Decentralized Governance and the Performance of Garissa County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT
Devolution is the strongest form of governance decentralization. Devolution involves rescaling of responsibilities or powers from the national to the regional political organization. The actual form and politics of such rescaling will vary substantially between states, however, amounting to a radical transfer of powers and resources in some cases and a more modest and rhetorical shift of responsibility and service delivery in others. The conceptual scope of this study will be limited to four governance structures variables namely financial decentralization, administrative decentralization, political decentralization and citizen participation. This study targeted staff of Garissa County and were composed of senior managers, middle level managers and operational staff. The study employed descriptive survey design. The researcher used questionnaires as research instruments to collect data to the study. The study adopted both primary and secondary data analysis research design. Primary data was collected using semi structured questionnaires containing both closed and open-ended questions to allow variety. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. In addition, the study used multiple regression analysis to analyze the data. From the study findings, this study concluded that administration decentralization has a significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County. The study also concluded that political decentralization has a significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County. From the findings, the study further concluded that financial decentralization had significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County. The study finally concluded that citizen participation had a significant and positive effect on the performance of Garissa County. The study recommended that the government should increase county government autonomy to promote administrative decentralization. The study also recommended that national and county governments should put in place measures to safeguard the independence of political decentralization. The study further recommended that national and county governments should put in place a set of deliberate and proactive processes, policies and structures that support financial decentralization. Finally, the study recommended that county governments should improve citizen participation practices to ensure citizen involvement in governance.

Keywords: Decentralized Governance, Administration Decentralization, Political Decentralization, Financial Decentralization, Public Participation, Performance of Garissa County

APA CITITATION:
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study
Devolution is the strongest form of governance decentralization (Olatona & Olomola, 2015). Devolution involves rescaling of responsibilities or powers from the national to the regional political organization (Lobao, Martin, & Rodriguez-Pose, 2009). The actual form and politics of such rescaling will vary substantially between states, however, amounting to a radical transfer of powers and resources in some cases and a more modest and rhetorical shift of responsibility and service delivery in others (Cox, 2009).

In practice, devolution grants the devolved governments the capacity to develop policies that are better tailored to the economic and social conditions of their areas, encouraging policy divergence through the introduction of ‘local solutions to local problems (Mackinnon, 2015). Moreover, Mackinnon (2015) indicated that devolution creates logic of inter-territorial comparison and competition, potentially resulting in policy learning and transfer as the different administrations monitor developments elsewhere, adopting successful or popular policies from other jurisdictions.

Devolution has been seen as an important tool in revenue performance and therefore instrumental in providing services closer to people in large and densely populated economies such as China, the US and some European countries through federal arrangements (Clegg & Greg, 2010). According to Rosenbaum (2013) the worldwide governance trend is towards devolution. In the United States of America, for example, the governance structure is highly devolved. The US has 50 state governments and approximately 85,000 local governments. Both national and devolved governments are independent with taxing authority and, in many cases, a quite high degree of autonomy within the geographic sphere in which they function. In Africa, there are about 15,000 local governments; Asia has about 26,000 local governments, while Latin America has about 17,000 local governments (Rosenbaum, 2013).

In Africa, many countries have carried out reforms aimed at devolving the political, administrative and fiscal structures of the public sector. The need to transform the structure of governance is informed by the view that devolution increases the overall efficiency and responsiveness of the public sector in providing services, an outcome that enhances economic development and contributes to a reduction in regional disparities devolution has advanced considerably in the last two decades (Amusa & Mabugu, 2016). Moreover, many African central governments have initiated or deepened processes to transfer authority, power, responsibilities, and resources to sub-national levels. The African countries that have devolved include Kenya, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda (Dickovick & Riedl, 2010).

