

ROLE OF SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MINORITIES' PARTICIPATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY GOVERNANCE IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: This study set out to examine the role of social inclusion as a means by which a county government in Kenya can use to empower marginalised minorities and in the process protect their rights and at the same time comply with the provisions of the law as a duty bearer with the obligation to that require county governments to protect the rights of minority groups within their jurisdictions. The objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which minorities in Kericho County were involved in citizen participation; determine the extent to which basic services were available to minorities in the county; find out the level of empowerment among minorities in the county and establish the extent of political engagement minorities were allowed in the county. The research design used in the study was a descriptive design which was considered appropriate in establishing facts as they were. The target population of the study comprised members of minority groups who were residents of two informal settlements within Kericho town and who were assumed to be marginalised. A stratified sampling method was used to select the respondents among members of the minority groups, while officials of the county government were purposively selected. The sample size selected was 290 individuals comprising 275 member of the minority groups and 15 government officials purposively selected. The instruments used to collect data comprised structured and semi-structured questionnaires, while IBM's SPSS software version 21 was used to analyse the collected data. The key findings of the study have revealed that the level of citizen participation in Kericho County was not up to the recommended level, with a mean score of 2.94. This indicates that a majority of the respondents disagreed that citizens were involved in governance issues of the county. Regarding access to basic services, the results show that the county was performing poorly with a mean score of 2.94 for availability of safe drinking water in their village, mean of 1.87 for access to the nearest water point in their village. A mean of 3.53 for level of health services available near their village was also established. This indicates that a majority of the respondents disagreed that citizens had adequate access to basic services. The standard deviation of the responses was however less than 2 indicating there were no big variations in the responses given. The study also confirmed the reviewed literature that there is a statistically significant relationship between citizen participation, access to basic services, empowerment and political engagement and performance of governance and that this effect is differentiated. Each of the four independent variables of social inclusion were found to have differentiated effect on performance of county governance. Access to basic services was confirmed to have the highest effect (60.9%), followed by empowerment (56.6%), citizen participation (51.4%) and the least was political engagement (39.2%). In conclusion, from the research objectives and the research questions the underlying objectives of the study were achieved. It was evident from the findings of the study that the performance of county governance could be improved significantly if citizen participation, access to basic services, the empowerment and political engagement of minority groups were mainstreamed in appropriate processes of government. An intra-governmental team comprising officials of the executive branch of the county government and members of the county assembly could be formed to look at the entire issue of social inclusion/exclusion in the county with a view to coming up with the necessary mechanisms to improve on this area.

Keywords: Social Inclusion, Participation, Performance.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Social inclusion is about people being able to participate in the affairs of the societies to which they belong where conditions for equal opportunities for all exist (Messiou, 2012). For example, every individual in a community should be able to access services, mingle freely with friends, attend to personal interests unhindered and have his or her voice heard without discrimination. This essentially means that all people should have the best opportunities to enjoy life and do well in their societies. In other words, social inclusion in all its manifestations is about making sure that no one is left out of the affairs of his or her own society. However, it is a fact that social inclusion is not always embraced by every community and therefore millions of people around the world are kept “out of the loop,” as it were.

In a joint research conducted by the Melbourne University and the Brotherhood of St Laurence in 2010, the facts of this reality were brought to light. The study found that more than 4.5 million Australians were socially excluded in one way or another, thus resulting in serious economic, social and cultural consequences for the affected groups (Triggs, 2013). What is highly significant in these findings is that the main population groups that were mostly affected were invariably minority groups whose levels of health, education, housing, employment opportunities and access to basic services were found to be below average in comparison with the quality of life of the dominant groups.

In Kenya, social exclusion is a serious problem that manifests itself in the manner in which minority groups are treated by dominant groups (majorities) and even by the state. In a 2005 study on the status of minority groups in Kenya, for example, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) revealed the existence of extensive and complex inter-ethnic and inter-class relationships in Kenya. The study also highlighted the adverse impact of the inequalities created by social exclusion on the economic, social and cultural status of the minority groups (Makoloo & Ghai, 2005). These groups, the study concluded, were ‘invariably’ excluded from the proceedings of the mainstream Kenyan societies.

