

The Influence of Decentralization on The Transfer of Secondary Education Delivery in Tanzania: A Case Study of Kagera Region

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Abstract

This paper examines the influence of transfer of responsibility from central government to local government on secondary education delivery, in order to shed light on the determinants of efficiency and effectiveness. In order to obtain timely relevant and in-depth information on the study, a cross-sectional survey was employed involving 286 respondents from both urban and rural settlements. Structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, key informants, and observation were used to collect data relevant for the study. Based on this study, decentralization is considered as a means of improving efficiency and responsiveness of public service delivery. The study found that no much support has been given to local government to enable them to gain confidence and commitment in service delivery since there is no sufficient mechanisms to support and incorporate local community in decision-making process. In principle, local officials must be committed, operate in transparent manner and be involved fully in decision-making, policy making and planning instead of the current practice of just receiving direction from the central government.

Keywords: Decentralization, Governance, Central Government, Service Delivery, Devolution, Local Government

1. Introduction

Decentralization as a key component for political development is considered to be instrumental in delivering service to the public. For more than fifty years, both developed and developing countries have been applying decentralization program in order to promote good governance and better service delivery such as education. So, decentralization is not a new concept in countries around the world. In 1980s, there was a push toward decentralization reform in most developing countries particularly in Africa. It was perceived that decentralization reform would contribute significantly to promote check and balance of power, accountability, responsiveness of local authority and ultimately, good governance as well effective and efficient service delivery to the public (World Bank, 1990). In fact, decentralization program is not an end in itself, but it is one of the several political strategy being applied by local government to improve the delivery of public goods and services, including education services. Effective services delivery requires strong relationships of accountability and responsiveness between the stakeholders through which the central government transfer its powers, functions, responsibility and decision-making powers to lower levels of government (UTR, 2008).

Before independence, the education system in Tanzania was under the colonial government and missionary institutions. Soon after independence in 1961, Tanzania took initiative to restructure the education system, in order to align it with the people aspirations and needs of the nation. Decentralization of education provide opportunities to promote school management and good governance to local authorities in order to empower citizens to engage in decision-making, facilitate local participation, transparent management and innovations (Kabagire, 2006). Mawhood (1983) argues that decentralization reform can be promoted through delegating responsibilities to local government. In this case, decentralization program empowers community to monitor local leaders. Therefore, there are possibilities of improving service delivery in local governance. As far as decentralization reform is deeply concerned with transfer of decision making powers from the central to local government, it offers an opportunity for local involvement in decision-making and improving local knowledge, resources and expertise in the development strategy (Asante and Ayee 2008).

According to Agba, Akwara and Indu (2013), the main goal of creating local government anywhere around the world rise from the need to improve development at the grassroots level and make the provision of social services equally. For decentralization to perform effectively

and efficiently, local government needs to have autonomy and independence, as well to be considered as a separate level apart from the central government. This paper aims at exploring the contribution of decentralization program on the transfer of secondary education in developing countries. That means to see the extent at which stakeholders are involved in promoting development good governance at the grass root levels.

2. Methodology

A cross-sectional approach was adopted in this study. Bailey (1994), argues that the design facilitated data to be collected at a single point in time of collecting important information of this study.

2.1. Sampling

To accomplish the respective sample sizes, lists of respondents were obtained from each of the sampled ward to act as sampling frames. The study two sampling methods: used a non-probability sampling method called convenience sampling and a probability sampling method called systematic sampling. Convenience sampling was applied to local leaders who were selected from among the respondents based on their willingness to participate in the study, while systematic sampling was employed to parents. Purposive sampling was also used in which head of schools were purposely selected for they were assumed to possess more information about the decentralization by devolution in delivering secondary education. Participants included students, teachers, head teachers, local government administrators, parents and education officers from both rural and urban in Kagera Region in Tanzania.

2.2 Sample size

In fact, the entire population of Tanzania particularly Kagera Region is affected by government systems and policies as decentralization by devolution is concerned with in public services delivery such as education. Basing on this fact, it is impossible to conduct research on all country. Ultimately, in view of circumstances like time factor and fund, the researcher obtained data from a sample of a population of two purposively selected districts with unique characteristics that differentiate them from rural and urban areas. 287 respondents were used as sample size.

