

Effect of Public Participation on Service Delivery in Bungoma County Government

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Abstract: The county governments were designed to enhance service delivery by bringing power and resources closer to the local citizens. However, this dream might not be achieved if the reported rampant corruption in the County Governments is not addressed. Notably, procurement has been at the center of most corruption scandals with procurement cases accounting for 8 in 10 corruption scandals, despite the series of reforms that have been initiated over the years to streamline public procurement. The objective of the study is to establish the effect of public participation on service delivery in Bungoma County Government. The study adopts a descriptive research design to conduct the study across a target population of 77 employees working in four key departments in the county government of Bungoma; Procurement, Finance, ICT and Monitoring and Evaluation. The study adopts the census technique to incorporate all the target employees in the four departments. The study relies on both primary and secondary sources of data that include published and unpublished sources and materials. Primary data will be collected using questionnaires administered through drop and pick method. Secondary data will be collected from previously published and unpublished reports and documents. Qualitative data from the secondary sources will be analyzed using content analysis and presented in prose form. Quantitative data will be analyzed using SPSS to make conclusions. On the basis of these conclusions, the study will make policy recommendations on the way forward in relation to how best to achieve public participation with regards to local governance.

Keywords: Public participation, Service Delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to determine the effect of public participation on service delivery in Bungoma County Government. Public Participation is the extent to which citizens and the general public engage in the planning, budgeting and oversight of the activities of the national and county governments. The aim of public participation is to improve transparency and accountability in procurement and financial processes (PPDA, 2015). The level of public participation can be measured through assessing the county's budget allocation for public participation, assessing the frequency of public hearings, assessing the available feedback mechanisms that can be used by the public and assessing the frequency of availing procurement documents to the public.

1.1 Background of study

It is difficult to give detailed information about public procurement reforms across all areas of the globe because the world does not have global public procurement standards. However, a common trend can be noted across areas of the world with public procurement (Thai, 2001). Governments have the mandate to perform four major economic activities regarding public financial management. The government provides the regulatory structure for economic undertakings, redistributes income via taxes and expenditure, and provides public goods such as infrastructure and public safety for its citizens and to purchase public goods, services and capital assets.

Service delivery is a crucial and critical responsibility of county governments and government institutions to make sure that the public's welfare is maintained and improved. Service delivery often involves dealings between two parties: a service provider and a client. While the provider offers a either a service or information, the client anticipates finding

value from the service provision. As per the new constitution of 2010, good service delivery is anticipated to provide the public with value so as to capture the benefits of the devolved services.

The public procurement process is paramount for effective service delivery. With the creation of Kenya's 47 counties came the domestication of the public procurement reforms made at the national level at the county level through the county government regulations of 2013. As the funds and decision-making systems were moved to the local level, the national government became less involved in service delivery to local communities. A significant scope of public procurement work has been transferred to the county governments. Public procurement is now at the core of the governance challenge of ensuring proper service delivery. The regulations were domesticated to ensure that the county government institutions complied with the public procurement reforms to ensure development and proper service delivery to the local residents.

Bungoma County, in particular, has prominently been in the limelight due to issues of procurement malpractice in the wheelbarrow saga and inflation of process of other supplies such as metal hooks, cattle cradles, handle rails and inspection racks (Magudah, 2015). With these malpractices in procurement, there has been widespread misuse of public resources and delays in project implementation thus inhibiting efficient service delivery to the county residents. Other papers have studied the influence of public procurement reforms on service delivery but none has focused on the county government of Bungoma (Thuo & Njeri, 2014 & Mutava, 2010). Besides, only a limited number of the public procurement reforms have been explored leaving the one reforms of interest of in this study unexplored especially in Bungoma County. This is public participation. Therefore, this paper sought to evaluate the effect of public participation on service delivery in the county government of Bungoma.

1.2 Objective of the study

To determine the effect of public participation on service delivery in the county Government of Bungoma

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Agency Theory

Agency theory analyses the effects of contractual behavior between two parties: principal(s) and agent(s). The agency relationship is a contract, under which the principal engages another person (the agent) to perform specific projects on its behalf, delegating decision-making rights. The agency relationship involves the appropriate selection of legal and organizational solutions that reduce the asymmetry of information and/or encourage the agent's activities to be consistent with the principal's expectations (Eisenhardt, 1989). The theory assumes that the two parties namely, principal and agents both have self-interests that motivate them towards certain practices and decisions (Hill & Jones, 1992).

On the broader scale, the county government acts as an agent acting on behalf of the national government (principal) in facilitating service delivery to the citizens. Procurement staff also plays an agent role on behalf of their employer (the county government) in ensuring efficient service delivery to other departments and the locals. This is done through the purchase and provision of public goods and services. Additionally, the county government is entrusted by the public to make decisions and coordinate functions such as housing, planning, construction of roads and social amenities on their behalf.