While the situation of minorities is dire, as elucidated above, the advent of Kenya’s new devolved system of government under the 2010 constitution contains specific provisions that might offer a cure to the problems affecting these groups in the long run. That is, the new constitution of Kenya and the accompanying legislation not only do provide a legal framework within which minorities can advance their quest for greater inclusion, but also the new legal framework requires the state as a duty bearer to protect the rights of the minorities. Article 56 of the constitution, for instance, declares that the Kenyan state is required to put in place affirmative action programmes that are designed to ensure minorities and marginalised groups “participate and are represented in governance and other spheres of life, are provided special opportunities in educational and economic fields, are provided special opportunities for access to employment, develop their cultural values, languages and practices and have reasonable access to water, health services and infrastructure” (GoK, 2010).

By the same token, Section 97 of the County Government Act, 2012, specifically requires the county governments (and private organisations) to observe the principles of inclusion and fairness towards minority groups. Fundamentally still, Article 19(1) (2) of Kenya’s constitution (the Bill of Rights) emphasises, inter alia, that the “purpose of recognising and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms is to preserve the dignity of individuals and communities and to promote social justice and the realisation of the potential of all human beings” (GoK, 2010).

It is clear from the foregoing that there exists in Kenya a serious problem of social exclusion that affects many minority groups, and that there too exists a constitutional and legal framework that, if applied effectively, can countermand this state of affairs and protect the rights of minorities through social inclusion. This study, therefore, sought to determine the role social inclusion of minorities in Kericho County plays in assessing the performance of county governance as provided for under Article 56 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and Section 97 of the County Government Act, 2012, which reinforces Article 19(1) of the same constitution, that is, the Bill of Rights.

Statement of the problem

In Kenya, the social exclusion of minorities is a well-documented fact arising from the numerous studies that have so far been conducted as well as the interventions that have been attempted (Abraham, 2012). For example, the government at the national level, via frameworks developed by such entities as the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) and the National Cohesion and Integrity Commission (NCIC), has instituted interventions to address the problem albeit with limited success (Makoloo & Ghai, 2005). However, according to literature reviewed, no specific studies have been undertaken at the county level to assess the performance of any county government in its responsibility to promote and

protect the interests of minority groups through effective social inclusion as contemplated under Article 56 of the constitution and Section 97 of the County Government Act, 2012.

The aim of this study, therefore, was to determine the extent to which minority groups in Kericho County were excluded from the public affairs of their county and what the county government was doing, as the duty bearer, to ensure the social inclusion of minority groups in the county as required by law.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

A theory is a set of assumptions, propositions, or accepted facts that provide reasoning for why something may occur or explain patterns in behaviour (Watson, 2017).

- **Symbolic Interaction Theory (1864-1920)**

Symbolic interactionism, which started with Max Weber (1864-1920), is a social psychological theory that developed from the work of Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead in the early part of the twentieth century. According to this theory, people inhabit a world that is in large part socially constructed. That is, the meaning of objects, events and behaviours in that world is the interpretation the people give objects, events and behaviours they interact with. These interpretations, because they are the creation of different groups, vary from one group to another. Cooley, in his perspective of the theory, argued that the way we think about ourselves is natural and obvious enough to us, but that may not represent what someone else considers to be the 'reality' about us. In other words, symbolic interactionism is a social construction of reality where particular societies develops perceptions about other societies or individuals based on subjective notions that give meaning to what they think about others.

- **Equity Theory (1960)**

Considered one of the justice theories, Equity Theory was first developed in the 1960s by a workplace behavioural psychologist named J. Stacy Adams (Spector, 2008). The theory focuses on determining whether the distribution of resources is fair to "relational partners" — in this case, employer and employee. Equity, according to this theory, is measured by comparing the ratio of contributions and benefits of each person within the relationship.

- **Good Governance Theory (2017)**

The tenets of the good governance theory can be used as a searchlight for evidence of good performance by authorities aspiring to demonstrate good governance (Ekundayo, 2017). The good governance theory is a creation of the World Bank when it introduced the concept in the 1990s to help developing countries improve their governance structures —hence, the relevance of this theory to this study, whose focus is on the performance of county governance (i.e. Kericho county government). The key principles of good governance include public participation, the rule of law, equity and inclusiveness. Public participation as a principle of the good governance theory entails the involvement of every adult in the affairs of his or her society, while the rule of law, as Griffin (2013) has emphasised, guarantees equity, fairness and justice in the society.

