

Evaluation of participatory governance for enhancing quality of local governments: Towards a new model

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Abstract

Public participation in government programmes has gained prominence, the world over as it enhances democratization good governance and quality of governments. Involving the public in government activities is associated with improved efficiency, accountability, inclusiveness and quality public service provisioning. Different countries design varying types and forms of participatory governance structures with varying impacts on public management. Uganda is among the countries that for long embraced elaborate and universal participatory governance frameworks at both central and local government's programmes. The primary objective of the study was to evaluate the participatory governance framework, so far as 1997 and its contribution to quality of local governments in Uganda. The empirical objectives were to evaluate participatory planning, budgeting and capacity of local councilors in managing local government policies. The study was based on a cross-sectional designed carried out in six selected districts in Central Uganda using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Ninety questionnaires were administered to political leaders, technical officers, members of CSOs, and public to evaluate their opinions on the current forms of participatory governance. In addition, the study relied on oral interviews, literature review and field observations. Findings of the study revealed that indeed participatory governance framework had to some reasonable extent improved quality of local governments. Findings also revealed that voice and accountability, control of corruption and enhancing government effectiveness are vital factors for quality local governments. The study findings further revealed that participatory planning, budgeting and capacity of local councilors are important contributing factors to quality in local governments. A hybrid Local Government Participatory Governance Model was developed. The study recommended that central government develop local government-feasibility-assessment-guidelines to inform formation of new districts. There should also be regular policy trainings to local councilors to empower them and to enhance capacity of accountability institutions and departments in local governments.

Keywords: participatory governance, quality of local governments, Uganda.

1. Introduction and background to the study

Participatory governance has become a critical area of current development debate in which new concepts of citizenship and new approaches to democracy are emerging globally [1]; The logic for advocating participatory governance is premised on the conviction that governing should be about finding out what the citizens want and finding ways of effectively delivering those service. In recent days, participatory governance has become part and parcel of political organisation both nationally and internationally and has been embraced by the World Bank, UN Habitat , the European Union (EU), and the US Agency for International Development [2].

The principal of citizen participation is universally acceptable in the spheres of public administration, although the forms and extent of this participation are often questioned. Traditionally, public participation was more formal and was based on standardized rules,

legislations, regulations and protocols. Nowadays, there has been changing perceptions about participatory governance that it exists in different forms of engagement in different democracies [1].

Therefore, the paradigm shift from governments to governance involves mechanisms of public engagement in structures and arrangements that facilitate effective relations between public, private, and civil society in decision-making. This phenomenon of interconnectedness of the above sectors forms the basis of contemporary democratic societies and sustainable development [3].

2. Background to the study

Participatory governance emerged in the 1990s because of a proliferation of existing participatory arrangements especially in Latin America. It has expanded globally in both developed and developing countries and it taken as a new approach to social and economic development [4]. It is currently manifested in form of citizen-based activities taking place alongside civil society organisations[5].

The 2005 World Summit stipulated that good governance at both national and international arenas was an essential requirement for sustained economic growth and development, because it significantly contributed to the eradication of poverty, hunger and diseases. This was further reiterated by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations that called for the reinforcement of the quest to strengthen public participation in government activities. This was aimed to safeguard private sector engagements to realize globally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The 5th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration encouraged member countries to nurture public participation in public policy development, public accountability and service delivery [5]. From that time, several member states embarked on a series of policy reforms that promoted citizen participation in public affairs.

Participatory governance was advocated in response to democratic deficits and draws its aspirations from progressive projects of political parties in India, Spain, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Mexico. Several international civil society organisations, notably Action Aid, Oxfam, and the International Budget Project practiced, advocated and disseminated information that promoted participatory practices [2].

While governance refers to systems of decision-making, it does not include the politics that goes on in within these spaces. Therefore, participatory governance originates in the theory of participative democracy that advocates public engagement through series of deliberative processes. Participatory governance focuses on deliberative empowerment of the common citizens to engage in deliberative democracy and deliberative experimentation in public policy as well as political actionsism by public civil society organisations, foundations and the general public [2]. Participatory governance, therefore includes not only voting and watching over government activities, but also the direct deliberative engagements with the government institutions of the public pressing issues of the time [6].

Participatory governance seeks to examine the traditional conceptions of public governance that hinder the realization of genuine participatory democracy and advocates participation based on a series of elaborate and diverse opinions, principles, approaches and institutions. Therefore, it aims at, among other things, equitable distribution of political power, fair distribution of national resources, decentralization of decision-making, transparency in the exchange of knowledge and public information, creation of collaborative partnerships with non-state actors, inter organizational and institutional dialogues, as well as increased public accountability. These can only work in a system that provides for citizen engagement in a collaborative and discursive manner with state and non-state actors [7].

Participatory governance goes beyond the traditional practices of facilitating the access to public information regarding government activities and programmes; it includes emphasizing of citizens' rights to be consulted on public issues affecting them and ensuring that the voices of the citizens are heard through fair and equitable representative political systems [3].

Although public participation has clear benefits manifested in both inherent and instrumental justifications, unintentional consequences of participation have sometimes been identified [8]. For example, participation may be neither efficient nor equitable; just like markets and governments may fail, communities may also fail. Limitations to participation are possible, that may require safeguards to enable the delivery of expected results. Constraints to community participation are broadly of two types: first is the failure of communal action and secondly, community deficiencies. First, by involving many individuals in pursuit of common goals, the challenges of free riders and other adverse consequences that could hinder collective action emerge. As a result, community participation, on an ugly seen, may end up hindering rather than promoting efficient solutions to service delivery. Secondly, it is also possible that community imperfections may arise that may lead to elite capture within the participation structures, which in turn, lead to in inequality in service delivery.

Public participation in governance involves the devolution of some powers and resources from central governments to lower democratic structures focusing on the lowest consumers in what Stroker (2004) called new localism. This is a new governance arrangement that focuses on direct public involvement in decision-making [3].

