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## **Relationship between Allocation of Economic Resources and Performance of County Government of Marsabit, Kenya**

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### ***Abstract:***

*The international unresponsive approach by centralized governments to the social, cultural and economic needs of the citizenry at the grassroots did inform the devolution of both political and administrative powers to sub-national levels of governments. This was with the view that bringing governments closer to the people would improve its performance in terms of delivery of public services. However, in Kenya these devolved governments (county governments) have been reported to adopt imbalances in the allocation of economic resources due to the existence of defective strategies on this. The study is hinged on one theory; Allocation Efficiency Theory. Study's target population was of 295 respondents. Sample size used consisted: 15 Staff Finance and Economic Department County Government of Marsabit, 23 Members of County Assembly and Staff and 51 CSOs' and Private Companies' Managers. Stratified sampling and Simple random sampling were used to pick the respondents. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect primary data from sampled respondents. Descriptive statistics was used quantitative data analysis and content analysis employed for qualitative data through the categorization data into themes, patterns and sub-topics modeled on objectives of the research. The study established that credit provision to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), sharing out of County Jobs, provision of agricultural machinery and irrigation schemes in semi-arid areas all exhibited a relationship with the performance of County government of Marsabit. The study concluded that the existence of substandard strategies on allocation of economic resources adversely influenced the performance of County government of Marsabit as it negatively affected entrepreneurial activities in the County and the economic empowerment of vulnerable groups. The study recommends that the County government of Marsabit should carry out a human resources audit for better sharing of county jobs and invest more in financial capital for SMEs.*

***Keywords:*** Allocation of economic resources, county governments, devolved system of governance, performance

### **1. Introduction to the Study**

Cheema and Rondinelli (2007) define devolution as the modus operandi involving the transfer of powers and resources to lower levels of government from the central government. In South America, Faguet (2008) mentions Bolivia, Nicaragua and Colombia operating departmental governments while Chile and Peru operate regional governments. Keating (2009) mentions several European countries operating different types of devolved systems of governance which include; France, Italy, Finland and Denmark operating regional governments, Spain autonomous communities, Ukraine oblasts while Portugal is governed by municipalities and the United Kingdom (U.K) has Ireland, Wales and Scotland operating devolved governance. In Asia, Japan's devolved units are called prefectures while China, Indonesia and South Korea run provincial governments, the Philippines runs regional governments and Myanmar runs municipal governments. While South East Asia has New Zealand and Papua New Guinea operating devolution and in Africa Kauzya (2007) mentions South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya as countries with a devolved system of governance.

Scholarly works done on the performance of devolved units in South America have exhibited variations on the performance of devolved units of governance. In Bolivia, Faguet (2014) reported that allocation of economic resources such as; arable land and communal forest protection was more enhanced under municipal governments after devolution of these powers from the central government to these decentralized units. In Nicaragua, Larson and Lewis-Mendoza (2012) reported that devolution had enhanced the allocation of economic resources to local communities and in particular land through the provision of titles resulting to improved agricultural harvest translating into increased incomes.

In Europe different scholars have reported a wide range of findings on the performance of devolved units in the continent. In Spain, Hewitt and Hernandez-Jimenez (2010) reported that the need to allocate economic resources and in particular land for enhanced sustainable development did result to the emergence of collaborative communities among municipalities leading to better land-use practices. In Portugal, Barros (2012) observed that devolved units could play a key role in the allocation of economic resources that would lead to the globalization of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) resulting the creation of more jobs at the municipal levels positively influencing their performance.

In Indonesia, Djaenudin, Oktaviani, Hartoyo and Dwiprabowo (2016) reported that the function of land allocation had been devolved and different provincial governments were allocating it for various economic purposes depending on their geographical location. In Papua New Guinea Zahid, Keefer and Menzies (2011) reported that the allocation of economic resources and funding of different socio-economic projects by different provincial governments was influenced by citizenry knowledge of existence of these devolved units and individual membership to self-help groups.

