

# EFFECT OF LEADER ACCOUNTABILITY ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS IN KENYA: A CASE OF SIAYA COUNTY

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**Abstract:** In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, inadequate political accountability and transparency, coupled with ineptitude leadership and bad governance remain a major challenge in many nations and more often than not, it has led to political unrest. To deal with political unrest, economic empowerment is unavoidable and it depends on the accountability of political leaders. This study sought to effect of leader accountability on economic empowerment of low income households in Siaya County. A descriptive design was applied in the study. The population for this study was 166,460 households in Siaya County. The study employed quota random sampling with each constituency in Siaya County having an equitable share of sampled households depending on the number of households. This method led to a sample of 384 households. The study used primary data which was both quantitative and qualitative. This data was collected through semi structured questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed through statistical tools which generated frequency distributions, percentages and mean scores. The analyzed data was presented using charts, graphs and tables. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic summary analysis and presented through prose. The study found that leaders in Siaya County are not generally accountable to the electorate for their actions. Leader accountability is important since leaders are given authority by the electorate. In addition, leaders in the county were seen to lack in transparency, communication of policy decisions, poor in teamwork, poor in relationship building, and lacking in personal effectiveness. This lack of openness and accountability to the residents of the county was perceived by the residents to contribute to poor economic advancement of the county. The study recommends that leaders should be accountable to their followers and electorate. The electorate also should demand accountability from their leaders. This can be done through having proper channels of communication between the leaders and electorate and also ensuring that best practices are always followed. Leaders should be transparent and open in their dealings. They should also have the ability to consistently exercise good and clear communication. On the sender side of leadership communications, the ability to articulate ideas and vision, inspire, provide feedback, espouse practical philosophies and values - are all necessities. The electorate should look for such qualities in selecting leaders.

**Keywords:** Accountability, Economic Empowerment, Political Leaders.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Economic empowerment is the capacity of individuals to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007). Economic empowerment increases access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. Economic empowerment is one way of dealing with political instabilities and unrests.

Political unrest has been reported in many parts of the world. There have been long protests and violent clashes between protesters and authorities mostly in 2011. Globally, this has been reported in the Arab world including countries such as Bahrain, Yemen and Syria. In Africa, there have been uprising in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The political and social unrest that began in Tunisia at the end of 2010 swept across the entire Arab world. The unrest forced the Tunisian president to flee abroad. The Egyptian President announced his resignation. The Gaddafi regime was overthrown with the aid of the West's military intervention. The Bahrain protests calmed only temporarily after Saudi Arabia and the UAE sent troops (Huihou, 2012). The Yemeni President handed over "power" in exchange for "immunity", but the situation in Yemen still remains complex and unpredictable. The United States and other Western powers were behind the Syrian opposition. These uprisings are seen as the answer from the low and middle income earners to the poor leadership in those regions which culminated to poor economic conditions.

In Kenya, there were protests reported after party nominations in the run up to the general election of 2013. Protesters were protesting against the incumbent crop of leaders who they claimed were rigged in even after they voted them out. These protesters were usually the low income households who were of the opinion that their low economic status were brought by poor leadership of these incumbents. Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party nominations were marred with chaos and malpractices forcing some voters in various counties in Nyanza region to have mass protests. In Siaya County, there were chaos and alleged manipulation of the ODM nomination exercise with section of youths participating in mass protests in roads and streets (Burrows, 2013). This protestation was a clear signal that the voters mostly the low income earners see a clear cause and effect relationship between leadership and their economic status.

The notion of leader is divided into ordinary, innovative and visionary. The line between innovative and visionary is not so easy to determine. Visionary leadership is far more readily achieved in specific domains (e.g. particular arts or sciences), or in specific institutions like universities or corporations than in the guidance of an entire society. Leadership must not be confused with status, power and official authority. High status given by somebody does not guarantee the ability to lead (Tuulik & Alas, 2009). The same is true with power – leaders always have some measure of power rooted in their capacity to persuade, but many people with power (derived from money or from the capacity to inflict harm, or from control of something or somebody, or through military power, or from access to the media) are without leadership gifts. Leadership requires major expenditures of effort and energy – more than most people care to make.