The data were collected through structured questionnaires, focus group discussion, key informants, observation as well as documentation. Data were analyzed using quantitative technique. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded, summarized and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive statistics

were used to obtain frequency counts of various coded responses and to compare means of quantitative responses of variables. Also, descriptive statistics were used for comparison purposes on variables of interest for explaining the decentralization by devolution in delivering education service. Presentations of the findings are presented using figures that show frequencies and percentage.

3. Results and Discussion

The data was analyzed according to the objective, which was: To examine the influence of decentralization by devolution on education service delivery in Kagera Region as a case study.

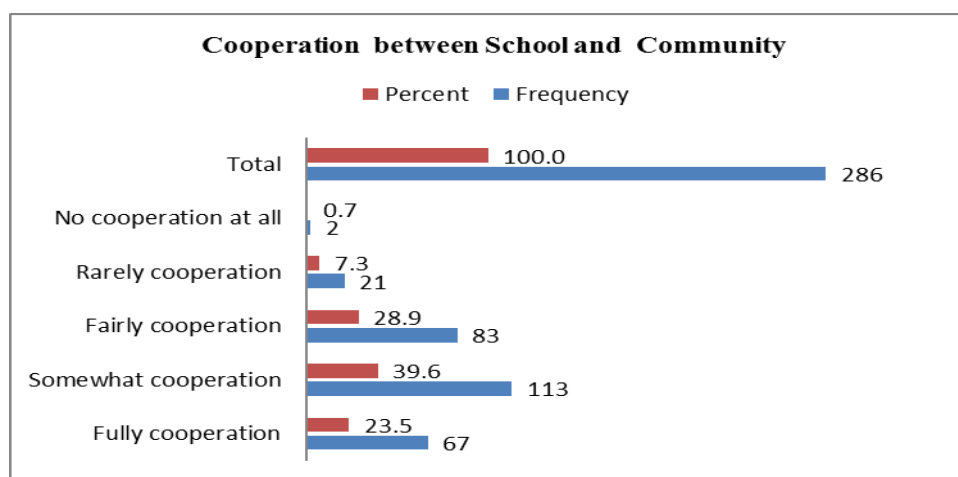
3.1 Cooperation between School and Community

The community is the primary stakeholder group, but other stakeholders with specialized capacities and responsibilities are essential. The cooperation between school and community is a factor that cannot be ignored. Parents are the most conspicuous representatives of local communities, but the two groups are not identical. As indicated on Figure 1 below, 67 (23.5%) of the respondents admitted that there was full cooperation between schools and community. On the other hand 113 (39.6%) said that the relationship between school and community was that of minimal cooperation, 83 (28.9%) of the respondents said cooperation between school and community was fair. Others 21 (7.3%) answered that the cooperation between school and community was rare while, only 2 (0.7%) of the respondents said there was no cooperation at all. Basing on the findings on table 1, it shows that there was sufficient cooperation between school and community in delivering secondary education. Such findings reflect that community members were responding positively to participate fully in delivering education at the local level. The importance of cooperation between school and community is being emphasized by Chrzanowski and Thompson (2009) who argue that when parents and community members are engaged in the life of the school, the resources available for teaching and the learning environment expand. Also, when teachers and principals build trust with each other and with parents, they can develop a common vision for school reform and work together to implement necessary changes in the school. In addition, an intersecting set of relationships of community can provide a holistic environment in which children are raised with a unified set of expectations and behaviors. The relationship between the school and other community institutions such as community organizations, businesses and churches can also be understood in this way. Interpersonal relationships built between individuals across

these institutions provide the glue for innovative collaborations at the institutional level. These partnerships strengthen relationships among people in the entire community. Building the collective capacity for schools to thrive in this way has a direct impact on student achievement.

According to (UNICEF, 2007) parents and communities have a duty to lobby their government for provisions that can provide quality education for their children. In the absence of such government provision, parents and communities still have a duty to their children and need to establish schools that can provide quality education. Furthermore, parents and communities must be closely involved in all aspects of the school and must be prepared to support it by shouldering the fair and reasonable costs required to promote quality education. Parents should have a vested interest in what schools offer and in the outcomes of the education process for their children and communities. In turn, schools have an obligation to be sensitive to the communities they serve, to care for and protect the children entrusted to them, and to be accountable to the local community in their governance and management. School boards and parent-teacher committees are the governance and management mechanisms through which this linkage and accountability are manifested. Despite of positive response of the community to participate in delivering education, community have not yet been involved fully in decision-making concerning education policy which was supposed to be a bottom-up rather than to top-down affair. Top-down paradigm in decision-making is still prevailing. Moreover, top-down paradigm has become an obstacle to achieve the goals of decentralization reform in most developing countries especial in South of Sahara because have not always had effectiveness of efficiency as their primary goals in education sector.