In Africa, Dickovick and Riedl (2010) observed that though devolution promised better delivery of services to citizenry in the continent, different devolved units in various countries had exhibited mixed results in terms of their performance. In South Africa, Quesada (2007) reported that a provincial government had effectively allocated resources to businesses in the form of credit provision to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) positively influencing its performance.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The promulgation of the Kenya 2010 Constitution brought with it hope as it promised a more responsive approach to the needs of citizens; bringing most government functions closer to the people. Devolved units of governance (county governments) embedded in this constitution were now charged with functions including; agriculture, health, water, county trade and infrastructure previously performed by the central government that had failed to not only ensure the equitable distribution of economic benefits but also enhance equal political representation for all parts of the country. However, county governments are now faced with emerging bottlenecks that adversely influence their performance and dampen the aspirations of citizens at the grassroots. Key among the challenges is the existence of defective strategies on equitable allocation of economic resources.

The County government of Marsabit, Kenya is also faced with this particular challenge that continues to forestall the implementation of various projects and provision of public services to her people. It has also been reported that, the sustained existence of substandard strategies on allocation of economic resources such as; credit provision for small and medium enterprises, distribution of county government jobs and business tenders and poor livestock programs adversely influences the economic performance of County government of Marsabit. Additionally, different stakeholders have also poorly rated performance by the county government due to; corruption, high levels of wastage of resources, nepotism and ethnic profiling in employment.

## 3. Research Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Allocation of Economic Resources does not have a significant relationship with the performance of County government of Marsabit.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Allocation of Economic Resources has a significant relationship with implementation of public-private partnerships healthcare projects.

## 4. Allocation of Economic Resources and Performance of the Devolved System of Governance

Shanee and Shanee, (2016) found evidence indicating that failure by two regional governments to effectively allocate land through proper titling did lead to encroachment of a reserved area by local communities. This they contend did lead to both increased deforestation through logging and poaching of wildlife adversely influencing regional tourism consequently the local economies of these two devolved units of governance in Peru (Shanee and Shanee, 2016). In their study, Amorós, Felzensztein and Gimmon, (2010) observed that despite the existence of devolution, the central government and urban regional governments were providing more credit to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for business development compared to the rural regional governments in Chile. This they further argued did influence both the emergence of new entrepreneurs and business growth among existing SMEs in most rural regions adversely influencing the economic performance of these devolved units of governance (Amorós, et al., 2010).

In their study, Reyes-García, Vadez, Aragón, Huanca and Jagger, (2010) found evidence on the unfair distribution of employment opportunities by a departmental government in Bolivia. Further, they observe that this though emanating from lack of information on the benefits of devolution did deny a local community job opportunities in this devolved unit of governance (Reyes-García, et al., 2010). Ballvé, (2012) also found evidence indicating that failure by two departmental governments to adopt effective land allocation through titling did adversely influence land tenure security of farmlands belonging to small scale local farmers. This he contends did negatively influence agricultural incomes of these farmers and consequently lowering their disposable income resulting poor economic performance of these devolved units of governance in Colombia (Ballvé, 2012). Similarly, Faguet, Sanches and Villaveces (2016) found evidence exhibiting mixed results on land distribution for economic purposes by devolved units of governance in Colombia. They further argued that though the country had adopted land distribution reforms which had witnessed increased agricultural incomes among peasant farmers, some municipalities had reported inequalities in land distribution and titling emanating from elite capture of the process (Faguet, et al., 2016).

Castro, Pereira, Amiama and Bueno, (2015) observed that an autonomous community (A.C) rural government had allocated support to dairy farming for the mechanization of this economic activity. This they further concluded had improved income levels raised through dairy farming leading to an enhanced quality of life among dairy farmers residing in this devolved unit of governance in Spain

(Castro, et al., 2015). Similarly, Caraveli and Chardas, (2013) found evidence indicating that a rural regional government had allocated machinery to farmers in remotes areas as an implementation of a policy strategy aimed at improving agricultural yields in Greece. Further, they contend that this not only improved income among farmers realized from mechanized crop farming but it also resulted to the economic development of rural regions due to increased disposable incomes among the farming community (Caraveli and Chardas, 2013).

