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## EFFECT OF ADMINISTRATIVE PLATFORMS ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN PUBLIC SECTOR IN RWANDA

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### ABSTRACT

*Over the past decades a technological outburst has greatly impacted people's everyday life. Specifically, the study sought to assess the effect of administrative platforms on service delivery in public sector in Rwanda. The study adopted both descriptive and quantitative research designs. The population of 114 was stratified into three strata: top management staff, middle management staff, and low-level management staff. From each stratum the study used the stratified sampling technique to reach to the entire population of the study. Stratified random sampling method brought out the aspect of accuracy and reliability to this study, because, each and every individual participated to this study. The study used both primary and secondary data collection methods. The researcher administered the questionnaire to each respondent. Quantitative data was collected and analyzed using SPSS and presented through percentage, mean, frequencies. Pearson correlation was used to assess if the relationship between the independent variables, and dependent variable which is organizational performance, was significant or not. The study found out that the beta coefficients administrative platforms had a coefficient of 0.078 which is greater than zero. The t statics was 2.485 which had a p-value of 0.013 which is less than 0.05 implying that the coefficient of administrative platforms was significant at 0.05 level of significance. This showed that administrative platforms has a significant positive effect on service delivery at Irembo. Further, the study could explore the importance of fiscal and human resource on service delivery, public involvement, civil society and other stakeholders on the impact of Irembo on social, economic and political development in Rwanda. This could be undertaken with a greater diversity in participants, in particular, age, cultural background and people with disability to enable the government to determine the most effective participatory structures in order to optimize the representativeness in various counties*

**Keywords:** Administrative platforms, Service delivery, Public sector, Rwanda

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## INTRODUCTION

Citizen involvement is important for local and international governments because it increases legitimacy, efficiency, and accountability. It distributes the burden of good governance among all citizens and local government officials such as those elected and appointed. In the United States (US), the heart of democracy is exemplified in the Constitution, which states, "We the People. . . ." This wordage sets up as a perfectly fine as a duty that, along these lines, the establishment for public commitment and citizen association in administration (Luis, 2013). People's contribution supports devolved power and impact to nationals, networks and government. It perceives local diversity by connecting with the assortment of citizens and groups inside community and includes them in choices made about public administration (Roberta, 2014).

In United Kingdom (UK), Public involvement approaches, have being produced independently from arrangements to build social union in light of the fact that if community voices are not heard or regarded, at that point, there would be loss of trust and social consistency (June, 2009). In Brazil, governance of projects has had changes in governance standards that have led to compliance by Brazilian organizations to good governance, rules and fundamental values which have enhanced their value on the domestic market reducing their capital costs (Andriano, 2012). Less observable but equally malicious, governments that are not responsible to their citizens and with inefficient organizations and powerless foundations are unwilling or unfit to define and execute genius development and star poor policies (Gisseltquirt, 2012).

In South Africa, public involvement has been noted to be a requirement in various decision-making processes by local government (Laurence 2008). In East African nations, there have been fortified endeavors to enhance citizen commitment through government activities, common society activities and non-legislative associations and now and again,

an association between various associations (Zanello et al, 2011). The East African Community (EAC), for example, has scrutinized absence of citizen interest in the EAC incorporation process.

In 2015, the ICT Sector Profile emphasizes the prominence ICT enabled E-government, under the Smart Rwanda 2020 Master plan, GoR has set ambitious target to achieve 24/7 self-service Government, driving cashless and paperless economy with 95% of Government services transacted online by 2017 (Ministry of Youth and ICT, 2015). In 2015, the Republic of Rwanda, has initiated the e-government towards excellence in service delivery through partnership with Rwanda Online Platform Limited; ICT, Irempo that is single platform through which businesses and citizens accessed integrated government services via the Internet and mobile devices have been developed and operationalized so as to transform how government services to citizens and business are being improved and the efficiency and effectiveness that government is gaining using ICT.