Political leaders are supposed to understand the hopes and aspirations of the people and identify the goals of the society (Peele, 2005). They are then expected to work on the hopes and aspirations of their followers through passing legislation, mobilizing resources and inspiring them to work towards their vision (Crane et al, 2004). Political leaders are also expected to formulate a vision of the country's future and specifically the region they represent. They acquire or develop the capacity to mobilize the people to achieve the common societal goal.

Elgie (1995) observed that political leaders are expected to have certain attributes in order to be effective as leaders. One of these attributes is leader's accountability. In leadership roles, accountability is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance, and implementation within the scope of the role or employment position and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resulting consequences.

Siaya County has a poverty level of 57.9 % against a country average of 46% (Suri et al, 2009). The resources that can be utilized in Siaya are agricultural land, fisheries, indigenous Forests, rivers and timber. Siaya has many tourist attractions including Lake Kanyaboli, Lake Victoria, Ndanu falls and Yala Swamp. Main economic activities in Siaya include subsistence farming, fishing, livestock rearing, small scale enterprise and rice farming. Though Siaya is endowed with many resources, its populace continues to languish in poverty. This study sought to establish the relationship that exists between the economic development of the area and leadership.

Siaya County is located in Nyanza area in Kenya. It borders Busia County to the North-West, Kakamega County to the North-East, Vihiga and Kisumu County to the East and Lake Victoria to the South. This county has had mostly the same leaders from the advent of multiparty politics. ODM is the major political party in the county. However, the recent ODM nominations saw protests where voters did not want to retain the incumbent leaders and claimed they wanted change in leadership (Aluru, 2013). This indicates that the masses see a direct relationship between leadership and their economic status. This study sought to find out how leaders' accountability affects economic empowerment of low income households in Siaya County.

### Statement of the Problem

Leadership is a complex process by which persons in power influence their followers, civil society and wider public to accomplish societal goals. Political leaders are necessary for initiating as well as for hastening the process of change in any society. It may be social and/or economic change, constitutional change or political change. In all these processes of change, political leadership plays an important role. Political leaders carry out the process of change by applying their leadership attributes like politically relevant beliefs, socially adored values, generally approved character, wide knowledge and wisdom acquired through learning and experience.

Theory indicates that good leadership structures should be able to deliver economic development of the society (Ruscio, 2004). Weak governance and leadership structures have detrimental effects on economic welfare and income growth. This suggests that a lack of effective leadership can reduce the long-term benefits to the citizen. Political and social unrest seen in the Arab world and in Kenya after disputed party nominations is an open and neutral concept. There are many goals for these protests, and the direction of development remains unclear. The outbreak has distinct features of unpredictability and grassroots. There is no unified and clear agenda, nor were these protests initiated by a political party or group. However, what is evident from these protests is the unified approach by the protesters on their march against the status quo leadership. The protest mainly had a common theme that the leaders who have been occupying positions of power in the past have not performed well to improve the economic situation of the areas affected. The protests were therefore aimed at changing the leadership and probably changing the economic development of the affected areas. This study therefore sought to investigate the link between the leader accountability and economic empowerment of the specific area of Siaya County.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** *Leader accountability has a significant influence on economic empowerment of low income households in Siaya County*

### Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories, namely; principal–agent theory and accountability theory.

#### Principal–agent theory

The principal–agent problem, in political science and economics, occurs when one person or entity (the "agent") is able to make decisions on behalf of, or that impact, another person or entity: the "principal". This dilemma exists in circumstances where the agent is motivated to act in his own best interests, which are contrary to those of the principal, and is an example of moral hazard (Poth & Selck, 2009). Common examples of this relationship include corporate management (agent) and shareholders (principal), or politicians (agent) and voters (principal) (Gailmard & Jenkins, 2009).

The problem arises where the two parties have different interests and asymmetric information (the agent having more information), such that the principal cannot directly ensure that the agent is always acting in his (the principal's) best interest, particularly when activities that are useful to the principal are costly to the agent, and where elements of what the agent does are costly for the principal to observe (moral hazard and conflict of interest). Often, the principal may be sufficiently concerned at the possibility of being exploited by the agent that he chooses not to enter into the transaction at all, when it would have been mutually beneficial: a suboptimal outcome that can lower welfare overall. The deviation from the principal's interest by the agent is called "agency costs" (Poth & Selck, 2009).

