

Decentralized Planning and Service Delivery in the Education Sector in Pakwach District Local Government: An Analysis of Primary Schools in Pakwach Sub-County

Mary Racheal Anena¹, Jimmy Francis Obonyo², Alex Oboi³

¹Senior Assistant Secretary, Pakwach District Local Government

²Assistant Lecturer, Lira University

³Teaching Assistant, Lira University

Abstract:

In Uganda, the Second Schedule of the Local Government Act (1997) decentralized service delivery including education sector, but the education service delivery in local governments is still wanting in most of the country side. The paper analyzes the effects of decentralized planning on education service delivery in Pakwach district by making an empirical scrutiny of four major indicators of decentralized planning, namely: goal setting, identification of priorities, public participation in program implementation, and monitoring in primary education sector of the district. A cross-sectional study design was considered, with both qualitative and quantitative approaches; and a total of 102 respondents were sampled using the table recommended by Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The findings show that three decentralized planning (Adjusted R² = 0.320) would account for about 0.320 variation in education service delivery in Pakwach district from which identification of priorities appears a significant predictor of education service delivery (p value=0.002, β = 0.476); goal setting does negatively and significantly predict education service delivery (β = -0.474, p value=0.002); and monitoring negatively and significantly predict education service delivery (β = -0.262, p value = 0.02). But Implementation (p value=0.852, β = -0.031) appears to be having no significance in predicting education service delivery. The study concludes that the identification of priorities enhances better service delivery in the education sector but goal setting, monitoring and implementation are not good at enhancing. The study recommends that the actual implementation of programs be supported through timely and full funding of the planned priorities.

Introduction

In a contemporary global situation, education is been considered the backbone of development in every society, thus any services that are meant to uplift the standard of education are usually given a red-carpet treatment and handling by society. Government of Uganda made a decision to decentralize the management of primary education to local governments across the country. Hanson (1997) contends that in developing countries, decentralization can be traced from the 1970s in Latin America after the disappearance of autocratic governments from which Edwards and Matthews (2014) believe that it was meant to improve administrative services and achieve quality education. In Uganda, since 1997, local

governments have assumed more planning and budgetary responsibilities in a view of improving education service delivery (World Bank, 2012).

Theoretically, the paper is guided by the Human Capital Theory which traditionally justifies, amongst others, the significant public spending in the planning and expansion of education, a more contemporary perspective involves decentralizing decision-making processes. Decentralized planning entails the involvement of local communities, educators, and stakeholders in the determination of educational priorities, curricula, and resource allocation. Embracing this approach enhances community engagement, promotes tailored educational strategies, and ensures that investments in human capital are responsive to local contexts. The theory was developed by Gary Becker (1930–2014) and popularized by Theodore Schultz (1902-98) to explore the intricate dynamics of service delivery. The Human Capital Theory posits that the monumental expansion of the educational system transformed it into a crucial investment for both individuals and society. The theory is relevant to primary education service delivery especially its ability to provide a foundational justification for substantial public spending in the planning and expansion of primary education.

Conceptually, the paper looks at decentralized planning, as the empowerment of local authorities to autonomously formulate, adopt, plan, and implement strategies without interference from centralized entities, which (Renu, 2014) asserts that it is a representation of a paradigm shift from top-down decision-making to a bottom-up approach. On the other hand, Barakat and Urdal (2015) considers the proposed ideas of Wane (2013) to confirm that service delivery in education sector encompass key indicators that evaluate the effort and competence of staff, as well as the availability of essential inputs and resources contributing to the functionality of schools, and include teacher effort, teacher knowledge and ability, and the availability of critical inputs such as textbooks, teaching equipment, and infrastructures.

Contextually, the paper looks at decentralized planning as an Independent variable and the education service delivery as a dependent variable. The paper further presents some of the key elements under decentralized planning and service delivery in the education sector, especially in Pakwach district. The elements of decentralized planning for analysis include the goal setting in primary education, the identification of priorities, public participation in program implementation, and monitoring the implementation of programs. The key elements under service delivery in the education sector for analysis include the pupils-classroom ratio in primary schools, the pupils-teacher ratio, textbooks provision, and the provision of pit latrine stances.

