



Public Administration in the Global South

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Keywords

Public administration
Performance management
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Abstract.

This article strives to investigate what devolved governments of Kenya are doing and ought to do after which the approaches of performance and public administration will be made clear. This approach will facilitate the identification of prevailing practices used to manage the performance and suggest strategies for improvement. Descriptive assessment of 5 devolved governments of Kenya is carried out. The article covered 518 respondents across the above-sampled governments. The results support administrative staff, scholars, policy-makers and practitioners, consultants and social scientists in development studies for planning and administration of public organizations. This outcomes have an interest and importance far beyond Kenya and can be embraced by various prospective governments, states, and organizations. The thought of factors that enhance or impede devolved government workers performance can be explored in future research.

1. Introduction

Performance Management (PM) can be considered as one of those theories whose authenticity needs to be proved in emerging countries' environment (see Aoki [1]). PM concept has various meanings based on the value derived (see Saltmarshe et al. [40]). PM is not merely a concept but a competitive strategy for change which requires a reasonable realization of the same (see Dorren et al. [12]). A good distinction between evaluation, embracing, and appreciation of performance information is fundamental. The PM in the public sector is rooted in discussions of reform, policy, and management (see Lee et al. [29]). PM is the monitoring and appraisal of employees, departments, and public sector institutions, in this case, devolved governments also referred to as county governments to ensure that achievements and aims are attained efficiently and effectively (see Brinkerhoff [6]). The eventual goal of PM is to better the quality of services offered in the most efficient way possible (see Cronin et al. [8]). In this article, an overview is given

of the status of PM in public sector institutions in Kenya. This is intended to address the performance discussion in modern public administration, public sector realignments and public policy (see Walker et al. [48]). The approaches used in PM evaluation in the public sector are still in need of further investigation and development particularly regarding understanding the resultant action arising from the monitoring and appraisal process (see Ohemeng et al. [37]). A hopeful future of public administration is guided by the assertion of the viability and importance of the public need as a benchmark against which performance offered in public institutions may be advanced (see Beresford [5]).

To generate a literature review for this article, we searched the internet, scrutinized relevant manuals, reading materials and peer-reviewed academic databases. Since the focus is on devolved governments PM, we examined materials of public administration and performance in nature. The literature emphasizes the collective and prudent provision of devolved government services and functions through human resources and precious assets for continuous development.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Since the promulgation of the fresh constitution, Kenya has been actualizing public sector transformations. Among them is devolution which has taken centre stage by constituting devolved governments. Devolution is the legitimate delegation of authority from the central government of an independent nation to govern at a subnational level, for instance, a county level. Devolution as enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 consists of the National and County Governments. The two levels of government are distinct and inter-dependent with constitutionally allocated and preserved functions and powers as explained in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution. Hence, 47 devolved governments and the Senate were constituted in the wake of the 2013 general election as a means of implementation of devolution (see Schulz-herzenberg et al. [42]).

As a result of the versatile nature of the public service, it is more demanding to develop performance measures in these institution (see Chiu [7]). Regardless of the best aims of governments to better the quality of services, through measurement, quality systems and benchmarking, there is still unwelcome side effects like bad devolved government reputation, a decline of stakeholders' lifetime value resulting in a decrease in willing parties like suppliers, increased employee renewal rate and inferior quality of services which scale down anticipated benefits.

Devolved governments need to express that performance is managed, monitored and improved on an endless basis. For this reason, it must develop a far-reaching PM approach (see Downe et al. [13]). The development of such an approach is, nonetheless, not without hitches and devolved governments are tasked with identifying fundamental dimensions which should be assimilated into such an approach. This article aims to focus on key deliberations and strategies related to the improvement of devolved governments' service provision through the implementation of solid PM structures. We discuss performance and how it has emerged as one of the core but highly contested dimension in public administration.

The initial question we pose is what is it that devolved governments are doing and ought to do after which the approaches of performance and PM will be made clear. The

importance and controversies around the PM debate are outlined. Some ideas towards an all-inclusive system for PM and the shortcomings related to it will then be considered while functionalizing the aims of this article.

