

EFFECTS OF COUNTY GOVERNANCE PRACTICES ON PROMOTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF WAJIR COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Devolution has the potential to enhance access to key services in Wajir County by bringing decision-making and service delivery closer to the local population. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of governance practices on effectiveness of service delivery in Wajir County. The study specific objectives were to examine how accountability and transparency influences rural development in Wajir County. Specifically, it aimed at assessing the changes in access, quality, equity, efficiency, and public satisfaction and participation in key decision making resulting from the shift in governance structure and decision-making authority from the national government to the county government. This study was guided by several theories including the good governance theory, participatory development theory and stakeholder management theory and conceptual frameworks to analyze the effect of county governance practices on accountability and service delivery effectiveness. This study utilized a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive and robust data. Quantitative data is collected through structured surveys administered to a representative sample of county government workers in Wajir County.

The surveys captured information related to access to accountability, perceptions of service quality, satisfaction levels, and equity in service delivery. Qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including county government officials, county management and lower carder staff in the county. These qualitative data sources provide insights into the contextual factors, challenges, and potential opportunities associated with devolution and its impact on service delivery effectiveness and public participation on key decision making processes. The study reveals that transparency in communication, information access, and public service delivery is relatively well-established within the county. The study concluded that governance practices are important in promoting rural development. The study recommends that county governments should find ways of promoting policy initiatives to enhance transparency, policy implementation, and accountability to promote sustainable rural development in the region.

Keywords: County Governance, Accountability, Transparency and Rural Development.

INTRODUCTION

County governance refers to the system of managing and governing a specific geographic region known as a county, typically characterized by its own administrative structure and local decision-making authority. It is often associated with regional or devolved governance models that aim to decentralize power and empower local communities (Vincent, 2019). It recognizes the importance of tailoring policies and services to the unique needs and characteristics of a specific county, promoting local accountability and responsiveness (Loughlin, 2013). County governance is seen as a way to strike a balance between centralization and decentralization, enabling more efficient and effective management of local affairs (Pierre & Peters, 2000).

From a global background, especially in Countries such as United States, the county governance plays a crucial role in the administration of local governance. According to a study by Lobao and Adua (2011) county governance are responsible for providing essential public services within their jurisdictions. This includes maintaining public infrastructure like roads, bridges, and public buildings. They often oversee public transportation systems, public health services, parks and recreation, and waste management.

In the African context, especially in South Africa, a study by Gilson et al. (2017) noted that county governance often oversees the administration of elections at the local level. They register voters, establish polling locations, and manage the voting process, ensuring fair and transparent elections. The authors also argued that county governance are involved in land-use planning and zoning regulations. They establish guidelines and regulations for residential, commercial, and industrial development within their jurisdiction, aiming to ensure orderly growth and protect the environment. The county governance also provides or coordinate social services for their residents, such as public assistance programs, including welfare, housing assistance, and programs for the elderly and disabled (De Grauwe & Laot, 2012).

In local context, especially in Kenya, it is evident that county governance has the authority to levy and collect taxes to fund their operations and provide services. They also manage their own budgets, allocating funds for various departments and initiatives (De Grauwe & Laot, 2012). They are responsible for emergency management and disaster response within their jurisdictions. They coordinate with state and federal agencies to develop emergency plans, provide emergency services, and coordinate response efforts during natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, or wildfires.

Rural development in Kenya has gained significant attention since the implementation of the devolved system of government in 2010. County governance play a vital role in formulating and implementing policies and plans that drive rural development. According to Ondieki (2017), county governments are responsible for developing county integrated development plans (CIDPs)

that outline strategies for rural development. These plans guide the allocation of resources and prioritize key sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and social services (Ondieki, 2017).

Effective service delivery is crucial for rural development. County governments are responsible for providing basic services in rural areas, such as healthcare, education, water supply, and sanitation. Mwangi and Kioko (2015) emphasize that county governments need to improve service provision in rural areas through infrastructure development and the recruitment of qualified personnel (Mwangi & Kioko, 2015). County governments have a role in promoting economic empowerment in rural areas. According to Kithinji and Kombo (2018), county governments can support rural entrepreneurship and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through capacity building, access to credit, and market linkages. These initiatives can contribute to job creation and income generation in rural communities (Kithinji & Kombo, 2018).