Statement of the Problem

In Uganda, the Second Schedule of the Local Government Act (1997) decentralized service delivery including in the education sector. Despite the availability of this clear legal provision, education service delivery in local governments is still substandard in the country (Clarence & Etang, 2017), and Pakwach district is none exceptional in this assertion. For instance, the district Quarter Four Monitoring Report of Pakwach (dated 24/08/2020 pg. 64) reveals that renovation of primary school classrooms within Pakwach sub-county was budgeted at one hundred million nine hundred eighty eight thousand shillings (UgX.100, 988, 000/=) but only seven million five hundred fifty two thousand (UgX.7, 552, 000) was realized, which is about 12% of the total budget estimates for the sector. This statistics appear to be casting doubts on the effectiveness of decentralized planning on education service delivery in Pakwach

district. This paper is intended to analyze the effects of decentralized planning on education service delivery in Pakwach District.

Objectives of the Paper

1. To find out the effect of goal setting on education service delivery in Pakwach Sub-county
2. To examine how the identification of priorities affect primary education service delivery in Pakwach Sub-county
3. To examine the effect of public participation in program implementation on primary education service delivery in primary schools in Pakwach Sub-county
4. To examine the effect of monitoring on primary education service delivery in Pakwach Sub-county.

Significance of the Paper

The is expected to of great significance to Pakwach District Local Government, and other districts in Uganda by providing an insight into the extent to which decentralized planning affects education service delivery. It will also go a long way in enabling the leadership of Pakwach district to find appropriate strategies of addressing some of the challenges facing the education sector so as to improve service delivery.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study design was considered, with adoption of both qualitative and quantitative approaches were blended into the study to balance the weakness of the other. The target institutional population included all the nine Government-aided primary schools in Pakwach sub-county and considered a target population of 119 that consisted of a cross section of sub-county staffs, Local Council One or LC1, members of Parents Teachers Association or PTA, and School Management Committee or SMC members, Head teachers and Teachers. A total of 102 respondents were sampled using the table recommended by Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The five-point Likert scale designed-questionnaires and interview guide were used for data collection which yielded a response rate of 89% from which it was analyzed using computer software packages to generate the inferential statistics and explanatory results for quantitative and qualitative data, respectively.

Reliability of the Instrument: Reliability of study constructs in the questionnaire was established by conducting the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test of reliability using SPSS version 25. This analysis is dependent on the formula for reliability testing as presented below;

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{1-k} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

Where:-

σ_X^2 = the variance of the observed total test scores

$\sigma_{Y_i}^2$ = the variance of component i for the current sample of persons.

This tool was considered to be reliable for an internal consistency of 0.761 because the default Cronach Alpha value is at a minimum of 0.70. In other words, any value within the acceptable range implies that

there is consistency among the components of the questionnaire and accordingly the stability required in the event of repeating the test.

Validity of the Instrument: Validity determines whether the research instrument truly measures that which it intends to measure or how truthful the research results are (Haradhan, 2017). A content validity index (CVI) was computed by dividing the number of correct items in the tool over the total number of items in the tool as illustrated in the formula below:

$$CVI = \frac{\text{No of item declared valid by the judges}}{\text{Total No of items on the questionnaire}}$$

According to Haradhan (2017), if the CVI value is 0.7 or above, the tool is considered satisfactory, indicating that the instrument satisfies content validity test and that the data collected thereafter would be valid. Overall, the CVI of the instrument was above 0.7.

