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✉ info@chuka.ac.ke | ☎ 020 231 0512 / 020 231 0518

MANAGERIAL TIES AND PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY ASSEMBLIES IN KENYA

Joseph Kaberia Isaac, Thomas A. Senaji, and Nancy G. Rintari*

Correspondence email: kaberialimba@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The central principle of the Constitution of Kenya 2020 is the implementation of the system of devolved Government. In implementing this system, the Constitution in Articles 174 and 175 envisions the power of self- governance by the people and their enhanced participation in decision-making. Hence, County Assemblies are obligated by law to discharge important mandates within the county governments' set-up in the framework of legislation, representation and oversight for satisfactory performance. However, there is scarce literature on the relationship between managerial ties and performance of legislative organizations such as Kenya's County assemblies. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between managerial ties and performance of County assemblies in Kenya. The specific objective for the study was to assess the relationship between managerial ties and performance of county assemblies in Kenya. A descriptive census survey was conducted on a target population of 138 respondents from the 46 County assemblies in Kenya comprising the County Assemblies Speakers, Clerks and Deputy Clerks. Data was collected from 98 respondents using structured questionnaire and later analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 24. Correlation analysis was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between managerial ties and performance and the t-test was used to test the significance of individual correlation coefficients. There was a negative significant relationship between institutional ties and performance ($r = - 0.40$, $p < 0.001$) while a positive significant relationship existed between social ties and performance ($r = 0.205$, $p < 0.05$). Political ties had no significant relationship with performance of county assemblies ($r = 0.127$, $p = 0.211 > 0.05$). However political ties were positively and significantly related with oversight by county assemblies ($r = .276$, $p < 0.01$). These findings are important to the county governments' policy makers and other stakeholders in making informed decisions on the role of managerial ties in the effective performance of the County Assemblies in particular and generally the County Governments in Kenya.

Key words: Managerial ties, performance, County assemblies, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

The promulgation of a new constitution on 27th August 2010 in Kenya ushered a new era in that introduced two-tier system of administration; the National government and the County government leading to decentralization of power and functions (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The post-independent Kenya was characterized by strong centralized political and economic power with uneven and unfair resources distribution and social inequalities (Anwar, 2017). According to Wagana, (2017) organizational theorists argued that managerial actions in county government are hugely embedded in networking relationships, these relationships create social capital, a valuable resource useful for leveraging or exploiting other resources and enhancing firm performance (Levy, 2010). Managerial ties in county government is one of the areas that is commanding manager's attention worldwide and especially in emerging economies and political dispensations.

Managerial ties play a pivotal social capital role in helping organizations access scarce resources and manage environmental uncertainties and improve organizational performance (Li & Zhou, 2010). There are two types of managerial ties; horizontal managerial ties, which mainly focuses on relations with other managers in related firms and vertical managerial ties which involve relations with government officials and further which involves interaction with superiors and sub-ordinates. Armstrong, (2010) opines that organizational learning is key for new organizations to improve resource efficiency and achievement of desired outcomes. In some of the developing countries like China, environmental uncertainties have been found to be relatively stronger and new organizations often lack resources and social capital to support their growth

Armstrong, (2010) found that new organizations need to leverage their learning capability to improve effectiveness of social capital embodied in managerial ties which helps new organizations improve performance. Gay, (2013) posit that performance is practiced in a world faced with unpredictable dynamic environment brought about by changing technological advancement, social alterations, economic influences and political pressure. Performance concept commenced in 1960 and since that time several countries in the world have adopted it in customized forms (Morning, 2008). Performance contracts have remained in use in Africa's enterprises such as Kenya, Benin,

Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia and Zaire. In Latin America, they have been used at different times in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Kenyan constitution promulgated in the year 2010 provided for the devolved system of government whereby the forty-seven County Governments were established under one national government. The two levels of governments are required by law and more particularly the constitution of Kenya (CoK) to involve the citizens in making key decisions which affect them. Several studies have been conducted in the organizations on the managerial ties vis-a-vis organizational performance. It is imperative to assess the effect of the managerial ties on the performance of the legislative institutions such as the county assemblies in Kenya. This study endeavored to determine the relationship between the managerial ties and performance of the 47 county assemblies in Kenya. The county assemblies in Kenya which are regional legislative, oversight and representative entities perform crucial roles in the governance and service delivery to the citizens living within these devolved systems of government. The county assemblies conduct their business mainly through Speakers, Clerks and Deputy Clerks who are liaison officers and managers of county assemblies and who further act as the "bridges" between the county assemblies and the external entities which include the national, other county governments, private entities and the general public.

Managerial Ties

Laughlin, (2010) defines managerial ties as executives' interpersonal contacts with external entities. Ties are vital in helping organizations acquire necessary external resources and information which enable them to be continually innovative, exploitative, and explorative and produce new products and services in order to achieve superior performance. Managerial ties are especially prevalent in emerging economies, since the 'institutional voids' force managers to rely on personal relationships as a substitute for formal institutional support. Many years back ties were deeply ingrained with institutions in many countries thus it is not surprising that managerial ties, namely, top managers' boundary-spanning and interpersonal connections, provide a pervasive means to conduct businesses in many countries like china (Laughlin, 2010). For both domestic and foreign firms that seek to prosper in this huge market, cultivating ties with business leaders and government officials is critical because "who you know often is more important than what you know" (Tsang, 2018). These connections help companies gain necessary resources, foster firm growth and achieve superior performance.

Public Sector performance

According to Hope (2012) Public sector performance around the world has been experiencing a call for improvement in the recent past due to the fact that the sector employs a large number of people and also because the sector receives significant amount of funding from the government as well as the public. Creswell, (2003) highlighted that the overall result to public workers has not only been having stress but also lower quality service being delivered to citizens. The Kenyan public sector according to the Kenya Institute of Public Policy and Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) has been experiencing a downward growth since independence and this has been attributed majorly to poor management, corruption and also poor wages to a great extent; redundancies are a major cause of low performance in the sector as well as incompetent and under qualified work force (Creswell, 2003).

This assertion implies that performance is measured across three areas stipulated in the constitution of Kenya 2010 which are oversight of the executive, representation of citizens and legislation by members of the county assembly (MCA). Since managerial ties have been found to be significant in explaining performance of organizations, their influence in government organizations needs empirical investigation. Managerial ties play a key role in addressing challenges encountered in the course of the legislative, representative and oversight roles of the county assemblies in Kenya. Libendi (2017) observed that there is a huge capacity gap in knowledge and skills in law making among the MCAs and that many County bills are drafted by the County assembly staff and because MCAs have no capacity to prepare bills. At institutional level it was found County assemblies lack information resource Centre to support knowledge building capacity. This challenge curtails the use of evidence in decision making and bills passed in County Assemblies. The 2010 constitution of Kenya breaks down the aspect of devolution into; Executive arm – which is made up of the County executive committee lead by the Governor which undertakes all the administrative duties; the legislative – which consist of all elected and nominated MCAs and their responsibilities include but not limited to legislation, representation and oversight roles.

Devolution is therefore a key pillar of the constitution of Kenya by seeking to bring governance closer to the people, with County governments being the center of dispersing political power and economic resources to Kenyans at the

grass roots. However, fundamental challenges have continued to dog the Counties including but not limited to weak and uncoordinated planning and execution, misallocation of the available financial resources, inadequate capacity at the county level to effectively and efficiently perform the devolved functions. However, the performance of county assemblies has received unfavorable rating with regard to representation, oversight and legislation. For instance, on the representative mandate of the County assemblies, both the print and electronic media are awash with complaints from the electorates to the effect that they have not seen or met with majority of the MCAs in their respective wards for purposes of consulting on matters affecting the citizens and which matters need to be taken up by the MCAs and presented to the County assemblies for appropriate redress.