History of participatory governance in Uganda can be traced back to the National Resistance Movement (NRM) civil war of the 1980s. Citizens were mobilized into *Resistance Committees* to maintain local security in areas that had been captured by the National Resistance Army (NRA) soldiers. When the NRA captured state power, *Resistance Committees* were re named *Resistance Councils* and were institutionalized into the local governance structures. When the *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda* was enacted in 1995 and later on operationalized into the *Local Government Act of 1997* and the former *Resistance Councils* were renamed '*Local Councils*'. These councils allocated six devolved *government functions* to be exercised in local areas. These were, the Planning, the Political/executive function, the Administrative function, the Budgeting

and the Judicial Legislative (Government of Uganda, 1995). Local governments are composed of directly elected local councils with the district as a unit and other lower local governments and administrative units. Elected local councils were granted supreme political, executive and legislative powers over their areas of jurisdiction.

In rural districts, there are district councils and several other sub-county councils. In urban areas, there are cities (which are equivalent to districts) that exercise their functions through city councils, city divisions (equivalent to a municipality) municipal councils, municipal divisions, and town councils, which are equivalent to rural sub counties (Government of Uganda, 1997). Local councils are institutions of participatory governance that are highly representational. They are composed of elected chairpersons, councilors representing electoral areas, two youth councilors (one of them female) two councilors with disability and one of them should be female, two elderly persons (one of them a female) one third of the whole council should be women. Chairpersons of women, youths, and disability councils, as well as elected leaders of higher electoral constituencies in a particular local government are *ex officio* members of that local government council (Government of Uganda, 1997).

Local councils are mandated to provide basic public services to their local communities and to bring service delivery closer to the people (Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, 2013). The *Second Schedule* of the LGA gives the functions of central government and local governments and specific functions for districts and lower local governments in both rural and urban areas. Generally, most of the operational government functions, besides those of maintaining macro stability, are vested in local governments. Nsibambi observes that the objective of involving many stakeholders at all levels of local governments and administrative units was to improve quality of service delivery at the grassroots level.

Consequently, according to Devas, Uganda is among the most decentralized countries in the world with over 60,000 local governments that are based on the aforementioned inclusive participatory governance structure. The local government system emphasizes citizen participation at all levels. For example, besides directly electing local representatives, councilors, ordinary citizens indirectly participate in local governments when they are appointed members of local statutory bodies such as *District Service Commissions* (DSCs) *District Land Boards* (DLBs) *District Public Accounts Committees* (DPACs) members of *Management Committees* (MCs) for service delivery units. Ordinary citizens also participate in local budgeting, planning, community work and local council courts. The civil society, especially *Community Based Organisations* (CBOs) also participate in local governance. For example, they work hand in hand with local governments to provide public goods such as education, health, water, environment and social justice. The media also participates by monitoring and evaluating implementation of local government programmes.

3. Statement of the problem

The objective of participatory governance in Uganda was to enable ordinary people access their local needs and engage in local policy formulation, budgeting and

monitoring. Indeed, it is no longer in dispute that past governments' exclusion of the weak and powerless from governance was a cause of poverty in Uganda as this denied them their rights and created unequal power relationships.

Therefore, participatory governance was not only necessary to improve public resource management and controlling corruption, but also for addressing poverty through making public servants and political leaders accountable to their own local communities. The foundation of the quality of local governments as Cornwall reports was the participation of citizens as stakeholders, advocates, collaborators and evaluators in all processes of public decision-making and policy implementation. By incorporating citizens' voices into complex decision-making processes, participatory governance was expected to enable new non state actors into incremental and devolved decision-making processes whereby citizens would be facilitated to deliberate and make choices on the allocation of public resources and on the use of state authority especially in local areas.

Participatory governance and quality of local governments are complementary. Whereas the local government system in Uganda had provided adequate opportunities for citizen participation, the effects of such participation to the quality of local governments are still unclear. Cases of corruption, abuse and misuse of public resources in local governments were rampant [9]. The quality of local government designated functions, such as participatory planning and budgeting as well as involvement of locally elected councilors in local policy development, are still evidently very poor. Hence, for meaningful participatory governance to happen, policy makers and practitioners are expected to have a clear understanding about the intention for engaging citizens and design participation in a manner that envisions a clear path leading from participation to the satisfaction of that intention. This implies that participation should be designed so that its outcomes are meaningful to the citizens who are participating in it.

Government of Uganda provided for a comprehensive participatory local governance structure but with little impact on the quality of local governments. Participatory governance was statutorily embedded into the local council system by both the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the Local Government Act (LGA). There was a growing need to evaluate the required levels and nature of public participation, which would empower citizens with the required capacity to effectively engage and influence decision-making in local governments, hence improve the quality of local governments. Quality of local governments in this study means the capacity of local government to contribute to the effective formulation and implementation of sound local policies that result in quality public services through participatory planning, budgeting, and contracting local bureaucrats. Effective participation required citizens to understand where and how to participate. The necessary capacity for both local governments as institutions and citizens needed to be clearly defined and aligned with the respective levels of participation. Several studies have been carried out on decentralization and local governments in Uganda [10], [9], [11], [12], [13], [14].

Most of these studies have concentrated on the effectiveness of the local government system and participatory approach to local governance in Uganda. In addition, Nayonjo

revealed significant improvements in the establishment of decentralized universal primary education, but did not address issues of quality of local institutions as well as the contribution of different actors in enhancing decentralized governance. Other studies on participatory governance considered participation and rural development in Uganda with regard to access to information, the ability to use the information, and awareness of citizens' rights.

Despite all the aforementioned studies, none has been carried out to assess how participatory governance has enhanced the quality of local governments in Uganda. This study aimed to bridge this gap and design an appropriate model for the assessment of participatory governance with regard to quality enhancement of local governments in Uganda.

