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Influence of Leadership Style on Performance Contracting Results in Local Authorities, Kenya

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## Influence of Leadership Style on Performance Contracting Results in Local Authorities, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of leadership style on performance contracting results in local authorities in Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study used a Correlational research design. The target population comprised of 4I867 employees. This study used stratified random sampling to select a sample of 328 from the175 Local Authorities in Kenya as per the Ministry of Local Government. Questionnaires were used to collect data from local authority employees. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to conduct analysis.

**Results:** The study found out that Leadership style significantly affect the effectiveness of performance contracting.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** The study recommended that local authorities' management should emphasize and enhance good leadership styles in the organization. The recommendation maybe critical to the successful running of the county governments which takes over the services performed by local authorities.

Keywords: Performance Contracting, Leadership Style, Local Government



#### **1.0 Introduction**

Jenkins (2007) states that a performance contract is defined as a management tool for measuring performance that establishes operational and management autonomy between government and public agencies. It reduces quantity of controls and enhances the quality of service. The performance contract privatizes the style of public sector management by focusing on results and not processes. It also measures performance and enables recognition and reward of good performance and sanction bad performance.

According to England 2000) a performance contract addresses economic, social or other tasks that an agency has to discharge for economic performance or for other desired results. It organizes and defines tasks so that management can perform them systematically, purposefully, and with reasonable probability of accomplishment. It also assists in developing points of view, concepts and approaches for determining what should be done and how to go about it. Performance contracts comprise determination of mutually agreed performance targets and review and evaluation of periodic and terminal performance.

Performance contracting is a freely negotiated agreement between government acting as the owner of a public enterprise itself in which the intentions ,obligations and responsibilities of the two are freely negotiated and then clearly set it out (GOK 2010).

Traditionally, the shortcomings of the public sector were seen as organizational problems capable of solution by appropriate application of political will, powerful ideas and managerial will. The overriding concern with economic growth has led to a refocusing (Fernandez, 2010). Over the years, poor performance of the public sector, especially in the management of public resources has hindered the realization of sustainable economic growth (Spivey, 2005). Some of the factors adversely affecting performance include: excessive regulations and controls, frequent political interference, poor management, outright mismanagement and bloated staff establishment. To improve performance, the Government has been undertaking a number of reform measures (Trivedi, 2009).

In the implementation of performance contracts, an Ad-hoc Negotiations and Evaluation Task Forces whose members are drawn from outside the public service assist the steering committee (Trivedi, 2009). The ad-hoc task forces are responsible for negotiating and evaluating performance contracts of ministries/departments, state corporations and Local Authorities on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Public Service. The task forces are independent and comprises of eminent private sector practitioners, retired public servants with track records, business executives and academia. This ensures independence in the entire process of setting performance targets and in their evaluation (Kobia and Muhamed, 2006; Muganda-Ochara and Van Belle, 2008)

Kenya's Vision 2030 has recognized performance contracting among the key strategies to strengthen public administration and service delivery. The strategies will in this regard focus on deepening the use of citizen service delivery charters as accountability tools, and entrenching performance as a culture in the Public Service. (Obongo, 2009). The challenge of securing commitment for results is profound, particularly at this time when the rhetoric of public service performance improvement is as prevalent as the reality. This commitment takes willingness to



commit before hand, taking responsibility for, as well as owning and accepting praise and blame for delivery of services agreed upon in a performance contract (Akaranga, 2008; Obongo, 2009).

The expected outcomes of the introduction of Performance Contracts include improved efficiency in service delivery to the public (Akaranga, 2010). This is made possible through ensuring that holders of public office are held accountable for results and improvement in performance (Kobia & Muhamed, 2006). In addition, it ensures efficiency in resource utilization and that public resources are focused on attainment of the key national policy priorities. Other expected outcomes include: ability to link reward for work to measurable performance, instilling accountability for results at all levels in the government and ensuring that the culture of accountability pervades all levels of Government (Muganda-Ochara & Van Belle, 2008). Perfomance contracting also has other outcomes such as the reduction or elimination of reliance on Exchequer funding by Public Agencies, ability to strategize the management of public resources and recreating a culture of results-oriented management in the Public Service (Mittullah & Waema, 2007).

Local Government is the part of government which deals with matters concerning the inhabitants of a particular area or form usually, financed at least in part by local taxes (Hutclison Encyclopaedia, 2004). The local government is the closest government to the people hence it is often referred to as grass roots government. Bearuaster (2002) believes that the local government holds a unique position within the system.