Effective local governance and citizen participation are crucial for promoting rural development. County governments play a vital role in facilitating participatory processes, engaging local communities, and incorporating their perspectives in decision-making. De Grauwe and Laot (2012) highlight the importance of citizen participation in shaping development policies and programs at the local level. County governments are responsible for providing essential services and developing infrastructure in rural areas. This includes healthcare, education, water supply, sanitation, road networks, and electrification. Olowu and Wunsch (2004) emphasize the need for effective service delivery and infrastructure development by county governments to stimulate rural economic growth and improve living conditions.

Agriculture is a crucial sector for rural development in Africa (Kithinji & Kombo, 2018). County governments play a significant role in promoting agricultural productivity, providing extension services, facilitating access to credit and markets, and supporting agribusiness development. Akudugu et al. (2015) highlight the importance of county government interventions in improving agricultural practices, enhancing rural livelihoods, and achieving food security.

In Kenya, the role of county government administration is significant as it is responsible for devolved governance at the local level (Kithinji & Kombo, 2018). Following the implementation of the 2010 Constitution, Kenya adopted a devolved system of government that established 47 counties. The county government administration plays a crucial role in several areas, including promotion of service delivery. The county government is responsible for providing various services to the residents within their jurisdiction. This includes sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, infrastructure development, water and sanitation, trade and commerce, and public transportation. The county government's primary objective is to improve service delivery and address the specific needs of their constituents.

Wajir County is located in northeastern Kenya and is one of the 47 counties in the country. It covers an area of approximately 56,685 square kilometers and has a diverse population, mainly comprising the Somali ethnic group. The county's capital and largest town is Wajir. Wajir County is predominantly arid and semi-arid, which poses challenges for farming activities. However, livestock rearing, especially camel and goat herding, is a crucial economic activity for the residents. The county also has potential for renewable energy, with solar and wind power projects being explored to harness the available resources.

Rural development in Wajir County, Kenya is a critical aspect of addressing the economic and social needs of the county's rural communities. It involves implementing various strategies and programs to improve the quality of life and promote sustainable development in rural areas. According to the Wajir County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2022), road construction projects are underway to improve transportation and link rural areas to markets and services. Given the predominantly arid and semi-arid nature of Wajir County, agricultural development plays a significant role in improving food security and livelihoods. However, the county is still underdeveloped in terms of agriculture health and education. There is need for the county government to adopt drought-resistant crops, support livestock rearing as well as construct schools and health facilities, ensuring trained personnel are available, and implementing initiatives to enhance education and healthcare outcomes in rural areas. This should be done in conjunction with economic empowerment and encouragement of environmental conservation and natural resource management in all rural regions in the county.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the devolved system of governance in Kenya and the mandate of county governments to spearhead local development, rural areas in the region continue to face various socio-economic challenges. These challenges may include limited access to basic services, inadequate infrastructure, and high levels of poverty, low agricultural productivity, and limited employment opportunities (Kithinji & Kombo, 2018). These challenges are affecting rural development in many regions in Kenya.

Rural development in Kenya is essential for addressing poverty, reducing regional disparities, ensuring food security, creating employment opportunities, and promoting sustainable resource management (Ondieki, 2017). It contributes to the overall socio-economic development and well-being of the country's population, particularly in rural areas. One of the notably studies by Ogola and Mureithi (2019) confirmed that county government plays a critical role towards rural development in Kenya. This is because it has led to revenue generation, management of county activities and development of schools and hospitals as well as market places in many rural areas in Kenya.