Research gap

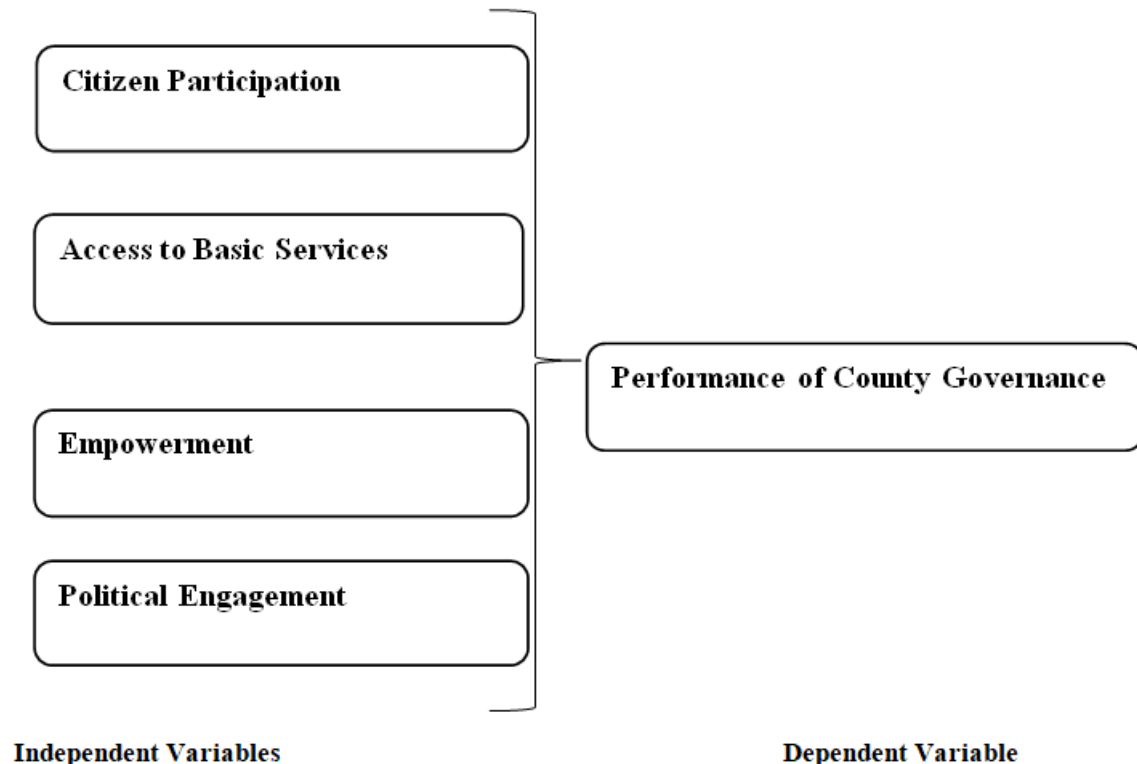
Having taken a critical look at the existing research significant to this proposal study, the closest to addressing the problem of social exclusion and discrimination of minorities in Kenya was the study undertaken by the Equal Rights Trust (ERT) in 2012 titled "In the Spirit of Harambee: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Kenya." The study established that despite positive developments in the Kenyan legal regime (following the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010), the discrimination of two communities in particular was rife; namely, the Kenyan Somalis and the Nubians. Members of the two communities were systematically denied the all-important identity cards (i.e. acknowledgment of citizenship). However, as the study focused itself on the question of citizenship, and not as an assessment of county governments' performance vis-à-vis the promotion and protection of the rights of minorities and marginalised groups, as provided for in the laws of the land, the study is markedly different from the current proposed study. Another study that touched on minorities and marginalised groups was that undertaken by Roschmann, Wendoh & Ogolla (2017). It focused on the advent of the devolved system of government in Kenya after the first general election of 2013 under Kenya's new constitution and sought to establish whether or not new governance system held the key to the

