

The Challenges Facing Secondary Education Service Delivery under Decentralization by Devolution in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges facing decentralization by devolution on public participation in secondary education service delivery in Tanzania. It is a descriptive research under which a cross-sectional survey is used to collect detailed information from Tanzania. The main focus is on the management of secondary education. The population of this study comprises national groups of local governance actors in education sector including officials from local government authorities and from district councils of Karagwe and Bukoba Municipality in Tanzania. The study employs purposive and simple random sampling techniques to draw 287 respondents. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The collected data from face to face and other group interviews are transcribed qualitatively. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 is used to analyze the quantitative data. The evidence obtained indicates that decentralized education governance is challenged in terms of policy decision and clear policy guideline, hence, the minimality of education decision-making at grass-roots level. However, the study also observes that, the local government agencies attempted little to encourage involvement in local needs particularly decision-making. But there are reasons to believe that given the opportunity to continue to institutionalize local government over a long period, and following the decentralization reform route, decentralization by devolution will gradually bring about better results.

Key words: *Decentralization, challenges and decision-making, secondary education, service delivery.*

INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is one of the African countries that have decentralized its education service delivery. In the 1990s the government adopted decentralization by

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devolution policy with the intention of reforming its local governments (United Republic of Tanzania, 1998). There have been gains and challenges arising from the process of decentralization by devolution. This study investigates the challenges of decentralization for public participation in secondary education services delivery in Tanzania. Decentralization has been considered the tool to improve the delivery of public goods and services, including education services (Shah and Thompson, 2004). It was also thought to increase parental and community-level participation, which in turn, created additional pressures of accountability and quality assurance (Crouch, 2008).

However, in many developing countries, the high expectations of decentralization reforms have not been fulfilled (Olum, 2014). Overall, their impact was associated with failures rather than successes (Stacey, 2011). For instance, empirical literature showed that the management of service sector, such as secondary education, has experienced poor involvement of communities in decision-making and resource mobilization at the local levels (King, Feltey and Susel, 1998). It was against that backdrop that this study has been conducted, focused on the challenges of secondary education delivery in the decentralized framework in Tanzania.

Decentralization has the potential of making development outcomes more equitable and sustainable, resulting in improved systems of accountability that are more effective and transparent (World Bank, 2001). However, despite the claims about the governance mechanism in the decentralized framework, decentralized secondary education governance in Tanzania seemed not to provide the expected outcomes from its implementations. There was lack of public participation as had been envisaged, and, thus, secondary education service delivery has been facing severe problems which include limited operational financial resources, lack of clear policy guidelines, political interference, shortage of basic school infrastructure such as classrooms, teachers' houses, toilets, and desks, as well as low quality of curriculum (Lwaitama and Galabawa, 2008). This prompted the need for a study to find out, whether decentralization by devolution has made any difference or impact on the decentralized governance of secondary education in Tanzania.

METHOD

In order to obtain timely, relevant, and in-depth information for the study, a descriptive research design, under which, is a cross-sectional survey was used.

The population of this study comprises national groups of local governance actors in education sector including officials from local government authorities and from district councils of Karagwe and Bukoba Municipality in Tanzania. Those actors included district commissioners, district executive directors, PMO-RALG (regional educational officer, district education officers, district academic officers, and ward education officers), councilors, teachers, village executive officers, students, parents, and members of school boards. The respondents were randomly selected; each respondent in the list was given an equal chance of being chosen at each draw. In addition, the study included purposive sampling from specific target groups such as district education officers, district executive directors, and Ward education officers, because they were groups that had unique characteristics and held specific information, desired for the study (Creswell, 2009).

Moreover, they were deemed to have in-depth knowledge of education in Tanzania. The sample size of this study is based an optimum since it fulfils the requirements of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility. 287 respondents were used as sample size. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. That helped to generate a lot of information from a larger sample size at a relatively low cost in terms of time (Daniel, 2007). Also, semi-structured interview schedule was employed because it was useful in the collection of more data due to its flexibility, focus, timeliness, as well as its use of open and closed- ended approaches. Hence, we are able to gather comprehensive data and acquire complete understanding of decentralized education, according to Rubin and Babbie (2001). After the actual field work, the collected data, (both qualitative and quantitative), were processed prior to analysis. Analysis of data collected from mixed methods necessitated the use of multiple processing and analysis techniques. The collected data from face to face and other group interviews were transcribed qualitatively. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the quantitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Challenges of Education Policy Formulation in the Decentralized Secondary Education