2. Literature Review

The literature identifies the crucial dimensions of successful PM system being practised and alignment with the prevailing systems and strategies of the institutions and leadership devotion (see Hoek [19]). Public institutions must enforce a culture in which it is perceived as a way of improving and identifying good performance and not a burden that is used to condemn poor performers (see Ellis et al. [14]). Performance focusses on all roles being exercised by the responsible individuals (see Taberero et al. [45]). Performance inhibits the aspect of logistic-assessment where it can be either satisfactory or unsatisfactory (see Hamilton [17]). Performance is enshrined in the quality of activities towards achievements (see Masters et al. [34]). Deriving from the assumption that a competent performer is more likely to produce more and superior quality output from a task always, informs the association between performance and competence of the organization (see Kuranchie-mensah et al. [27]). When performance is conceptualized with both quality of actions and achievements, it may be viewed as sustainable results (see Stanciuet al. [43]). The societal expectation of high performing public institutions filters all through up to the organizational stage (see Penuel [38]).

Performance could be problematic and at cross-roads with other values (see Barrett [4]). Due to this, decisions on PM have been quite controversial with parties rising performance issues against the dissenters who asserted that the critical premises were incorrect and generated improper behaviour (see Leon et al. [30]). It is argued that performance is critical in contemporary public administration (see Cuganesan et al. [9]). Performance is embedded in management, public sector transformations and public policy (see Hope [20]). By the end of the twentieth century, numerous developing nations chose to adopt Market-Based Development (MBD) (see Khanna et al. [24]). This is the approach whereby development groups, institutions, and governments are aided to focus more innovatively on fresh products and services and address the needs and opportunities of the general public which form the foundation of the economic pyramid.

This shift required modernization of accounting practices and new management control and information systems. Kenya resolved to introduce New Performance Management (NPM) which has various vital elements including devolved authority and offer flexibility, develop competition and choice, provide responsible service, is performance-oriented, customer-driven and focus on efficiency (see Mccourt [36]). NPM is a mode of managing public institutions, which is government and their departments at sub-national and national stages (see Aragon et al. [2]). The NPM process has produced improved institutional performance, superior individual performance, and enhanced engagement (see Steane [44]). The main ideas in NPM are value for money, financial management, improving institutional efficiency, identifying and setting realistic targets and continuous monitoring of performanc (see Kinder e [25]).

Public managers enjoy incentive-based motivation, for instance, pay-for-performance, and definite performance targets are often set, which are evaluated always (see Rahman

et al. [39]). It's essential to sustain accurate standards and measures of performance at work (see Hatry [18]). NPM fosters outlining of objectives, targets, and indicators for development (see Tolofari [46]). NPM champions often moved away from a consolidated management system to a decentralized system whereby managers acquire flexibility and work with minimal restrictions (see Hope et al. [21]). It's crucial that in the modern uncertain business environment, institutions must always be focused on bettering performance by pushing for positive operational enrichments (see Hope [20]). With the effects of a global economy, regulatory advancements and the advancement of the technology, managers must be able to drive institutional performance through embracing MBD, modernizing of accounting practices and adopting NPM since it improves institutional performance (see Dervies [11]). These attributes are interlinked and vital since they all address the critical needs of a developing country like Kenya.

2.1. What Devolved Governments should and can do

Before assessing what institutions 'measure when they strive to determine performance', it is fundamental to find out what devolved governments should do and their ability to do it (see Leyland [32]). It is therefore helpful to commence with what has been explained about what devolved governments can manage, concerning common tools accessible to them. Kenya school of government (see Kenya School of Government [23]) Points out the following key dimensions which are important while assessing the function of devolved governments. Persuasion addresses information, research, and development along with knowledge sharing (see Government of Kenya [15]). This presumes that devolved government's function in conveying information ought to be impartial. Funds range from taxation, schemes and powerful fiscal policy tools. Rules encompass formulating rules, dissemination, enforcement of the rules, fines, and penalties, and demonstrating adherence to the rules. According to Lewis [31], these dimensions explain how conversations about devolved government performance seem to make some, usually unconstructive, assumptions. This tends to strengthen the assertion often spelt out in the performance literature that managers measure what can be measured instead of what is valuable (see Wambua [49]).