effective protection of the rights of minorities. The researchers' conclusion projected a positive environment the new political dispensation could provide minorities and marginalised groups, if the tenets of the constitution were implemented effectively. The dissimilarity of that study to this study is that it was entirely a desk-based research (or secondary research) that synthesised the salient features of the Kenyan constitution focusing “on the structures, powers and organizing principles of the devolved governance...” (Roschmann, Wendoh & Ogolla, 2017). This too was not concerned with the performance of county governments in the promotion and protection of the rights of disadvantaged groups despite a reference to the legal provision which states that the government is under obligation to protect “minorities and marginalised groups through affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalised groups participate and are represented in governance and other spheres of life” (Roschmann, Wendoh & Ogolla, 2017). One more research was that which touched on the problem of the marginalisation of certain counties in Kenya. It was carried out under the auspices of Kenya's Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA) and sought to know the attitude of Kenyans towards marginalised counties and whether people in general ‘empathised’ with the marginalised counties and hence agreeable to the concept of equitable allocation of funds to them. Out of 3,707 respondents, an overwhelming majority at 89.4% were in agreement that the marginalised counties needed to be allocated funds commensurate to their poverty levels (Sayer, 2006).

It is evident from the foregoing —even without revisiting the rest of the studies included in our literature review — that no study has been undertaken that specifically seeks to establish the extent to which a county government is protecting the rights of minorities and marginalised groups by improving their inclusion in say, decision-making processes or ensuring that affirmative action programmes are in place to empower them accordingly. This proposed study is therefore expected to add to the present body of knowledge in the field of governance and performance of devolved system of government in Kenya.

Conceptual framework

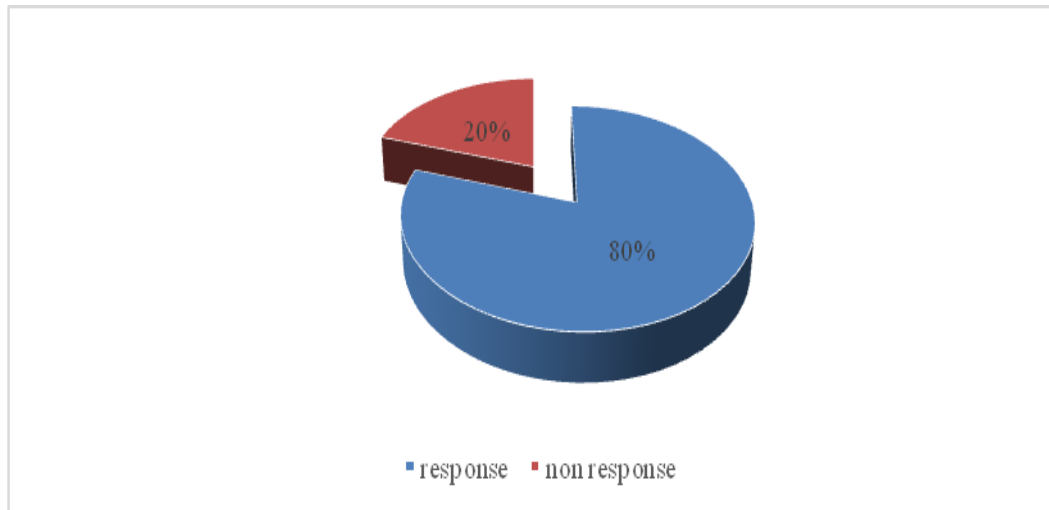
When a group is excluded by mainstream society, the group will not be able to participate in the decision-making processes in matters that affect their lives in that society (Messiou, 2012).



3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response rate

Response rate refers to the number of questionnaires sent to the field divided by the number which was completed and returned. For this study, 290 questionnaires were distributed out of which 252 were completed and returned. The questionnaires that were used for the analysis were therefore 252. This translated to a response rate of 80%. This was considered an appropriate response rate as supported by Bryman and Bell (2011) who contends that a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% good & above 70% as excellent.



Response Rate

➤ Citizen participation

The study sought to establish the extent to which citizen participation affected performance of county governance.

| Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|------|--------------------|
| How would you rate the level of public information available to you in the county? | 2.94 | 1.194 |
| How would you rate the number of information centres in the county? | 2.67 | 1.337 |
| How many information centres are found in your village? | 3.72 | 0.752 |
| How do you rate your participation in public or community decision making processes? | 2.33 | 1.124 |

An examination on the means revealed that the level of citizen participation was not upto recommended level, with a mean score of 2.94. This indicates that a majority of the respondents disagreed that citizens were involved in governance issues of the county.

➤ Access to basic services

The study sought to establish the extent to which access to basic services affected performance of county governance.

| Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|------|--------------------|
| How would you say is the level of availability of safe drinking water in you village? | 3.15 | 1.566 |
| How far is the nearest water point in your village | 1.87 | .957 |
| How many meals do you eat in a day? | 2.57 | 1.502 |
| How do you rate the level of health services available near your village? | 3.53 | .741 |

An examination on the means revealed that the level of access to basic services was not up to recommended level.