The development of cities in Rwanda is very recent, and the rate of urbanization stands at about 18%. Although this rate is among the lowest in the world, the annual growth rate of the urban population of 4.5% far exceeds the worldwide average of 1.8%. In Rwanda, the Decentralization policy has, since 2000, been a key policy of the Government for promoting good governance, service delivery, and national development. The last decade of decentralization implementation has resulted in major positive developments in participatory democratization and local accountability but still a lot needs to be done to reach where we want to be in terms of democratic, participatory local governance, and effective citizen-centered service delivery ( Transparency International Rwanda, 2017).

The terms e-government and e-governance are often used to describe a government's use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

to render services to its citizens. Within the research community there is a debate on the correct use of the two terms. E-governance can be defined as “the use of emerging information and communication technologies to facilitate the processes of government and public administration” E-government can be defined as “the use of information technology to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services” (Visser & Twinomurinzi, 2014).

It is under this background, that the researcher needs to assess the effect of administrative platforms on service delivery in public sector in Rwanda. It aims at describing the challenges facing e-government and ways forward to engage effective and efficient e-government in Rwanda.

#### **Statement of the problem**

According to the 2015 CRC, about 71% of Rwandan citizens are satisfied with the service rendered to them. However, regarding the service delivery in land services, the citizens’ net satisfaction at the national level was 64.7% ( Rwanda Governance Board, 2015).

According to Transparency International Rwanda, the citizen awareness is a critical problem in the public service delivery in Rwanda. According to the research conducted by Transparency International Rwanda (2015); only 40% of the respondents did not know what services were offered at the district and 29.4% did not know what services were offered at the sector. In addition to that approximately 22% of respondents said they were not satisfied with the time it took for them to receive services. Perceived reasons for delays include: negligence/carelessness by staff, insufficient staff, and laziness by staff. Lack of staffing seemed to be severe ( Transparency International Rwanda, 2017). Critically, between 40% and 62% of respondents indicated that they perceive corruption as high or very high. However, only 10.5% of respondents have personally

encountered corruption in the past 3 years (Transparency International Rwanda, 2017). It is under the above background that the researcher intended to establish the effect of e-government on public service delivery in Rwanda, considering IREMBO as the case study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **New public management theory**

The new public management theory emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. The theory was proposed by Hood (1991) who argued that to reconfigure the state along more cost-efficient (and effective) lines. The protagonist recommended that the public sector be opened up to greater private sector influence Mongkol (2011). Hughes, (2003) avers that new public management reforms were aimed at improving the quality of public services, saving public expenditure, increasing the efficiency of governmental operations and making policy implementation more effective. The belief that large and monopolistic public bureaucracies are inherently inefficient was a critical force driving the emergence of the new public management (Andrews, 2012). The theory represents a set of ideas, values and practices aimed at emulating private sector practices in the public sector (Bourgon, 2007).

Recently, Gumede and Dipholo (2014) further opined that there was a need to reinvent government and harness the entrepreneurial spirit to transform the public sector and later “banish the bureaucracy”. Bourgon (2007) posits that the new public management theory takes its intellectual foundations from public choice theory, which looks at government from the standpoint of markets and productivity, and from managerialism, which focuses on management approaches to achieve productivity gains. The three underlying issues which new public management theory attempts to resolve includes: citizen-centered services; value for taxpayers’ money and a responsive public service workforce (Bourgon, 2007).

The new public management theory has also been criticized due to several shortcomings. First, Mongkol (2011) pointed out that the theory introduces a paradox of centralization through decentralization. Giving public managers more authority to manage programs may result in concentrating decisions making in them. Thus, new public management may lead to centralized decision making by public managers, rather than encouraging decentralization in public organizations as it claims. The second criticism concerns applying private sector management techniques to the public sector. While new public management has encouraged the use of private sector management techniques, there may be risk associated with adopting some private sector practices. Many academic commentators argued that most areas of public service and administration have distinct political, ethical, constitutional and social dimensions and these factors make the public sector different from the private sector (Mongkol, 2011).

The new public management theory is relevant to the current study as it informs citizen's participation, social accountability practices and service delivery variables. The theory advocates for citizens participation in the process of evaluating public services since the new public management principle of customer responsiveness requires that the degree of the user satisfaction be measured (Pollitt, 1995). This study drew from the theory of new public management in understanding the impact of social accountability on service delivery. The broad idea of new public management theory is the use of market mechanisms in the public sector to make managers and providers more responsive and accountable (Hughes, 2003; Mongkol, 2011). The proponents of this theory advocates that the government should put in place social accountability mechanisms to increase efficiency in service delivery.