2.2 Stakeholder Theory

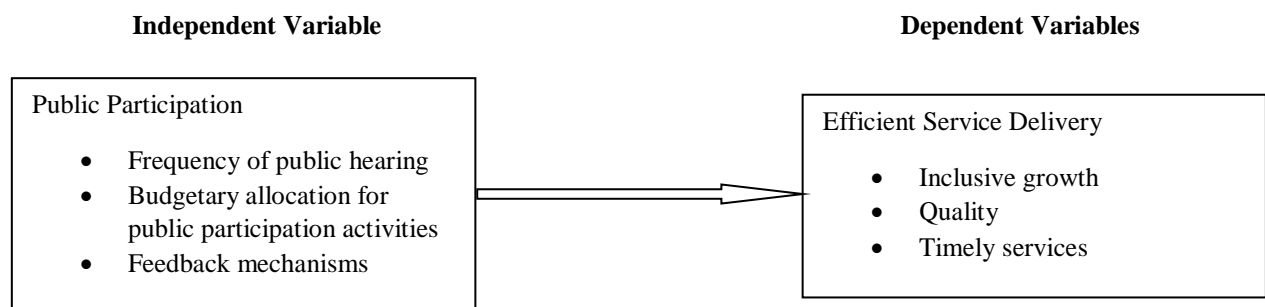
The stakeholder theory is a widely accepted theory first proposed by Edward Freeman (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2010). The theory is based on the assumption that the core reason for doing business is to create value. The shared desire to create value is therefore the reason that brings together various stakeholders. Traditionally, business scholars believed that a company was beholden only to its shareholders. Hence, the business had to create value for the shareholders. Through this theory, Freeman postulates that shareholders are merely one of a business' stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Businesses' stakeholders include everyone affected, involved and invested in the business, and thus, a business' success is tied to the creation of value and satisfaction of all the parties who are stakeholders of the business.

In the context of the county government, the stakeholder theory advocates for the creation of value through efficient service delivery to all its stakeholders. These include three categories of people: those investing in the county government, those affected by activities of the county government and those involved in the activities of the county government (Mugambi & Theuri, 2014). As illustrated by Freeman, the county government is only as successful as the degree to

which it creates value for all these stakeholders (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2010). Thus, as the study sought to assess the influence of public procurement reforms, efficiency of service delivery was assessed from the perception of all its stakeholders.

Public Participation is the extent to which citizens and the general public engage in the planning, budgeting and oversight of the activities of the national and county governments. The aim of public participation is to improve transparency and accountability in procurement and financial processes (PPDA, 2015). The level of public participation can be measured through assessing the county's budget allocation for public participation, assessing the frequency of public hearings, assessing the available feedback mechanisms that can be used by the public and assessing the frequency of availing procurement documents to the public.

2.3 Conceptual Framework



3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to conduct the study across a target population of 77 employees working in four key departments in the county government of Bungoma; Procurement, Finance, ICT and Monitoring and Evaluation. The study adopted the census technique to incorporate all the target employees in the four departments. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data that included published and unpublished sources and materials. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. Secondary data was collected from previously published and unpublished reports and documents. Qualitative data from the secondary sources was analyzed using content analysis and presented in prose form. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS to make conclusions on whether public participation had influenced service delivery in the county government of Bungoma.

The regression equation used to represent public participation and service delivery in the county government of Bungoma was:-

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

β_0 = Constant

Y= Service Delivery

X₁= Public Participation

β_1 = Coefficients of regression for the independent variables X₁ (for i= 1)

e= error term

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Public participation is one of the major reforms contributing to efficient service delivery among the county governments. To measure this, a set of three statements were formulated and the respondents asked to indicate the level of agreement with each of the statements. The results are presented in table 4.1

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics; Public Participation

Statement	Frequency (%)					mean	Std.dev
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. My organization organizes for public hearings where the public can be informed and give feedback on county government procurement	6(8.5)	26(36.6)	25(35.2)	11(15.5)	3(4.2)	3.30	.977
2. My organization sets aside a budgetary allocation for public participation activities for procurement processes	1(1.4)	34(47.9)	24(33.8)	10(14.1)	2(2.8)	3.31	.838
3. My organization has provided feedback mechanism for stakeholders to provide feedback about its procurement processes	2(2.8)	38(53.5)	22(31.0)	8(11.3)	1(1.4)	3.45	.789
Valid listwise 71							
Grand mean = 3.35							

Source: Field Data (2019)

From table 4.1 above, most respondents agreed (36.6%) and were undecided (35.2%) that their organization organized for public hearings to inform the public about public procurement processes. Secondly, majority of the respondents agreed (47.9%) and were neutral (33.8%). More so, the respondents were asked to provide their perception about whether their organization provided feedback mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback about its procurement processes. Majority of the respondents were in agreement (53.5%) and those who were neutral were represented by (31.0%).