Analysis and evaluation of public accountability requires a specification of who is (or is supposed to be) accountable to whom. This is a core ingredient of principal-agent theory. In principal-agent models, some actor (or group of actors) called an agent undertakes an action on behalf of another actor (or group of actors) called a principal. The principal, for its part, can make decisions that affect the incentives of the agent to take any of its various possible actions (Gailmard & Jenkins, 2009). This process of structuring incentives for the agent is the central focus of principal agent theory. The decisions made by the principal that structure the agent's incentives to take various actions constitute a contract, in the language of principal-agent theory, and principal-agent theory is often taken as a specific area of contract theory more generally.

In Siaya County, the political leaders are agents and the community members are the principals. A problem occurs when political leaders forget about their promises and responsibilities to the community and focus on their own self-interest. This leads to low economic empowerment and hence high levels of poverty.

### **Accountability Theory**

As explained by Vance, Lowry and Eggett (2015), accountability theory explains how the perceived need to justify one's behaviors to another party causes one to consider and feel accountable for the process by which decisions and judgments have been reached. In turn, this perceived need to account for a decision-making process and outcome increases the likelihood that one will think deeply and systematically about one's procedural behaviors. This theory was originally developed by Tetlock and Lerner and has been effectively applied in organizational research.

Importantly, as explained carefully by Vance, Lowry, and Eggett (2013), a useful way to understand accountability is to distinguish between its two most prevalent uses: as a virtue and as a mechanism. As a virtue, accountability is seen as a quality in which a person displays a willingness to accept responsibility, a desirable trait in public officials, government agencies, or firms; hence, in this use, accountability is a positive feature of an entity. As a mechanism, accountability is seen as a process in which a person has a potential obligation to explain his or her actions to another party who has the right to pass judgment on the actions as well as to subject the person to potential consequences for his or her actions. Accountability theory focuses on the process of accountability.

Accountability theory proposes several mechanisms that increase accountability perceptions. For example, "even the simplest accountability manipulation necessarily implicates several empirically distinguishable sub-manipulations", includes the presence of another person, identifiability, and expectation of evaluation (Romzek, LeRoux & Blackmar, 2012). Identifiability is a person's knowledge that his outputs could be linked to him" and thus reveals his/her true identity (Fox & Shotts, 2009). Expectation of evaluation is the belief that one's "performance will be assessed by another [party] according to some normative ground rules and with some implied consequences. Awareness of monitoring is a leader's state of active cognition that his/her system-related work is monitored. Social presence is the awareness of other users in the system.

## **2. EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

In a democracy, accountability is the ability of a leader being answerable to the electorate for his/her actions. The electorate on the other hand should possess the ability to punish or reward the leader in political elections. Accountability in leadership has been found to be of paramount importance in predicting whether the leader will deliver or not. Being accountable according to a study by Forgie and DeRosa (2010) have a strong effect on the results. Forgie and DeRosa established that demonstrating accountability builds trust between the leader and the followers and the result is success. The study further revealed that leaders at all levels should demonstrate some behaviour that make them effective and top of the list was accountability.

Grimshaw et al (2006) established that leaders become accountable if some factors are present in their positions. The leaders do what is expected and what is needed if the expectations from the stakeholders are clear, reasonable and credible. In some cases, stakeholders of an organization or citizenry in a country or community may provide unreasonable expectations which the leader perceive to be incredible. This will make the leader to start exhibiting secrecy and unopenness. Leaders also exhibit accountability if they expect that rewards will emanate from good results while punishment will arise after poor performance. Further, Huque (2011) found that increasing accountability in the public sector makes the sector more efficient in meeting their responsibilities of developing the community.

Christensen and Skaerbaek (2007) observed that failure to cultivate accountability makes leaders lax, corrupt and ineffective. Leaders also become accountable when elections to public office are fair and credible. When leaders know that they will be answerable to the electorate, this makes them more accountable due to fear of retaliation from the electorate. This in turn increases the effectiveness of leaders in such a society (Lee, 2005). This study hypothesized that leaders who are accountable to the electorate are more effective in influencing the economic empowerment of the low income households in Siaya County. The study also hypothesized that holding credible elections or nominations in Siaya County influences accountability of leaders. This indicates that having poor nomination exercises lessens accountability of leaders since the leaders know that they will rig themselves in.