➤ Empowerment

The study sought to establish the extent of empowerment on performance of county governance.

| Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|------|--------------------|
| Are you employed? | 2.98 | 1.262 |
| in what sector are you employed | 3.37 | 1.093 |
| Do you have a bank account? | 1.50 | .501 |
| What assets do you own? | 2.29 | 1.411 |
| How many elected leaders come from your village? | 3.45 | .775 |

An examination on the means revealed that the level of empowerment was not up to recommended level.

➤ Political engagement

The study sought to establish the extent of political engagement on performance of county governance.

| STATEMENT | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION |
|---|------|--------------------|
| How many elected leaders come from your village? | 3.45 | .775 |
| How satisfactory are your political interests represented in the county | 3.59 | .969 |
| How often do you contact political leaders for help in the county? | 3.27 | .760 |

An examination on the means revealed that the extent of political engagement level of was not up to the recommended level.

• Regression diagnostics

To assess the effects of social inclusion on performance of county governance, this study used ordinary least regression (OLS) model whose general form . OLS modeling are based on specific assumptions, it was deemed prudent to determine how well these assumptions were upheld hence the diagnostics. Various diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure that the coefficients of the estimates were consistent and could be relied upon in making inferences. As argued by Greene (2002) regression can only be accurately estimated if the basic assumptions of multiple linear regressions are observed.

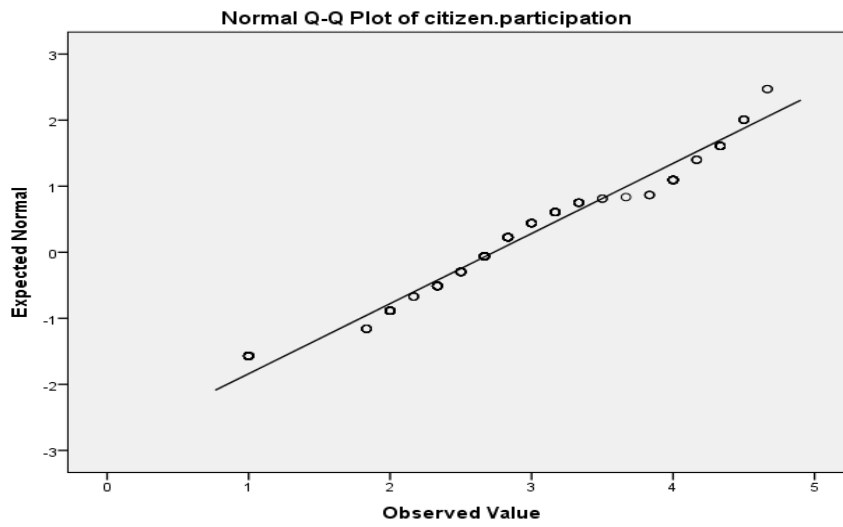
Tests of normality

Table: Tests of Normality

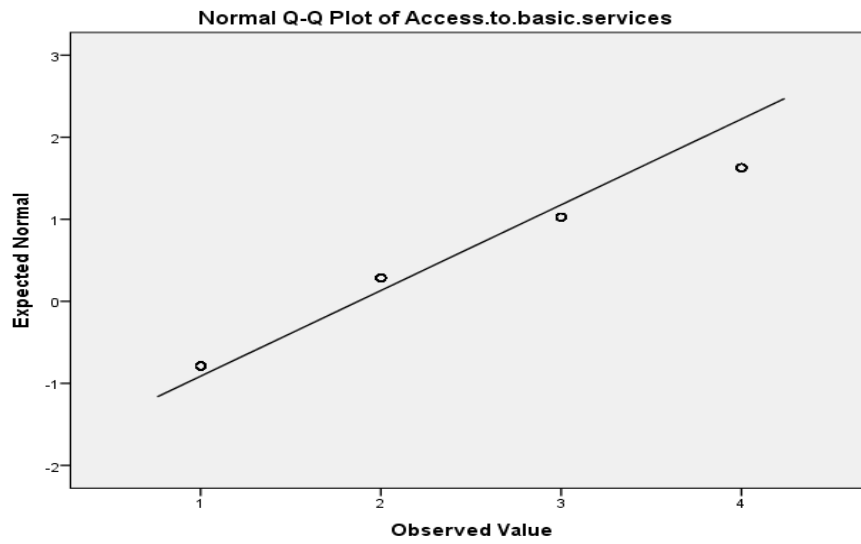
| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|
| | Statistic | Df | Sig. | Statistic | Df | Sig. |
| Citizen participation | .102 | 222 | .480 | .956 | 222 | .790 |
| Access to basic services | .247 | 222 | .123 | .945 | 222 | .065 |
| Empowerment | .071 | 222 | .670 | .937 | 222 | .590 |
| Political engagement | .139 | 222 | .760 | .895 | 222 | .970 |
| Performance of county governance | .163 | 222 | .900 | .924 | 222 | .240 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