The theory is also important in understanding service delivery variable. The rationale of establishing county governments is to ensure

efficient service delivery. In this regard, county governments are important tool for new public management reforms in improving the quality public services and increasing the efficiency of governmental operations. The new public management theory is, therefore, evident in the quality of services delivered by the county governments. In addition, the new public management theory provides a foundation for predicting the link between decentralization, e-government and service delivery variable. The moderating variable (e-government) was also examined based on new public management theory as emerging governance dynamic.

### **Administrative platform**

To effect retail banking successfully, ATMs have to come in first place. Introduction of ATM is the seminal example of how to introduce agile into a banking sector at large scale. Noteworthy, successful digital transformations depend on adapting or adding to a bank's existing IT systems in multiple ways; for example, increasing the number of ATM, introducing a library of micro services or APIs, using cloud computing at scale, and leveraging technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence (Mwangi, 2011). Partnering for reach and innovation the second response to digital disruption involves a bank partnering with a telco to transform its reach and accessibility to customers, and in product innovation. Partnerships can make sense for banks seeking a cost-effective model to serve low-income segments. It is a less resource-intensive option, making it a suitable play for a bank facing constraints in financial resources or talent (Ndome, 2011).

The world around one-third of stakeholders use mobile applications and online banking is now available to customers of the entire major to make the transactions and this makes it hard for auditors (Wen, 2010). While there are differences in the sophistication and functionality of the applications offered by the established commercial banks based in the UK, customers are typically able to check their balance, set up personalized alerts, send

payments to another account using a mobile number, and locate their nearest branch. Lloyds also modernized its IT architecture to extend the use of micro services, and cloud environments. The results were dramatic. Between 2014 and 2016, the number of customers using Lloyds' mobile channel grew from five million to eight million, therefore, all this makes hard for auditors in identifying any possible fraudulent actions (McKenzi, 2016).

Platform commercial banks that orchestrate these ecosystems will become the de facto interface for customers across multiple services; and financial services players are at risk of being reduced to white-label manufacturers for the platform player. Already, in China, digital attackers managed \$6.5 trillion in transactions in 2015, five times the level just two years earlier, and exceeding the \$6 trillion in offline point-of-sale transactions handled by traditional banks in 2015. Similarly, digital attackers increased their share of the unsecured lending market in China from 1 percent in 2013 to 25 percent in 2016 (Wen, 2010).

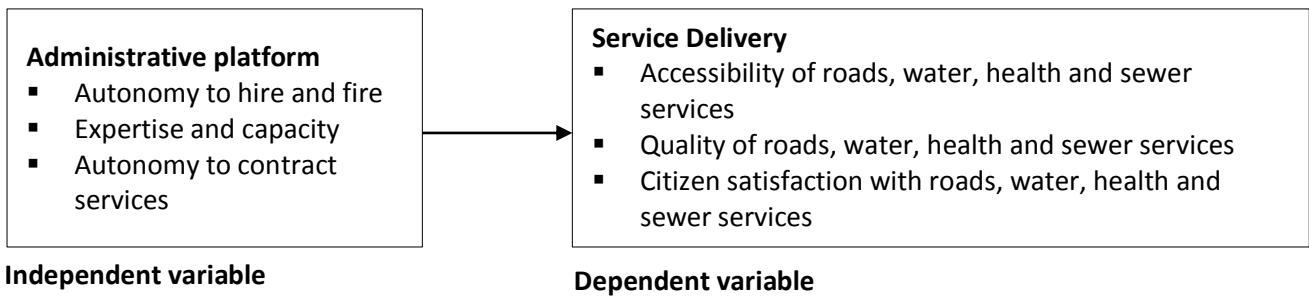
However, bank customers usually enjoy the convenience of ATM debit cards to take out money from a machine and to buy products or services. You don't have to carry cash because you can get it from almost any ATM machine, though you may end up paying a fee if you use an ATM that's not in your bank's network. You can pay your bills easily and quickly with a debit card because the number on the card acts like a credit-card number (Garry et al, 2012). Criminals target ATMs, so using an ATM could place you at risk for robbery after withdrawing money from the machine. Always choose an ATM in a well-lit and populated area to increase your safety during and after the transaction. If you lose your ATM card to theft and the thief has access to your account PIN, you may lose your account balance (Mwangi, 2011).