A: Results of the Findings Correlation Analysis

The Pearson’s product-moment correlation analysis was performed to establish the relationship between decentralized planning and education service delivery in Primary Schools. The matrix of correlation shows that the r values for education service delivery correlates with implementation ($r = -0.295$, p value = 0.003); goal setting ($r = -0.378$, p value=0.000); and monitoring ($r = -0.196$, p value=0.048), but not correlated with identification of priorities ($r = -0.009$, p value=0.929). This is presented in the table below:

Table showing the Correlation of decentralized planning & education service delivery

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Education Service delivery	1.000				

(2) Implementation	-0.295*	1.000			
	(0.003)	---			
(3) Identification of Priorities	-0.009	0.757*	1.000		
	(0.929)	(0.000)			
(4) Goal Setting	-0.378*	0.925*	0.713*	1.000	
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	----	
(5) Monitoring	-0.196*	0.253*	0.373*	0.278*	1.000
	(0.048)	(0.009)	(0.000)	(0.004)	----

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

According to table 8, education service delivery correlates positively with the various constructs of decentralized planning. In particular, it has a weak, negative, but significant correlation with implementation ($r = -0.295$, p value = 0.003); with goal setting ($r = -0.378$, p value = 0.000) and monitoring ($r = -0.196$, p value = 0.048). This implies that as the score in implementation, goal setting and monitoring increase, the score in education service delivery would also decrease.

B: Regression for Predicting Service Delivery

The linear regression analysis was conducted to establish the simultaneous effect of decentralized planning on education service delivery. The results indicate that: simultaneously, three decentralized planning constructs would account for about 0.320 variation in education service delivery in Packwach

district (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.320$) from which: identification of priorities appears a significant predictor of education service delivery (p value=0.002, $\beta = 0.476$); goal setting does negatively and significantly predict education service delivery ($\beta = -0.474, p$ value=0.002); and monitoring negatively and significantly predict education service delivery ($\beta = -0.262, p$ value = 0.02). But Implementation (p value=0.852, $\beta = -0.031$) appears to be having no significance in predicting education service delivery.

Table showing the linear regression predicting education service delivery

Education service delivery	Coef.	St.Er	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
Implementation	-.031	.164	-0.19	0.852	-.355	.294	
Priority identification	.476	.104	4.60	0.002	.271	.682	***
Goal Setting	-.474	.148	-3.22	0.002	-.767	-.182	***
Monitoring	-.262	.111	-2.36	0.020	-.482	-.041	**
Constant	4.59	.45	10.20	0.000	3.697	5.484	***

Model Summary			
Mean dependent var	3.262	SD dependent var	0.581
R-squared	0.320	Number of obs	102
F-test	11.405	Prob > F	0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)	148.510	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	161.635
*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$			

In the table above, all the constructs under the three decentralized planning indicators (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.320$) which account for 0.320 variation in education service delivery in Pakwach district implies that a hooping 0.68 units of variation in education service delivery would be accounted for by other factors that this study did not investigate.

Accordingly, goal setting does negatively and significantly predict education service delivery ($\beta = -0.474, p$ value=0.002). This finding is also corroborating with the qualitative findings, for instance, when asked about the effect of goal setting on education service delivery in Pakwach district. The district LCV chairperson narrated:

“The ability to weigh the urgency of items in terms of priority to determine which one comes first, which one to first be left out, or something similar is provided by defining goals. Goals can sometimes provide us a clear image of what can be achieved and what cannot be reached”.

The senior education officer narrated:

“Goal setting is good as it enables the different stakeholders to participate in setting what they want and it helps institutional leaders to work within the frame work and there is no diversion from planned activities, resources are also channeled to areas that are necessary and controls wasteful expenditures”. He further narrated;

“Generally, for all set goals to be achieved there must be implementation. It enables the educational institution to achieve the set goals, planned activities when implemented effectively

can lead to goal achievement. Facilitate need for accountability and transparency. It enables stakeholders to own what they implemented. It's also a motivating factor and building trust”.

Generally, goal setting has effect on education service delivery. This finding is in agreement with Hassan & Rana (2020) who notes that at the national level there is broad outline of what needs to be done and the resources needed to enable the achievement of the stated policy objectives. Similarly, Devarajan (2018), further points out thus; goals provide a sense of direction and purpose. When examining the behavioral effects of goal setting, they concluded that 90% of laboratory and field studies involving specific and challenging goals led to higher performance than easy or no goals. This conclusion is in line with what (Couper, 2013), pointed out concerning community-based services, who asserted that goals are the primary guide for service delivery, facilitating the planning and implementation of appropriate rehabilitation services and community supports to meet the unique needs and interests of each person in their community. Similarly, Bruhn et al., (2016) concluded students were more likely to attain their goals when they were directly involved in setting the goals; however, most interventions reviewed dictated goals to students.