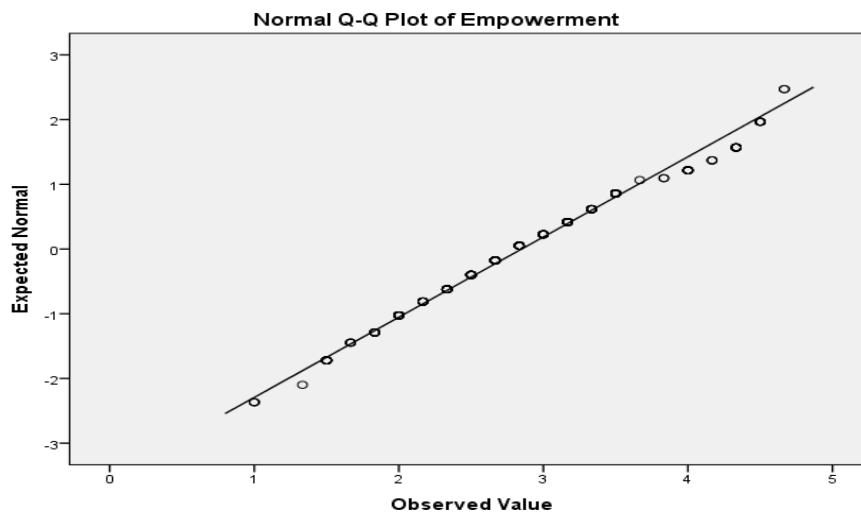
The results presented in the table showed a K-S statistic whose probability values were greater than 0.05 which was an indication the data was normally distributed. This was also supported by the normality plots