By going deeper into answering the question, what should the government do?, the constitution of the Republic of Kenya explains that administration of devolved governments should conform to a series of principles among them; devolved governments shall be governed by democratic standards and have continuous sources of funds to enable them to provide services sufficiently (see Greer et al. [16]). The elementary aim of the devolved structure of governance to inspire a style of management that supports the public interest (see Demerouti et al. [10]).

2.2. Dimensions of performance

The ways to performance as a multifaceted idea, according to Atta-quartey [3], are outlined as; refinement of opinions and attitudes as an endeavour to fine-tune feelings, understanding institutional values by improving on communication, a role which can be executed by defining policies adequately. Streamlining of the management system

which increases the responsiveness and open-mindedness of management, and decision processes. Structural adjustment is where a reorganization of the institutional structure in terms of size, staffing processes, and budgeting procedures takes place. The process of appraisal and assessment consists of setting objectives, fast-tracking the progress, and taking account results (see Kruseet al. [26]). Restricting of work techniques via technology by replacing equipment, control systems and work processes (see Schuff et al. [41]). Retraining and re-organization of personnel as per redefined roles and job requirements. Streamlining work plan by rearrangement functional areas such that the sequence of the work plan is changed. Initiating fresh programs by the inclusion of new products and services. These dimensions help in comprehending the procedure of improving institutional performance. It equally demonstrates why there exists some ambiguity about the different definitions of performance since its dependent on which aspect the focus is on (see Jiang [22]). These dimensions may contradict each other, for instance: in order to improve performance effectiveness of results, it may require a change in work methods, which could unfavorably impact on the motivational atmosphere (see Mau [35]). The structure of the devolved governments of Kenya also referred to as county governments are shown below in Figure 1;