Figure 1: Cooperation between School and Community (N=286)



Sources: Survey Data, 2019

3.2 Cooperation between School and Local Government (Councilors and Village Executives)

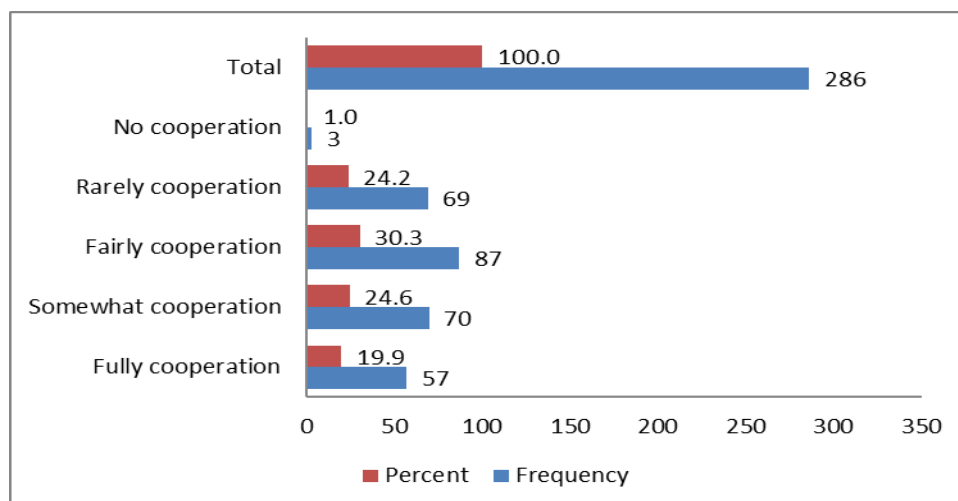
Local government authorities have a unique role in their community and are better placed to ensure that the school is aware of the community that it is within. These individual relationships help to break down perceived barriers. In Tanzania, local government authorities were established for the purpose of bringing the government closer to the people for instance, work with schools to support the quality of education. The analysis of the responses presented in Figure 2 below depicts that 57 (19.9%) of the respondents said there was full cooperation between school and local government and 70 (24.6%) of them said there was minimal cooperation between school and local government. On the other hand, 87 (30.3%) of the respondents had opinion that there was fair cooperation and, 69 (24.2%) proclaimed that there was rare cooperation between school and local government while 3 (1.0%) said there was no cooperation between school and local government. From these finding it can be stated that overall 283 (99.0%) of the respondents were on opinion that there was cooperation between school and local government. Therefore, the findings confirm that there is good cooperation between school and local government that can lead to better achievement for secondary school education in Tanzania.

Local Governments are government institutions that are closest to the people, therefore responsible for serving the political and material needs of the people and communities including school at a specific local area. Mkonongwa (2012) asserts that secondary education in Tanzania is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) which is responsible for policy-making, quality assurance, monitoring as well as evaluation of Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP). In addition, (MoEVT) is responsible for monitoring sub-sector programmes such as Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP II). While the Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) is responsible for the management and administration of secondary schools. Hence, the day to day routine functions are assigned to the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in accordance with the decentralization by devolution (D-by-D) policy. The administration of secondary schools in LGAs is an additional new function since 2009 following the announcement of decentralization of administration of secondary schools from the central government to Local Government Authorities.

Parish, Baxter and Sandals (2012) argue that schools are clear that the future of the education system lies in the strength of their partnerships, and it is encouraging that schools are

mobilizing themselves to capitalize on these opportunities. In, Bristol for instance, the chance to strengthen existing partnerships was one of the main attractions of becoming an academy. The range of partnerships, from teaching schools alliances, to individual federations, transition groups, and subject networks, is very broad and speaks volumes of the vibrancy and dynamism of the school system. However, head of schools are also aware that these partnerships can be fragile and very dependent on the good will of the individuals involved. Under these circumstances, a lot of consideration is being given by local authorities and schools, to local governance mechanisms that bring key partners together around decision-making, that demonstrate their worth to those involved, and that create a sense of moral obligation that makes it difficult for schools to opt out of decision-making processes that serve the collective interests of learners. Therefore, in overall, the cooperation between school and local government in terms of sharing experiences and skills allow for better governance.