The central research problem upon which this study was premised is: despite the universal, all- inclusive and systemic public participatory governance framework exercised and statutes provided for in Uganda, the quality of local governments remained evidently pathetic and poor. Continued reliance on the current participatory governance framework is likely to precipitate an even uglier decline in the quality and quantity of local government services delivery. The problem of this study is further based on the capacity of elected councilors (the key participants in the local government system) to effectively manage the decentralized local public policies.

4. Objectives of the study

The primary objective of the study was to assess the nature and form of participatory governance for enhancing the quality of local governments in Uganda. The central theoretical objective of the study was: To evaluate participatory governance, so far since 1997, for the enhancement of quality of local governments in Uganda. In relation to the primary objective of the study, the following empirical objectives were formulated:

- To assess how participatory planning enhanced quality of development plans in local governments in Uganda.
- To assess the impact of participatory budgeting on responsiveness to local priorities in local governments in Uganda.
- To assess the capacity of local councillors to effectively manage public policies in local governments in Uganda.
- To develop an effective participation model for local governments in Uganda.

5. Methodology

The study adopted both the quantitative and the qualitative methodologies. The positivist paradigm was used to test empirically and validate hypotheses in the study in as far as they were consistent with the study area. This was in agreement with Hussey and Hussey who suggested the positivist process critiques literature to identify appropriate theories and construct hypotheses from them. The qualitative methodology was sequenced in to supplement and sequencing on the quantitative methodology.

In agreement with Churchill, (1995), the study employed the exploratory research in obtaining background information concerning the research problem; develop hypotheses, critique theories, and review related literature. Consequently, the researcher identified hypotheses and constructs based on reviewed literature and related documents. In this way, the investigator was able to establish the research problem and study objectives that focused on testing of an integrated model, which evaluates the nature and form of participatory governance for enhancing the quality of local governments in Uganda.

Sequentially, the study adopted the descriptive research design to establish unique characteristics of respondents as well as to determine frequencies, means, percentages, and standard deviation of the variable. Zikmundurges that descriptive research alone may not substantially explain the relationship among the variables necessitating some form of explanatory research to be used to further explain relationships and associations among variables.

The study targeted six selected districts in Central Uganda together with their respective sub-county governments, political and technical staff, district NGO forums and the public. The sample frame of this study consisted of the 25 districts in the central region of Uganda as of July 2017. The sample size was 25% of the twenty-five (25) districts of Central Uganda totalling to six districts. The districts were randomly selected using the table of random numbers. Table 1 shows the selection of district in the region appear and Table 2 shows sample selection and instruments to be used.

Table 1. Sampled districts

District	Anonymous Code
Mukono	District 1
Butambala	District 2
Masaka	District 3
Mpigi	District 4
Kayunga	District 5
Wakiso	District 6

Source: Researcher, 2018

Table 2. Sample size and sampling techniques

Sample Category	Target	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques	Sampling Tools
MoLG Staff	Decentralisation Directorate	3 Respondents who are senior officers in the Department of Local Council Development	Purposive	Interview Guide
LG officials	6 Districts	60 Respondents , 15 for every district	Cluster and Simple Random*(07 political leaders and 08 technical staff)	Questionnaire
National NGO Forum	District Coordinators of NGO Forum	6 Respondents, 1 for every district	Purposive	Interview guide
General Public	6 Districts	30 Respondents, 5 per district	Convenience	Questionnaire
Total Sample		99		

Source: Researcher, 2018

6. Findings Conclusions and policy recommendations

Several findings and recommendations were derived in line with the study objective. These are discussed as hereunder.

6.1. *Forms of participatory governance*

In line with the primary objective of the study which was to assess the nature and form of participatory governance for enhancing quality of local governments, statistical findings revealed that both participatory governance and quality of local governments are affected by several factors as manifested by all items in the instrument having p-values smaller than the conventional .05 value. However, it was possible to find the strongest participatory factors contributing to quality of local governments by considering the items with the smallest p-values and the highest Estimates of regression weights as most significant contributory factors. These items were identified as Stakeholders performing to their expectations; Local councils effectively monitoring activities in their local governments; and marginalized communities (Women, youths, PWDs & Children) participation in local government activities. This was further statistically proved by a small Chi Square Test (χ^2) statistic of 178 (df=104) implying that indeed participatory governance enhances quality of local governments in Uganda.

6.2 *Participatory governance and quality of local government*

Theoretical objective of the study which was to evaluate participatory governance, so far since 1997, for the enhancement of quality of local governments in Uganda. Statistical findings revealed that there are several quality indicators for local governments in Uganda as manifested by the p-values smaller than the conventional 0.05 significance level. The study further established the strongest indicators measuring to quality of local governments by considering the respective Estimates (regression weights). Indicators with the highest regression weights were taken as the most significant contributors to quality in local governments. Findings further revealed that the three strongest quality indicators in local governments are that departments in local governments are well-functioning; that there is transparency in operation of local governments; and there is an effective system of stopping fraud.

The above was confirmed by a small Chi Square Test (χ^2) statistic of 366 (df=170) confirming that indeed there are several indicators of quality of local governments. The study further established the most contributing factors in the three quality criteria in local governments.

For the criterion of **voice and accountability**, the most influential items were that: there is transparency in operations of local governments; that local governments are accountable to local people; and that there is trust and social cooperation between civil servants and political leadership.

For the criterion of **government effectiveness**, the most influential factors were that: departments in local governments well-functioning; that there are effective systems of

stopping fraud; and that public resources are used optimally (frugality in public expenditures).

With regard to the criterion of **control of corruption**, the most influential factors were that there is respect for private property rights; and that patronage in appointment to public offices is checked.

6.3. Participatory planning and quality of development plans

Empirical Objective 1 of the study was to assess how participatory planning had enhanced quality of development plans in local governments in Uganda. Several factors pertaining to participatory planning were assessed and both statistical and qualitative findings are presented systematically hereunder.