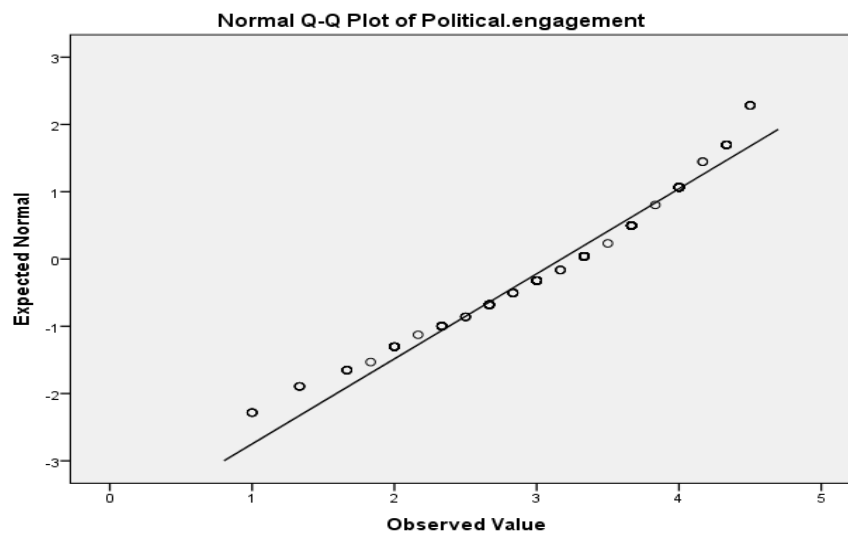
Plot for Citizen Participation



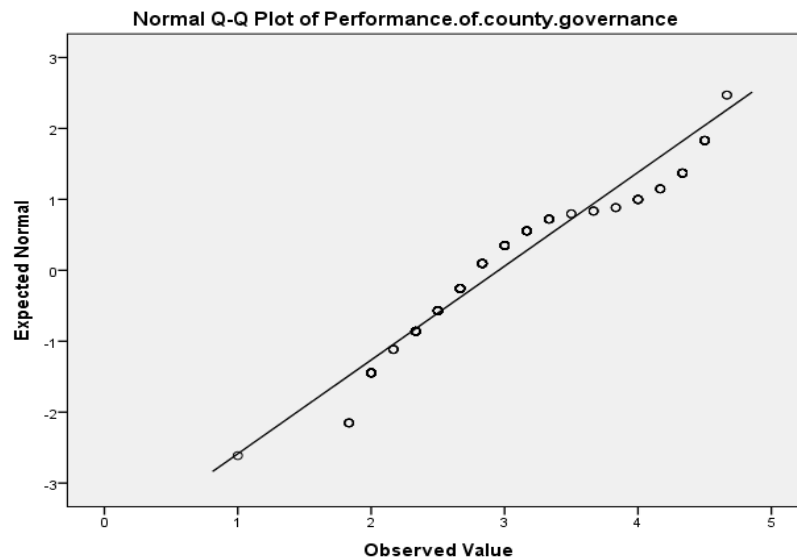
Normal Q-Q plot for access to basic services citizen Participation



Normal Q-Q plot for empowerment



Normal Q-Q plot for political engagement



Normal Q-Q plot for performance of county governance

Test for Multicollinearity

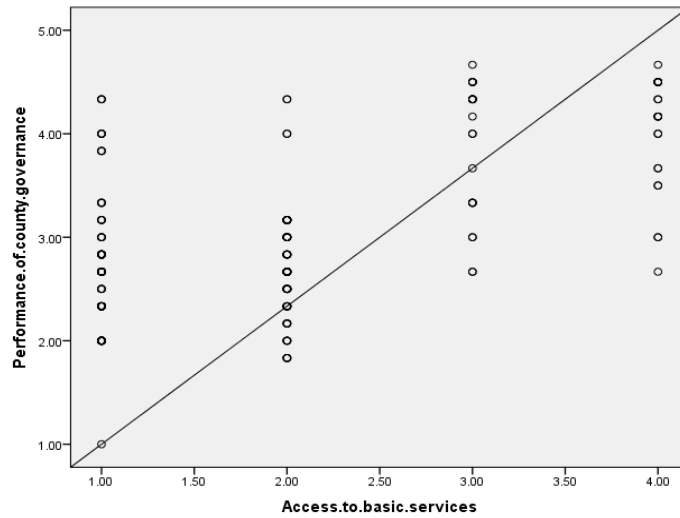
The results show the independent variables had variance inflation factor less than 10 which was an indication of non-existence of multicollinearity.

| | Tolerance | VIF |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| (Constant) | | |
| Citizen participation | .774 | 1.292 |
| Empowerment | .686 | 1.458 |
| Political engagement | .903 | 1.108 |
| Access to basic services | .812 | 1.232 |

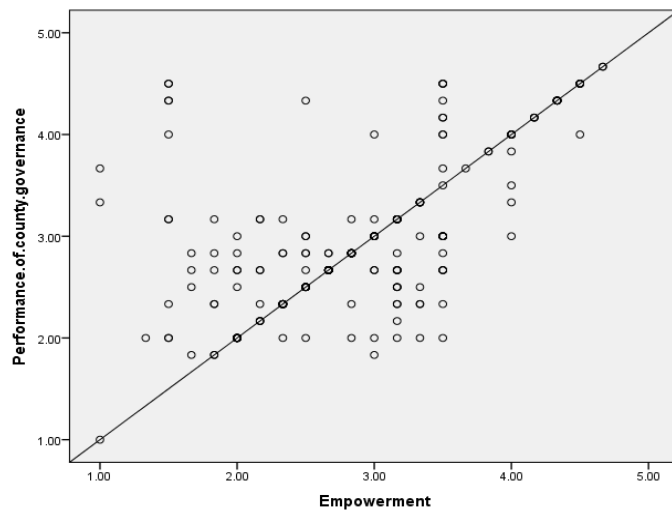
Test for linearity

The results show the independent variables had observations which were balanced on a straight line which was an indication that linearity test was satisfied.