Regarding the oversight of the executive arm of the County governments, whereas it is legally provided and appreciated that the first line of oversight of the executive arm of the County Government ought to be done by the County assembly before the matter proceeds to the Senate, the audit reports of 2018/2019 financial year in Kenya shows that colossal amounts of money allocated to the County Executives for recurrent and development expenditure have either been lost and or misused and that the County assemblies have not been able to prevent the loss or misuse of the said funds in the exercise of their oversight mandate (Republic of Kenya, 2019). In Kenya, loss and misuse of the public funds has led to a number of arrests of County Governors who have been charged with corruption and economic crimes, and abuse of office as reported in Kiambu and Samburu Counties. Recently Nairobi county government had been in the news for all the wrong reasons including infighting among MCAs and irregular awarding of tenders and giving of kicks backs to the governor by companies awarded tenders, city hall has also failed to meet its own-source revenue targets since the advent of devolution in 2013 (Omulo, 2019, November 18 Daily Nation p.3). This poor performance has been blamed on the delay in enactment of finance bill. All these challenges point to the poor management of devolved governments in Kenya.

Despite several studies having been conducted on the relationship between managerial ties and performance by various researchers in several firms and organizations such as Gay (2013) and Chepngeno (2015), limited studies have been carried out to determine the relationship between the managerial ties (social, institutional and political) and performance County assemblies in Kenya. Further, though managerial ties have been shown to positively impact performance in other jurisdictions, its relationship with performance in legislative organizations has received less empirical study and attention, particularly in Kenya. Specifically, it is not clear what ties exist among legislative assemblies and how these ties relate with performance of county assemblies in Kenya. This study attempted to answer the question: what is the relationship between managerial ties and performance of County assemblies in Kenya? Thus, the aim of the study was to determine the relationship between managerial ties and performance of county assemblies in Kenya. Consequently, the following hypothesis was tested: H₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between managerial ties and performance of the County assemblies in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Two theories have been reviewed: social learning theory and resource-based theory. Social learning theory, was promulgated by Albert Bandura in 1963; it underscores the indispensability of surveying and modelling people's behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions. It is a theory that concentrates on learning by way of observation and modelling. Social learning theory also focuses on environmental and cognitive factors that interact in order to impact human learning and behavior. It opined that individual learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling (Anwar, 2017). Through sharing and reflecting of experiences, values, ideas and experiences, the electorate are able to solve particular issues such as utilization of public funds and transparency; hence enabling the stakeholders such as county and national government to reach agreement and or make decisions on various issues. The social learning theory is important because it explains the MCAs roles in legislation a key indicator of performance in county assemblies.

Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory refers to "Policy-making that emphasizes the formal and legal dimensions of governance structures. "Institutional theory" is widely accepted theoretical proposition that emphasizes rational and legitimacy." The theory focuses on the subterranean and more vigorous aspects of social structures. It puts into consideration the processes by which structures, such as schemes, rules, norms, and routines, become founded as authoritative guidelines for social behavior (Scott, 2011). Scott (2011) contends that institutions are conveyed by various types of carriers, including symbolic systems, relational systems and routines. Institutional theory provides an explanation of how the organizations respond to various institutional pressures in the surroundings (Sakharov, 2015).

Based on this perspective, the institutional theory is applicable in this study because the complements and criticisms on the structure and operations of the county governments and more so the county assemblies will influence the image of the counties. Therefore, the management will act towards satisfying the public by adaption of the structures which allows them to participate in public meetings. This underpins the variable of the managerial ties (political ties, social ties and particularly the institutional ties).

Conceptual Framework

“A conceptual framework also works as a Conceptual map where one can order the main ideas or concepts, and set topics and Subtopics and draw lines to indicate their relationship” (Trigueros, 2018).