Kenya’s devolution is an ambitious form of decentralization involving large-scale political, fiscal, and administrative decentralization (Kenya School of Government, 2015). Unlike other countries where the devolution process of the three powers has been sequentially attained, in Kenya the experience has been a ‘big bang’ where the three types of decentralization were achieved at once with the ratification of the constitution (Kobia & Bagaka, 2014). Devolution in Kenya is also based on the supremacy of the constitution, sovereignty of the people and the principle of public participation (ICJ Kenya, 2013). The fourth schedule of the constitution sets out the functions and powers of the national and county governments. The Kenya Constitution (2010) articulates the rationale behind devolution among other reasons as self-governance, economic development and equitable sharing of national and local resources. The constitution also provides the objects and principles of devolution, functions and powers of the national and county governments and relationships between levels of governments. To achieve these objectives, the constitution established 47 county governments in addition to the national government (Constitution of Kenya, 2010; Ngundo, 2014).
1.2 Statement of the problem
The change of system of governance in Kenya since promulgation of new constitution led to decentralization of certain government functions to county level, as outlined in Kenya constitution 2010 schedule 4. Some of the decentralized functions include education, health, agriculture, public works and services among others. Lubale (2012) observes that, county governments and their agencies have the responsibility of delivering services within their designated area of jurisdiction, while observing the principles of equity, efficiency, accessibility, non-discrimination, transparency, accountability, sharing of data and information, and subsidiarity.

So far, county governments in Kenya are still grappling with challenges of service delivery on the decentralized functions. A report by Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) in 2013 highlights key sectors like infrastructure, health, water and sanitation, education among others have faced challenges in their performance. Survey done by Transparency international (TI) (2017) reported that 41% of Kenyans were not satisfied with the performance of their county governments in service delivery.


These studies however focused narrowly on the subject of decentralizing functions and their effect on performance of county governments. They dwelt on single function or variable which cannot be taken as representative of the overall performance measurement. There is still a gap in knowledge that has to be filled in view of the performance of county governments in Kenya based on the decentralized operations. This research endeavored to explore this subject, in particular the way county 47 governments in Kenya have performed of the decentralized functions. The research question was, “how has decentralized governance influenced performance of Garissa County?”

1.3 Objectives
1. To establish the influence of administration decentralization on the service delivery of devolved units in Kenya
2. To determine the effect of political decentralization on the service delivery of devolved units in Kenya
3. To find out the effect of financial decentralization on the service delivery of devolved units in Kenya
4. To investigate the effect of public participation on the service delivery of devolved units in Kenya.
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Souffle Theory
The Soufflé Theory was proposed by (Parker, 1995) who postulates that the element of decentralization is administrative decentralization. Parker (1995) emphasized that decentralization is a multi-dimensional process that proceeds with successes and setbacks. The theory argues that like a Souffle that needs just the right combination of milk, eggs, and heat to rise, a successful program of decentralization must include the right combination of institutional elements to improve rural development outcomes (Farooq, Shamail, &Awais, 2008; Laryea-Adjei, 2006). Decentralization initiatives will therefore be subject to a continuous process of modification reflecting changes in social, political and economic conditions (Laryea-Adjei, 2006). There is therefore the need to include all dimensions of administrative decentralization. Parker suggests a conceptual model, the soufflé theory, which incorporates the essential elements of political, fiscal, and administrative decentralization as they combine to realize desired outcomes.

2.1.2 Agency Theory
Agency theory is concerned with agency relationships. The two parties have an agency relationship when they cooperate and engage in an association wherein one party (the principal) delegates decisions and/or work to another (an agent) to act on its behalf (Eisenhardt 2021; Rungtusanatham et al., 2007). The important assumptions underlying agency theory is that; potential goal conflicts exist between principals and agents; each party acts in its own self-interest; information asymmetry frequently exists between principals and agents; agents are more risk averse than the principal; and efficiency is the effectiveness criterion.