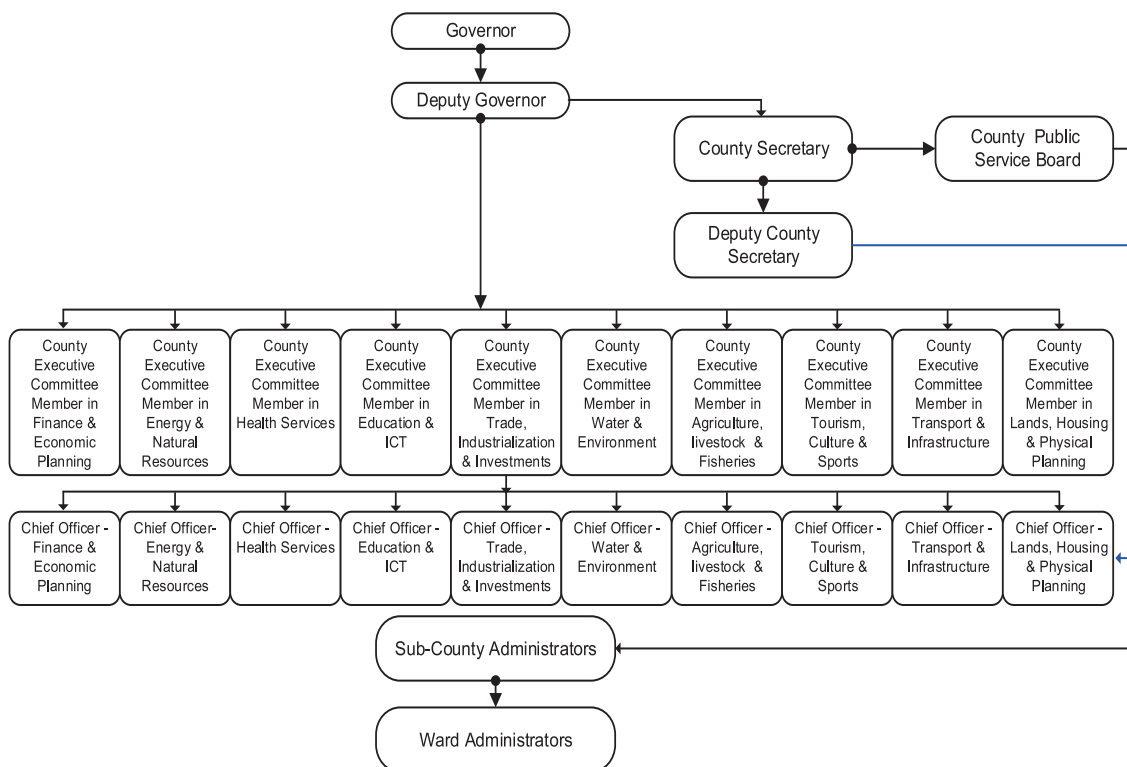


Figure 1: Devolved Government Structure (Source: Field Survey 2016).

3. Methodology

This article utilized a quantitative method. The quantitative method as a kind of empirical inquiry was used to ensure a suitable sample to attain accurate and provable observation. Empirical inquiry relies on observed and measured experience as opposed to theory. The article was carried out in the Kenyan devolved governments of Nairobi, Busia, Eldoret, Kakamega, and Mombasa. Data was collected from devolved government workers of all cadres with equal priority between January and November 2017. Triangulation was employed during data collection, analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings. Triangulation is the use and consolidation of multiple research procedures in the analysis of the same event, in this case, PM in devolved governments. The article population comprised of devolved government personnel like senior managers and directors from the selected devolved governments.

Stratified Random Sampling (SRS) was adopted by dividing the devolved governments into homogeneous strata. Stratification was done by professionals among various cadres. SRS is a technique of sampling that involves the division of study population into strata to capture fundamental population attributes in the selected sample, identify the respondents and root out bias. The respondents were chosen from each stratum depending on the information acquired from the devolved government offices using simple random sampling. A total of 554 respondents were randomly picked to participate in this study. The data was collected via self-administered structured questionnaires. Out of which 521 questionnaires were received back. Three questionnaires were defective due to incomplete information. Therefore the final sample was 518 constituting a response rate of 93.5%. The contemporary practices used to measure the performance of devolved government workers were analyzed based on a five-point Likert scale where the respondents were needed to affirm their level of concurrence or dissent with the statements.

The questionnaire aims to capture the extent of implementation of PM in devolved governments of Kenya by identifying the current practices applied to manage the performance and to suggest strategies for further improvement. The research questions describing the various PM systems under these counties include, how performance standards are set, identification of performance measurement tools, performance reporting time frame, performance improvement methods, rewarding systems, staff training and development, how performance is reviewed and how performance information is utilized. Questions relating to the perceived effectiveness of PM comprise, whether objectives to be realized are known, whether performance standards are clear, whether performance appraisal is based on the job description and whether the staff is aware of PM in their operational areas. Questions relating to the performance of participants range from, whether the offices frequently report the performance standards to stakeholders, whether the staff is actively involved in decisions about PM, whether objectives to be achieved are known to individuals to be assessed and whether performance appraisal is based on the job description. This was meant to generate substantive information in line with the study objective.

Before data collection, the questionnaire was checked to ascertain its reliability. Trial testing of the questionnaire was exercised by distributing the questionnaire to experts like managers, administrative officers, and clerics. The questionnaire was prepared into two

sections. The first section was designed to capture general information of the selected counties including core activities. The second section addressed issues concerning the implementation of PM in devolved governments, current practices applied to manage the performance and suggestions for improvement. The relevant quality criteria employed to ensure external validity comprised of stratified random sampling, adequate sample size and reasonable composition of the sample.

Measures to ensure internal validity were taken care of by construction of the questionnaire items based on an extensive literature review which informs the study focus, research question and spontaneous involvement of the respondents to address the study objective. Questionnaires were distributed by drop and pick a method and via email with the help of trained research assistants. The reasons for carrying out the research were communicated to the respondents via an introductory letter. The completed questionnaires were cross-checked for completeness, open-coded and assessed objectively. Open coding is a technique of analysis involving identifying concepts, describing and developing classification in line with their properties. Statistical computations were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The categories of 'disagree' and 'agree' as well as 'undecided' were utilized for data presentation and interpretation. The results are displayed in the tables.