In another instance, identification of priorities appears a significant predictor of education service delivery (p value=0.002, $\beta = 0.476$). Therefore, keeping other factors constant, a unit increase in the score of identification of priorities would significantly increase their education service delivery by 0.476 times 95% CI (0.271-0.682).

When asked about the effect of priority identification on education service delivery in Pakwach district. The chairperson LCV narrated:

“The benefits of priority identification include that when we create a list of priorities, it assists us in making decisions with limited resources by allowing us to identify the most pressing needs and address them first on the priority list before tackling the others”.

According to the DEO, identification of priorities is not so important because of limited resources you need to priorities. Knowing that this priority has been reached and that we can cross it off our lists as something completed allows us to shrug off some of the weight.

Generally, identification of priorities had significant effect on education service delivery. This finding is in agreement with Hiroshi (2008) who asserts that one of the ways by which local government planning is made to reflect national priorities is through harmonizing central and local government planning and budgeting cycles to ensure that local needs and priorities do feedback in to the National budget. Similar finding by Olum & Yasin (2013) indicates that in Uganda, there is lack of consensus by councilors on priorities yet that setting priorities and costing them are very critical stages in the budgeting process, in his research. In Cote d’voire, the preferences expressed by the local people for roads, social facilities and water supplies did not correspond to spending priorities of the communes, which focused on municipal buildings and secondary schools (Tammy, 2020).

Similarly, monitoring negatively and significantly predict education service delivery ($\beta = -0.262$, p value = 0.02). When asked about the effect of monitoring on education service delivery in Pakwach district. The district LCV chairperson narrated:

“Monitoring keeps us informed and up to date with current events, provides access to data and information, allows us to see what is coming up and how the teaching and learning process is progressing, as well as the difficulties that the project may be facing. It also enables us to gather stakeholders to solve issues that may arise, jeopardize service delivery, or impede project progress, and allow us to revise mechanisms to address issues while keeping us in the loop”.

He further noted:

“Monitoring enables identification of gaps, achievement and challenges and it how to address the challenges. It enables work to progress as planned. It exposes poor implementation like shoddy work”.

Generally monitoring had effect on education service delivery in Pakwach district. This finding is in agreement with a study conducted by Muthoni, Ong’ang’a , & Kimamo, (2021) on the levels of monitoring and evaluation in implementation of the National Early Childhood Development Policy framework for quality service delivery in pre-primary school in Kenya and the findings indicated that a strong relation between monitoring and evaluation and quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. Similarly, Mayanja (2020), analyzes the role played by PME to ensure quality programs in higher education institutes in Uganda. The study found that participatory monitoring and evaluation process can enhance participation, empowerment and governance, thus enhancing the performance, efficiency and sustainability of educational interventions. In another similar instance, Mugabe & Ogina , (2021) undertook an empirical study on the ascribed roles of the School Management Committees in the implementation of Uuniversal Primary Education and the findings showed that in schools where the SMCs were active in tgheir monitoring roles, there was an imprvement in UPE implementation especially an increase in enrolment and support supervision that are all vital in improving teaching and learning. This is also suported by Mujuni and Mwesigye (2022), who established whether the Monitoring systems mediate the relationship between human capital and performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro District, Uganda and the findings of the study revealed that the relationship between human capital and performance of government aided primary schools is partially mediated by monitoring systems. Finally, Beluhu, (2020) sought to find out the effect of monitoring and evaluation framework to the success of development educational project in Jig-Jiga district and found that participatory monitoring and evaluation in development of educational projects therefore contributes to the success of educational projects though it should be complemented with good project management skills.