Several studies have been done globally to determine the role of county governments in spurring rural development. In Turkey, a study by Aydogus and Topcu (2013) confirmed that county operations in Turkey are progressing despite various challenges. The authors noted that county governments in Turkey play a crucial role in the development and maintenance of rural infrastructure. This includes the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, irrigation systems, and other essential infrastructure projects that enhance connectivity and accessibility in rural areas (Aydogus & Topcu, 2013). In their study, Gilson et al. (2017) noted that county governance in Africa plays a crucial role in promoting rural development by implementing strategies such as decentralization, enhancing local governance and participation, transparent service delivery and infrastructure, supporting agriculture and rural livelihoods, and fostering economic empowerment. In Kenya, Abass, Munga and Were (2017) reviewed how rural development is a problem that can be solved through county governance operations which is crucial for achieving sustainable economic growth, reducing poverty, and improving the well-being of rural communities.

Nonetheless, the role of county governance in promoting rural development within Kenya is still facing challenges (Abass, Munga & Were, 2017). This is because the resources and the structure is not effective and county government administration is still young in Kenya. In addition, there is little known studies investigating the role of county governance in promoting rural development within Kenya marginalized areas such as Wajir. This creates both conceptual and contextual gaps that this study intends to fill by investigating the role of county governance in promoting rural development within Wajir County.

Objective of the Study

- i. To examine how accountability influences rural development in Wajir County.
- ii. To evaluate how transparency affects rural development in Wajir County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study is guided by good governance theory which is explained in detail below:

Good Governance Theory

Good Governance Theory was founded by M. R. Kukrit Pramoj in 1957. Good Governance Theory also known as the theory of good governance focuses on the principles and practices that contribute to effective governance and sustainable development. Although it does not have a single founder, it has been developed and expanded upon by various scholars, policymakers, and international organizations (De Grauwe & Laot, 2012). The theory indicates that transparency, accountability and application of the rule of law can promote social development in the world.

The theory assumes that governments should be accountable to their citizens, promote transparency in decision-making and resource allocation, encourage citizen participation, and operate within a framework of the rule of law. It also assumes that governments should be accountable to their citizens for their actions, decisions, and use of resources. It assumes that transparency in governance processes, including decision-making, budgeting, and resource allocation, promotes trust and reduces corruption (De Grauwe & Laot, 2012). The citizens' active participation in governance processes strengthens democracy, enhances legitimacy, and leads to better policy outcomes and it is important governments should operate within a legal framework that upholds human rights, protects property rights, and ensures equal treatment under the law.

However, critiques of the theory highlight its Western bias, lack of contextual specificity, and challenges in implementation. One critique of good governance theory is that it reflects a Western-centric perspective, primarily rooted in liberal democracy (De Grauwe & Laot, 2012). It may not fully account for cultural, social, and political contexts in non-Western countries or regions. Critics argue that good governance principles are often presented as universal norms without considering the specific historical, cultural, and institutional contexts of different countries or regions. In addition, implementing good governance principles can be complex and challenging, especially in contexts with weak institutional capacity, limited resources, and political constraints. Critics contend that the theory does not adequately address these challenges.

Nevertheless, the theory has practical applications, including integration into development policies and programs, guiding institutional reforms, and empowering civil society organizations and citizens to advocate for transparency, accountability, and participation in governance processes. These applications aim to foster effective governance and promote sustainable development outcomes, including rural development (De Grauwe & Laot, 2012). In Wajir County, the theory can help to promote transparency and accountability in managing rural activities leading to rural development.

Empirical Review

Accountability Local Political Affairs and Rural Development

Analysis reveals that management of political local affairs influence rural development. In Nigeria, the study conducted by Agbodike, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah (2014) focuses on how rural development is possible in Nigeria. The researchers examine the role of local government authorities in promoting sustainable development and identify the key challenges they face in achieving this objective. The study highlights the importance of local government administration in driving sustainable development initiatives at the grassroots level. It explores the various functions and responsibilities of local government authorities in Nigeria, including service