Figure 2: Cooperation between School and Local Government (N=286)



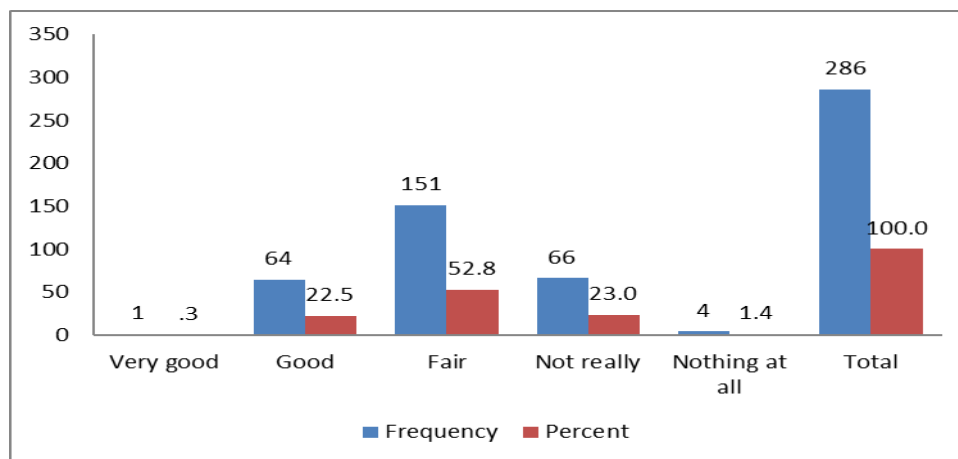
Sources: Survey Data, 2019

3.3 The Influence of the Existing Nature of Public Participation on Infrastructure (Classroom and Laboratory)

Infrastructure (classroom, laboratory and teachers' houses) in secondary schools is growing steadily as enrolment of students increase, and as expectations of achieving better standards of academic performance are raised by the government. Local services and infrastructure not only contribute to conducive environment but also enhance academic performance. Figure 3 below illustrates that, only 1 (0.3%) of the respondents said that public participation in construction of infrastructure in secondary schools was very good, 64 (22.5%) of them said construction of infrastructure was good, 151 (52.8%) claimed that construction of

infrastructure was fair. In contrast to this 66 (23.0%) held the opinion that construction of infrastructure was not really while 4 (1.4%) believed that public participation on constructing infrastructure was nothing at all. From these findings, it can be deduced that overall, 65 (23.8%) of the respondents were of the opinion that accessibility on infrastructure was good, the majority 151 (52.8%) of them said participation in construction was just average while the rest 70 (24.4%) of them were not contended with participation in infrastructure. The findings indicate public participation on putting school infrastructure in place is slow and has made the school environment to be not conducive for learning.

Figure 3: The Influence of the Existing Nature of Public Participation on Infrastructure (Classrooms and Laboratory) (N=286)



Sources: Survey Data, 2019

The school infrastructure plays a major role in promoting or restricting learning. In Kagera Region, the number of classrooms which were expected to be constructed under SEDP Programme for January-March of the Financial Year 2015/2016 were 198, but only 20 classrooms were constructed. The construction of teachers' houses was also at the very slow pace due to lack of funds. There are few teachers' houses for the whole region. The total requirements were 3,105 but there are only 500 house which is equal to 16% of the requirement (Regional Administration and Local Government in Kagera region, 2016). Moreover, the construction of toilets was still going on supported by communities in the district. However, due to increase in enrolment all schools in the region have acute shortage of toilets. The available stances were not meeting the requirements.