Conclusion and Recommendation of the Study

The study concludes that the identification of priorities enhances better service delivery in the education sector but goal setting, monitoring and implementation are not good at enhancing. The study recommends that the actual implementation of programs be supported through timely and full funding of the planned priorities so that the goal set can be achieved, hence better service delivery in the education sector in Packwach District.

REFERENCE:

1. Beluhu, D. R. (2020). The Effect Of Monitoring And Evaluation Framework On Development Project In Education Bureau In Somali Regional State In Case Of Jig-Jiga Branch. *Journal Of Social, Humanities and Administrative Sciences*, 6(34), Retrieved [https://journalofsocial.com/files/josasjournal/845223723_13%20ID476_6.to 34.%20Beluhu_2150-2161.pdf](https://journalofsocial.com/files/josasjournal/845223723_13%20ID476_6.to%2034.%20Beluhu_2150-2161.pdf)
2. Barat , M. & Urdal, K(2015). *Decentralized Planning in an Indian State*. Tamil Nadu: Hasanuddin University and Asian Rural Sociology Association. doi:doi: 10.1186/s12939-017-0649-0

3. Bizhan, & Nematullah. (2016). *Bringing the State Closer*. Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.
4. Couper, S. (2013). *Victorian Cradle to Kinder and Aboriginal Cradle to Kinder*. Melbourne: Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne, Australia,.
5. Devarajan, & R. (2018). *The Business and Management Review*. Veena Vohra: Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies.
6. Edwards , B., & Matthews, D. (2014). Historical Trends in Educational Decentralization in the United States and Developing Countries: A Periodization and Comparison in the Post-WWII Context. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. doi:10.14507/epaa.v22n40.2014
7. Haradhan, M. (2017). Two Criteria for Good Measurements in Research: Validity and Reliability. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*.
8. Hassan, & Rana. (2020). *World Education Services*. Kampala: NDP.
9. Hioshi, L.Q (2008). How poverty affects people’s decision-making processes. *Inspiring social change*.
10. Gary Becker (1930-2014). *The Emissions Gap Report*. High-quality health systems in the Sustainable Development Goals era. *The Lancet Global Health Commission*. Nairobi: UNEP.
11. Clarence, D & Etang S. (2017). Decentralized Planning, Budgeting and Service Delivery in Local Governments. A Case Study of Health and Education Services in Musanze District, Rwanda. Retrieved from <https://idr.kab.ac.ug/handle/20.500.12493/342?show=full>
12. Theodore Scultt. (1998). Between rhetoric and reality : decentralisation and reproductive health service delivery in rural Tanzania. Retrieved from https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/23649/1/Masawe_4287.pdf
13. Mayanja , C. (2020). Participatory monitoring and evaluation for quality programs in higher education: What is the way for Uganda? *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 12(1), 52-59. doi:10.5897/IJEAPS2020.0637
14. Mugabe , R., & Ogina , T. (2021). Monitoring and Implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Uganda. *The Education Systems of Africa*, 187–209.
15. Mujuni, B. P., & Mwesigye, A. (2022). Monitoring Systems Mediate Human Capital to Performance of Government Aided Primary Schools in Isingiro District, Uganda. “Using Med Graph program Approach”. *European Journal of Human Resource*. doi:10.47672/ejh.1119
16. Olum, & Yasin . (2013). The federal question in uganda. *the federal question in Uganda*.
17. Tammy. (2020). Learning to Change. (M. L , Ed.) *London school of hygiene & tropical medicine*.
18. Renu, F (2014). Monitoring and Evaluation for Quality Service Delivery in Pre-Primary Schools in Murang’a County, Kenya. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(5). doi:10.4236/jss.2021.95022
19. The Local Government Act (1997), Ministry of Local Government, Government of Uganda
20. Monitoring Report for Quarter Four (FY 2019/2020). The Planning Department, Pakwach District Local Government.
21. The World Bank Report (2012). The United nations conference on trade and development. *The development dimension*.
22. Wane , W. (2013). Service Delivery Indicators Education Survey 2013 - Harmonized Public Use Data. Retrieved from microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2749

Map of Pakwach District