delivery, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation programs. The researchers also discuss the legal and policy frameworks that guide local government administration in Nigeria. In Indonesia, Yudha, Juanda, Kolopaking, and Kinseng (2020) examined how policies in rural promote value in development the country. The researchers explore the policies and strategies implemented in the context of rural autonomy to promote rural development in the regency. The study provides an overview of the rural autonomy era in Indonesia, which grants more decision-making power and resources to local governments to address the specific needs and challenges of their rural areas. It examines the policy framework and strategies adopted by Pandeglang Regency to drive rural development in this era. The researchers analyze the key areas of focus in the rural development policy of Pandeglang Regency, including infrastructure development, agricultural productivity, education, health services, and tourism. They assess the implementation of these policies and strategies, highlighting the achievements and challenges faced by the local government. The study also discusses the role of community participation and local institutions in the rural development process. It explores the extent to which community involvement and the collaboration between local government and various stakeholders contribute to the success of rural development initiatives. Based on their analysis, Yudha et al. (2020) provide insights into the effectiveness of rural development policies and strategies in Pandeglang Regency. They identify areas where improvements are needed, such as strengthening coordination among government agencies, enhancing community engagement, and addressing resource limitations. However, this study only offers a comprehensive examination issues in Indonesia.

Bratton (2020) also investigated the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa and their potential influence on public policy. The study examines the relationship between NGOs and government institutions, exploring the extent to which NGOs can shape public policy and contribute to development processes in the African context. However, Crook (2013) focuses on the decentralization of power and its impact on poverty reduction in Africa. The empirical study examines the political dynamics between local and central governments in the context of decentralization reforms. It explores the potential of decentralized governance structures to address poverty and promote local development. These studies provide valuable empirical insights into various aspects of rural development and the importance of management of local affairs.

In Kenya, Omar and Moi (2020) noted that public participation is important in all projects. The review confirmed that counties should manage their operations through consideration of others view. The study was based in Wajir and involves the importance of considering public views in major activities. However, the review on focused on the value of public participation in counties.

Transparency and Rural Development

Several reviews indicate that transparent public service delivery promotes rural development. Singh, Pathak, Naz & Belwal (2010) also evaluated how governance systems influence public activities in India and other regions. The study was based on a comparative analysis of these three

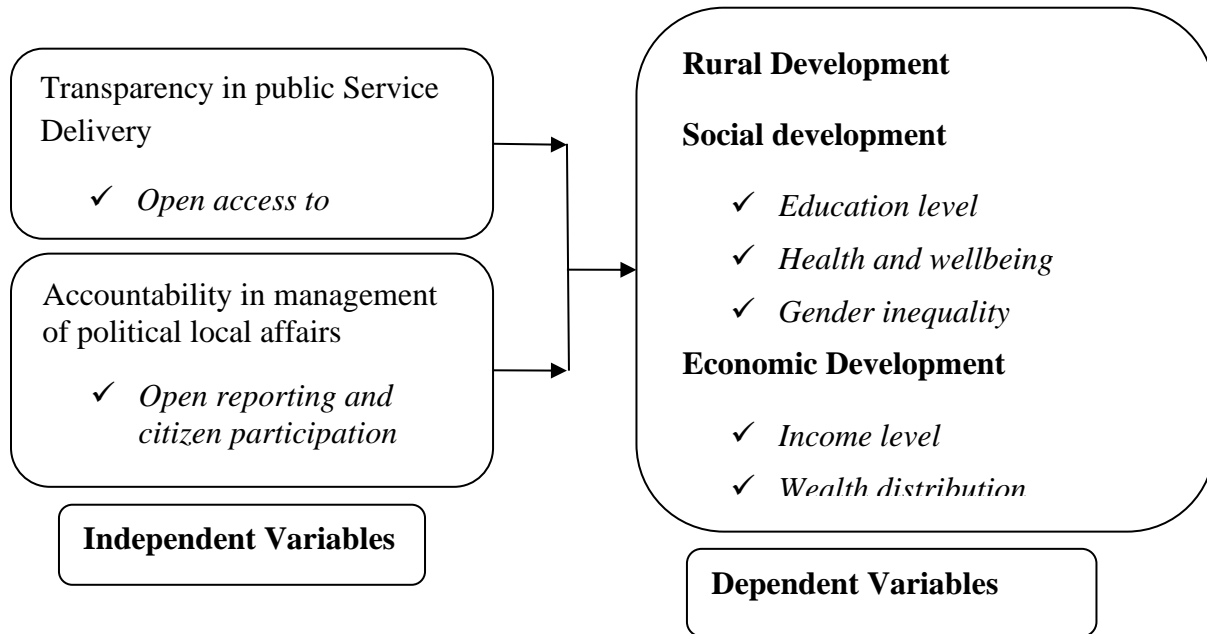
countries. The researchers employed a qualitative research approach, including document analysis and case studies. The findings indicated that e-governance initiatives had a positive impact on service delivery in all three countries, leading to increased efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction. The study concluded that e-governance can significantly enhance public sector service delivery.

