



Received: 10-09-2023
Accepted: 20-10-2023

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Accountability and Performance of Kabale District Local Government, Uganda

¹Gad Byomuhangi, ²Patience Tugume

^{1,2}School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University, Kampala, Uganda

Corresponding Author: **Gad Byomuhangi**

Abstract

Poor accountability by local governments in Uganda has been reported overtime. The study examined the relationship between accountability and performance of Kabale District Local Government. Specifically, the study assessed the relationship between accountability in terms of financial, administrative and political accountability and district performance. A cross-sectional research design using quantitative and qualitative approaches was used. The study targeted 750 respondents who involved 100 administrative staff, 50 political leaders, and 600 clients visiting Kabale District Local Government (KDLG) from where a sample size of 254 respondents was selected using simple random sampling technique with the help of the questionnaire as the data collection instrument. There was a positive relationship between financial, administrative and political accountability and performance of Kabale district local government ($r=0.409$, 0.227 , and 0.584 , $P=0.000$)

respectively. Financial accountability has helped to achieve the district goals, minimized costs and increased profitability, KDLG produces accurate financial reports for the benefit of its stakeholders and frequently produces cash flow statements to show the organization's projected cash inflows and outflows. Political leaders in KDLG work with anti-corruption agencies to ensure smooth running of its daily activities, play a big role in running district activities, participate in community mobilization for government programs and commissioning of government projects as well as oversee all activities and programs with government funding. Based on the study findings, the researcher recommends that there should be more citizen participation approaches in the management and accountability of district funds and resources in order to apprehend defaulters and corrupt officials.

Keywords: Financial Accountability, Administrative Accountability, Political Accountability and Performance

1. Introduction

Accountability is as old as man himself and dates back to the biblical times. For instance, the story of Ananias and Saphira could be viewed as one of "Financial Accountability" Ananias and Saphira sold a piece of property and with his wife's full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself but brought the rest and put it at the Apostle's feet (Act 5:1-3). The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary sees the word accountable as being responsible for something that is expected to give an explanation on something under one's care. Akpan (2010), viewed public accountability as: The firm's recognition and acceptance of the fact that all public servants hold their positions as trusts for the people who are masters. Those who are expected to render services must account to the people for their success and failures and those who are entrusted with the custody and disbursement of public funds must appropriately account to the people for their use. For one to be accountable for something, s/he must be responsible to its associated authority, which will make him/her answerable to his/her supervisors.

The development and enhancement of conscious public management reforms for over two decades is still continuing as government is looking for reformation and restructuring to enable better delivery of public services (Tarofder *et al.*, 2017; Thomas & Nadiyasu, 2017). The debate for good governance began in the late 1980s due to the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in the UK and other developed countries in the world where NPM was first adopted and then resulted in the adoption of a new approach to public sector management reform (Grace, 2015). Since the beginning of 1990, the paradigm of government in some countries start towards good governance, in order to put government organizations to become more effective, efficient and equitable for every citizen. This standard demands of government officials to become more responsive to the demands of their environment, in order to provide better, transparent and accountable service (Indra, 2006).

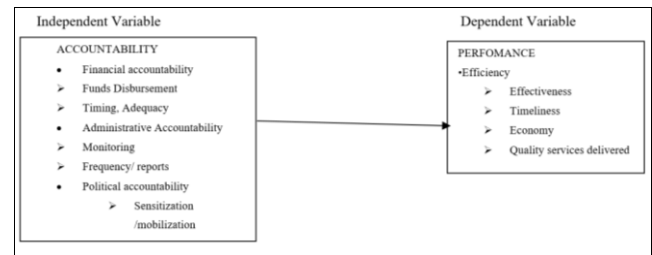
According to ministry of local government, (Public Finance Management Act, 2015), Uganda has suitable oversight bodies, policies, procedures and legal framework. Despite these, there has been poor state of financial management in government departments demonstrated by the low number of clean unqualified audits. This shows that the requirements of the Public Finance Management Act 2015, the legislative oversight bodies, and the wider legal framework governing public finances have been flouted which necessitates the holistic evaluation of accountability, (MOLG, 2019). In Uganda, Public Finance Management Act, 2015 clearly lays down procedures of accountability practices expected from anybody in charge of public budget spending.

Public sector offices are part of the public body, which is partly or wholly financed by the central government budget in form of conditional, unconditional and equalization grants. All this is concerned with providing basic government services to the whole society (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (2004). Local governments (LG) in Uganda are a subject of repeated controversy over the unending reported cases of poor financial accountability with emphasis on abuse of public authority and resources (Office of Auditor General 2014, Inspector General of Government, 2015). The compositions of the public sectors are important by their function and purposes, but in most cases, they are designed to influence economic growth and development. Despite some reports conducted by Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) about performance of Local Governments in Uganda which indicate a slight improvement in performance, there still exists continued poor performance from previous records and reports (MoLG, Annual National Assessment Report 2017 and 2018).