Political leaders or organizational leaders who understand that their performance will determine future state of being a leader or not are usually more inclined to be accountable (Tuulik & Alas, 2009). Having clear performance targets, clear consensus on the outcome of good or bad results and having a system that follows meritocracy forces the leader to have the best performance (Shibru & Darshan, 2011). Political leaders in effective democracies know that they will face the electorate every four or five years and hence account to their electorate clearly and regularly. Leaders who are

accountable also exhibit a better performance than those leaders who are not accountable (Hassan *et al*, 2013). Accountability and openness lessens the chances of abuse of power or following of suboptimal or selfish goals. This study hypothesized that those leaders that are accountable in Siaya County are more effectible in enhancing the economic empowerment of the low income households in Siaya County. Those leaders that are not accountable are hypothesized to contribute poorly towards economic empowerment of low income households in Siaya County.

### Conceptual Framework

The study aimed at ascertaining the prospects of budget making, transparency and regulations on the process of public finance and administration and the possible outcome on economic empowerment of low income households in Siaya County.

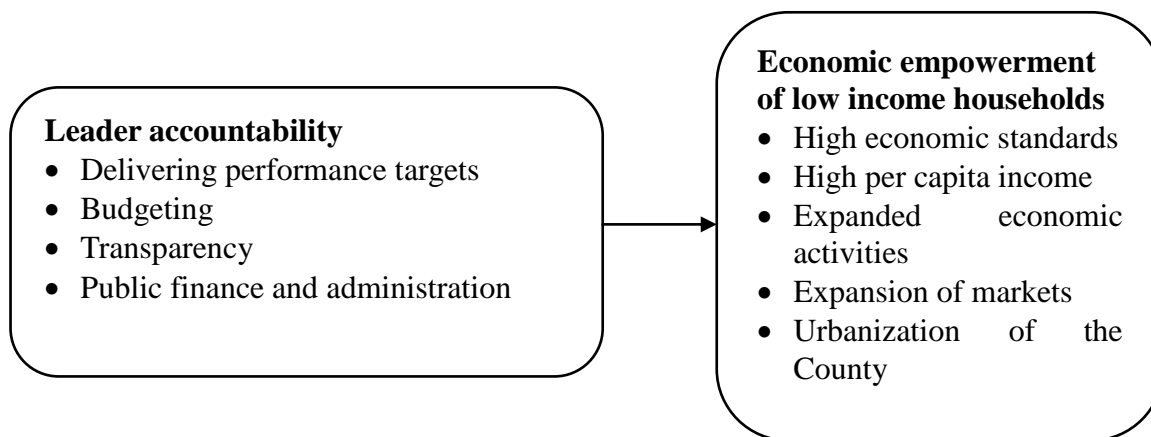


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive design. The design was a survey of the households in Siaya County. The survey involved a description of how leadership in Siaya County has contributed to the economic empowerment of the low income households. This was a questionnaire survey aimed at collecting views and experiences from the household heads in the county. The descriptive design was selected due to how it fits the study. This design is applicable when the study involves giving an account of the state of affairs in relation to the variables under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This study design is appropriate in a study like this one when the researcher wants to prove or disprove a theory or give information that may be important in theory building, planning and decision making. Bryman and Cramer (2012) indicated that a descriptive design is appropriate to enable the researcher obtain information concerning the current status of the variables under study and to describe the situation as is with respect to variables or conditions in the situation. In a descriptive design, the researcher has no control on the research variables. Cooper and Schindler (2006) also advocated the use of descriptive design in social science and business research since it portrays an accurate profile of persons, events or situations.

The population of interest in this study was all the low households in Siaya County. Every household was taken as a sample unit while subjects who participated in the survey were the household heads. Siaya County has a population of 842,304 and 166,460 households (CRA, 2012). The 166,460 households was the population for this study. The households were taken as the data unit due to the homogenous nature of the economic wellbeing and political feelings of a family unit. The family was the unit of analysis and the household head was the subject in the unit.

The study employed quota random sampling with each constituency in Siaya County having an equitable share of sampled households depending on the number of households. This method of sampling is considered realistic since random sampling technique cannot be possible due to the lack of a sampling frame with all the members of the population.

The number of households to participate in the survey was drawn from the study population of 166,460 households. The sample size was 384 households determined according to the sampling table provided by (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The determined sample of 384 respondents was distributed as indicated in Table 1.