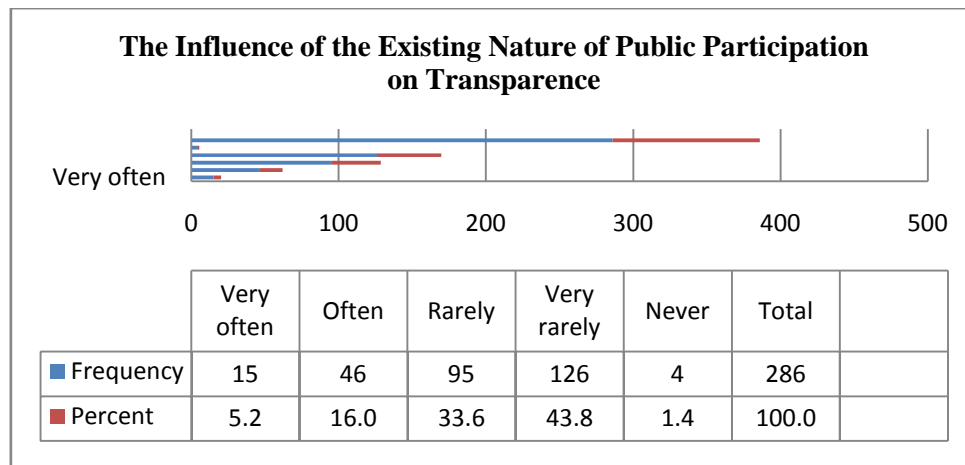
Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) observe that in Africa an effective assessment of facilities in schools reveals a gross and unacceptable state of infrastructural decay. This is particularly true of secondary schools. Many of the buildings were constructed in the late 1950s and early

1960s with mud blocks. Today, they are not only a health hazard but also potential death traps. In fact, in many areas, classes are being held in the open during the dry season and when the rainy season comes, children are crowded into the few available ramshackle buildings. Many schools lack essential infrastructure to enable them function as safe, efficient and effective schools.

3.4 The Influence of the Existing Nature of Public Participation on Transparency

The people must be able to remain informed if they are to retain control over those who are their public servants. Transparency is a condition in which information about the priorities, intentions, capabilities, and behavior of powerful organizations is widely available to the global public (Maravall and Przeworski, 2003). In addition, it is a condition of openness enhanced by any mechanism that discloses and disseminates information such as a free press, open government hearings, mobile phones, commercial satellite imagery as well as reporting requirements in international regimes. Greater transparency also empowers citizens directly and allows them to monitor their affairs themselves instead of relying on a single official source of information (Uemura, 1999). In the decentralized governance; government actions, decisions and decision-making processes are open to an appropriate level of scrutiny by other parts of the government, citizens and, in some instances, outside institutions. Particularly, transparency is achieved when citizens or taxpayers have access to information and decision-making forums, so that the general public knows what is happening and is able to judge whether it is appropriate or not. As shown on Figure 4 below, 15 (5.2%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative that they were exposed to information concerning the secondary education delivery. On the other hand, overall 46 (16.0%) said that they were exposed to information often. While 95 (33.6%) of them said they were exposed to information about secondary education rarely. As many as 126 (43.8%) of the respondents said they were exposed to information very rarely, only 4 (1.4%) of them claimed they were never exposed to information concerning secondary education. The data in Figure 4 below, revealed that overall, 61 (21.2%) of the respondents were on opinion that they were exposed to information often. On the other hand, 221 (45.2%) of the respondents said they were exposed to information rarely while 4 (1.4%) of them said they were never exposed to information. These entails an obligation to transparency and traceability and to the effective provision of services are moderate.

Figure. 4: The Influence of the Existing Nature of Public Participation on Transparency



Sources: Survey Data, 2019

The rationale for decentralization rests on the assumption that decentralized government structures can improve efficiency and transparency in public management. Transparency is key element of decentralization. Nevertheless, local officials must also have authority and resources corresponding to their functions if they are to be able to take over effectively and efficiently the responsibility assigned to them. If these requirements are met, public administration become more transparent and can be monitored more efficiently. This can help to reduce corruption and improve resource allocation and distribution (Gravingholt, 2006).

4. Conclusion

It should be noted that local government reform supported by public awareness and consensus would be more efficient and effective to the people’s needs and strengthen and support a more democratic system of governance. Also, if decentralization is well organized, it can provide exciting opportunities to offer a sufficient service at the local level and if there is a political will, it can help improve national democracy.

Unfortunately, in most developing countries including Tanzania, the high expectations of decentralization system have not been fulfilled. This is because democratic institutions are fragile and the capacity is weak. The results are associated with failures rather than with success, as a resulting lack of political will on the part of the central government. For instance, the evidence indicates that quality of local governance to handle issues concerning services delivery such as education is still very low despite the reforms. It is important to note that decentralization reform in most African countries has not yielded the expected fruits because central governments are not willing to share power. Therefore, there is urgent need

for the central government to reconcile with the local governments in terms of education service delivery. The study recommends that since D by D aims at bringing services closer to the people, local leaders should involve citizens in decision-making particularly in planning and setting their priorities in education service delivery. Again, there is need for education policy to state clearly how D by D works especially on education service delivery.

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