For instance, The Auditor General's Report 2016 indicated that Kabale District incurred overpayments of salary to staff amounting to UGX.103, 894,344, contrary to Section B (7) of the Uganda Public Standing Orders, 2010 which requires correct payment of salary. There were irregular salary payments totaling to UGX.58,912,157 to staff who had been earmarked for deletion as a result of either retirement, transfer of service or death, unsupported Pension Payments. UGX. 155,740,590, irregular Award of Framework Contracts UGX. 214,253,253 and the amount was irregularly included in the financial statements without supporting evidence at all, indicating ineffective accountability (MOLG, 2018; Ssalongo, 2022).

Several frameworks of Local Governance exist in Uganda, such as effective participation of citizens observed in decentralization policy, promotion of financial accountability and administrative accountability through the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), and the Inspectorate of Government (IGG). However, in spite of existence of the above frameworks, performance of Local governments is still below citizens' expectations in a number of Local Governments especially in Kabale District. This study therefore examined the relationship between accountability and performance of Kabale District Local Government and was conceptualized as in Fig 1.

1.1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Judge *et al.* (2002). Modified by researcher, 2023

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework showing the relationship of variables, independent: Accountability and dependent: Performance

Accountability plays a pivotal role in the enhancement of Performance of local governments. Therefore, the study attempted to establish the relationship between Accountability and Performance of Local Governments in Uganda. The key factors related to performance of Local Governments are synthesized to form the above conceptual framework. The dependent variable is Performance characterized by quality of services rendered by the local government, efficiency, and timely delivery of the services to the public, whereas, the independent variables comprise of Administrative Accountability, Financial Accountability and political/citizen accountability. Performance of Local Governments was the variable of interest which was explained in relation to effectiveness, timeliness, economy and quality of service. Therefore, the study attempted to establish how accountability dimensions affect performance in Kabale District Local governments.

2. Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional research design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches was used to conduct the study. The target population was 750 adults from which a sample size of 254 respondents was determined according to Morgan and Krejcie's (1970) [10]. These included 100 administrative staff, 50 political leaders, and 600 clients visiting Kabale District Local Government. Simple random sampling technique was in order to give equal chances of selection into the study for respondents and data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using content validity test and the content validity index for all variables was above 0.7 as recommended by (Sekaran, 2000) [17]. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument using SPSS version 27. Andy Field (2013), in discovering Statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics, quoted that Nunnally (1978) and Grayson (2004) recommend a cut-off coefficient point of 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient. Any question with an alpha above 0.7 was retained and considered reliable. Variables were measured using the five point-Likert scale with values as: strongly agree ranking 5, agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Data collected was cleaned, sorted and entered into SPSS version 27 after which analysis was done. Descriptive statistics using means and standard deviations was used to present data and Pearson correlation used to analyze the relationship between study variables.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1.1 Financial Accountability and District Performance

The respondents were asked questions in relation to how they feel about the different statements with reference to

strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) aligning to how financial accountability influences on the performance of Kabale district local government (Table 1).

Table 1: Responses in line with financial accountability

Statements	SA	A	NS	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
Being financially accountable has helped to achieve the district goals.	124 (54.4)	59 (25.9)	1 (0.4)	5 (2.2)	39 (17.1)	3.98	1.47
Everyone should be financially accountable in their respective offices.	74 (32.5)	58 (25.4)	2 (0.9)	94 (41.2)	0 (0)	3.49	1.32
Being accountable possibly minimizes costs and increases profitability	72 (31.6)	109 (47.8)	0 (0)	45 (19.7)	2 (0.9)	3.89	1.08
KDLG produces accurate financial reports for the benefit of its stakeholders	106 (46.5)	75 (32.9)	27 (11.8)	20 (8.8)	0 (0)	4.17	0.95
The management of KDLG regularly produces cash flow statements to show the organization's projected cash inflows and outflows	87 (38.2)	94 (41.2)	0 (0)	25 (11)	22 (9.2)	3.87	1.29

A majority 80.5% (54.4+25.9) of respondents agreed that being financially accountable has helped the district to achieve its goal (Table 1). This implies that financial accountability is pivotal in the district performance levels as further explained by the high mean of 3.98 and 1.47 standard deviation.