6.3.1. Stakeholders' participation

Statistical findings revealed that indeed stakeholder participation had led to improved service delivery in local governments in Uganda. This was confirmed by a mean value of =4.25 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.66. Qualitatively, respondents agreed that unlike previous local government systems, the current policy allowed for greater stakeholder involvement in local government programmes pointing out examples of involvement in local council meetings, local security management, and local council courts, in the NAADS distribution of agricultural inputs as well as in planning and budgeting meetings.

6.3.2. Stakeholder control

In assessing whether stakeholders were in control of local governments, findings revealed that there was substantial stakeholder control of local government activities. This was confirmed by a high percentage rating of 73.3% and by a mean value of = 3.75 as well as a moderate standard deviation value of =0.93. During interviews, responses however indicated mixed reactions. Some respondents were of the view that stakeholders' control of government functions was increasingly diminishing because of budget cuts experienced by local governments. They also pointed out the conditions set by central government on grants to local governments that tend to undermine the autonomy of local governments to manage their activities.

6.3.3 Clarity of guidelines and procedures

In evaluating whether there were clear guidelines and procedures for participation in local governments, statistical findings revealed that indeed there were some guidelines and procedures for participating in local governments. This was confirmed by a high percentage of over 90% and by a mean value of =4.29 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.85. Besides, literature showed elaborate guidelines and procedures of participation ranging from the composition of local councils as highlighted in Sections 10, 35, 38, 45-51, and 101-105 of the Local Government Act. Further interactions with officials from the Ministry of Local Government and Gender, Labour and Social Development further identified several policies facilitating inclusive participation in local government activities. Even during oral interviews, respondents acknowledged the

existence of clear guidelines setting out the different roles of stakeholders in local governments.

6.3.4 Local governments' councils effectively monitor local government programmes

In evaluating whether local councils effectively monitor local government programmes, statistics revealed that there was ineffective monitoring of local programmes by local councils. This was confirmed by a mean value of =3.63 and dispersed standard deviation value of =1.02 pointing to respondents' perceptions that local councils were ineffective in monitoring local government activities. However, interview respondents had different opinions. They argued that there were functional structures for monitoring local government activities. However, these structures experienced capacity challenges ranging from limited skills and training by local councilors to limited funds released by the central government.

6.3.5 Clarity of roles of stakeholders

On the item of clarity of roles of stakeholders, statistical findings revealed that there were clear roles of stakeholders. This was confirmed by the high percentage rating of 93.3%, a mean value of =4.29 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.71. Literature on the National NGO Policy further revealed government's commitment to strengthening partnerships between governments and the NGO sector based on clear principles and practices.

6.3.6 Outcomes of stakeholder involvement in local government activities

In evaluating whether there were, clear outcomes of stakeholder, involvement in local governments activities, statistics revealed mixed reactions. This was demonstrated by a 64% of the respondents who agreed that there are clear outcomes of stakeholder involvement in local government activities, represented by a mean value of =3.61 and a high standard deviation value of =0.99. The results point to possibilities of minimal clear outcomes of stakeholder involvement in LGs. Literature further revealed this mixed reactions with some analysts regarding stakeholder involvement as successful while others as lacking. Qualitative interview findings indicated some specific areas where councilor involvement was successful such as in roads construction, education programmes and solid waste management in urban areas. However, activities that are likely to jeopardize their electoral popularity, findings revealed that councilors were reluctant to participate.

6.3.7 Performance of stakeholders

On evaluating the overall performance of stakeholders, statistical findings revealed poor ratings. This was confirmed by a 33.3% agreement and confirmed by a mean value of =2.92 and a high standard deviation value of =1.06 value suggesting that respondents believed that some stakeholders do not always perform as expected. The same findings were recorded during face-to-face interviews where it was found out that councilors are reluctant to participate in policies that cause public outcry for fear of losing their electoral popularity.

6.3.8 Consistence of stakeholder actions in local government activities

In evaluating the consistence of stakeholder actions in local government activities, statistics established low consistence levels as evidenced by the low percentage agreement of 41.3% that was confirmed by a mean value of =3.13 and high standard deviation value of =1.11. The results mean that respondents believed that stakeholders' actions are sometimes inconsistent with local government policies. The same factor was qualitatively evaluated during interviews and findings revealed that councilors participate more in local government activities where they hold private interests and less in local policies where there seem little or no direct personal benefits to councilors. Central government political players resident in local areas who sought for local popularity sometimes ignited resistance to local government programmes.

6.3.9 Ministry of local government effectively monitors local government activities

In evaluating whether the Ministry of Local Government effectively monitors local governments' activities, statistical findings revealed that there was limited and declining effectiveness of the Ministry of Local Government in monitoring local governments' activities. This was confirmed by a moderate 53.3% in agreement and a mean value of = 3.21 and a relatively high standard deviation value of =1.08. The declining effectiveness of the Ministry of Local Government was attributed to policy shift that saw the Office of the Prime Minister taking over some monitoring activities from the Ministry of Local Government; the collapse of the National Local Governments Assessment Exercises and the suspension of the local governments' performance motivation grants.

6.3.10 Public participation in local government activities

In evaluating the participation of the public in local government activities, statistical findings revealed a positive and affirmative response. This was confirmed by a high percentage response of 80% and a mean value of =3.8 supported by a modest standard deviation value of =0.77. This revealed that the general public fairly participates in local government activities.

An official from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development gave an example of the Municipal Development Forum (MDF) where stakeholders in municipalities continuously interface with urban officials to address issues of urban management.

6.3.11 Councilor's effectiveness

In evaluating councilors' effectiveness, statistics revealed mixed reactions with 54.7% in agreement with the statement. While 40% in disagreed with the statement. The fair percentage rating was confirmed by a mean value of = 3.31 and a high standard deviation value of =1.10, thus pointing to respondents' observation that councilors ineffectively represent their constituencies. During interviews, it was revealed that the ineffectiveness of councilors was because of their self-interests especially the quest for monetary benefits that negatively affects their performance.