The Republic of Kenya recognized the need to enhance efficient service delivery in local authorities. The need was expressed through the policy paper on Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS 2003 - 2007) which envisaged efficient service delivery by local authorities as a basic necessity to growth and development (GOK, 2010). Local authorities in Kenya have been endowed with huge resources including Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF) which is allocated 5% of the National budget and local revenues which they are mandated to collect from the business community. All this is meant to service the operating expenses and deliver quality service to the community (Evaluation on the Performance of Public Agencies 2011).

## **1.2 problem statement**

Public outcry on quality of services is not uncommon in public sector local authorities included. Despite government's inputs and concern and introduction of performance contracting, performance of local authorities on service delivery is far below expectation (Afro Barometer Briefing Paper, 2010). Based on the lower performance ranking of local authorities in Kenya and the continued drop in rank for local authorities, there is a justifiable need for a study to establish factors hindering performance contracting in improving service delivery in Kenyan local authorities. Mitullah (2004) brings out the deteriorating performance of Kenyan local authorities while the Afrobarometer survey of 2004 decries the poor service delivery of local authorities.

The reviewed local studies Akaranga (2010), Kobia and Muhamed (2006), Muganda-Ochara and Van Belle (2008) and Mittullah and Waema (2007) did not critically address the factors hindering performance contracting from improving service delivery of Local Authorities. Studies by Mitullah and Waema (2007) and Muganda-Ochara and Van Belle (2008) were narrow and suffered from conceptual gaps since they only addressed the role of ICT in local authorities service delivery. The study by Kobia and Mohamed (2006) suffered from a contextual gap since it concentrated on



the Kenya Institute of Administration while the focus of the current study is on Local Authorities. The study by Akaranga (2010) also faced methodological issues since it was a desk-based study in addition to exploring a different contextual area (the general public sector). It is due to these conceptual and contextual gaps that the current study wishes to establish the employees perception on the determinants influencing performance contracting results of local authorities in Kenya.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

To investigate whether leadership style influences performance contracting results.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

## **2.1 Theoretical Review**

## Agency theory

According to Jensen & Meckling (1976), principal–agent theory in economics rests on several key assumptions about human and organizational behavior. Individuals and organizations are assumed to rationally pursue their self-interest, resulting in divergence of interests between the principal (owner) and agent (producer) (Adams, & Ferreira, 2009; Ahn, Jiraporn, & Kim, 2010). The separation of ownership from production increases the cost and difficulty involved in monitoring the agent's behavior. This creates information asymmetry that benefits the agent as he goes about performing a task on behalf of the principal. Under these conditions, two agency problems arise: moral hazard and adverse selection (Baker, 2002).

Moral hazard refers to instances of opportunistic behavior by the agent. Divergent interests and information asymmetry favoring the agent create opportunities for the agent to engage in behavior that maximizes his utility but that conflicts with the goals of the principal (Abdullah, 2006). Monitoring allows the principal to detect opportunistic behavior and align the agent's behavior with his own goals, thus helping to improve the outcomes of contractual relationships (Adams & Mehran, 2003).

The theory is relevant to this study as the implementers of Performance Contracting Act as the agents of the departments and must act in good faith to fulfill the principles of the Principal. The theory informs the variable of leadership style.

## Systems theory

Bertalanffy (1972) defines system theory as the trans disciplinary study of systems in general, with the goal of elucidating principles that can be applied to all types of systems at all nesting levels in all fields of research. The term does not yet have a well-established, precise meaning, but systems theory can reasonably be considered a specialization of systems thinking, a generalization of systems science, a systems approach. The term originates from Bertalanffy's General System Theory (GST) and is used in later efforts in other fields, such as the action theory of Talcott Parsons and the system-theory of Niklas Luhmann. According to Patton, (2006) systems framework is fundamental to organizational theory as organizations are dynamic entitles that are goal oriented. The systems approach to organizations relies heavily upon achieving negative entropy through openness and feedback.

The theory is relevant to the study because all organizations interact with outside world as they are often systems. Sections of organizations interact amongst themselves in exchange of key



information and materials. The theory is important in this study as the Local Authorities are often systems interacting with outside world in service delivery and other inputs. In this regard, it is an important tool in diagnosing management deficiencies and providing principles through which they can be remedied. Systems theory is therefore evident in the leadership styles adopted by the local authorities.