Moreover, Bhuiyan (2011) focused on modernizing Bangladesh's public administration through e-governance. The study examined the benefits and challenges associated with e-governance in the context of Bangladesh. The findings highlighted the potential benefits of e-governance, such as increased efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation. However, challenges related to infrastructure, capacity building, and policy implementation was identified. The study concluded that effective e-governance implementation can modernize public administration in Bangladesh. Joshi (2013) also assessed the impact of transparency and accountability initiatives on service delivery. The study employed a systematic literature review methodology to analyze existing empirical studies in diverse contexts. The findings suggested that transparency and accountability initiatives can have positive effects on service delivery outcomes. However, the impact varied depending on factors such as contextual factors, program design, and citizen engagement. The study concluded that transparency and accountability initiatives can contribute to improved service delivery but require careful attention to implementation and contextual factors.

Iyer and RN (2017) focused on transparency and effective e-governance in the Indian state of Karnataka, using telecentres as a case study. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and case studies. The findings revealed that transparency initiatives through telecentres positively influenced e-governance outcomes, including improved access to information, citizen empowerment, and government accountability. The study concluded that transparent and effective e-governance can be achieved through the strategic use of telecentres and a focus on citizen-centric services.

However, Saxena (2017) explored how challenges of corruption negatively influence activities in Bulgaria. The review was based on survey and the authors noted that there various factors, including organizational culture, enforcement mechanisms, and technological infrastructure, that influenced public perceptions of corruption. The study concluded that addressing these factors and promoting transparency in e-government platforms can help reduce corruption and improve public service delivery. These studies provide insights into the impact of e-governance on public sector service delivery in different countries and contexts. They highlight the potential benefits of e-governance, such as increased efficiency, transparency, and citizen satisfaction. However, challenges and contextual factors need to be considered for effective implementation. The studies emphasize the importance of transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in achieving improved service delivery outcomes.

Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. According to Maxwell (2012), descriptive research design represents the research questions that are applicable to statistics and include quantitative data. This method is associated with description of the variables to help analyze and explain topic of the study. Cooper and Schindler (2011) noted that the model can help describe variables in a clearer manner. The population comprised all 300 staff at Wajir County (Wajir County, 2023). A representative sample of 90 was selected supported by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) that 30% of the target population is adequate for generalization of findings. The study collected primary data using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics: Mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

From the 90 questionnaires administered to the all the sampled respondents, 80 questionnaires were returned thus, a response rate of 88.88%. Mugenda (2012) noted that a response rate of 70% and above is excellent for data analysis and reporting, a rate of 60% is good, and a rate of 50% is adequate.

On gender, majority of the respondents were male. The male respondents were 58, representing 72.5% of the respondents who returned their questionnaire and the female were 22, representing 27.5%. On positions held, majority of the respondents were field project officers (35), followed by HR officers (15), then top management (9), operations officers (6) and finance officers (6), stakeholders (5), and finally M&E department officers (4).

On age levels, the respondents were between 40 and 50 years, followed by 30-40 years, then 50-60 years, there also youths between 20-30 and the least were between 60 and 70 years. On work experience, majority of the respondents had worked in their respective positions for the county in slightly more than five years.

The findings also showed that the respondents were learned as majority had attained Bachelor's degree as their highest level of education with some having Master's Degree and others having diploma and certificates.