**Table 1: Sample Size**

Constituency	No. of Households	Sample size (0.23%)
Ugenya	21,786	50
Ugunja	16,674	38
Alego Usonga	37,449	87
Gem	32,135	74
Bondo	31,504	73
Rarieda	26,912	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,460</b>	<b>384</b>

The study involved collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to attain the research objectives and answer the research questions. Quantitative data collected included data on earnings per month and other quantitative measures of economic empowerment (Creswell, 2006). Qualitative data was collected on the variables that were not quantifiable and included experiences and perceptions of leader commitment and their perceived effect on economic empowerment. The study also collected only primary data. This data was collected through self-administered semi-structured questionnaires. These questionnaires were administered to the selected subjects at their places of residence.

The questionnaires were administered randomly to subjects in each constituency until the quota of the constituency in question was exhausted. The researcher gave the respondent a few hours to fill the questionnaire and collected it later in the day or the following day. The questionnaire was made as light and as simple as possible to reduce the effort required in answering the items. This increased the response rate on the questionnaire items. The questionnaire had both open ended and closed questions being semi structured in nature. The questionnaire was used since it was easy to administer and covers a wide population with the data obtained easy to analyze (Glicken, 2008).

Data collected for the purposes of the study was in narratives, nominal, ordinal and ratio scales. Data in nominal and ordinal scales was analyzed through descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions and percentages. This was to summarize the data in a way that the different categories were evident. Data that was in prose or in note form was collected through open questions where the respondents had freedom to respond in any way they saw right. This data was analyzed through thematic summary analysis where the themes in the answers were separated and narrated. Quantitative data on economic measures of the respondents and the likert type question responses were analyzed through statistical tools which determined the mean scores (Greener, 2008). This analysis determined the relationship between the different leadership variables and their effect on economic empowerment of the low income households in Siaya County. The analyzed data was presented using charts, graphs and tables. Qualitative data collected from open questions was analyzed through thematic summary analysis. This involved arranging the data according to the various thematic issues and interpreting the data according to the major issues respondents indicated. The data was then presented in prose.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 384 questionnaires distributed to all the selected households in Siaya County out of which 217 were filled and collected which translated to 57% response rate. According to Punch (2003), a response rate of above 50% for paper questionnaires is good and adequate for serving the research purpose. The questionnaires were coded and data entered in Software Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) which generated frequencies, percentages and mean scores which were then presented in tables and graphs.

##### Age of Respondents

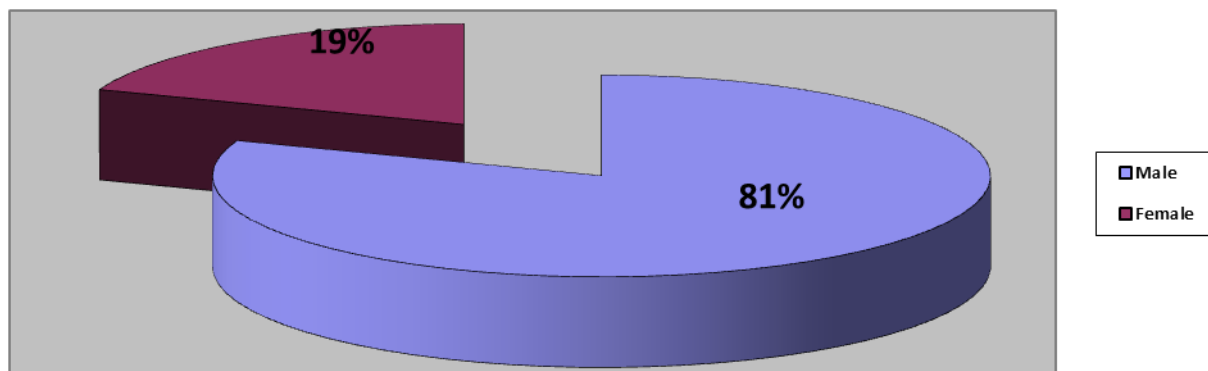
The study sought to know the age distribution of the respondents. The age distribution is presented in Table 2. Study results indicated that 26% of the respondents were aged between 36 and 45 years while 13% were aged above 65 years. These findings indicate that majority of the households in Siaya County are headed by middle aged adults.