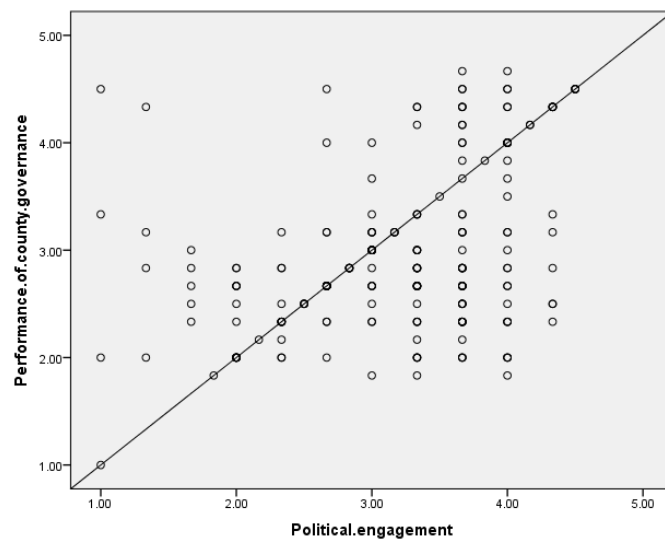
Test for linearity for citizen participation



Test for linearity for access to basic services



Test for linearity for empowerment



4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Citizen participation and performance of county governance

The first objective of the research was to examine the extent to which citizen participation and performance of county governance. From this objective, it was hypothesised that there is no significant relationship between citizen participation and performance of county governance. The results of this study showed a positive statistically significant influence as citizen participation explained 26.5% variation in performance of county governance. It is notable that the relationship was not as strong as expected. The study attributes this to the moderate implementation of citizen participation.

Relationship access to basic services and performance of county governance

The second objective was to examine the extent to which access to basic services influenced performance of county governance. From the objective, it was hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between access to basic services and performance of county governance. The results confirmed that there is a positive statistically significant influence, as access to basic services accounted for 32.1% variation in performance of county governance.

Empowerment and performance of county governance

The third objective was to examine the extent to which relationship empowerment influenced performance of county governance. From the objective, it was hypothesized that; there is no significant relationship between empowerment and performance of county governance. The results confirmed that there is a positive statistically significant influence of performance of county governance, as relationship termination accounted for 37.1% variation in performance of county governance.

Political engagement and performance of county governance

The fourth objective was to examine the extent to which political engagement influenced performance of county governance. From the objective, it was hypothesized that; there is no significant relationship between political engagement and performance of county governance. The results confirmed that there is a positive statistically significant influence of political engagement and performance of county governance, as political engagement accounted for 15.4% variation in performance of county governance.

The Joint effect of citizen participation, access to basic services, empowerment and political engagement on performance of county governance

The fourth objective was meant to examine the extent of the influence of joint relationship between citizen participation, access to basic services, empowerment and political engagement on the performance of county governance. From the objective, it was hypothesized that there is no significant joint relationship between citizen participation, access to basic services, empowerment and political engagement on performance of county governance. The results confirmed that there is a positive statistically significant influence as joint relationship accounted for 60.7% variation in performance of county governance. It was noted that the joint effect of citizen participation, access to basic services, empowerment and political engagement on performance of county governance was greater than the individual effect.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the research objectives and the research questions, the underlying objectives of the study were achieved. The study established an overall poor performance of county governance vis-à-vis social inclusion of minorities in the public affairs of the county. Access to basic services registered the highest failure of the county government (60.9%), followed by empowerment (56.6%), citizen participation (51.4%) and political engagement (39.2%). This means that the performance of county governance could be improved substantially if the county government established mechanisms to address itself to the areas stated above in order to integrate members of the minority groups into the social, economic and political fabric of the county.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

As this study has revealed that the Kericho County is far from embracing the social inclusion of minorities and marginalised groups in the county, and considering that no evidence was found to suggest that it is the policy of the county government to exclude the groups, it is recommended that a closer attention is paid to the shortcomings that have

been identified. Perhaps the county government may consider setting up an intra-governmental team comprising officials drawn from the executive branch of the government on the one hand and members of the county assembly on the other to look into the entire issue of social inclusion/exclusion of minorities in the county with a view to formulating urgent interventions to address the problem.

Suggestions for further research

As this study has established baseline data on four key areas of failure by the county government of Kericho County vis-à-vis social inclusion/exclusion of minorities, further research — preferably by the county government itself — is suggested on any/or all of the four identified areas to obtain an in-depth understanding of the possible factors impeded the county government from integrating minorities in public affairs.

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