6.3.12 Involvement of civil society organisations in local government activities

While evaluating the involvement of civil society activities in local governments' programmes, statistical findings indicated that there was substantial involvement of CSOs

in local governments' programmes as evidenced by a high percentage of 81.3% and a fair mean value of = 3.95. This was further confirmed by a moderate standard deviation value of =0.79, consequently pointing to suggestions that Civil Society Organisations are fairly involved in local government programmes. Qualitative findings further revealed that CSOs tend to be interested in specific activities such as investigating corruption, health, sanitation, water, youths and women related activities.

6.3.13 Religious leaders' participation in local government activities

In evaluating the participation of religious leaders in local governments' activities, 66.7% of the sampled population agreed to this statement. This was further substantiated with the mean value of = 3.57 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.84 all pointing to limited participation of religious leaders in local government activities. Similar observations were made during interviews where it was found out that religious leaders concentrate more in religious activities than in local government programmes.

6.3.14 Cultural leaders participate in local government activities

While evaluating the participation of cultural leaders in local government activities, statistical findings showed that 45.3% of the sampled population agreed with the statement. This fair percentage rating was confirmed by a mean value of =3.24 and moderate standard deviation value of =0.84 indicating that cultural leaders modestly participate in local government activities. The statistical findings were confirmed during interviews where it was discovered that cultural leaders are influential stakeholders in local government programmes although they are constitutionally barred from active politics.

6.3.15 Public satisfaction with local governments' activities

As to whether the public is satisfied with local governments' activities, statistical findings revealed that only 53.3% of the sampled population agreed with the statement. The statistics were further confirmed by a mean value of =3.19 and a high standard deviation value of =1.26 statistically showing that stakeholders are not satisfied with the way civil servants conduct local government activities.

6.3.16 Participation by marginalized communities

While evaluating the overall public satisfaction with local government activities, statistics established an 81.3% overall agreement. This was further confirmed by a mean value of =3.97 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.75; therefore confirming that marginalized communities such as women, youths, PWDs, and children only fairly participate in local government activities. The statistical findings were however contradicted by the qualitative investigations that revealed that women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWD) do participate a lot in local government programmes especially through women, youths and PWD councils that have structures at all levels of local governments and administrative units.

Quantitatively, the statistical summary pointed to the conclusion that there were mixed reactions with regard to the impact of participatory planning on the quality of development plans. While respondents in government communities agreed that

participatory planning had positively affected the quality of development plans, other communities seemed to be ambivalent to the assertion. To further, establish the influence of participatory planning to quality of local governments, a relatively small Chi Square Test (χ^2) statistic of 186 (df=54) was established implying that participatory planning enhances quality of development plans.

The study further established the key participatory planning factors that contribute to enhancing quality of development plans as development plans help to steer local development; development plans are considered while making local governments budgets, and that development plans help in the social economic development of local governments.

6.4. Participatory budgeting and responsiveness to local priorities

Empirical Objective 2 of the study was to assess the impact of participatory budgeting on responsiveness to local priorities in local governments in Uganda. A series of factors pertaining to participatory budgeting and its responsiveness to local priorities in local governments were assessed and both statistical and qualitative findings are systematically presented below.

6.4.1 Citizens' participation in the budgeting process

In evaluating the participating of citizens in the budgeting process, statistics established that only 48% were in agreement which was further confirmed by a mean value of =3.39 and a high standard deviation value of =1.15. The results indicate low citizens' participation in the budgeting process. During the subsequent interviews, there were mixed reactions. While some agreed pointing out participation in parish level planning meetings and local government budget conferences, others rejected the existence of effective citizens' participation in the budgeting process.

6.4.2 Councilors understand how to develop local budgets

In evaluating the knowledge of councilors in budget formulation, only 34.7% were in agreement with the statement. The statistics were further confirmed by a mean value of =3.04 and modest standard deviation value of =0.951 further indicating that councilors do not properly understand how to develop local budgets. The statistical findings were further confirmed by qualitative interviewees where the opinions of the majority of the respondents were that councilors do not effectively understand the budget process because they are not formally educated.

6.4.3 Incorporation of local needs in local governments budgets

While evaluating the incorporation of local needs in local governments' budgets, statistics showed that 81.3% were in agreement that local needs are incorporated in local government budgets. This was further confirmed by a mean value of =4.00 and modest standard deviation value of =0.93. Similar findings were confirmed during interviews. From the interview, more examples regarding construction of access roads, repair of water sources, construction and repair of markets, installation of streetlights, provisioning of public infrastructure and scholastic materials in government aided primary schools, and the renovations of health facilities were given.

6.4.4 Civil servants effectively manage local government budgets

In evaluating the effectiveness of civil servants in the management of local budgets, statistics revealed an 81.3% agreement that was further confirmed by a mean value of = 3.8 and a modest standard deviation value of =0.986, establishing that some civil servants were ineffective in implementing the local government budgets. Qualitative findings however, revealed mixed findings of some responses from especially civil servants arguing that they effectively implement local budgets only constrained by limited financial allocations, declining revenues, and unprecedented releases of grants from the Central Government. However, political leaders had differing opinions as they expressed dissatisfaction in the way civil servants implement local government budgets by deliberately leaving out the political leadership.

6.4.5 CSOs effectively monitor local government budgets

In evaluating the effectiveness of CSOs in monitoring local government budgets, statistical findings indicate that only 32% agreed with the statement. This low percentage was further confirmed by a value of =2.93 and a high standard deviation value of =1.031 strongly establishing that CSOs do not effectively monitor the local government budget process. During interviews, financial constraints, and deliberate exclusion of CSOs by civil servants were suggested as some of the constraints to CSOs in the monitoring of local budgets.