Administrative platforms seek to redistribute authority, responsibility, and financial resources for providing public services between different levels of government. Therefore, the responsibility for planning, financing, and managing certain public

functions is transferred from the central government to subordinate levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, or area-wide, regional, or functional authorities (Ozmen, 2014). Administrative platforms is often seen as part of civil service reform and is generally perceived as the narrowest form of decentralization because local institutions to which tasks are transferred are not based on political representation controlled from below (Yusoff et al., 2016).

Akorsu (2015) argued that administrative platforms have either a positive or negative impact on the autonomy of sub-national executives. If administrative decentralization improves local and state bureaucracies, fosters training of local officials, or facilitates learning through the practice of delivering new responsibilities, it was likely increasing the organizational capacities of sub-national governments. Nevertheless, if administrative decentralization takes place without the transfer of funds, this reform may decrease the autonomy of sub-national officials, who were more dependent on subsequent national fiscal transfers or sub-national debt for the delivery of public services (Akorsu, 2015).

Review of previous research reveals that there is limited evidence on influence of administrative decentralization on services delivery. Majority of research has analyzed the impact of decentralization on services delivery from either political or fiscal decentralization rather than from all three forms of decentralization (fiscal, administrative, or political) simultaneously. Allowing for interaction of all three dimensions of decentralization in the same analysis can bring more robust evidence on the relationship between decentralization and service delivery and hence bring stronger basis for providing policy advice in the future. In this study, administrative decentralization is conceptualized as autonomy to contract services, hire and fire county employees, sign employment contracts and expertise and capacity.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

**METHODOLOGY**

This study applied both descriptive and quantitative research designs. The population of this study consisted of management team, middle management level managers and low-level managers of IREMBO. The total population is 114 people. A total of 89 employees constituted the sample size for this study. The researcher used both open-ended and close-ended questionnaires. In this study, pilot testing was done by administering ten questionnaires to the respondents who were not part of the study sample. The 10 staff members were selected from IREMBO Remera Branch. The

pre-test was conducted using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient reliability.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

**Descriptive Statistics Results for Administrative platforms**

The study assessed the effect of administrative platforms on service delivery in public sector in Rwanda. Respondents’ opinion administrative platforms were captured using 1-Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Indifferent; 4 – Agree; 5 –Strongly agree. The statements, respondents’ opinions and their percentages were as shown below:

**Table 1: Respondents views on administrative platforms**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
Irembo has autonomy to hire new employees	6.0%	3.6%	18.1%	28.9%	43.4%	4.00	1.15
Irembo has power to sign employment contracts with employees	6.0%	6.0%	10.8%	37.3%	39.8%	3.99	1.15
Irembo is responsible for economic empowerment of the residents	10.8%	16.9%	13.3%	33.7%	25.3%	3.46	1.33
Irembo has website or Internet portal accessible by citizens and businesses community	31.3%	31.3%	19.3%	12.0%	6.0%	2.30	1.21
Citizens can access government services anytime—24 hours a day, 7 days a week (or 24/7 service delivery) through government website	28.9%	25.3%	20.5%	19.3%	6.0%	2.48	1.26

The results in Table 1 indicated that out of the 83 respondents, 6.0% strongly disagreed with the statement that Irembo has autonomy to hire new employees, 3.6% disagreed, 18.1% somehow agreed while 28.9% strongly agreed with the statement. However, the standard deviation that

was above 1.15. This shows that the respondents were spread to the positive and to the negative hence the high standard deviation witnessed. Additionally, overwhelming minority 6.0% strongly disagreed that Irembo has power to sign employment contracts with employees, 10.8% had