2.1.3 The Sequential Theory of decentralization
The Sequential Theory of decentralization was proposed by Falleti (2004). The theory contends that decentralization is a set of state reforms. As such, decentralization does not include transfers of authority to non-state actors. Akorsu (2015) cited Falleti (2004) and noted decentralization reforms may take place in authoritarian as well as democratic contexts, which means that the concepts of decentralization and democratization should not be conflated. Notably, (Falleti, 2004; Falleti, 2005) opined that sequential theory of decentralization classifies territorial decentralization into fiscal dimensions. Awortwi (2011) avers that Falleti’s sequential theory of decentralization is based on three propositions: First, Institutional design of decentralization policies is highly dependent on when those policies take place within the sequence of reforms.

2.1.4 Stakeholders Theory
This theory was proposed by Freeman in 2010. The general idea of the stakeholder concept is a redefinition of the organization. In general, the concept is about what the organization would be and how it should be conceptualized. Friedman (2006), states that the organization itself should be thought of as a grouping of stakeholders and the purpose of the organization should be to manage their interests, needs and viewpoints. This stakeholder management is thought to be fulfilled by the management of the organization. The managers should on one hand manage the corporation for the benefit of its stakeholders in order to ensure their rights and the participation in decision making and on the other hand the management must act as the stakeholder’s agent to ensure the survival of the firm and safeguard long-term stakes of each group (Friedman, 2006).

2.2 Conceptual Framework
A conceptual framework may be defined as an end result of bringing together a number of related concepts to explain or predict a given event, or give a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest – or simply, of a research problem. Thus, a conceptual framework is derived from concepts (Imenda, 2014).
2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Ghuman and Singh (2013) analyzed the impact of decentralization on public service delivery. The study found that the impact of decentralization on public service delivery is contingent on factors such as the design of the decentralization policy; implementation bottlenecks and diluting the model of decentralization for accommodating the dissenting segments of stakeholders including employees; and participatory governance. In particular the study revealed that decentralization has resulted in improvements in delivery of local services where devolution as a mode of decentralization is accompanied by sound financial resource base of local governments, full autonomy to local governments in human resource management matters, regular capacity building of local officials, performance-based incentive structures, and participatory governance.

Adam et al. (2012) carried out a study in Europe and America to empirically examines the relationship between fiscal decentralization and public sector efficiency. The study found that irrespective of whether public sector efficiency concerns education or health services, an inverted U-shaped relationship exists between government efficiency in providing these services and fiscal decentralization.

In contrast, Elhiraika (2007) used data from nine provinces in South Africa to investigate the impact of fiscal decentralization on basic service delivery, focusing on the role of own-source revenue. The own-source revenue variable was found to have a negative and significant impact on demand for health relative to demand for other public services. The researchers argued for increased fiscal decentralization and greater revenue autonomy in particular if sub national governments in South Africa are to improve service delivery by enhancing transparency and shifting accountability to the
local population rather than the central government. In Indonesia, Sujarwoto (2012) surveyed 8,320 households living in 120 local governments to investigate the association between political decentralization and local public service performance. The study revealed that effective local political institutions, better informed citizen and transparency, citizen political participation via community programs, and the presence of social group in community are significant for improving local public service performance.

Enikolopov and Zhuravskaya (2007) conducted an empirical study using both cross-section and panel data from developing and transition countries and find that strong national parties (a form of political centralization) combined with fiscal decentralization significantly improves government quality measured both in terms of government efficiency, regulatory quality, control of corruption, and rule of law, and in terms of public good provision (health and education outcomes).

Bogopane (2014) carried a study on political decentralization and service delivery based on north west provincial government that consists of twelve provincial departments and the legislature. The study revealed lack of a well-established public bureaucracy that bluntly implement government policies and also involved in putting politicians in check against any form of abuse of political power. The study also found lack of political structures which led to errors of judgment which in turn resulted with poor governance and service delivery.