In their study, Li, Wu and Deng (2013) had observed that devolved units of governance had adopted different land allocation processes that were driven by their different economic needs. They further did note that while urban counties increased the acreage of land for both public infrastructure and real estate development which resulted to increased urban incomes, rural counties allocated more land for forestry and grasslands to increase incomes of rural pollutions in China (Li, et al., 2013). Further, Dong (2014) found different evidence of an enhanced procedure in the allocation of land use under devolved units of governance in China. He further observed that most county governments governing under provincial authorities had adopted better land allocation processes that improved the economic use of available land resulting to both reduced deforestation and economic growth among these devolved units of governance (Dong, 2014). Tan and Amri, (2013) found evidence indicating that some provincial governments were providing financial support to emerging entrepreneurs resulting to a higher performance rating of these devolved governance units in Indonesia. Further, they observe that this was in terms of financial deepening which led to different businesses and in particular Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) accessing financial credit from provincial governments through the Provincial Development Planning Agency (Tan and Amri, 2013).

Thonart, et al., (2013) found evidence indicating that failure of mechanization of dairy farming through allocation of processing machinery by devolved units of governance to enhance the production of products as fermented milk did derail the realization of economic benefits that would emerge from this economic activity. This they observe did continually limit dairy farmers to the overreliance on the use of traditional technology units to produce popular dairy products such as fermented milk. They also contend that this did limit famers' production levels and consequently their disposable incomes adversely influencing the economic development of rural devolved units of governance in Rwanda (Thonart, et al., 2013). In his study, Muchunguzi (2012) had observed that failure by the national government to enhance land tenure security for peasant farmers resulted to devolving of the function of land administration to local government in Uganda. However, Leewun, (2017) found evidence indicating the lack of better land allocation by devolved units of governance in Uganda. This he noted emanated from; corruption, overdependence on the national government funding, inadequate and unskilled staff resulting to insecure land tenors among small-scale farmers which in turn adversely influenced their agricultural activities and income of populations residing in these devolved units of governance (Leewun, 2017).

Njovu, (2013) observed that devolved units of governance in Tanzania were in a better position to both select and recruit their human resources that would meet their needs and consequently positively influencing their performance. This he argued would make the employees both more accountable to their work places and they are able to work more effectively because they are compatible to the local conditions (Njovu, 2013). However, Lameck, (2015) found different evidence noting that recruitment and selection processes for human resources at devolved units of governance tends to be imbalanced in terms of ethnic representation and gender. He further noted that it is also characterized by nepotism and other forms of favouritism anchored by corruption leading to poor performance of these devolved units of governance (Lameck, 2015). Similarly, Plimo and Cheruiyot, (2016) found evidence indicating that county jobs distribution in one of the counties was characterized by unbalanced and unjust recruitment practices which witnessed these limited opportunities allocated to a particular ethnic group in Kenya. This they argued did result to the employment of under qualified employees who could not meet the needs of this particular county government resulting to its poor performance in delivery of public services under its management (Plimo and Cheruiyot, 2016).

## 5. Theoretical Foundation

This research study was hinged on one theory; Allocative Efficiency Theory. The theory of Allocative Efficiency was developed by Oates, (1972) on the premise that sub-national government levels are better placed than central government to provide conditions under which the Pareto-efficient levels of output for their respective jurisdictions would be uniform. Other proponents of the theory also argued that, devolved units of governance are able to tailor outputs of public service goods to the particular preferences and circumstances of the people they serve because they are closer to them than central governments are (Weingast, 1995; Oates, 2005). This according to the theory grants devolved units of governance opportunities to not only gather more adequate and reliable information on the needs of the citizenry providing them with a platform to better serve them but to also do so at comparatively low costs (Schoeman, 2006).

In applying this theory to the topic under study, the researcher seeks to answer research questions on the influence of allocation of economic resources to the performance of devolved governance. And in the process unpack the relationship between these in terms of; creation of entrepreneurship opportunities and credit provision for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The theory also helpstheunderstanding of how allocation of economic resources by devolved units of governance improve the economic welfare of the citizenry they serve in terms of; agricultural incomes from allocated land and mechanization of agriculture, sharing out of county jobs and how all these relate to the performance of devolved governance.