6.4.6 Local revenues effectively collected to finance local budgets

The study also evaluated the effectiveness of locally generated revenues in financing local budgets. Statistical findings revealed that an average of 57.3% agreed with the statement. The statistics were further confirmed by a mean value of =3.33 and high standard deviation value of =1.082 establishing that local councils' revenues were not effectively collected to finance local government budgets. From the qualitative findings some of the factors that hinder effective local revenue collections in local governments which were cited include: politics, embezzlement at source arising out of spending at source, relaxation to collect more revenues after realizing the bear minimum budgeted revenues and connivance between the politicians and tax payers.

6.4.7 Central government dictates on local governments' budgets

In evaluating how central government influences local budgeting, statistics revealed that 81.3% of the sampled population agreed that the central government dictates on local governments' budgets. The high percentage was confirmed by mean value of =4.09 and a modest standard deviation value of =0.975 statistically establishing that the Central Government dictates on what the local budgets should finance. Qualitative findings were in agreement with the statistical data and further identified areas where the central government dictates in local government budgeting as in the sector specific funding such as water, roads, functional adult literacy, education and health.

6.4.8 Value for money because of participatory budgeting

In evaluating whether there was value for money because of participatory budgeting, statistical findings revealed that only 22.7% of the sampled respondents agreed that there

is value for money because of participatory budgeting. The statistics were further verified by a mean value of =3.65 and a high and scattered standard deviation value of =1.007 revealing that there was minimal value for money in local government programmes because of participatory budgeting. During qualitative interviews, civil servants observed that there was value for money because of participatory budgeting, which was only constrained by the introduction of the practice directive of **Force-on-Account**. This directive compromises value for money by putting the risks in the hands of the accounting officer unlike under the previous practice of procuring road constructions under the Contracts Committees.

6.4.9 Participatory budgeting has reduced corruption

In evaluating the extent to which participatory budgeting has reduced corruption in local governments, statistical findings revealed that only 49.3% of the sampled respondents agreed with the statement. This was confirmed by a mean value of =3.23 and a high standard deviation value of =1.11 revealing that participatory budgeting had not reduced corruption in local governments. Qualitative findings further indicated that although participatory budgeting facilitates participatory planning, it does not facilitate monitoring and evaluation of local government programmes hence, it has a limited impact on reducing corruption in local governments.

6.4.10 Participatory budgeting increases quality of public services

In evaluating whether participatory budgeting increases the quality of public services, statistical findings revealed that only 49.3% of the sampled population agreed with the statement. The poor percentage rating was confirmed by a mean value of = 3.23 and a high standard deviation value of =1.11, statistically establishing that quality of public services only slightly increased as a result of participatory budgeting. Qualitatively, findings indicate that there is some degree of vigilance by particular local councils to demand for quality public services.

6.4.11 Local budgets focusing on solving local problems

In evaluating whether local budgets focus on solving local problems, statistical findings revealed that an overwhelming 84% of the sampled population agreed with the statement. The high percentage rating was confirmed by a mean value of = 4.00 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.885, which means that sometimes local government budgets focus on solving local needs. However, qualitative findings contradicted the statistical findings. From the statistical data, it was observed that to some extent local budgets focus on solving local needs. There were also avenues of participating in parish level planning meetings which were identified as fora for local participatory budgeting focusing on local problems.

In general, statistics given above rubberstamp the findings that participatory budgeting positively contributes to local priorities in local governments. To further confirm the findings, a relatively small Chi Square Test (χ^2) statistic of 163 (df=44) was established which further confirmed that the null hypothesis was suitable for the data and confirmed that Participatory budgeting delivered effective local government priorities of the variable analyzed was.

6.5 Capacity of local councilors to manage local policies

Empirical Objective 3 was to assess capacity of local councilors in managing public policies in local governments in Uganda. Ten items under this objective were separately evaluated to assess the capacity of local councilors in managing local policies. Both statistical and qualitative findings were established as presented hereunder.

6.5.1 Councilors have skills to manage local policies

In evaluating whether councilors have skills to manage local policies, statistics revealed that 78.7% of the sampled population disagreed with the statement as further confirmed by a mean value of = 2.0 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.777. The statistics revealed that some councilors do not have requisite skills to manage local policies. Statistical findings were further confirmed by qualitative interviews by revealing that local council elections regulations do not attach minimum education requirements on offices of local councilors. It was further established that there was no nationwide induction programme of local government councilors after the 2016 general elections as has always been the case with previous general elections, thereby worsening the capacity gap in local councils.

6.5.2 Councilors' commitment to local councils

In evaluating the commitment of local councilors to local councils, statistics revealed that only a mere 48% of the sampled population agreed with the statement. This low percentage was further confirmed by a mean value of = 3.09 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.989, confirming that a reasonable number of councilors are poorly committed to local governments' business. Qualitative findings reported that councilors are only committed to local government programmes when they expect financial rewards.

6.5.3 Councilors design the right contents in local policies

In evaluating whether councilors design the right contents in local policies, statistical findings revealed that 53.3% of the respondents did not agree with the statement. This was further confirmed by a poor mean value of =2.73 and high standard deviation value of =0.92 implying that sometimes councilors do not design the right contents in local policies. However, qualitative findings established that although councilors may not design the right contents, they are practically guided by technical staff employed in the districts to come up with right contents for local policies.

6.5.4 Availability of sufficient resources to councilors to effect local policies

In evaluating whether there were sufficient resources available to councilors to effect local policies, statistics revealed that 76% of the sample disagreed with the statement. This was further confirmed by a mean value of =2.24 and a moderate standard deviation of value =0.913 confirming that there was insufficient resources available for local councils to implement local government policies. During face-to-face interviews, it was discovered that one of the factors responsible for insufficient resources available to local councilors was the statutory limit of councilors' emoluments and allowances to 20% on the locally generated funds in the previous financial year. The 20% limit is usually very

small and cannot effectively enable local councilors to monitor local government policies and programmes.