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics; Service Delivery

Statement	Frequency (%)					mean	Std.dev
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. The user departments are satisfied with the quality of goods and services are delivered to them	2(2.7)	32(43.8)	31(42.5)	5(6.8)	1(1.4)	3.41	.729
2. Customers are attended to within set deadlines	4(5.5)	47(64.4)	11(15.1)	9(12.3)	2(2.7)	3.58	.905
3. My organization conducts customer satisfaction surveys	3(4.1)	45(61.6)	20(28.2)	9(12.7)	3(4.1)	3.51	.924
4. My organization monitors its compliance with the service charter	5(6.8)	45(61.6)	10(13.7)	8(11.0)	3(4.1)	3.58	.936
5. My organization supports all inclusive growth for all members of the society	2(2.7)	37(50.7)	20(27.4)	8(11.0)	3(4.1)	3.41	.904
Valid listwise 71							
Grand mean = 3.50							

Source: Field Data (2019)

First, the respondents were asked to provide their perception about whether the user departments are satisfied with the quality of goods and services are delivered to them. From table 4.2 above, most respondents agreed (43.8%) and undecided (42.5%) that the user departments are satisfied with the quality of goods and services are delivered to them. Secondly, the respondents were asked to provide their perception about whether customers are attended to within set deadlines. Majority of the most respondents agreed (64.4%) and undecided (15.1%). More so, the respondents were asked

to provide their perception about whether their organization conducts customer satisfaction surveys. Majority of them agreed (61.6%) and were undecided (28.2%).

Moreover, the respondents were asked to provide their perception about whether their organization monitored its compliance with the service charter. Majority of the respondents agreed (61.6%) and undecided (13.7%). Lastly, the respondents were asked to provide their perception about whether their organization supported all inclusive growth for all members of the society. Majority of the respondents most respondents agreed (50.7%) and undecided (27.4%).

4.1 Regression results for Public Participation and Service Delivery

This tested the objective of study which was to evaluate the effect of public participation on service delivery in Bungoma County Government. The results are illustrated in table 4.3 below. The model summary as illustrated in table 4.3 below shows that R squared (R^2) = 0.755 which implies that 75.5% of variation in the dependent variable of study (service delivery) is explained by the independent variable (public participation). Thus, other factors that have not been conceptualized in this model account for 24.5% in the variation of service delivery in the County Government of Bungoma.

Additionally, regression results using coefficients analysis demonstrate that there exists a positive and significant effect of public participation and awards on service delivery in Bungoma County Government ($\beta=0.750$); significant at $p<.01$. This demonstrates that increasing public participation by a single unit results in 0.750 increase in service delivery in Bungoma County Government. The linear regression equation for influence of public participation on service delivery in Bungoma County Government;

$$Y = 0.982 + 0.750X_1 \text{ Where:}$$

Y = service delivery in Bungoma County Government

X_1 = Public Participation

Table 4.3: Effect of Public Participation on Service Delivery

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				Sig. Change	F
					Square Change	F Change	df1	df2		
1	.869 ^a	.755	.751	.359	.755	212.469	1	69	.000	

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.348	1	27.348	212.469	.000 ^b
	Residual	8.881	69	.129		
	Total	36.229	70			

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.982	.178			5.531	.000
	Public Participation	.750	.951	.869		14.576	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

These results are supported by a study by Sheppard & Cantera (2012) that was conducted across countries that are members to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The study sought to investigate the investment of the countries into public participation activities and its subsequent impact. The research indicated that majority of the countries have realized the value of public participation as a tool of enhancing integrity in public procurement processes. As a result, over half of them have invested in strategies to disclose procurement related information through the use of online portals and other channels. Further most of the countries encouraged public witnessing of public procurement processes which enhanced accountability, transparency and integrity through their processes.

Ronoh, Mulongo & Kurgat (2018) further affirm to these findings; that public participation significantly impacted service delivery. In a 2018 study in Kericho, Bomet and Narok counties, the researchers sought to investigate the challenges that the institutions faced when implementing public participation strategies. Some of the challenges identified included unawareness of the public, technical language used during public hearings, lack of venues for the public participation processes and political influence.

5. CONCLUSION

Public participation is a significant predictor of service delivery in Bungoma County Government. Through public participation, the public feels engaged in the public procurement process which entails the use of their duly contributed taxes. Besides, public participation increases transparency and accountability in public procurement processes. Bungoma County Government still has great potential for increased public participation through organizing for public hearings where the public can get informed and give feedback on county government procurement, setting aside a budgetary allocation for public participation activities and providing feedback mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback about the institution's procurement processes.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the public procurement oversight authorities such as PPOA and PPOAB in collaboration with the executive arm of the national government should carry out frequent audits on county governments, Bungoma County included monitoring and evaluating their compliance with the prescribed public procurement reforms. Further, it is their duty to punish non-compliance with any of the requirements of the Act through processes that are specified by law to ensure that Bungoma County Government is keen on conforming to the public procurement reforms i.e. public participation.

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