**Table 2: Age of Respondents**

Years	Frequency	Percent
Below 25 years	14	6
26 - 35 years	51	24
36 - 45 years	57	26
46 – 55 years	41	19
56 – 65 years	25	12
Above 65 years	13	6
No Response	16	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>

### Gender of Respondents

The study was aimed at household heads in Siaya County. Gender of respondents in the study was investigated. The results indicated that 81% of the respondents were male with 19% being female. This portrays a highly patriarchal society where most household heads are male. These findings agree with findings from Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (2011) which established that seven out of every ten households are headed by males. The findings are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Gender of Respondents**

### Number of Members in the Household

The study sought to determine how many members each household had. Respondents were required to indicate the number of household members who were living with them at the time of this study. Results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Number of Household Members**

Number of members	Frequency	Percent
3	14	6
4	22	10
5	39	18
6	56	26
7	29	13
8	23	11
10	16	7
11	8	4
Non response	10	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in Table 3 indicate that 26% of the respondents indicated that their households had 6 members while 8 indicated that their households had 11 members. This results agree with the findings from KIHBS (2011) which established that Kenya has a mean household size of 5.1 persons. The modal family size in this study was 6. This indicates that households surveyed in Siaya County fit well to the typical households in Kenya.

### Revenue for the Household

The study further sought to determine how much revenue each household surveyed commanded. This was aimed at establishing the economic empowerment of the households. The findings were presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Revenue for the Household**

Amount in Ksh per month	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5000	92	42
5000 - 9999	43	20
10,000 – 14,999	26	12
15,000 – 19,999	19	9
20,000 and above	12	5
No response	25	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings as presented in Table 4, indicate that 42% of the households had a household income of below Ksh 5000 with 5% indicating to have an income of above Ksh. 20,000. This indicates households with incomes being skewed to the lower incomes indicating a region with modal income of Ksh 5000. This indicates an income distribution of a region that poverty is high.

### Political Leader’s Effectiveness

The study sought to establish how the respondents rated their political leaders on effectiveness. Respondents were required to rate effectiveness of their political leaders on a scale of being very effective, effective or ineffective. The rating was to apply to leaders who occupied positions before the 2013 elections. The results were as presented in Table 5.

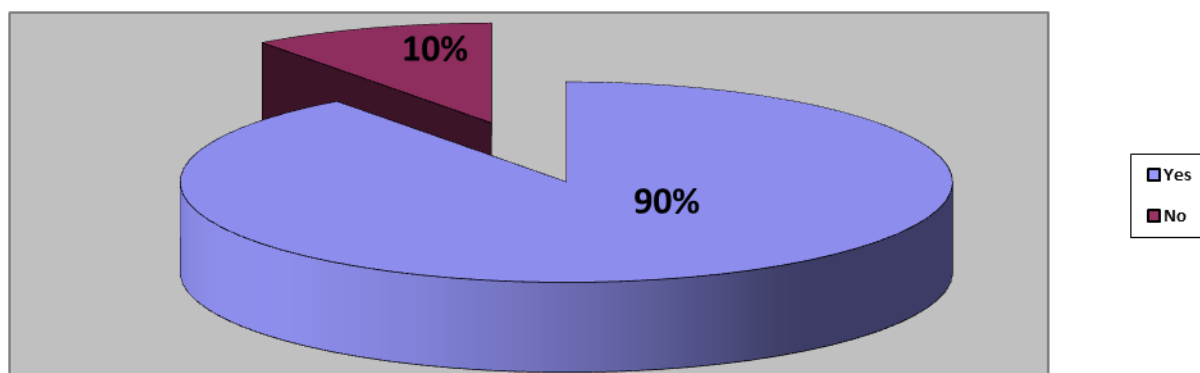
**Table 5: Effectiveness of Political Leaders**

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	18	8
Effective	35	16
Ineffective	125	58
Don’t know	39	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>

The study results indicated that 58% of the respondents rated their leaders as being ineffective with 8% rating their leaders as very effective. These findings indicate a community where the political leaders are seen as ineffective by the electorate.

### Effect of Political Leadership on economic empowerment

Respondents were also required to indicate their view on whether political leadership affected their economic empowerment. The results were as presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Effect of Political Leadership on economic empowerment**

From the findings, 90% of the household heads viewed political leadership in the county as affecting the economic empowerment of the household with 10% having different views. This indicates that people in the county relate leadership with economic development and hence view poor leadership to bring poor economic development and good leadership to bring advance in economic development.