On whether being accountable possibly minimizes costs and increases profitability, a majority (79.4%) of respondents were in agreement, with 3.89 mean and 1.08 low standard deviation.

With respect to whether KDLG produces accurate financial reports for the benefit of its stakeholders, results revealed 79.4% agreement, implying that accurate financial reports are a necessity to district growth as further given by the high mean of 4.17 and 0.95 low standard deviation.

Lastly, the researcher investigated whether the management of KDLG regularly produces cash flow statements to show the organization's projected cash inflows and outflows and the study findings revealed a majority 79.4% agreement. This implies that there is transparency in the operations of the district as given by a mean of 3.87 and 1.29 standard

deviation.

The relationship between financial accountability and performance of Kabale district local government was assessed using Pearson correlation analysis and this showed a statistically significant positive relationship between financial accountability and performance of Kabale district local government ($r=0.409$, $P=0.000$). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) value is 0.164 implying that 16.4% of the variation in the performance of the district can be explained by the financial accountability measures undertaken by the district holding other factors constant.

3.1.2 Administrative Accountability and District Performance

The respondents were asked questions in relation to how they feel about the different statements with reference to strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) aligning to how administrative accountability influences on the performance of Kabale district local government (Table 2).

Table 2: Showing statements on administrative accountability

Question	SA	A	NS	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
Kabale district employs the most qualified and competent workforce	115 (50.4)	77 (33.8)	1 (0.4)	2 (0.9)	33 (14.5)	4.05	1.36
The public can realize Responsive Performance: when there is satisfaction and goal congruence.	112 (49.1)	62 (27.2)	0 (0)	3 (1.3)	51 (22.4)	3.79	1.58
There is high Level of Service Provision which is a Performance Measurement.	60 (26.3)	55 (24.1)	5 (2.2)	108 (47.4)	0 (0)	3.29	1.29
The officials concerned with funds of the KDLG are trustworthy	102 (44.7)	66 (28.9)	0 (0)	26 (11.4)	34 (14.9)	3.77	1.48

A majority 84.2% (50.4+33.8) respondents agreed that Kabale district employs the most qualified and competent workforce (Table 2). This implies that better performance levels can be attained at the district since it has competent and most qualified persons and this is in addition explained by the high mean of 4.05 and 1.36 standard deviation.

More so, study findings revealed there is high Level of Service Provision in the district by the administrative body as seen by majority 50.4% in agreement, with the mean of 3.29 and 1.29 standard deviation.

Lastly the researcher investigated on whether officials concerned with funds of the KDLG are trustworthy and study findings revealed a majority 73.6% agreement, with the mean of 3.77 and 1.48 standard deviation.

The relationship between administrative accountability and

performance of Kabale district was weak and positive ($r=0.227$, p value= 0.001). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) value is 0.047 and this implies that 4.7% of the variation in the performance of the district can be explained by the administrative accountability measures undertaken by the district holding other factors constant.

3.1.3 Political Accountability and District Performance

The respondents were further asked questions in relation to how they feel about the different statements with reference to strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) aligning to how political accountability influences on the performance of Kabale district local government and study findings are as in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Showing statements on Political accountability

Question	SA N(%)	A N(%)	NS N(%)	D N(%)	SD N(%)	Mean	Std.D
Political leaders in KDLG work with anti-corruption agencies to ensure smooth running of its daily activities.	72 (31.6)	54 (23.7)	14 (6.1)	87 (38.2)	1 (0.4)	3.48	1.29
Political parties play a big role in running district activities	77 (33.8)	89 (39)	0 (0)	54 (23.7)	8 (3.5)	3.76	1.24
Political leaders in this district participate in community mobilization for government programs	90 (39.5)	80 (35.1)	5 (2.2)	28 (12.3)	25 (11)	3.8	1.36
Political leaders in this district participate in commissioning of government projects	117 (51.3)	66 (28.9)	0 (0)	2 (0.9)	43 (18.9)	3.93	1.5
Political leaders in this district report cases of resource mismanagement and this has improved performance	70 (30.7)	57 (25)	2 (0.9)	89 (39)	10 (4.4)	3.39	1.38
Political leaders in this district oversee all activities and programs with government funding	68 (29.8)	96 (42.1)	0 (0)	62 (27.2)	2 (0.9)	3.73	1.18

Political parties play a big role in running district activities, a majority (72.8%) of respondents were in support of the statement. This implies that political parties like National Resistance Movement (NRM) and Forum Democratic Change (FDC) that are strong influence governance and service delivery in the district as further explained by a mean of 3.76 and 1.24 standard deviation.