Feedback from managers was gathered via a semi-structured interview administered by way of direct interviews. Before starting the interviews, the interviewers explained the aims and the procedure of the interview and obtained informed consent and permission to use a tape recorder. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality for all information they presented. The data acquired was recorded precisely, coded and analyzed logically. The analysis consisted of creating categories and grouping them into topics and sub-topics before presentation, interpretation, and discussion.

The precision and validity of the data were ensured by audio recording, compiling comprehensive notes, and accurate transcription of the interviews. The accuracy was also boosted through methodological triangulation involving the statistician and the supervisors of the study to verify the coding to ensure consistency between the topics, sub-topics, and categories. Methodological triangulation was ensured by the use of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. All respondents had served for at least more than six years, a period considered long enough to offer the much-needed insight. All the five selected devolved governments were represented equally at 20% each based on the randomly selected sample population. However, the study was conducted in five out of the 47 devolved governments of Kenya and therefore the sample may not be significantly large enough to represent the target population appropriately.

4. Results

The dimensions examined include setting performance standards, rewarding mechanism, value for performance review information, performance measurement, staff empowerment and development, performance improvement and reporting which are the dependent variables against performance improvement and performance measurement which are the independent variables. Table 1 below represents the interrelationship between setting performance standards and performance improvement. Table 2 indicates

the interconnection between performance review information and performance measurement.

Content validity was demonstrated since the items in the study were fairly representative of the target population. The means of developing the measuring tool is adequate because the questionnaire reflects the critical issues sort out for in the study and fundamental associated subjects are included. The questionnaire outcomes demonstrate how mechanisms for prioritizing development initiatives and goal setting in devolved government planning processes reduce overreliance from the people. Throughout this study, the dominance of external supervisory departments representing the national government is paramount and this to some extent impacted the use of performance information within devolved government authorities but the questionnaire outcomes offer useful tips for comprehending the dynamics of PM systems and service delivery in the context of devolved government management.

About techniques, scales were developed with the instruments normally used in this type of study, such as the literature review. Convergent validity is proven where the measurement of constructs is strongly and positively related with the variable with which it should theoretically relate. The correlations between setting performance standards against performance improvement and performance review information against performance measurement are significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) and all the parameters estimated are statistically significant at 95% thus convergent validity is proved. This attribute provides certainty that all variables tested converge on the same construct. In Table 3, for all the dimensions tested about setting performance standards, performance review information against their impact on performance improvement and performance measurement respectively, chi-square indicates all the variables as statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and the existence of discriminant validity is therefore proven.

Regression analysis in Table 4 confirms that performance reports are effectively used in decision making as all variables about setting performance standards, performance review information against their influence on performance improvement and performance measurement respectively are significant with an R square of .268 (27%). Procedures to collect suggestions for performance improvement, use of various methods to improve performance and frequent training of staff are significant. All the other performance variables under regression are not significant as a result of performance management challenges like for instance lack of clear performance standards, inappropriate performance indicators, lack proper and frequent reporting on performance progress, untimely intervention whenever performance falls below accepted standards, lack of optimal utilization of employee skills and lack of objective performance appraisal.