## 6. Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used to investigate the influence of allocation of economic resources on the performance of County Government of Marsabit. The choice of descriptive survey research design was informed by its inherent capacity that provided the researcher with an opportunity to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on the relationship between allocation of economic resources and performance of County Government of Marsabit. Survey design was also instrumental in establishing the link between study variables and study problem. This is because survey research design is an effective channel for inquiring about respondents' perceptions, attitudes and values in relation to problem under study. Survey design is also a useful tool for collection of primary data from samples representing large populations. This study used a sample size of 89 respondents involving staff finance and economic department, members of county assembly and staff and civil societies and private companies' managers. Final study subjects were selected through the application of stratified and simple random sampling procedures. The researcher self-administered two study's questionnaires to sampled respondents. The researcher edited primary data, examine it for completeness and finally coded it. Descriptive statistics making use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was employed to analyze quantitative data and the results presented using frequency tables, bar graphs and percentages to make meaningful conclusions. Qualitative data were analyzed making use of content analysis through the categorization data into themes, patterns and sub-topics modeled on objectives of the study.

## 7. Findings, Presentations and Interpretations

The study sought to establish the relationship between allocation of economic resources and performance of county government of Marsabit.

### 7.1. Allocation of Economic Resources and Performance of Devolved System of Governance

This sub section investigated the influence of allocation of economic resources on the performance of Devolved System of Governance.

The study sought to establish the extent to which respondents agree with the various statements on components of allocation of economic resources that influence the performance of the County government of Marsabit. Results are presented in Table 1

	Mean	Std Dev.
Credit Provision to SMEs	4.048	0.733
Sharing out of County Jobs	4.071	0.747
Irrigation Schemes in Semi-arid Areas	3.435	0.554
Number of Livestock Programs	2.982	0.770
Provision of Agricultural Machinery	3.941	0.635

Table 1: Allocation of Economic Resources and Performance of Devolved System

The study revealed that credit provision to SMEs as shown by a mean of 4.048, sharing out of County Jobs as expressed by a mean of 4.071 and that provision of agricultural machinery as shown by a mean of 3.941 influenced the performance of the County government of Marsabit. The study further showed that irrigation schemes in semi-arid areas as shown by a mean of 3.435 and number of livestock programs as shown by a mean of 2.982 lightly influence the performance of the County government of Marsabit. This was significant as it means that a vast majority of respondents mean of 4.048 attached greater importance to the provision of credit provision to SMEs which means majority of them were entrepreneurs or had a spouse or relative in the business sector moving away from traditional pastoralist lifestyle, most of respondents mean of 4.071 also recognized the need to address the issue of sharing out of County Jobs as a measure of improving the performance of the County government of Marsabit meaning most of the populace was now educated and relied on white collar jobs, while a significant number of respondents a mean of 3.941 felt that provision of agricultural machinery was important measure of performance of county government shift from pastoralist to cultivation of crops, a sizeable mean of 3.435 attached the importance of addressing the issue of irrigation schemes in semi-arid areas as a measure of the performance of the County government of Marsabit could because the populace was adopting crop farming a shift from nomadic pastoralists and a minimal number of respondents mean of 2.982 number of livestock programs as an important measure of performance of county government of Marsabit. This could because citizens were now investing less in livestock due to challenges associated with pasture during recent droughts. The respondents suggested to improve on the allocation of economic resources the County government of Marsabit should adopt; needs analysis, reliable fiscal and equalization policy strategies.