6.5.5 Councilors design locally relevant policies

In evaluating whether councilors design locally relevant policies, statistical findings revealed that an average 50.7% of the sampled population agreed with the statement. This was further confirmed by a mean value of = 3.21 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.99, consequently conclusions that councilors sometimes fail to design policies that are relevant to the local contexts.

6.5.6 Public involvement in policy formulation

While evaluating public involvement in policy formulation, statistical findings revealed that 57.3% of the sampled population of the study agreed with the statement. This average percentage rating was confirmed by a mean value of =3.35 and a modest standard deviation value of =0.979 confirming that the public including CSOs are not fully involved in policy formulation. Qualitative findings further confirmed that the public and CSOs do not always get actively involved in policy formulation but rely on their elected councilors for involvement in local policy formulation.

6.5.7 Experience of councilors in policy management

While evaluating the experience of councilors in policy management, statistical findings established that 66.7% of the sampled population of the study disagreed with the statement. This poor percentage rating was confirmed by a mean value of =2.29 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.866 driving to conclusions that some councilors do not have sufficient experience in policy management. Qualitative findings further revealed that some councilors aim at satisfying their private interests and spend less time in acquiring skills in managing local policies.

6.5.8 Councilors receive technical support to manage local policies

In evaluating whether councilors receive technical support to manage local policies, statistics revealed that 66.7% of the sampled population of the study disagreed with the statement. This was confirmed by a mean value of =2.29 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.866 establishing that some councilors do not have sufficient experience in policy management.

6.5.9 Presence of infrastructure to design and implement local policies

While evaluating the presence of infrastructure to design and implement local policies, statistical finds of 53.3% disagreed with the statement. The poor percentage rating was confirmed by a mean value of = 2.84 and a high standard deviation value of =1.139, consequently confirming that there were insufficient infrastructure (policy furniture) to design and implement local government policies. Respondents further expressed concern that although there is some infrastructure in place in some local governments, the majority still lack the basic infrastructure. Absence of electricity was emphasized as the biggest challenge local policy management.

6.5.10 Local policies take into account both short term and long-term interventions

In evaluating whether local policies take into account short term and long term interventions, 77.3% of the statistical findings disagreed with the statement. This fair percentage rating was confirmed by mean value of = 3.81 and a moderate standard deviation value of =0.881, concluding that sometimes local government policies take into account both short term and long-term interventions. Long-term interventions are usually incorporated in the development planning process for short term and long-term priorities.

A summary of the statistical findings from the index of the ten items captured under object three revealed mixed reactions from the respondents of the capacity of local councilors in effectively managing local government policies. The summary findings were further validated by conducting a small Chi Square Test (χ^2) where of a statistic of 91 (df=35) was established. This confirmed the null hypothesis that local councilors have effectively managed local government policies.

The overall summary from this study show that the respondents gave varying views on the impact of participatory planning and budgeting to quality of local development plans and local budget prioritization. At the same time, there substantial evidence from the findings that local councilors lack capacity to effectively manage local policies.

7. Local Participatory Governance Model (LPGM)

The model was developed as a multi regression model. Regression analysis is a statistical process for estimating relationships among variables. It includes several techniques for modeling and analyzing multiple variables, to establish the relationship between a dependent variable and one or many independent variables. Regression analysis helps to understand how the values of the dependent variable (Criterion Variable) changes as any one of the independent variables changes, while the other independent variables are held constant [15].

The model developed under this study was built on findings and conclusions derived from multiple regression analyses carried out using AMOS Version where Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out and several hypotheses tested. The development process of the **LPGM** is illustrated in Figure: 1.

The model shows that participatory governance (PG) has influence on voice and accountability (VA), but does not have influence on governments effectiveness (GoE) and control of corruption (CC) and that the variance in voice and accountability (VA) explains up to 38.0% of the variance in participatory governance (PG).The model further shows that participatory planning (PP) does not have influence on neither voice and accountability (VA), nor government effectiveness (GoE) nor the control of corruption (CC).

The model also shows that participatory budgeting (PB) has influence on voice and accountability (VA), but does not have influence on government effectiveness (GoE) and control of corruption (CC) and that the variance in voice and accountability (VA) explains up to 34.0% of the variance in participatory budgeting (PB).Furthermore, the model shows that capacity of local councilors (CLC) has influence on government

effectiveness (GoE) and control of corruption (CC), but does not have influence on voice and accountability (VA). The variance in government effectiveness (GoE) explains up to 20.0% of the variance in capacity of local councilors (CLC) and variance in control of corruption (CC) explains up to 23.0% of the variance in capacity of local councilors (CLC).