### Accountability of Leaders

The study sought to establish whether political leaders in Siaya County were accountable and how this accountability affected economic empowerment of the area. The study also investigated several components of accountability and established how leaders in the county faired in all of them based on the perception of the respondents. First, the study sought to establish whether the leaders were accountable. Results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Accountability of Leaders**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	15
No	185	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>



Results as presented in Table 6 indicate that 85% of those who responded viewed their leaders as lacking in accountability with 15% having the perception that their leaders were accountable. This implies that most of the leaders in Siaya County were lacking in accountability.

### Leader Accountability and Economic Empowerment

The study sought to assess the effect of leader accountability on the economic empowerment of Siaya County households. Respondents were required to indicate how they agreed with the statements provided on the effect of accountability of leaders on economic empowerment of citizens of Siaya County. Rating was on a scale of 1 – 5 where the scale used was as follows: 1- Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree and 5 - Strongly agree. Responses were analyzed using mean scores where mean scores were interpreted as follows. Means score of below 1.5 - Strongly disagree, 1.5 – 2.5 – Disagree, 2.5 – 3.5 – Neutral, 3.5 – 4.5 – Agree and above 4.5 - Strongly agree. Analysis of study results is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Accountability and economic empowerment**

Statement	Mean score
Leaders in the county are always accountable in whatever they do in relation to the county	1.43
The leaders in the county are more accountable which have made them to deliver on economic development of the county	1.67
The elections held in the county are always free and fair and the people elect their desired leaders	1.47
Leaders in the county are not corrupt which have made them effective on developing the county economically	1.96
Leaders in the county deliver on their performance targets and promises	1.45
Leaders in the county do not abuse power or follow goals that do not benefit the county	2.19

Table 7 presents results indicate that respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that ‘Leaders in the county are always accountable in whatever they do in relation to the county’ (Mean=1.43) and also strongly disagreed with the statement that ‘Leaders in the county deliver on their performance targets and promises’ (Mean=1.45). The study results also showed strong disagreement to the statement that ‘The elections held in the county are always free and fair and the people elect their desired leaders’ (Mean=1.47). There was disagreement observed to the statement that ‘The leaders in the county are more accountable which have made them to deliver on economic development of the county’ (Mean=1.67) and also to the statement that ‘Leaders in the county are not corrupt which have made them effective on developing the county economically’ (Mean=1.96). These results indicate that the leaders are not out-rightly accountable, are corrupt and elections held in the area are not usually free and fair. This lack of accountability by leaders partly explains why the area is poor economically and households are not economically empowered.

## 5. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The study sought to establish whether political leaders in Siaya County were accountable and how this accountability affected economic empowerment of the area. Study results in table 4.7 indicates that 85% of those who responded viewed their leaders as lacking in accountability with 15% having the perception that their leaders had integrity. Further results indicated that leaders in the county are usually not accountable in whatever they do in relation to the county. Results also indicated that leaders in the county usually fail to deliver on their performance targets and promises. Study results also showed that the elections held in the county are not usually free and fair and the people are not granted their right to elect their desired leaders. This lack of accountable, the results showed, have made the leaders unable to deliver on economic development of the county.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study also concludes that leaders in Siaya County are not generally accountable to the electorate for their actions. Leader accountability is important since leaders are given authority by the electorate. Leaders in the county were seen to lack in transparency, communication of policy decisions, poor in teamwork, poor in relationship building, and lacking in personal effectiveness. This lack of openness and accountability to the residents of the county was perceived by the residents to contribute to poor economic advancement of the county.

The study recommends that leaders should be accountable to their followers and electorate. The electorate also should demand accountability from their leaders. This can be done through having proper channels of communication between the leaders and electorate and also ensuring that best practices are always followed. Leaders should be transparent and open in their dealings. They should also have the ability to consistently exercise good and clear communication. On the sender side of leadership communications, the ability to articulate ideas and vision, inspire, provide feedback, espouse practical philosophies and values - are all necessities. The electorate should look for such qualities in selecting leaders.

#### **Areas for Further studies**

This study was limited to Siaya County and hence its findings cannot be generalized to other Counties in Kenya. The study therefore recommends further studies on the effect of leader accountability on economic empowerment of low income households in other Counties in Kenya. The study found that leaders in Siaya County were lacking accountability. The study suggests that further studies should be conducted on the effect of leaders' accountability on the voting behavior of community members in Kenya.

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