### 7.2. Perform of Devolved System of Governance in Marsabit County

Further, the study sought to establish measures of the performance of devolved system of governance. The study sought to establish the extent to which respondents agree with various statements on performance of devolved system of governance. Results are presented in Table 2

Statement	Mean	Std Dev.
The county government has allocated enough acreage of arable land for cultivation.	3.482	0.997
The county government has not created entrepreneurial opportunities through provision of business opportunities at the county level.	3.886	0.676
The county government has not created partnerships with the private sector for better results on environmental conservation initiatives.	4.266	0.735
The county government has put in place policy measures for the implementation of the 2/3 gender rule.	3.738	0.592

Table 2: Statements Related to Performance of Devolved Governance System

The respondents agreed that the county government has not created partnerships with the private sector for better results on environmental conservation initiatives as expressed by a mean score of 4.266, that the county government has not created entrepreneurial opportunities through provision of business opportunities at the county level as expressed by a mean score of 3.886. They also agreed that the county government has put in place policy measures for the implementation of the 2/3 gender rule as expressed by a mean score of 3.738 while they were neutral that the county government has allocated enough acreage of arable land for cultivation as expressed by a mean score of 3.482.

### 7.3. Inferential Statistics and Regression Results

This study conducted Pearson's correlations analysis and multiple regression analysis at 95% confidence interval and 5% confidence level 2-tailed to establish the relationship between the independent variable under study and the dependent variable.

### 7.4. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

A Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was conducted to establish the strength of the relationship between the variables. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Performance of County Government of Marsabit		
Performance of County Government of Marsabit	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Allocation of Economic Resources	Pearson Correlation	.814
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039

Table 3: Correlations Table

Based on results in Table 3, the study revealed that there is a strong, positive and significant correlation between allocation of economic resources and performance of County Government of Marsabit ( $r = .814$ ,  $p \text{ value} = .039$ ). From this finding, it was deduced that the allocation of economic resources by county governments had a positive and significant correlation with their performance including the county government under study.

### 7.5. Results of Regression Analysis

In this study, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the effect among predictor variables. The summary of regression model output is presented in Table 4.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.899 <sup>a</sup>	0.808	0.794	2.561
Predicator: (constant)	Allocation of Economic Resources			
Dependent: Variable.	Performance of County Government of Marsabit			

Table 4: Model Summary

From the research findings, the predictor variable selected (i.e. allocation of economic resources) accounted for 79.4% variation in the performance of county government under study. According to the test model, 20.6% percent of the variation in Performance of devolved system of governance in Marsabit County could not be explained by the model.

### 7.6. Regression Coefficients

A regression coefficient was also employed to explain the relationship between the independent variable and Performance of devolved system of governance in Marsabit County. This is presented in Table 5.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.674	0.123		5.480	.000
Allocation of Economic Resources	0.765	0.342	0.688	2.237	.031

Table 5: Regression coefficients

Based on the results in Table 5, the established regression equation for the relationship between allocation of economic resources and performance of County government of Marsabit is as follows:

$$Y = 0.674 + (0.765)$$

From the regression equation above it was established that assuming the allocation of resources was held at constant zero, the performance of County government of Marsabit was 0.674. This finding implies that a unit increase in the scores of allocation of economic resources would lead to a 0.765 increase in the scores of Performance of devolved system of governance in Marsabit County. Further, the findings mean that the existence of defective strategies on allocation of economic resources negatively affected performance of county government of Marsabit. This was established at a significance value of 0.000 which is  $< 0.05$  implying allocation of economic resources to a great extent influenced performance of county government of Marsabit. The research therefore rejected the Null hypothesis that allocation of economic resources do not have a significant relationship with performance of county government of Marsabit and accepted the Alternative hypothesis allocation of economic resources have a significant relationship with performance of county government of Marsabit.

### 7.7. Research Conclusions

The study concluded that the existence of substandard strategies on allocation of economic resources adversely influenced the performance of County government of Marsabit as it negatively affected entrepreneurial activities in the County, the economic empowerment of vulnerable groups including women, youth and the physically challenged and agricultural growth in the county.

### 7.8. Study Recommendations

The study recommends that to improve on its performance the county government of Marsabit should both carry out a human resources audit on the sharing out of County jobs for the economic empowerment of vulnerable groups; women, youth and physically challenged persons and also adopt an effective policy strategy for the establishment of a credit cooperative providing financial capital to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The Study also recommends that the county government under study should adopt and execute policy strategies that would facilitate the expedited mechanization of agriculture and the establishment of irrigation schemes in the semi-arid areas under its jurisdiction.

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