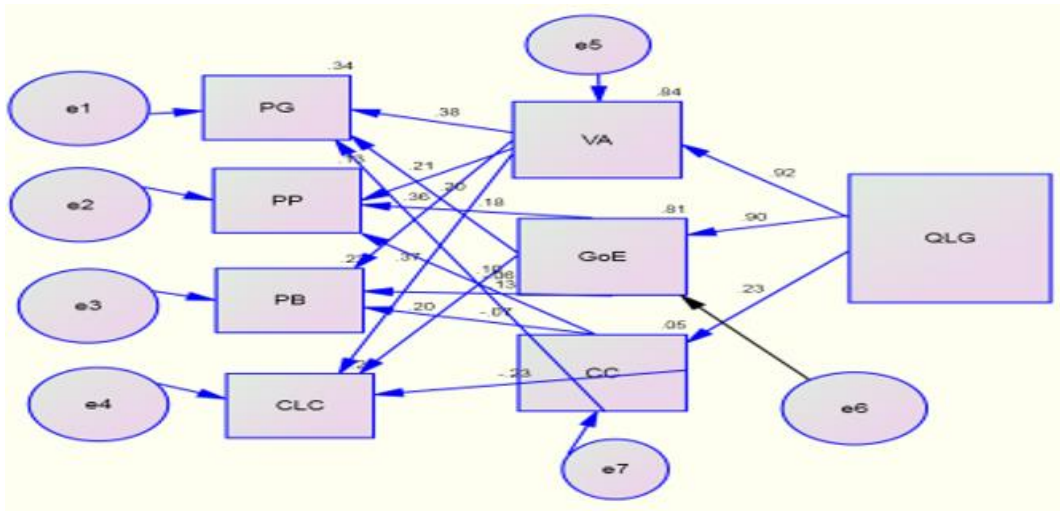


Fig. 1. Local Participatory Governance Model (LPGM)
 Source: Resracher, 2018

Key:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| e1 | Error estimated value for PG | CC | Control of Corruption |
| e2 | Error estimated value for PP | CLC | Capacity of Local Councillors |
| e3 | Error estimated value for PB | GoE | Government Effectiveness |
| e4 | Error estimated value for CC | PB | Participatory Budgeting |
| e5 | Error estimated value for VA | PG | Participatory Governance |
| e6 | Error estimated value for GoE | PP | Participatory Planning |
| e7 | Error estimated value for CC | QLG | Quality of Local Government |
| VA | Voice and Accountability | | |

Finally, the model shows that quality of local governments (QLG) has influence on voice and accountability (VA), government effectiveness (GOE) and control of corruption (CC). The variance in quality of local governments (QLG) explains up to 92.0% in voice and accountability (VA), 90.0% of the variance in government effectiveness (GoE) and 23.0% of the variance in the control of corruption (CC).

8. Conclusions

Conclusions from this study are presented in line with the objectives of the study. The overall conclusion from this study as far as the primary objective of the study is concerned, are that there is evidence of participatory governance since 1997, which has enhanced quality of local governments in Uganda. The lesson learnt in relation to the primary objective is that participatory governance, with all its conceptualised advantages,

in some instances, if not clearly planned, structured and contextualised, may result in many un-intended internal weaknesses at the very least and may not always help to improve the quality of local governments that are not doing so well.

These specific conclusions on Uganda's participatory governance since 1997 considering the specific participation elements that were evaluated are as follows:

8.1.1 Participatory planning

As far as participatory planning and enhancing quality of the development plans, based on statistical and qualitative findings, the study concluded that participatory planning enhances quality of development plans. The three most influential factors in the participatory planning framework are that development plans help to steer local development; they are considered while making local governments budgets, and are vital in the social economic development of local governments.

8.1.2 Participatory budgeting

When it comes to participatory budgeting and its effectiveness in the delivery of local governments' priorities, the study concluded that the participatory budgeting framework in local governments in Uganda effectively delivers local government priorities. Three most significant participatory budgeting advantages are that: Participatory budgeting reduces corruption; it enables locally employed civil servants to effectively implement budgets; and it enables local CSOs to effectively monitor local government budgets.

8.1.3 Capacity of local councillors

Considering the capacity of local councillors in managing local policies, the study concluded that councillors have not effectively managed local policies. Three incapability factors were identified namely: lack of experience in policy formulation; insufficient infrastructure to design and implement local policies; and limitations of the general-public and CSOs involvement in policy formulation.

8.2 Conclusions on quality of local governments

Conclusions from the dependent variable of quality of local governs indicate that null hypothesis was easily accepted. By accepting the Null hypothesis, it was concluded that indeed there are indicators of quality of local governments. The study also identified the most influential factors in each of the three criterion of quality of local governments.

8.2.1 Voice and accountability

The most influential factors were transparency in operations of local governments; accountability of local governments to local people; and building trust and social cooperation between civil servants and political leadership.

8.2.2 Government effectiveness

The most influential factors were that departments in local governments are well functioning; there is an effective system of stopping fraud; and that public resources are used optimally.

8.2.3 Control of corruption

The most influential factors were the respect for private property rights; and, checking patronage in appointments to public offices.

9. Policy recommendations

Centre for Ageing Research and Development, Ireland [16]; defined policy recommendations as written policy advice prepared for some particular policy makers, or to policy actors with authority to take or influence policy decisions. The actor may be a minister, a member of parliament, a committee of parliament, a local government or any other public agency. The purpose of policy recommendations is to inform policy actors faced with several policy options about the outcomes of research and innovations to address policy problems. Policy recommendations use research to give solutions to policy problems and to give useful information of the effectiveness of a public policy. This study has several recommendations aligned to the objectives of the study.

9.1 Recommendation 1: Participatory governance

For the primary objective of assessing the impact of participatory governance on the quality of local governments in Uganda, the study proposes that the central government develops **Local Governance Feasibility Assessment Guidelines** to guide future creation of local governments. Since this study conceptualised capacity of local governments to be dependent on global, national and local parameters, the Central Government should develop self-assessment guidelines to inform further creation of local governments. Otherwise, government risks the consequences of **over-governance**, which is an unsustainable situation where governments expand beyond what they can effectively govern. There are lessons to draw from unfortunate historical facts that have consistently shown that in all stable democracies, increased state capacity came before representative democracy was established. For the other objectives, the study has the following policy recommendations.

9.2 Recommendation 2: Capacity of local councillors

To enhance the capacity of local councillors in public policy management, government should develop a policy management training programme for all local councils to enable councillors enhance policy management skills. Such a training programme should be regular in all local governments in the country. Besides, the Central Government should provide sufficient policy furniture to enable local governments effectively execute the devolved government functions. In addition, national guidelines on involvement of CSOs in local government programmes should be formulated to streamline the corroboration between CSOs and local governments in local government programmes.

9.3 Recommendation 3: Quality of local governments

In line with the theoretical objectives of the study, this research proposes the following policy recommendations to enhance quality of local governments. These recommendations are based on three quality criteria adopted in this study. First, to enhance voice and accountability, the study proposes that the Central Government strengthens the public accountability institutions in local governments by providing more funds to enable them effectively monitor local government programmes. Secondly, to

enhance government effectiveness, the study recommends that departments in local governments should be facilitated to be fully functional in terms of staffing, infrastructure and reasonable and timely budget allocations.

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