somehow agreed, 37.3% had agreed that and 39.8% had strongly agreed. Furthermore, the results showed that 10.8% strongly disagreed that Irembo is responsible for economic empowerment of the residents, 16.9% had disagreed that Irembo is responsible for economic empowerment of the residents, 13.3% had somehow agreed, 33.7% had agreed and 25.3% had strongly agreed that Irembo is responsible for economic empowerment of the residents. The results showed that out of the 83 respondents, 31.3% had strongly disagreed that Irembo has website or Internet portal accessible by citizens and businesses community, 31.3% had disagreed, 19.3% had somehow agreed, 12.0% had agreed and 6.0% had strongly agreed that Irembo has website or Internet portal accessible by citizens and businesses community. Lastly, the results showed that out of the 83 respondents, 28.9% had strongly disagreed with the statement that Citizens can access government services anytime—24 hours a day, 7 days a week (or 24/7 service delivery) through government website, 25.3% disagreed, 20.5% had somehow agreed that 19.3% had agreed that and the standard deviation at 1.02 to show the heterogeneity of responses.

These findings were consistent with Saavedra (2010) who examined the effects of administrative

decentralization on access to two key services: health care and improved drinking water sources. The study provided evidence supporting positive and significant effects of administrative decentralization on access to health care, and improved water provision. Bogopane (2014) explored the impact of perceived erosion of the politics administration dichotomy on good governance and service delivery. The study concluded that strong visionary political and administrative leadership; vibrant apolitical strong public bureaucracy and integrated political and administrative structures lead to improvement of performance of politics-administration dichotomy relations.

### Correlation between Administrative Platforms and Aervice Delivery

Correlation analysis was conducted to empirically determine whether administrative platforms had a significant effect on service delivery in Rwanda. Results indicated that administrative platforms are significantly correlated to service delivery in Rwanda ( $r=0.522$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This implied that the increasing the administrative platforms in this case public institutions would result to increased service delivery in Rwanda.

**Table 2: Correlation between administrative platforms and service delivery**

		Administrative platforms	Service delivery
Administrative platforms	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	.522**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

### Discussion of Results

The study findings agreed with Akorsu (2015) who argued that administrative platforms have either a positive or negative impact on the autonomy of sub-national executives. If administrative decentralization improves local and state bureaucracies, fosters training of local officials, or facilitates learning through the practice of

delivering new responsibilities, it was likely increasing the organizational capacities of sub-national governments. Nevertheless, if administrative decentralization takes place without the transfer of funds, this reform may decrease the autonomy of sub-national officials, who were more dependent on subsequent national fiscal transfers



or sub-national debt for the delivery of public services.

Review of previous research reveals that there is limited evidence on influence of administrative decentralization on services delivery. Majority of research has analyzed the impact of decentralization on services delivery from either political or fiscal decentralization rather than from all three forms of decentralization (fiscal, administrative, or political) simultaneously. Allowing for interaction of all three dimensions of decentralization in the same analysis can bring more robust evidence on the relationship between decentralization and service delivery and hence bring stronger basis for providing policy advice in the future. In this study, administrative decentralization is conceptualized as autonomy to contract services, hire and fire county employees, sign employment contracts and expertise and capacity.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings confirmed that there is a statistically significant influence of administrative platforms on service delivery in public sector in Rwanda. It was possible to infer that the relationship between administrative platforms and service delivery is positive and significant. The study concluded that administrative platforms were statistically

significant in explaining service delivery in public sector in Rwanda. It was also concluded that administrative platforms are being adequately practiced in Irembo Rwanda.

The study found that all the four e-governance dimensions had a significant positive effect on service delivery in public sector in Rwanda. The policy implications are highly relevant: governance decentralization implemented through multidimensional approach (administrative, financial, citizen participation and social accountability) may render more positive fruits in terms of improved services delivery than single-dimensional approach. This has important implications for the design of implementation strategies to policy makers. Moreover, the strength of the effect of financial platforms, administrative platforms, social accountability and citizen participation are highly relevant for policy makers in developing countries in the context of on-going institutional reforms. If a decentralization process can render larger positive effects on service delivery, designing adequate decentralization frameworks in these countries could help significantly in increasing the quality of life of their citizens through better access to services. The study thus assists policy makers in coming up with policies geared towards improving service delivery.

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