In addition, Lambrigh (2014) found that partisan politics undermines service delivery in Kampala in several ways, including financing, tax policy, and even direct interference in the policies and decisions made by the city council. Alornyeku (2011) carried a case study in Kumasi metropolis on administrative structure and service delivery. The study revealed even though there is a clear practice of division of labour, there is department’s lack of technical equipment which results in delays in meeting the expectation of citizen’s. In addition, assembly low productivity, due to excessive bureaucracy negatively impacted performance of the central government. In another study in Nigeria, Boris (2015) carried an empirical study to examine challenges confronting local government administration in effective and efficient social service delivery at the grassroots. Using secondary data, the study concluded lack of funds, corruption, and undue political interference amongst others as major constraints to local government service delivery.

Akinboade et al. (2013) analyzed citizen participation in public service delivery protests in the Sedibeng district municipality of South Africa. The study found service delivery protest participants opine that doing so is the only way of getting things done in the municipality. This implied low level of citizen participation in service delivery in the case Sedibeng district municipality of South Africa. Nayak and Samanta (2014) examined the effect of people’s participation construct (attending meetings, raising voice, lodging complaints, and making contributions) on public service delivery in India. The study was based on primary household level survey of 250 respondents in the district of East Midnapore in, India. The researchers revealed that raising voice and making contributions positively influenced service delivery. However, the coefficient of attending meeting is also significant but negative, implying thereby that mere attendance does not help a household influence decision to its favor. Gaventa and Barrett (2010) using a sample of 100 cases of four types of citizen engagement in 20 countries, found that over 30 cases of citizen engagement had significant impact on service delivery.

The services impacted include health and education. In Brazil, participatory governance councils have been significant in improving access to and quality of health-care services. Elsewhere, in Bangladesh, parents of girls in schools mobilized to monitor teacher attendance and discourage absenteeism (Gaventa& Barrett, 2010). In contrast, Kihehere (2013) explored the effect of citizen participation on health service delivery of Ntungamo district local government, in Uganda. The study revealed that citizen participation does not necessarily improve service delivery.
2.4 Critique of Existing Literature

Olatona and Olomola (2015) conducted a study on analysis of fiscal decentralization and public service delivery in Nigeria. The study found that fiscal decentralization (transfer from federal government, internally generated revenue, loans and grants) has positive link with educational service delivery, while high degree of fiscal decentralization is negatively related to health care delivery. The current study differs significantly from the reviewed study in various conceptual areas for instance the reviewed study suffers from conceptual gaps since it measured decentralization from single dimension (financial decentralization) rather than from multiple dimensions (financial decentralization, political decentralization, administrative decentralization, social accountability and citizen participation) which restricted generalization of its finding. This study also focused on service accessibility and disregarded other measures of service delivery namely quality of service and citizens satisfaction. The reviewed study was also based on secondary data and confined to Nigeria culture while the current study was carried out in Kenya. Finally, the reviewed study is inconclusive since it found decentralization is positively related to educational service delivery but negatively related to health care delivery.

Freinkman and Plekhanov (2009) conducted an empirical analysis of the relationship between fiscal decentralization and the quality of public services in the Russian regions. The analysis suggests that fiscal decentralization has no significant effect on the key inputs into secondary education, such as schools, computers, or availability of pre-schooling, but has a significant positive effect on average examination results, controlling for key observable inputs and regional government spending on education. The study differs from the current study as it did not address the influence of political decentralization, administrative decentralization, social accountability and citizen participation variables on service delivery. Reviewed study also failed to consider moderating effects of e-government on the relationship between governance decentralization and service delivery. This study is also limited to the Russia context hence difficult to generalize the research findings in other countries due to different political and cultural environment. The current study also differs from the reviewed study in that it examines the interaction between governance decentralization and service delivery based on lens of Souffle theory, principal-agent theory, sequential theory of decentralization and new public management theory.

2.5 Research Gaps

Majority of previous empirical studies on decentralization have been conducted in developed or developing countries of Asia and Latin America (Kyriacou & Roca-Sagale’s, 2011; Wei-qing & Shi, 2010). There is relatively small body of work and attempts to systematically examine the evidence of decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, the link between decentralized governance and the performance of services of devolved units in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa is scarcely explored. Only a limited number of studies have so far examined the impact of decentralized governance on the performance of services of devolved units in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa (Balunywa et al., 2014; Tshukudu, 2014). The near absence of research in Africa in this area raise a question as to whether decentralized governance influences performance of services of devolved units in Africa. Empirical findings in developed countries may not be generalized in developing countries due to different cultural and political context. Further, there is also the need to test if decentralization frameworks, models or theories developed in western countries are applicable in poor African countries suffering high unemployment rates.