Table 1. Setting performance standards and performance improvement (Source: Field Survey 2016).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Workers are fully aware of their mission towards clients	1																
I have a clear job description	.886**	1															
Stakeholders participate in setting performance standards	.925**	.934**	1														
Targets are set for a prescribed period	.925**	.917**	.873**	1													
This devolved government frequently report the performance to the external stakeholders	.903**	.875**	.900**	.808**	1												
Performance standards are clear	.929**	.952**	.932**	.882**	.931**	1											
There are appropriate performance indicators	.708**	.655**	.652**	.772**	.605**	.664**	1										
I access my superiors frequently	.765**	.756**	.774**	.828**	.686**	.699**	.712**	1									
My superiors encourage me on improving my performance	.929**	.884**	.906**	.882**	.904**	.896**	.654**	.807**	1								
The performance reports are used in decision making	.439**	.468**	.472**	.423**	.408**	.435**	.331**	.435**	.446**	1							
There exist clear procedures to collect suggestions for performance improvement	.881**	.822**	.866**	.809**	.911**	.861**	.673**	.762**	.930**	.451**	1						
Timely intervention is taken when performance falls	.885**	.801**	.843**	.791**	.914**	.878**	.697**	.710**	.901**	.420**	.951**	1					
Staff are involved in performance improvement	.467**	.459**	.457**	.439**	.451**	.475**	.324**	.451**	.445**	.207**	.424**	.428**	1				
Workers performance data is used to set priorities for personal growth	.898**	.859**	.880**	.897**	.811**	.854**	.780**	.825**	.910**	.443**	.891**	.886**	.434**	1			
Devolved governments have procedures for managing changes in policies	.819**	.772**	.780**	.824**	.757**	.789**	.819**	.785**	.838**	.442**	.889**	.888**	.394**	.941**	1		
Rewards and sanctions are based on performance outcomes	.939**	.840**	.880**	.871**	.888**	.892**	.712**	.755**	.934**	.447**	.935**	.928**	.415**	.910**	.876**	1	
The analysis of employees' training needs is based on the performance appraisal reports	.919**	.919**	.894**	.903**	.863**	.909**	.646**	.806**	.945**	.451**	.846**	.847**	.456**	.878**	.782**	.897**	1

(** $P < 0.01$)

Table 2. Performance Review information and performance measurement (Source: Field Survey 2016).

	CORRELATIONS													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Promotion within service	1													
There are rewards	.914**	1												
Demotions of staff occur	.598**	.555**	1											
Frequent rotation of staff	.871**	.942**	.613**	1										
My skills are utilized	.767**	.755**	.661**	.710**	1									
Training of staff occurs	.906**	.897**	.591**	.815**	.878**	1								
Tracking and collecting staff performance data occurs	.939**	.906**	.636**	.898**	.814**	.914**	1							
Performance is measured	.873**	.925**	.531**	.895**	.733**	.830**	.873**	1						
Workers performance is measured regularly	.912**	.813**	.673**	.756**	.821**	.899**	.873**	.809**	1					
Objectives to be achieved are known	.924**	.853**	.702**	.826**	.874**	.927**	.914**	.798**	.896**	1				
Performance is appraised based on job description	.849**	.925**	.516**	.905**	.695**	.812**	.861**	.889**	.709**	.762**	1			
Individual performance standards is measured	.935**	.900**	.640**	.871**	.752**	.850**	.922**	.895**	.837**	.853**	.907**	1		
Performance standards are clear	.921**	.894**	.647**	.855**	.780**	.875**	.913**	.919**	.887**	.866**	.877**	.942**	1	
Staff are aware of performance measurement	.908**	.898**	.623**	.890**	.730**	.832**	.928**	.890**	.806**	.833**	.918**	.973**	.936**	1

(** $P < 0.01$)

Table 3: Chi-Square test (Source: Field survey 2016).

	Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1031.618a	.000
Likelihood Ratio	825.392	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	305.234	.000
N of Valid Cases	518	

Table 4: Regression analysis (Source: Field survey 2016).

Regression Statistics					
Multiple R	.518 ^a				
R Square	.268				
Adjusted R Square	.248				
Standard Error	.219				
Observations	518				
ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Significance <i>F</i>
Regression	14	888.751	63.482	13.187	.000 ^a
Residual	503	2421.398	4.814		
Total	517	3310.149			
	Coefficients	Standard Error	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>P</i> -value	
Intercept	-.043	.585	-.074	.941	
The performance standards are clear	.587	.418	1.406	.160	
This office frequently report the performance standards to the external stakeholders	-.251	.418	-.601	.548	
There are appropriate performance indicators to assess the workers	-.284	.282	-1.009	.313	
The office always reports the worker's performance information to the external stakeholders	-.251	.418	-.601	.548	
There exist clear procedures to collect suggestions for performance improvement from the employees	.964	.378	2.549	.011	
My superiors encourage me to use various methods of improving my performance	-.979	.424	-2.309	.021	
Timely intervention is taken when performance falls below the acceptable standards	-.338	.416	-.813	.417	
The staff are actively involved in decisions about performance improvement	-.018	.033	-.564	.573	
My skills are utilized in some ways	-.456	.280	-1.628	.104	
Frequent training of staff occurs	1.213	.337	3.596	.000	
My performance is appraised based on the job description	.103	.383	.269	.788	
Objectives to be achieved are known by individuals to be assessed	.435	.398	1.091	.276	
The performance standards expected from the staff are clear and understood by all	-.455	.398	-1.145	.253	
My performance is well measured	.207	.419	.494	.621	