Political leaders in this district participate in commissioning of government projects as revealed by majority (80.2%) of respondents. This is further explained by 3.93 mean and 1.5 standard deviation.

Regarding whether political leaders in this district oversee all activities and programs with government funding, a majority 71.9% of respondents were in agreement, with 3.73 mean and 1.18 low standard deviation.

There was a strong statistically significant positive relationship between political accountability and performance of Kabale district local government ($r= 0.584$, $p= 0.000$). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) 0.338 implies that 33.8% of the variation in the performance of the district can be explained by the political accountability measures undertaken by the district holding other factors constant.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Financial Accountability and Performance

Being financially accountable has helped the district to achieve its goals and these findings align with those of Raga (2002)^[16] who observed that public accountability rests both on giving an account and being held accountable and that this double-barreled approach is at the core of responsive service delivery. This is further supported by World Bank (2004)^[18] that asserted that auditing in financial management of Public Institutions help local government to hold itself accountable and traditionally focuses on basic financial controls and financial flows. In addition, these are supported by Mukyala, Bananuka, Basuuta, Tumwebaze, and Bakalikwira (2017)^[13] who revealed that internal controls and managerial competencies are significant in predicting accountability in local governments. Chalam and Ng'eni (2017)^[3] also *asserted* that quality of financial reporting was significant in enhancing financial accountability.

Being accountable was thought to minimize costs as reported by Moyes *et al.*, (2006)^[12] who revealed that financial accounting must exhibit qualities of relevance, reliability, understandability and timeliness that make them useful to the stakeholders.

Results showed that KDLG produces accurate financial reports for the benefit of its stakeholders, and this implies that accurate financial reports are a necessity for district growth. This aligns with findings of Koornhof and Du Plessis (2018) that revealed that for the annual report to be the principal means by which an authority is held to account, they must contain improved measures of performance. However, Eton, Murezi, Mwosi, & Ogwel (2018)^[5] reported a weak relationship between the internal control system and financial accountability, linking it to inadequate accounting systems, staff gaps in local governments and untimely release of financial reports.

The management of KDLG regularly produce cash flow statements to show the district's projected cash inflows and outflows and this implies that there is transparency in the operations of the district. These findings align with those of Muraleetharan (2013)^[14] who found that adequate records maintenance, duplication of systems, efficient control of staff, written responsibilities, and directions significantly improve performance. On the contrary, Tooley and Hooks (2009) study revealed that annual reporting, though useful, have an overemphasized role as a source of information in discharging accountability.

There was a positive relationship between financial accountability and performance of Kabale district local government. This correlates with findings of Moyes and Hasan (1996) who revealed that the disclosure for accountability in terms of evidence of reporting to stakeholders has great influence on the performance public entities. Lee and Ali (2008) study also revealed that financial accountability influenced financial performance and that the goal of financial accountability is to improve performance, not to place blame and deliver punishments.

3.2.2 Administrative Accountability and District Performance

Findings of the current study revealed that the public can realize responsive performance when there is satisfaction and goal congruence among staff. This is in agreement with findings of Glynne and Murphy (2006)^[7] which indicated the need for management accountability for efficient and effective provision of public. In addition, Kiyemba, (2018)^[9] opined that oversight institutions have the potential to ensure compliance to systems, standards, and procedures only if they prove strong and effective. However, Ferry, Eckersley & Zakaria (2015)^[6] noted that too much monitoring of rules and procedures hinders decision-making resulting in negative operational performance.

There was a high level of service provision by the administrative body which indicates good performance. This is supported by findings of Moreno-Enguix, Gras-Gil, & Hernandez Fernandez, (2017) ^[7] who revealed that strengthening the control environment in municipalities reduces opportunities for fraud, increases compliance with the regulatory environment, and the likelihood for efficient utilization of resources.

There was a weak positive relationship between administrative accountability and performance of Kabale district local. This aligns with the findings of Idrissi and Alami, (2021) ^[8] who revealed that audit and nomination committees significantly affect financial performance while (Bayunitri and Nugraha, (2020) ^[2] found that administrative accountability significantly prevents fraud.

3.3.3 Political Accountability and District Performance

Political leaders in KDLG work with anti-corruption agencies to ensure smooth running of its daily activities. This correlates with Gasper (2015) ^[15] who asserted that citizens' pressure for local government performance would be channeled upwards to create vertical and horizontal spiral of demand for greater accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public goods and services and in turn better performance.