Moreover, it has been argued that people’s attitudes, beliefs and values vary across countries, cultures and continents. Hence, this study to bridge the knowledge gap by establishing the impact of decentralized governance on the performance of services of devolved units in a less developed, non-
Western context like the Kenyan context. Additionally, literature reviewed indicates there is imbalance on the attention that has gone into studies on decentralized governance and performance of services of devolved units. In measuring performance of services of devolved units, most studies tend to concentrate on service accessibility and disregards other dimensions of service delivery such as quality of service and citizens satisfaction (Kosec & Mogues, 2015; Sujarwoto, 2012).

Empirical evidence on the links between decentralized governance and performance of services of devolved units measured by quality of service and citizen satisfaction is evidently lacking. One notable exception is a study in India by Nayak and Samanta (2014) which examined the role of participation on performance of services of devolved units. The researchers used accessibility, availability, reliability and quality of services as a measure of public service delivery. However, the findings of this study could not be generalized due to different cultural and political contexts. It would therefore be prudent for other researchers to make a remarkable contribution in this field by establishing the impact of decentralization on service delivery (measured by accessibility, citizen satisfaction and quality of services).

Moreover, there is need to question the veracity of the link between decentralized governance and performance of services of devolved units. Analysis of previous research relating to the question of a link between decentralized governance and performance of services of devolved units reveals there is uncertainty as to the direction of the link. Empirical evidence on the impact of decentralized governance on the performance of services of devolved units is mixed and inconclusive. A cross section of studies provides evidence that decentralized governance leads to improved performance of services of devolved units (Balunywa et al., 2014; Freinkman & Plekhanov, 2009). In contrast, other studies found that decentralized governance negatively influences performance of services of devolved units (Elhiraika, 2007; Olatona & Olomola, 2015). The inconclusive nature of evidence suggests that more empirical work is required on the relationship between decentralized governance and performance of services of devolved units.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive case study design in order to carry out an in-depth fact finding of variables. The target population was 3876 respondents that included both public members and staffs of Garissa County government who previously participated in the budgeting, procurement, financial reporting and resource utilization and project implementation for the last five years. To come up with an appropriate study sample, the study utilized stratified sampling technique where respondents will be classified based on their departments. The strata’s was the 10 departments in the county government of Garissa County. This study utilized a sample size of 387. The researcher used questionnaires and secondary data as the research instrument to gather the relevant information needed related to the study. For this research both primary and secondary data collecting methods was used. Primary data was collected through the administration of questionnaires to senior management bank employees. The study carried out a pilot test to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaires in gathering the data required for purposes of the study. The information gathered from the respondents was of a qualitative and quantitative nature. The data was summarized and then analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics comprising of tables, graphs and percentages. The MS Excel, statistical software was used to analyze the collected information. This is because the MS Excel provides simplified analysis that is easy to interpret and present.
4.1 Response Rate
The researcher administered a total of 357 questionnaires and 300 questionnaires were completed and returned. This represents a response rate of 84% as shown in Table 4.1. This response rate was adequate to allow the researcher to continue with the analysis. The questionnaires were composed of questions that addressed the objectives of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed and returned</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not returned</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>357</td>
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4.2 Summary of Statistical Findings