Figure 1 illustrates that the majority (46.0%) of the respondents admit that education policy formulation is a very serious challenge in the decentralized secondary education since it has not involve the community in policy formulation,

while 42.9% claim that education policy is a serious challenge and only 10.1% say education policy formulation is fair. On the other hand, 0.7% of the respondents declare that education policy is not a serious challenge, while only 0.3% opine that education policy formulation is nothing at all. Evidently, the findings confirm that the educational level of citizens to participate in policy formulation is low, which means the citizens are not properly involved in decisions that affect their lives. Hence, the contribution of decentralization by devolution in education decision-making at the grass roots level (local community) is minimal. Policy formulation clearly is a critical phase of the policy process that is also an explicit subject of policy design. The formulation of public policy is part of the pre-decision phase of policy-making including constructing the goals, priorities and options, costs and benefits of each option, externalities of each option (Hai, 2012).

Lack of Clear Policy Guideline in the Decentralized Secondary Education

Policy coherence is a sign of commitment to decentralization. Figure 2 shows that 40.4% of the respondents believe that lack of policy guideline in the decentralized secondary education is a very serious challenge in secondary education delivery, 42.2% say that lack of policy guideline is serious challenge in secondary education delivery; while 14.6% indicate that policy guideline is fair. The remaining 2.7% suggest that lack of clear policy guideline is not a serious challenge, while only 0.3% maintains that lack of clear policy guidelines in the decentralized secondary education is nothing at all. As illustrated in the figure 2, the weighted score analysis confirm that 82.6% of the respondents indicate that lack of clear guidelines in the decentralized secondary education is a serious challenge. This implies that the lack of clear policy guideline is among the serious challenges that negatively affect the decentralized secondary education in Tanzania.

The Challenge of Infrastructure in the Decentralized Secondary Education

In order to determine the level of the infrastructure in secondary education, the researcher assigned the participants to show how infrastructure (classroom, laboratories, administration blocks, toilets, libraries, and teachers' houses) is the biggest challenge in the execution of the competences in secondary education. The findings in Figure 3 indicate that 28.8% of the respondents point out shortage of infrastructure such as laboratory, classroom, teachers' houses, toilets, and

dormitories as a very serious challenge in the decentralized secondary education; 33.8% declare that lack of infrastructure is a serious challenge; and 28.7% say the infrastructure is fair, 7.3% say that lack of infrastructure is not a serious challenge, while 1.4% claim that lack of infrastructure in the decentralized education is nothing at all. Hence, it can be deduced that majority (62.6%) of the respondents have the opinion that lack of infrastructure is a serious challenge in the execution of the competences in secondary education. The findings reveal that increase in enrolments has not matched with improvements in school infrastructure. School infrastructure are important factor in the implementation of learning and teaching processes. They assist the educators to realize their goals and create a conducive environment for the teaching and learning process that leads to the achievement of good academic performance by students. Therefore, much remains to be done, particularly in infrastructure improvement.

The Challenges of Language of Instruction in the Decentralized Secondary Education

Before colonialism, language of instruction was not a problem; each community used its own language to educate its own children. Figure 4 shows that 31.4% of the respondents said that language of instruction in secondary education is one of the very serious challenges facing the decentralized secondary education delivery. Other respondents (41.1%) declared that language of instruction is a serious challenge in secondary education delivery, while 22.3% respondents suggested that the language of instruction is fair. Additionally, 4.9% of the respondents said that language of instruction is not a serious challenge, while only 0.3% respondent claimed that language of instruction is nothing at all in the decentralized secondary education. So far, little attention has been paid to the language of instruction. Now it has emerged as a serious ingredient in the achievement of good academic performance.

Therefore, much remains to be done in order to improve language of instruction. If the English language is introduced to learners early and spoken more in primary school, students may be better prepared to learn entirely in English when they reach secondary school. A strong foundation in English language is important for learners to master tertiary education. As a matter of fact, only the language which instructors and learners understand can effectively function as the language of instruction. Unfortunately in Tanzania, the language of instruction factor has been ignored for a long time and this has had a negative impact on the

quality of education for the development of the country. In fact, students learn better when they understand what the instructor is saying. The current language of instruction policy in Tanzania seems to be confusing, contradictory, and ambiguous. In order to rescue academic quality in Tanzania, the need to improve the language of instruction at a young age is very important.