## **Goal Setting Theory**

Goal-setting theory places less emphasis on rewards and stresses the motivating power of defining appropriate work goals and engaging employee commitment to them (Marsden, 2004). A number of studies have attempted to examine the relationship between goal-setting and performance. It was found that the majority of evidence suggests strong support for the theory. In fact, it is where managers were not sure of their objectives, doubts into the credibility of the system evolved. Marsden and French, (2001), found that when employees thought performance contracting had led managers to set targets more clearly (because they have to appraise them afterwards), and if they thought their last appraisal fair, then they were more likely to experience positive incentive effects

Goal setting theory is at the centre of performance contracting. The theory is therefore relevant to this study as performance contracts have a lot in setting goals and agreeing with the Ministry on the same. They are evaluated on the goals they have set themselves which form the basis of performance contracting. Further, the financial management practices, human resource management practices and governance practices adopted by local authorities stem from the goal theory premise.

## 2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Leadership style is the personal approach of guiding a group of people by providing purpose, direction and motivation. There are many approaches to leadership styles that exist today. Three leadership styles exist which are: democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire. Best leadership use different styles at differing situations as depicted in Hersey- Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory (George, 2003). Effective leadership is not simply based upon a set of attributes, behaviour or influence but a wide range of abilities and approaches in very many corporate situations.

According to Kouzas and Posner (2007), participative leadership seeks to involve other people in the process, possibly including subordinates, pears, superiors and other stakeholders. Most participative activity is within the immeidate team. Participatory leadership is also known as consultation, powerment, joing decision making, democratic leadership, management by objectives and power sharing.Participative leadership can be a shame when managers ask for opinions and then ignore them. This is likely to lead to cynism and feelings of betrayal.

Obongo (2009) conducted a study on implementation of performance contracting in Kenya. To reverse the trend of falling service delivery, Kenya introduced performance contracting not only to improve service delivery but also to refocus the mind set of public service away from a culture of inward looking towards a culture of business as focused on customer and results. The author argues that whereas the general public and even some high ranking public servants may very much welcome the idea of performance contracting and measuring performance, it might not be readily accepted by everybody. This is especially those who might feel exposed (negatively in terms of



poor performance) by the outcomes. In other cases, resistance may come in the grading structure, those who feel that no grading system can even out the effects of lumping big and small ministries together. In the state corporations similar sentiments can be expressed, that it is unfair to grade state corporations operating in different sectors of the economy together.

Obongo (2009) notes that despite the application of composite score, which allows for comparisons of different ministries and state corporations, some ministries and even state corporations would still prefer to be grouped and ranked differently citing their uniqueness emerging from their areas of service delivery (industry), size in terms of turnover, number of employees and even their mandate. The separation of the negotiation committee and the evaluation committee may have its challenges too. It may be argued that for consistency and to help put the evaluation into perspective, it may be advisable for the same team that has done the negotiation to also undertake the evaluation. The reviewed study compares well with the current study as it endeavors to identify the determinants of the effectiveness of performance contracting in service delivery in local authorities in Kenya.

Transformational leaders are true leaders who require diverse skills associated with charismatic and visionary leadership. They have a zest and enthusiasm, add new value and look after initiative. Transformational leadership occurs when leader and follower unite in pursuit of higher order or common goals. Here, one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. This implies that the leader-follower relationship is one which the purpose of both become fused creating unity and collective purpose (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Transactional leadership style is more task- oriental that is comparable to the scientific approach to management. Completion of a task is commensurate rewards given, just like the "carrot and stick (contingent rewards). Some researchers like it to the scientific mode of management. The leaders specifies standards for compliance as well as what happens in non compliance. Close monitoring for deviances, mistakes and errors, and taking corrective action when incidences occur (management-by-exception-active). Another factor is the concept of management-by exception (passive), where leaders make no clear guideline or goals, and taking action only when something is not going as per the effectiveness of anticipated occurs. Passive leadership makes subordinates more likely to avoid initiating change and prefer maintaining status quo (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003).Lastly, there is the laissez faire or avoidant leader who avoids responsibility as supervisor, exhibiting low initiative and participation but tries closeness to subordinates. The leadership here aims at getting things done and satisfaction is relative (Avolio, Gardner 2005;, Luthans 2002).



#### 2.3:ConceptualFramework



#### **Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

#### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .

Correlational research design was used to conduct the study in 175 Local Authorities in Kenya as per the Ministry of Local Government. The population was 4I,867 employees. Sampling was not done at the organizational level but rather at the employee level. A sample of 328was selected using a stratified systematic sampling technique.