4.1. Reliability Test

Since Cronbach Alpha Coefficient is 0.959, it signifies a high level of internal consis-

tenacy and reliability for the scale and variables used, the factors around setting performance standards, performance review information against their impact on performance improvement and performance measurement respectively were considered fit for subsequent analysis. Table 5 presents the findings.

Table 5: Reliability (Source: Field Survey, 2016).

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	<i>N</i> of Items
.959	53

5. Discussions

The outcomes have demonstrated that there are guidelines established by the counties to measure the performance of workers. This is demonstrated in our regression analysis in Table 4 where tested variables about setting performance standards, performance review information against their effect on performance improvement and performance measurement respectively are statistically significant and R squared at .268. Performance standards and indicators assist the progress of accountability, monitoring, reviewing performance and informing policy initiatives on the best way going forward. PM tools serve to enhance the performance of workers and aid in setting, communicating and domesticating the devolved governments' strategies.

Defined job description and awareness about devolved governments' responsibility are some of the pillars for PM in the Kenyan context. Job descriptions with precisely stated targets, authority, and channels of accountability are largely associated with superior performance. The results indicate that the correlation between job description and target setting against performance improvement is statistically significant at 95% confidence level as per Table 1.

The results illustrate that performance assessment data were used predominantly for sound motives such as pinpointing institutional requirements for instance promotions as per Table 2. Also, the data results were used in identifying the performance needs, confirmation of staff members in payrolls and staff deployment, thus well utilized. This variable examined relating to setting performance standards, performance review information against their influence on performance improvement and performance measurement accordingly are statistically significant with an R squared at .268.

Previous studies reveal that sharing information helps workers perform better (see Lapierre [28]). This article has signalled that managers had faith in direct discussions concerning performance assessment outcome as a means of communicating with workers their strengths and shortcomings. This is shown where tested variables concerning setting performance standards, performance review information against their effect on performance improvement and performance measurement correspondingly are statistically significant and R squared at .268 as shown in Table 4. Without a functional feedback

structure, the workers were likely to be uninspired to participate in the PM process since they did not notice its advantage.

Rewards and remuneration mechanisms are believed to influence the conduct and performance of workers. This is shown as rewards and remuneration systems are statistically significant with positive association against the performance of workers at 95% confidence level. The PM should serve to single out who is fit for pay raises, promotions and accordingly motivate employees in their duties and present constructive feedback for improvement. For mediocre performance, PM should identify areas for improvement, and design strategies and structures for implementation.

This article confirms that devolved government managers in Kenya strive to meet the training needs of the workers. This is shown in the regression analysis where the training needs of employees are statistically significant at 95% confidence level towards performance improvement. Training and professional developments are important motivation and performance determinants as they nurture the workers' objectives. In-service training is one of the commonly used approaches in guiding workers' performance. Policy changes, new operational guidelines and general public administration tasks all require effective training of as many workers as possible to attain the objectives. Thus the research question was well responded to.

5.1. Drawbacks towards performance improvement

Based on the outcomes of this article and extensive literature review, it became clear that several hindrances hamper devolved governments in improving their performance as explained below;

