance = 0.134+ 0.136Responsiveness

Table 4 shows that the adjusted R-square is 75.1%, meaning that the independent variable (responsiveness) explains approximately 75 percent of variations in the dependent variable, while the rest are explained by other variables not included in the model. Therefore, the model can reliably be used to test the effects responsiveness on the performances of the counties. Hence, responsiveness is significant in explaining variations in county performance. The constant in the model is positive and F statistic significant 72.081, t-statistic of 1.461 and P value = 0.095 < 0.10.

4.2.1. Effect of Responsiveness on County Government Performance

The study aimed to substantiate the effect of responsiveness practices on the performance of County Governments in Marsabit and Makueni Counties. The regression analysis results in Table 4.13 established that responsiveness is significant at 0.136, and P-value of 0.001 < 0.050. This implies that there is a positive relationship between performances and responsiveness practices. This means that at 95% confidence level, responsiveness practices affect the performance of Makueni and Marsabit County Governments of Kenya in a positive way. It is also evidenced that, an increase in a single unit of responsiveness practices will lead to 0.136 increases in performance. Hence, it can be concluded that responsiveness affects the performance of Makueni and Marsabit County Governments of Kenya.

The findings are in line with the results provided by Bratton (2012) study, which showed responsiveness as a key contributor of citizen perceptions of local government performance. The argument was also, criticized by Rumbul (2016), which disagreed with the opinion of Bratton, that responsiveness is the only indicator for better performances, instead Rumbul's study added that openness and online participation influences performances in the local governments.

According to Finch and Omolo (2015), building sub-national government responsiveness and performance needs a deliberate effort to link county government with the public so as address their needs and preferences adequately. Therefore, the current study has factored in several other corporate governances' factors that influence performances of a government including the assessing the policy frameworks established to enhance responsiveness by the county government.

This further supports the results derived by Internal Budget Partnership in their study, which showed that most counties in Kenya are not doing extensive public participation especially in budget making process and a result the concerns and needs from the citizens are not being met. It also affirms the World Bank report of 2016, which reported success story of public participation in Makueni County. However, public participation still faces a number of challenges, such as low levels of civic education and inadequate support from the political class.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Policy Implications

5.1. Summary and Conclusions

Project relevance, timely response by government to the public needs and efficient utilization of resources remains a challenge among the County Governments despite the availability of best and modern corporate governance practices. The study sought to establish how responsiveness affects the County Governments' performance, a case study for Marsabit and Makueni County Governments. Responsiveness had a significant effect on the County Governments' performance, hence rejecting the null hypothesis. The findings indicated that if different stakeholders engaged more often-on matters concerning distribution and allocation of resources, it would enable diversify of funds and resources across different sectors and ministries in the County Government. Continuous assessing the project relevance and shareholders needs enabled County Government to have current knowledge on emerging initiatives, and changes in political, regulatory,

social, and environmental issues, which influenced performance. The results indicated that establishing stakeholder's demands, concerns enabled more often, and timely response to their needs, hence promoting performance.

Therefore, the study inferred these findings and concluded that responsiveness as a governance practice has a statistically significant effect on the performance of a county government. In addition, the study concludes that effective public participation through-out the government development actions enhances government performances directly since it enables the government address the public needs on time and avoid implementation of projects which are less impactful or relevant to the public needs at that moment.

5.2. Policy Implications

There is need for the government to emphasize the need to ensure resource allocations are shared strictly in adherences to county integrated development plans and annual development plans, developed through public participation to ensure responsiveness is enhanced across all government functions.Further, there is need for the counties to prioritize the public desires and ensure there is a strong monitoring and evaluation system for key development projects implemented in the counties. In addition, there should be timely delivery of service, timely response to the public demands, follow-ups and addressing the public demands.

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