County Governance Practices

The questionnaire contained a myriad of questions regarding county governance. The questions surrounded the governance practices that the county of Wajir embraces and how these practices affect rural development in the county. The first governance practice that the research focused on was transparency in the county operations. The study examined the transparency in communication in the county's operations, in the service delivery across the county, and in information access in the county. The second practice examined during the study was accountability in the management of the local political affairs within Wajir. The researcher established that although the county embraces open reporting policies and citizen participation in the local projects, accountability was a major problem in the county's operations and development initiatives. The third practice examined in the study was the county's public policy in projects' implementation. The last governance practice investigated during the study was how the county applies the rule of law in its major operations, including development programs. The study noted these governance practices had significant impacts on rural development within Wajir County (Mwangi & Kioko, 2015).

Transparency

The study's first objective was to evaluate how transparency affects rural development in Wajir. The participants were subjected to this objective as the first question in the questionnaire. From the analysis of the results obtained from the respondents, the researcher noted that majority of the respondents agreed that the county embraced transparency in its operations and development projects. The overall results and analysis of this objective is shown the table below.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The county management provides all necessary information to stakeholders	2	5	18	43	12
The county engages in transparency in public Service Delivery	15	9	10	40	6
There is open access to information in the county.	8	12	5	46	14
There is clarity in communication in the county	2	11	2	51	14

Mean	6.75	9.25	8.75	45	11.5
Standard Deviation	6.18	3.09	6.99	4.69	3.78

These findings indicate that majority of Wajir County’s staff members agree that the county fosters transparency. It is evident that most of the county’s staff members agree that the county’s management provide all necessary information to stakeholders regarding the development project and other operations in the county. Similar situation is witnessed in engagement of transparency in public service delivery within the county, open access to information regarding various projects in the county, and clarity in communication about county’s projects and operations. As such, rural development in the county is likely spur since county embraces transparency in its operations and projects. Transparency reduces corruptions and encourages stakeholders’ participation in the rural development projects across the county (Ogola & Mureithi, 2019).

Accountability

The second objective of the study was to determine whether Wajir County practices accountability in the management of the local political affairs. Majority of the respondents indicated that they agree that the county embraces accountability in the management of the local political affairs. However, there was a significant number of the respondents that disagreed that the county embraced accountability in the management of the local political affairs. The table below shows the results and statistical analysis of the respondents’ responses regarding this objective.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The county engages in accountability in management of political local affairs	3	29	9	34	5
The county supports Open reporting in county operations	2	22	1	43	12
There is citizen participation in the county activities	1	21	4	42	12
There is feedback mechanism to the public by top leaders	7	32	3	34	4
Mean	3.25	26	4.25	38.25	8.25
Standard Deviation	2.62	5.35	3.40	4.92	4.34

These results and analysis reveal that majority of the county’s staff members believe that the county is correctly involving accountability in the management of its local political affairs. Nonetheless, there is a significant opposition to this majority belief with a considerable number of participants expressing disagreement in the questionnaire. Availability of a feedback mechanism

seems to be the most contentious issue under this objective. Nevertheless, the county’s rural areas are still in better position to grow and develop like the urban areas (Ogola & Mureithi, 2019).

Rural Development

The questionnaire also contained questions investigating the extent and state of rural development within the county. From the results, the researcher noted that rural areas are fairly developed in Wajir. Most of the projects are fairly developed, others are below average, and a few are above average. The county is yet to experience a single development project in the rural areas that can be regarded as good or far above average despite the county’s 10 years existence. The table below shows the results, mean, and standard deviation of the participants’ responses regarding rural development in Wajir County.