- (1) Issues in measuring performance- A county's performance is difficult to measure since the results may be dependent on too many factors and the period between the starting point and its overall effect on performance could be too long due to bureaucracy. Nevertheless, similar indicators may be duplicated severally by different individuals.
- (2) Tasks and responsibility Simplification- The absence of clear tasks and responsibilities between the functions of decentralized governments, and the national government has impacted negatively on the development of local infrastructure. For example, rural areas face much bigger hitches as their revenue generation capability is restricted and there are rising costs related to service delivery as a result of their geographical areas.
- (3) Political climate- Political issues mostly override management actions in devolved governments' decision-making (see Lin et al. [33]). Although governors habitually condemn the increasing bureaucracy and promise to streamline operations and reduce taxes as they improve services, once they get into office through rigorous elections, they naturally concentrate on other county political issues and opportunities that benefit themselves at the expense of the tedious and most demanding need of performance improvement.
- (4) Institutional environment and culture- Public employees are aware that they must operate within the framework of a wide sequence of rules and guidelines meant to ensure accountability. Several of these guidelines are boring and not conducive to

the decentralization of powers and the action of caution, and therefore appear like a stumbling block to performance improvement.

- (5) Institutional issues- Institutional features that could unfavourably affect the performance of valuable personnel are; unethical labour practices for instance discrimination, insufficient remuneration, risky work environment, imperfect management, lack of a career progression and unfavourable working circumstances.

5.2. Recommendations on the best way going forward

Performance planning considerations and agreements between the supervisors and the workers ought to be incorporated with performance targets and strategies to regularly monitor performance. Hence, the counties need to develop a practice of monitoring, evaluating and giving timely feedback to further the performance of workers. All workers should be made aware of PM and its significance to bettering service delivery as well as their potential. All stakeholders in the devolved governments must guarantee that data acquired is put to productive use. Performance reporting is a far-reaching component for PM, which need to be implemented consistently.

Devolved governments objectives should be strategically outlined to address long-term and immediate needs. The role of external players such as input from central government is necessary impetus to sustain devolved governments performance. Devolved governments leadership should be arrived at through competitive selection based on merit, qualification, and competence. The key to a successful PM system is ensuring conformity between all operational elements encompassing employees at all departments and requiring thorough management commitment to teamwork and integrating performance structures with those of the stakeholders. Managers must continuously scrutinize the environment where they operate to identify aspects that may influence PM. They should guarantee that the individual performance is aligned with the mission and objectives of the devolved governments. Operational plans should be outlined for individual workers, agreed and signed by all parties.

There has to be on-going two-way feedback and coaching throughout the performance cycle. Managers must provide frequent, documented and constructive feedback to the workers about their performance. Also, there should be feedback from other stakeholders such as creditors, clients, and suppliers. Managers should focus on improving their current performance and support the workers to build their capabilities for the future.

5.3. Implications for practitioners of the public administration

While implementing of PM practices, a performance-enhancing policy initiative aimed at bettering devolved government performance is necessary. This study has demonstrated how the performance of the devolved government is determined by national-level policies because national government priorities inform the content of devolved government performance plans. The study has shown that the capability of stakeholders to participate in designing performance indicators impacts on their influence while demanding accountability, from county administrators. The extent of county leaders capture in the management of devolved government performance further curtails the availability of

performance information to the electorate as reported in this study. Although county managers did use performance information, lack of communication and sharing of performance information made it challenging for the electorate to know whether their county was performing to required standards or not and this has negative implications on citizens' perceptions and satisfaction with devolved government performance and may reduce trust in local politicians and authorities. In the long run, public non-satisfaction with devolved government provision of fundamental services may impact on the willingness to pay taxes to devolved authorities and this can heavily affect performance as far as service delivery is concerned. Deliberation of theoretical and managerial implications has been included to add value to the study.

6. Conclusion

To comply with its statutory and regulatory responsibility, decentralised governments in Kenya should develop an extensive PM system. Such a performance system must enable devolved governments to measure the performance of the entire county, which is input, processes, and results to diagnose drawbacks within this performance chain. The findings of this article have implications for all stakeholders involved in the management of performance in devolved government like administrative staff, scholars, policy-makers and practitioners, consultants and social scientists in development studies. This outcomes have an interest and importance far beyond Kenya and can be embraced by various prospective governments, states, and organizations.

The decentralised governments need to consider crucial dimensions which must be included in their respective PM systems and adopt the recommendations generated by this article. Critical issues that are brought forward by this research will be instrumental as a basis for improving the PM of workers outcomes based on the strategic plan. Further research should be conducted on qualitative research among workers to obtain in-depth information about the factors that enhance or impede their performance.

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