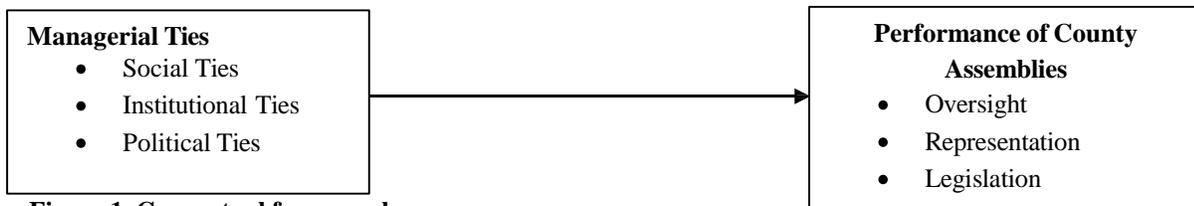


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

According to the conceptual framework (Figure 2.1), the independent variable is underpinned by resource-based view theory in this study. The conceptual framework above further depicts performance of the county assemblies to be the dependent variable. The performance will be measured across the three sub-constructs of oversight, representation and legislation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy represents the researcher’s guiding assumptions about the nature of the worldview (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Creswell et al., 2003; Saunders et al., 2008). The positivist research paradigm was used in this study because the study was carried on observable social entities which were the 46 County assemblies in Kenya, while data was collected from the respondents by use of questionnaires based on the reality and quantifiable observation. Descriptive research design was applied in this study because it involved collection of information that demonstrated relationships and described the world as it exists without manipulation of the variables. A sample is simply a subset of the population Trigueros, (2018). The sample size for the study was the 138 respondents who comprised the 46 County assemblies’ speakers, 46 clerks and 46 deputy clerks. This study used questionnaires to collect primary data from the respondents. To establish whether the data collection instrument had content and construct validity expert opinion was sought from the Supervisors. The data obtained was tested and pre-tested to address any insufficiencies that arose before the actual analysis of the overall findings. Pre-testing was done comprehensively in order to enhance instrument reliability. Data collected was analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis to test the influence of independent variable on dependent variable. SPSS was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics comprising frequencies and percentages was applied to summarize the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A sample size of 14 respondents was adopted for purpose of pre-testing the questionnaire. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a sample size comprising 10% of the population is acceptable for pretesting the questionnaire. The 14 respondents were drawn from the County Assembly of Meru. Cronbach alpha statistic was used to assess the reliability of the data collection instrument which were the questionnaires. The instrument was “purified” by deleting the items that were making the scales less reliable. The distribution of the reliable items (n =71), associated reliability measures and the items that were deleted are presented in Table 1.

The results in Table 1 imply that upon adjustments in item measures where it was found necessary, for example Institutional ties, Political ties and Legislation, the scale for each variable was as shown by a Cronbach alpha value of at least 0.7 as recommended by most scholars. The final item measures for the constructs in the study were managerial ties (Institutional ties: n=7, Political ties: n = 4, Social ties: n=10) and qualitative performance (legislation: n=14, oversight: n=10, representation: n = 11) and quantitative performance (n=15). The reliability test results implied that the instrument was suitable for use in data collection based on the Cronbach alpha reliability statistic of at 0.7 for all the variable scales

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items	No of items deleted
Institutional ties	0.704	7	1,7,9
Political ties	0.750	4	1,5,7,8
Social ties	0.805	10	
Legislation	0.725	14	7
Oversight	0.902	10	
Representation	0.775	11	
Performance	0.756	15	

Characteristics of respondents

The frequencies of the responses by Gender, Age bracket and highest level of academic qualification were generated and the results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Distribution of respondents by Gender, Age and Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	15	15.3	15.3	16.3
	Male	82	83.7	83.7	100
	Total	98	100	100	
Age bracket	26 – 35	16	16.3	16.3	16.3
	36 – 45	38	38.8	38.8	55.1
	46 – 55	33	33.7	33.7	88.8
	above 55	11	11.2	11.2	100
	Total	98	100	100	
Highest academic qualification attained	Bachelor's degree	24	24.5	24.5	25.5
	Doctorate degree	2	2	2	27.6
	Master's degree	71	72.4	72.4	100
	Total	98	100	100	