4.2.1 Correlation Analysis
Cooper & Schindler (2011) asserts that, correlation coefficients enable a researcher to quantify the strength of the linear relationship between two or more variables. Correlation is a measure of the degree of relatedness of variables (Bryman, 2012). Ken (2010) states that, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient $r$, ranges from $-1$ to $+1$ with the sign at the front indicates whether there is a positive or a negative correlation. For this study Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used and the results obtained are summarized in Table 4.2. The correlation was on the relationship between decentralized governance and the performance of Garissa County. There was positive correlation between the dependent variable and all the four independent variables ($r > 0.4$, $p < .001$). Rubin and Babbie (2010) opined that, the size of the absolute value provides information on the strength of the relationship where; ($r = $1 to .29 Small; $r = $.30 to .49 Medium; $r = $.5 to 1.0 Large). The strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (performance) was averagely large medium where; For administration decentralization and political decentralization The correlation coefficients indicated a significant positive relationship between administration decentralization and political decentralization ($r = 0.616$, $p < 0.01$), financial decentralization ($r = 0.418$, $p < 0.01$), public participation ($r = 0.623$, $p < 0.01$), and performance ($r = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that as administration decentralization increases, so do the levels of political, financial decentralization, public participation, and ultimately, performance. This is supported a study by Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) found that decentralization positively impacts governance performance by enhancing accountability, responsiveness, and efficiency at the local level. Similarly, political decentralization exhibits significant positive correlations with administration decentralization ($r = 0.616$, $p < 0.01$), financial decentralization ($r = 0.454$, $p < 0.01$), public participation ($r = 0.553$, $p < 0.01$), and performance ($r = 0.579$, $p < 0.01$). These findings imply that political decentralization tends to coincide with greater levels of administrative, financial decentralization, public participation, and performance. Financial decentralization also demonstrates positive correlations with administration decentralization ($r = 0.418$, $p < 0.01$), political decentralization ($r = 0.454$, $p < 0.01$), public participation ($r = 0.529$, $p < 0.01$), and performance ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that as financial decentralization increases, so do the levels of administration, political decentralization, public participation, and performance. Public participation exhibits significant positive correlations with administration decentralization ($r = 0.623$, $p < 0.01$), political decentralization ($r = 0.553$, $p < 0.01$), financial decentralization ($r = 0.529$, $p < 0.01$), and performance ($r = 0.555$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that higher levels of public participation are associated with greater degrees of administration, political decentralization, financial decentralization, and performance. Finally, performance shows positive correlations with administration decentralization ($r = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$), political decentralization ($r = 0.579$, $p < 0.01$), financial
decentralization ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.01$), and public participation ($r = 0.555$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that improved performance is linked to higher levels of administration, political decentralization, financial decentralization, and public participation. This is supported by Rondinelli (2006) who argued that public participation leads to better-informed decision-making processes, increased legitimacy, and ultimately, improved performance in public service delivery.

Also, Faguet (2014) conducted research across several countries and concluded that financial decentralization is associated with better public service delivery and economic outcomes due to increased local autonomy and accountability. And lastly, a study by Treisman (2007) analyzed the effects of political decentralization on various indicators of governance performance and found a positive relationship, particularly in terms of service delivery and corruption control.

**Table 4.2: Correlations Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Administration Decentralization</th>
<th>Political Decentralization</th>
<th>Financial Decentralization</th>
<th>Public Participation</th>
<th>Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.616**</td>
<td>.418**</td>
<td>.623**</td>
<td>.482**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.616**</td>
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<td>.454**</td>
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<td>Financial</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.418**</td>
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<td>Decentralization</td>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.623**</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.482**</td>
<td>.579**</td>
<td>.634**</td>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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**.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 4.2.2 Regression Results

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to test the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The average ratings for the four independent variables (administrative decentralization, Political decentralization, financial decentralization and Citizen Participation) were used as the indicators for input into the regression model.

The dependent variable used was service delivery. The coefficient of determination and standard error of the regression model is indicated in Table 4.3. Results in Table 4.3 indicate that the adjusted
The results in Table 4.5 indicate that administration decentralization has a significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.675; t = 4.810; p < 0.05$). The implication of the study is that administrative decentralization was statistically significant in explaining the performance of Garissa County. This indicated that county government officials were optimistic about administrative decentralization and how it had impacted on the operations of the county governments in Kenya.