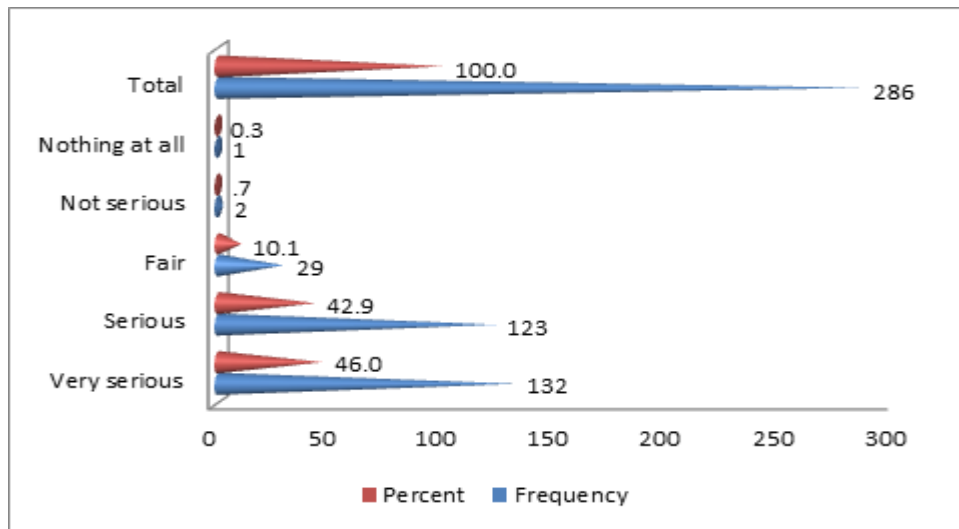


Figure 1: The Challenge of Policy Decision in the Decentralized Secondary Education.
 Source: Survey, 2018

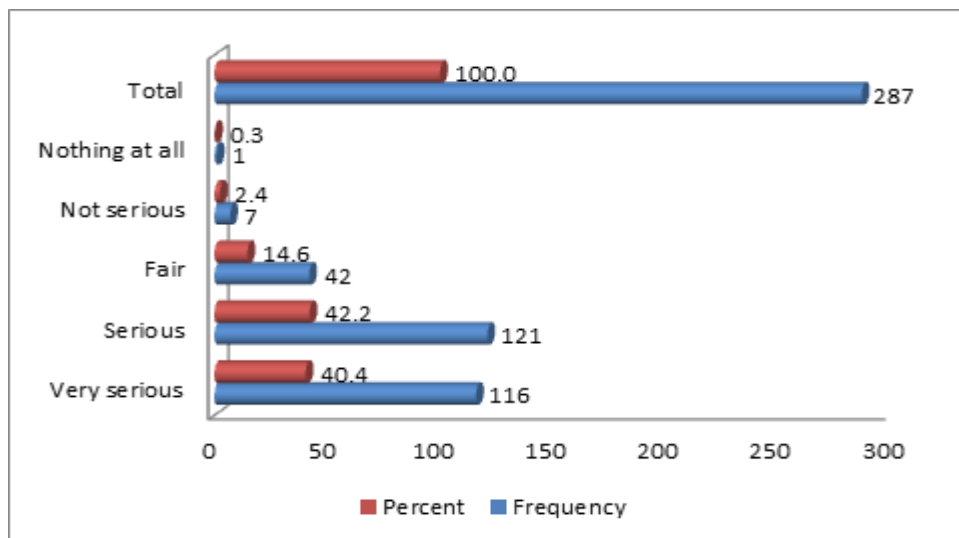


Figure 2: Lack of Clear Policy Guideline in the Decentralized Secondary Education
 Source: Survey, 2018