Summary description of managerial ties, citizen participation and performance

The composites means and strategy deviations of managerial ties (institutional, political and social ties), citizen participation, and performance (legislation, oversight and representation) are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Summary description of managerial ties and performance

	Descriptive Statistics									
	N	Min	Max	Mean Statistic	SD Statistic	Skewness Statistic	SE	Kurtosis Statistic	SE	
Institutional ties	98	1	4	2.39	0.65	0.267	0.244	-0.154	0.483	
Political ties	98	2	4	3.01	0.79	-0.018	0.244	-1.403	0.483	
Social ties	98	1	4.3	2.81	0.71	-0.308	0.244	-0.457	0.483	
Legislation	98	1.50	4.93	3.57	0.70	-0.665	0.244	0.306	0.483	
Oversight	98	2.39	4.80	3.67	0.57	-0.188	0.244	-0.568	0.483	
Representation	98	1	5.00	3.69	0.76	-0.865	0.244	1.333	0.483	
Performance	98	1.73	4.83	3.36	0.66	-0.218	0.244	-0.006	0.483	
Valid N (listwise)	98									

Relationship between Managerial ties and Performance

The strength and direction of the relationship between Managerial ties and Performance were assessed using person product moment correlation of summated scores of all the variables and the results clearly indicated that there was no significant linear relationship between managerial ties and the overall performance of county assemblies in Kenya. The strength and direction of the relationship between Managerial ties (institutional, political and social ties), and Performance (oversight, legislation and representation) were assessed using person product moment correlation of summated scores of all the variables.

Table 4. Managerial Ties and Performance

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Institutional Ties (INT)	1						
2. Political ties (POT)	-.214*	1					
	0.034						
3. Social ties (SOT)	-.308**	.370**	1				
	0.002	<0.001					
4. Legislation	-.346**	0.119	.282**	1			
	<0.001	0.242	0.005				
5. Oversight	-.357**	.276**	.341**	.559**	1		
	<0.001	0.006	0.001	<0.001			
6. Representation	-0.198	0.163	.200*	.418**	.527**	1	
	0.051	0.109	0.048	<0.001	<0.001		
7. Performance of County assemblies	-.409**	0.127	.205*	.470**	.489**	.667**	1
	<0.001	0.211	0.043	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	
	98	98	98	98	98	98	98

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 4.5, there was significant ($p < 0.05$) linear relationship between INT and overall performance ($r = -0.409$, $p < 0.001$); and between INT and both legislation and Oversight. Further all managerial ties variables (INT, POT, and SOT) and significant relation with oversight ($p < 0.05$ for all correlation coefficients), the composite score of performance of counties was also linearly and significantly related with all managerial ties variables except POT ($r = 0.127$, $p > 0.05$); and with citizen participation ($r = .448$, $p < 0.05$). This result suggests that there was linear relationship between managerial ties and performance of county assemblies and thus linear regression model was suitable for assessing the relationship between managerial ties and performance.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that there was no significant linear relationship between managerial ties and the performance, however after assessing the influence of managerial ties on performance, a linear regression of the composite score of the attributes of performance (legislation, oversight and representation) the results indicated that, managerial ties had a significant influence on the overall performance of county assemblies in Kenya. From the study managerial ties have greatly played a major part towards the growth of the Kenyan companies as they have gained the necessary resources, which have fostered firm's growth and achievement of superior performance. The study has also showed that developed countries like China have offered an important idiosyncratic setting to examine the conditional value of ties. The counties which have the respect for the ties are among the largest in the world as they share many characteristics with other emerging economies, such as a rapid pace of economic development and policies that favor the adoption of a free-market system leading to better performance. This study adds to the strategic management body of knowledge by clarifying the relationship between managerial ties and performance of county assemblies which will consequently guides as they implement their strategies.

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