Rural Development	Fair below average	Below average	Average	Little Above average	Far above average
The county has stable good educational facilities	18	48	9	3	0
The county has stable income level	15	52	8	5	0
The county has good wealth distribution	25	55	0	0	0
The county has strong Infrastructure development	22	53	5	0	0
The county has proper gender equality	24	40	12	4	0
The county has good health and wellbeing	28	32	8	2	0
Mean	22	46.66	7	2.33	0
Standard Deviation	4.77	8.93	4.09	2.06	0

Most of the development projects in the rural areas in Wajir County are below average (M= 46.66, SD=8.93). According to the respondents, a significant number of these projects are below average (M=22, SD=4.77). The ones that are average (M=7, SD=4.09) and the above average one (M=2.33, SD=2.06). There is no development in the rural areas of Wajir that can be regarded as good or far above average (M=0, SD=0), indicating that the rural development in Wajir County is still below average despite the county existing for the last ten years. Indeed, there are factors behind these underdevelopments in the county’s rural areas and there is need for significant changes and improvements to spur development in the rural areas of Wajir (Omar & Moi, 2020).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of governance practices, particularly accountability and transparency, in promoting rural development in Wajir County. The findings suggest that while transparency is relatively well-established in the county's operations, there is room for strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure more effective governance. The positive perception of public policy implementation and the application of the rule of law is encouraging, and these factors are likely contributing to rural development. However, further research and policy analysis are needed to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between these governance practices and rural development outcomes. In light of the identified positive influence of accountability on rural development, policymakers should consider measures to enhance accountability within the county government to drive sustainable rural development in Wajir County.

Moreover, the study's findings shed light on the governance practices and demographic characteristics of county employees in Wajir County. These practices, including transparency, accountability, public policy implementation, and the rule of law, play crucial roles in shaping rural development outcomes. The study suggests that a focus on improving accountability mechanisms may be particularly effective in advancing rural development efforts. However, further research and policy analysis may be needed to fully understand the nuanced relationships between these governance practices and rural development outcomes. The study also contributes to new body of knowledge by illustrating theories that define good governance in counties.

Recommendation for Policy

The Wajir County's policymakers and government officials prioritize and implement measures to enhance accountability mechanisms within the county government. This can include the establishment of transparent reporting processes, increased citizen participation in local projects, and the implementation of feedback mechanisms to promote accountability. Additionally, efforts to further improve transparency, especially in public service delivery and information access should continue to be a focal point of policy initiatives. Moreover, the positive correlation between policy implementation and rural development suggests the importance of ensuring that policies are effectively translated into actionable development projects and programs. Policymakers should work to streamline policy implementation processes to maximize their impact on rural development.

The County Government should promote various accountability Issues

To foster rural development in Wajir County, it is crucial to implement and fortify mechanisms that enhance financial accountability and transparency within rural development projects. This includes rigorous tracking of financial resources and transparent allocation to ensure that every shilling is put to its best use. Additionally, integrating technology and digital tools can be pivotal in monitoring project progress and resource utilization in a transparent and efficient manner. Empowering the local community is a key component of promoting accountability in rural development. Raising awareness through educational campaigns and community programs helps residents understand their rights and responsibilities within these projects. Encouraging local participation through avenues like town hall meetings, community feedback sessions, and public consultations ensures that the community's voice is heard and valued. There is need for capability building since building the capacity of stakeholders is vital for strengthening accountability. This includes providing comprehensive training for government officials, local leaders, and community members in best practices related to accountability, budgeting, and financial management. Moreover, fostering a culture of transparency and open communication within government departments and agencies responsible for rural development ensures that accountability becomes a fundamental part of the institutional framework.

The government in the Country should promote Transparency

County government should value transparency. Transparency in rural development can be achieved by establishing a centralized platform or website where information regarding rural development projects, budgets, and progress can be easily accessed by the public. This includes making project documentation, contracts, and reports readily available. Transparency in data sharing builds trust and ensures that the community and stakeholders are well-informed. The county should try ways to evaluate the impact of transparency, it's essential to require regular and detailed reporting on rural development initiatives. This reporting should encompass financial reports, project status updates, and impact assessments. Moreover, stakeholders should be encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement, and concerns should be addressed transparently to enhance trust in the process. In addition, promoting transparency also involves creating safeguards for those who uncover irregularities. Implementing policies that protect individuals who report corruption, fraud, or mismanagement in rural development projects is vital. Ensuring that whistleblowers are shielded from retaliation and provided with legal support encourages a culture of transparency and accountability.

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