Table 1	Target	<b>Population</b>
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Stratum	Population(N)
City Council	15,785
County Council	13,693
Municipal Council	6,426
Town Council	5,963
Grand Total	41867

#### (Source: GOK 2011)

The sample estimate was calculated using the formula below recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The formula yielded a sample of 384 respondents proportionately distributed in the 175 local authorities. The respondents were selected through random stratified sampling across all the departments as per each local authority. Local authorities were stratified into four strata based on type of local authority as per table 1. Under stratified sampling, the population is divided



into several sub-populations that are individually more homogeneous than the total population and then we select items from the total population (Kothari, 2004). A sample of 384 respondents was used.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.1 Performance Contracting Factor Analysis Component Matrix

In order to reduce the data to a meaningful and manageable set of factors, factor analyses was conducted. Factor analyses reduces the data to a manageable set of factors (Sekaran, 2006). Table 2 shows the component matrix of performance contracting which indicates that all the statement with a coefficient of 0.4 were retained and those with less than were dropped during regression analysis. This is in line with Sekaran (2006) who averred that statements with a coefficient of less than 0.4 should not be analyzed further. Out of 17 items 12 were retained for further analyses since they were the only items that made the threshold of 0.4 and 5 were dropped.

#### **Table 2: Performance Contracting Component Matrix**

Statement	Retained	Dropped
The council complies 100 with the budget	0.708	
The council undertakes periodical monitoring and Evaluation to ensure compliance with the budget	0.669	
The council implements the service delivery charter 100	0.663	
The council circulates the baseline survey results to the employees	0.612	
I have assigned a performance contract	0.594	
The council fully implements baseline survey recommendations	0.584	
The council achieves the set revenue collection targets	0.577	
The council undertakes periodical monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with service delivery charter	0.567	
The council achieves its development index targets every year	0.54	
The council is ISO certified	0.47	
The council funds are utilized on programmed activities	0.383	
The council complies 100 with the strategic plan	0.351	
The council provides adequate working tools and protective clothing to the employees.		0.207
I find my work challenging and interesting		0.19
The council has a service delivery charter		0.174
I am aware that the council has a performance contract		0.122
The council has a strategic plan		0.083



#### 4.2 Descriptive Analysis- performance Contracting

The section addresses the various measurements of effectiveness of performance contracting in local authorities in Kenya. Table 3 shows that 90% of the respondents agreed that they were aware that the council has a performance contract, 80% disagreed that they have signed a Performance contract and 82 % disagreed that the council complied 100% with the budget. In addition, 7% agreed that the council funds are utilized on programmed activities, 78% disagreed that the council undertakes periodical monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with the budget and 55% disagreed that the council achieves the set revenue collection targets. Eighty percent of the respondents disagreed that the council achieves its development index targets every year, 87% agreed that the council has a strategic plan and 71% disagreed that the council complies 100% with the strategic plan.

Furthermore, 79% of the respondents agreed that they find their work challenging and interesting, 94% agreed that the council has a service delivery charter, 77% disagreed that the council implements the service delivery charter 100% and 88% disagreed that the council undertakes periodical monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with service delivery charter. Eighty-eight percent disagreed that the council circulates the baseline survey results to the employees, 70% disagreed that the council fully implements baseline survey recommendations and 94% disagreed that the council was ISO certified. The score of the responses for this section disagrees at 55% indicating that more employees disagreed with the statements in regard to performance contracting in the local authorities in Kenya.

The findings imply that there were no strong systems that guided performance contracting in the local authorities in Kenya. This was evidenced by the disagreements from the respondents that the council was ISO certified, they have signed a performance contract, the council complied 100% with the budget and the council funds were utilized on programmed activities. This implies that there were very poor measures of performance contracting at local authorities in Kenya.

It also implies that the benefits of performance contracting may not be achieved unless sound

## 4.3 Leadership Style Factor Analysis Component Matrix

To reduce the number of variables to a meaningful interpretable and manageable set of factors, factor analyses were done. Out of 10 questions only one was dropped and 9 were retained as they met the acceptable threshold 0.4 as per Sekaran (2007). Results on Table 3 indicates that leadership style statements retained 9 statements and dropped one after the factor analysis was done.



#### **Table 3: Leadership Style Component Matrix**

Statement	Retained	Dropped
Employees' views are taken into consideration in the management	0.764	
Leadership qualities are visible in management	0.717	
Leadership style of senior management is participatory	0.663	
Employees are fairly empowered to be creative and innovative in their jobs	0.572	
Proper delegation is done to enhance service delivery	0.531	
There is good guidance to the staff in executing their duties by supervisors	0.517	
Leaders make clear guidelines to ensure effective performance	0.461	
Leaders motivate employees by rewarding good performance	0.443	
Leaders set sound performance standards	0.363	
There is proper co-ordination between the departments		0.092