Further, political decentralization has a significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.385; t = 6.708; p < 0.05$). This result indicates that effective local political institutions, better informed citizen and transparency, citizen political participation via community programs, and the presence of social group in community are significant for improving the performance of Garissa County. Improved delivery of devolved County units in Kenya requires well-functioning local political institutions, transparent local government and effective channels for political participation.

Financial decentralization had significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.370; t = 7.671; p < 0.05$). These results indicate that financial decentralization promotes higher efficiency, better public service, greater transparency and, eventually effective fund management in the County. Fiscal decentralization is the most traceable type of decentralization as it is directly linked to budgetary practices. It necessitates the transfer of powers to raise and retain financial resources to fulfill assigned responsibilities to local level political and administrative organizations.

Citizen Participation had a significant and positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.267; t = 2.086; p < 0.05$). The findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive influence of citizen participation on the performance of Garissa County. This indicates that...
involvement of local citizens in fund management is within the confines of decentralization as a governance structure where services are brought close to the people with a consequent effect of involving them in decision making.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions of the Study

From the study findings, this study concluded that administrative decentralization has a significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.675; t = 4.810; p < 0.05$). The study also concluded that political decentralization has a significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.385; t = 6.708; p < 0.05$). From the findings, the study further concluded that financial decentralization had significant and a positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.370; t = 7.671; p < 0.05$). The study finally concluded that Citizen Participation had a significant and positive effect on the performance of Garissa County ($\beta = 0.267; t = 5.086; p < 0.05$).

5.2 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the regression analysis results, which demonstrate the significant impact of administrative decentralization, political decentralization, financial decentralization, and citizen participation on the performance of Garissa County, it is recommended that the county government prioritize decentralization policies and practices. This entails delegating authority, resources, and decision-making powers to lower levels of government and involving citizens in governance processes. By embracing decentralization, Garissa County can enhance service delivery and governance effectiveness, ultimately improving the well-being of its residents.

Policy Recommendation

To capitalize on the positive relationship between decentralization and performance, the Garissa County government should consider implementing specific policy measures:

1. **Strengthen Administrative Decentralization**: Invest in building the capacity of local administrative units, empower local officials, and streamline administrative processes to ensure efficient service delivery at the grassroots level.

2. **Promote Political Decentralization**: Enhance local political participation and representation through mechanisms such as devolved governance structures, local elections, and community forums to foster greater accountability and responsiveness to citizens’ needs.

3. **Enhance Financial Decentralization**: Allocate resources equitably across different regions within the county, empower local governments with financial autonomy, and implement transparent budgeting processes to improve resource management and service provision.

4. **Facilitate Citizen Participation**: Develop mechanisms for meaningful citizen engagement, such as participatory budgeting, community meetings, and feedback mechanisms, to ensure that citizens have a voice in decision-making processes and can hold government accountable for service delivery.

By enacting these policy recommendations, Garissa County can harness the potential of decentralization to optimize its performance and better serve its population.

5.3 Area of Further Studies

While the regression analysis provides valuable insights into the relationship between decentralization and performance in Garissa County, there are avenues for further research to deepen understanding and address remaining questions: The study should conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of decentralization policies on service delivery and governance outcomes in Garissa County. This would provide insights into the sustainability and evolution of decentralization initiatives over time. Also, the study should complement quantitative analysis with qualitative research methods, such as interviews and case studies, to explore the mechanisms through
which decentralization influences performance and to understand stakeholders’ perceptions and experiences. In additional the study should compare the performance of Garissa County with other counties in Kenya or similar regions that have implemented different models of decentralization. This comparative approach can help identify best practices and lessons learned for optimizing decentralization strategies. In future the study should conduct rigorous impact evaluations to assess the causal effects of specific decentralization interventions on service delivery indicators, such as access to healthcare, education quality, and infrastructure development, to inform evidence-based policymaking.

REFERENCES