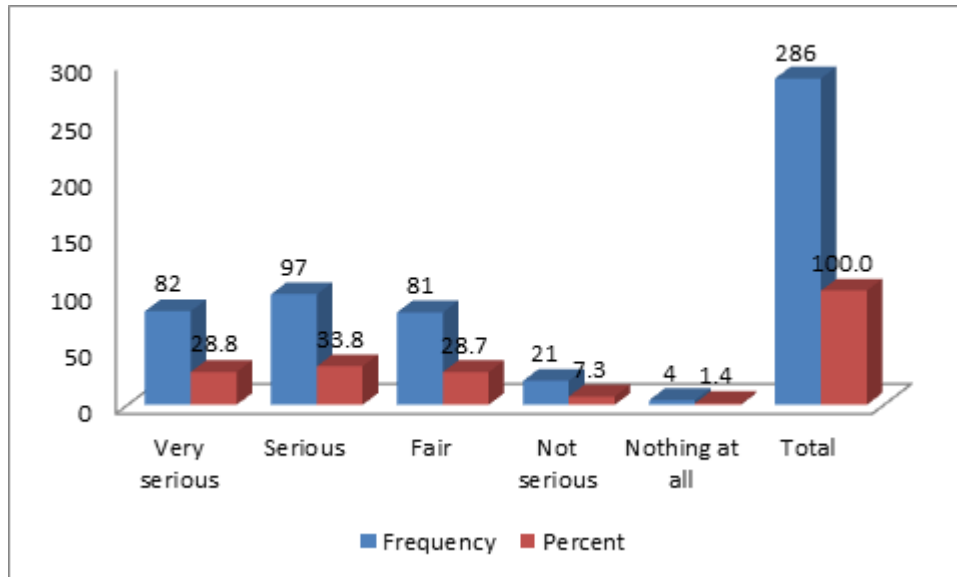


Figure 3: The challenge of Infrastructure in the Decentralized Secondary Education
 Source: Survey Data, 2018

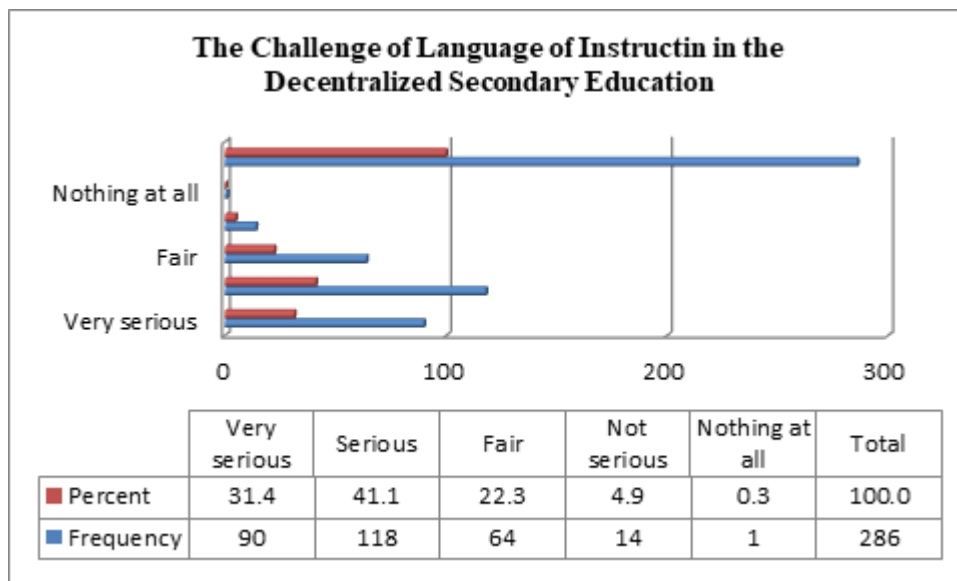


Figure 4: The Challenge of Language of Instruction in the Decentralized Secondary Education
 Source: Survey, 2018

CONCLUSION

In Tanzania, decentralization aims at solving problems at both national and local levels. The implementation of a successful policy requires the interaction and coordination of a large number of public organizations at different levels of government, complementary actions by non-government organizations and groups of intended beneficiaries (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). The research finds out that there are a number of factors that limit effective local community participation which include education policy formulation, policy guidelines, infrastructure and language of instruction.

Generally, the findings of this research show that currently the contribution of decentralization by devolution in education decision-making at the grass-roots level is minimal. This failure of D-by-D in Tanzania resulted from the inability of the local community to participate in the planning process which would have allowed them the platform to discuss their priorities. The findings further reveal that public participation can be a strong tool for tackling some educational problems, but it is not a panacea for all the problems encountered in the decentralized education service. One of the strategies to contribute to successful community participation in education is to conduct a social marketing campaign and an awareness campaign, in order to promote community involvement in children's education. Also, the government should stick firmly to the principles and regulations that established the local government authorities and grants more autonomy to them.

This study has identified the challenges preventing the effective involvement of the public in decisions that affect their lives. These challenges include education policy formulation, infrastructure, policy guideline, as well as the language of instruction. Indeed, much more research and discussion is required on these topics if the implementation of decentralized secondary education governance is to respond to the challenges it is increasingly facing.

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