#### 4.4 Descriptive Analysis-Leadership Style

The objective of the study was to investigate whether leadership style influences performance contracting in local authorities in Kenya. Results on Table 4 indicate that 80% of the respondents agreed that leadership style of senior management was participatory, 78% agreed that leadership qualities are visible in management and 56% disagreed that employees' views are taken into consideration in the management. Fifty-eight percent agreed that, proper delegation was done to enhance service delivery, 67% disagreed that employees are fairly empowered to be creative and innovative in their jobs and 72% agreed that there was proper co-ordination between the departments. In addition, 56% of the respondents agreed that leaders made clear guidelines to ensure effective performance, 56% disagreed that leaders set sound performance standards and 92% disagreed that leaders motivated employees by rewarding good performance. The scores of responses for this section agrees at 52% indicating that more employees agreed that leadership styles were a key driver of performance contracting. This finding is shown in Table 4.

The findings are consistent with those in Ohemeng (2009) who conducted a study on the Constraints in the Implementation of Performance Management Systems in Developing Countries



and noted that Social cultural norms influence public management practices and organizational decision making. In addition, the role of political authorities, as well as of administrative leadership, is also vital to the success of performance management. The author reckons that such leaders should be seen at the forefront of any reforms. The shortage of experienced staff, inadequate remuneration, the poor morale of the public service, and unwieldy administrative systems has weakened the capacity of institutions to carry out any meaningful reform agenda. Leadership thus becomes an essential instrument to reverse such a trend and inspire enthusiastic concern for the reforms.

The findings imply that there were good leadership styles at local authority because there was proper delegation to enhance service delivery, there was proper co-ordination between the departments, good guidance to the staff in executing their duties by supervisors and leaders made clear guidelines to ensure effective performance.

Statement	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Leadership style of senior management is participatory	2	12	6	48	33
Leadership qualities are visible in management	2	16	5	52	26
Employees' views are taken into consideration in the management	17	39	2	28	15
Proper delegation is done to enhance service delivery	3	36	3	50	9
Employees are fairly empowered to be creative and innovative in their jobs	23	44	4	25	5
There is good guidance to the staff in executing their duties by supervisors	6	32	7	48	8
Leaders make clear guidelines to ensure effective performance	4	39	4	45	9
Leaders set sound performance standards	9	47	8	31	6

#### Table 4: Leadership Styles



Statement	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Leaders motivate employees by rewarding good performance	66	25	2	6	2
Mean	14	30	4	40	12

## 4.5 Leadership and performance Contracting Odd Ratio Regression

Binary logistic regression was used to model relationship between leadership styles and performance contracting results. Table 5 shows that leadership styles regarding whether employees' views are taken into consideration in the management and whether employees are fairly empowered to be creative and innovative in their jobs are statistically associated to performance contracting results (p<0.050). A change in these leadership styles increases the probability of good performance contracting by 2.702 and 1.674 times respectively.

#### Table 5 Leadership and performance Contracting Odd Ratio Regression

	В	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% ( EXP(B)	C.I. for
						Lower	Upper
Leadership style of senior management is participatory	0.259	0.182	2.028	0.154	1.295	0.907	1.849
Leadership qualities are visible in management	-0.029	0.186	0.024	0.878	0.972	0.674	1.4
Employees' views are taken into consideration in the management	0.994	0.185	28.995	0.000	2.702	1.882	3.879
Proper delegation is done to enhance service delivery	0.25	0.185	1.822	0.177	1.284	0.893	1.844
Employees are fairly empowered to be creative and innovative in their jobs	0.515	0.185	7.79	0.005	1.674	1.166	2.404
There is good guidance to the staff in executing their duties by supervisors	-0.048	0.176	0.075	0.784	0.953	0.676	1.344
Leaders make clear guidelines to ensure effective performance	0.176	0.175	1.013	0.314	1.192	0.847	1.678
Constant	-6.152	1.215	25.621	0	0.002		



#### 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that the leadership styles of local authorities are transformational and participatory. However, a lot needs to be done as far as empowering employees is concerned that the particular aspects that influenced performance contracting positively.

#### 5.2 **Recommendations**

Modern management styles engages leadership as a very pertinent function and hence top management need to ensure that good leadership by example is taken into consideration in a very democratic style. Administrative procedures and manual need to be put in place and sensitized to employees down the line. The study recommended that local authorities management should emphasize and enhance good leadership styles in the organization. They should also ensure that they engage the employees views whenever making changes in the authority so that there will be smooth operations of the activities.

#### **5.3 Areas for Further Study**

The study focused on local authorities whereby only 18 local authorities were studied. The benefits of performance contracting surpasses the costs in public sector. There is therefore an opportunity to study other organizations in Kenya such as State corporations, learning institutions and government ministries to enhance generalization.

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