Political leaders in the district participate in community mobilization for government programs and this is further supported by Tesfay, (2020) and Wales, Davis, Kelly & Lynott, (2020) who suggested that public participation leads to a realization of authorized requirements, symbolizing the principles of democratic involvement and presence; advancing communal integrity; updating the community; improving awareness of community challenges and discovering and producing possible alternatives; and generating strategies, procedures and ventures of advanced value.

Political leaders in this district oversee all activities and programs with government funding. Carruthers, Busser, Cain and Brown (2010) identified a number of positive outcomes of citizen participation, namely: Improved public backing for resolutions; generation of ideas and data on community concerns; enhancing a sense of collaboration and confidence between the government and the community; ensuring justifiable imminent resolutions; and, facilitating to evade skirmishes and overpriced postponements.

4. Conclusions

Kabale District produces accurate financial reports for the benefit of its stakeholders and frequently produces cash flow statements to show the organization's projected cash inflows and outflows, employs qualified and competent workforce, officials concerned with funds of the KDLG are trustworthy, and that political leaders work with anti-corruption agencies to ensure smooth running of its daily activities, play a big role in running district activities, participate in community mobilization for government programs and commissioning of government projects as well as overseeing all activities and programs with government funding.

5. Recommendations

There should be a more inclusive financial accountability measures where local communities have the authority to verify work done before payments are effected on every

phase completed. This ensures quality work done and reduces Ghost works in the district. A more sufficient accountability system of public funds at the local level be put in place in order to easily adopt to New Public Management (NPM) systems and the use of the new reporting methods that were introduced to improve accountability. Focus has to go beyond vertical accountability that is within the district to horizontal accountability across sectors or low district units like parishes and sub counties. There should be more citizen participation approaches in the management and accountability of district funds and resources in order to apprehend defaulters and corrupt officials.

6. References

1. Auditor General. Annual report of the Auditor General on the results of audit for the year 2017. Kampala, Uganda, 2017.
2. Bayunitri BI, Nugraha R. The influence of internal control on fraud prevention (Case study at Bank BRI of Cimahi City). *International Journal of Financial, Accounting and Management*. 2020; 2(3):199-211.
3. Chalam GV, Ng'eni FB. Financial accountability and financial reporting in a decentralized environment in Tanzanian local government authorities. *International Journal of Management (IJM)*. 2017; 8(3):14-31.
4. Chapman & Hall. Moreno-Enguix MD, Gras-Gil E, Hernandez Fernandez J. An Explanation of Management of Local Government in Spain Based on the Structure of the Internal Control System. *Annals of Economics and Finance*. 2017; 18(2):393-410.
5. Eton M, Murezi C, Mwosi F, Ogwel BP. Internal control systems and financial accountability in Uganda: A Case of selected districts in Western Uganda. *International Journal of Commerce and Management Research*. 2018; 4(4):106-111.
6. Ferry L, Eckersley P, Zakaria Z. Accountability and transparency in English Local Government: Moving from 'Matching Parts' to 'Awkward Couple'. *Financial Accountability & Management*. 2015; 31(3):345-361.
7. Glynne, Murphy. Impact of Strategic Planning on financial accountability: Alternative Models to empower financial accountability at operation level. *Journal of Management*. 2006; 4(9):29-31.
8. Idrissi EI, Alami Y. The financial impacts of board mechanisms on performance: The case of listed Moroccan banks. *International Journal of Financial, Accounting, and Management*. 2021; 3(2):93-113.
9. Kiyemba R. Determinates of financial accountability in local Governments in Uganda: A case study of Wakiso district local Government. Kampala: Makerere University, 2018.
10. Krejcie RV, Morgan DW. Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. *Education and Psychological Measurement*, 1970, 607-610.
11. Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED). Report on the local government budget consultative workshop for FY2018/19. Kampala: Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED), 2017.
12. Moyes. The experience of Uganda- Local government's role as a partner in the decentralisation process to strengthen local development. Conference on Access to Development Funding for Local Governments in

- Africa. Johannesburg, 2006.
13. Mukyala V, Bananuka J, Basuuta M, Tumwebaze Z, Bakalikiwira. Accountability of local government authorities: A developing economy perspective. *African Journal of Business Management*. 2017; 11(12):266-274.
 14. Muraleetharan P. Control activities and performance of organizations in Jaffna district. *International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Marketing Research*. 2013; 2(4):10-16.
 15. Mzenzi and Gasper. *The Role of Governance in the Public Sector on financial accountability*, 2015.
 16. Raga. Governance, Corruption and Public Financial Accountability in Public entities in Philippines. *Journal on management*. 2002; 5(2):16-18.
 17. Sekaran U. *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Business Approach*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, 2000.
 18. World Bank. *Assessing Community Interest and Gathering Community Support*, 2004.