

Policy implementation in mid-western Uganda: Examining personnel resources, financial capacity, administrative capability and political support

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to examine the level of personnel resources, financial capacity, administrative capability and political support in Hoima district local government in mid-western Uganda.

Research Methodology: A descriptive survey of 194 respondents comprising of elected local councillors and technical officials were randomly selected from Hoima district. Four issues were investigated, namely personnel resources, financial capacity, administrative capability and political support. SPSS (version 15) was used for data analysis. A total of 164 respondents took part in the study.

Results: Policy implementation at local governments in Uganda was moderate; this was manifested in terms of personnel resources, financial capacity, administrative capability and political support, which, if each of them can be improved, the degree of policy implementation will improve. Financial and non-financial factors both need to be improved for achieving a preferred level of policy implementation at local governments.

Limitations: This study zeroed on policy implementation alone and yet a number of issues affecting policy implementation may not necessarily originate from it but from policy formulation, which was never covered.

Contribution: This study highlights the four aspects in policy implementation, *viz.* personnel resources, financial resources, administrative capability, and political support; these are very significant to policy managers at grass root government. Hoima district is encouraged to consider all four aspects for effective policy implementation.

Keywords: *Policy implementation, personnel, financial, administrative, political*

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1. Introduction

In Uganda, the transition from a centralised system to a decentralised system of local administration and service delivery was, on every level, an awesome mission. The optimistic national policy that was considered to advance the country's path to democratisation was accompanied by a need for local entities to both formulate and implement policies in their areas of operation. Policy implementation involves an act of putting into action or a strict observation of the rules and guidelines made so as to

ensure that they achieve set objectives ([Kirk, Robson-William, Fenemor & Heath, 2020](#)). To others policy implementation is considered as the achievement of policy objectives through the planning and programming of functions and assignments so that the outcomes agreed upon as well as the preferred impacts are accomplished ([Ciccina & Lombardo, 2019](#)). Thus, it follows that in policy implementation we consider the practical translation of formulated policies into actions that meet the projected goals and objectives of an organisation ([Hudson, Hunter & Peckham, 2019](#)). After all, organisational goals tend to be broader and long-term while objectives are short-term and measurable outputs. As a result, governments - both central and local - draw out their strategic goals and objectives that are realised during the policy implementation phase. This phase calls for premeditated activities that are connected to outcomes through a logical framework ([Changping, 2020](#)).

2. Literature review

Policy implementation is defined, in this study, as the process of translating policy initiatives and goals into programmes, projects, procedures, and/or regulations. It involves all activities that are designed to accomplish the policy that has been formulated. Policy implementation involves both successful policy implementation and unsuccessful policy implementation ([Daniel & Fyall, 2019](#)). The former occurs when a policy is implemented in full as designed and external circumstances are supportive of its execution, even if the policy fails to produce the intended policy outcomes. In this case, all citizens play their part in the policy and are committed to seeing its successful completion. This requires maximum cooperation between elected officials and civil servants. The least presupposes that policy is not executed as formulated; which could be due to the view that implementers are uncooperative or because their best effort could not overcome obstacles to effective implementation. After all, once citizens fail to build harmony, there are more chances of unsuccessful policy implementation. The study addressed policy implementation by looking at the four key ingredients, namely: personnel resources, financial capacity, administrative capability and political support ([Kasa, Mhamed & Rydchenko, 2020](#)).

The implementation theory identifies a set of four models for the success of policy implementation, namely the machine model, the games model, the evolutionary model, and the transactional model. In the machine model, policy implementation is assumed to be driven by a well-formulated plan supported by a legal participatory authority ([Buele, Vidueira & Guevara, 2020](#)). The games model rolls from total wisdom to implied wisdom in the implementation of policy and plays down plans and policies by stressing the negotiation and exchange of power. The evolutionary model argues that policy is important not because it presents one of the accurate paths to implementation but forms the possibility for action especially when the informal issues are dealt with ([Ciccina & Lomardo, 2019](#)). The transactional model stresses that in order to carry out a programme, implementers need to continually deal with tasks, the environment and users ([Onyango, 2020](#)). Therefore, the path to achievement is in the constant handling of contexts, personalities, alliances and events ([Merilee, 2017](#)).

The transactional model, as proposed in the implementation theory, underscores the issues of adaptation and readiness as the core to recognising and accepting faults, changing direction; and learning from doing ([Walker, Brandt, Wandersman et al. 2020](#)). The theory recognises the concept of capacity in order to describe the successes and failures of policy implementation. The theory stresses how that capacity captures the availability of and access to tangible resources such as material, logistical, human as well as non-tangible requirements such as commitment, motivation, and leadership ([Kooli, 2021](#); [Lamm, Randall, Lamm & Carter, 2019](#)). Other critics argue that organisational capacity should involve structures, functions, processes, resources and the management styles of a system ([Yin Tan, 2019](#)). In the case of policy formulation and implementation, capacity involves the ability of local citizens to realise their autonomy through effective citizen participation in local project management.

The machine model assumes that policy implementation is driven by a well-formulated plan supported by a legal decision-making authority. The games model assumes that policy

implementation rolls from total wisdom to implied wisdom in the implementation and plays down plans and policies by stressing the negotiation and exchange of power. The evolutionary model assumes that policy implementation is important not because it puts the accurate path of implementation but because it forms the possibility for action. Finally, the transactional model presupposes that policy implementation involves careful acts of citizens in order to realise an outcome, conscious dealings between implementers and programme environments, and, as a primarily influential kind of dealing, negotiation among parties with mismatched interests in implementation.

Building on the assumptions presented under the transactional model, policy implementation means 'a transaction'. This is so because when carrying out a programme or project, implementers ought to continuously deal with tasks, environments, clients, and each other: First, tasks involve the different activities that different citizens, such as local councillors and civil servants, have to undertake in order to translate plans into practical actions. Second, the environment is complex in nature, ranging from socio-economic, political to institutional dynamics. All those factors have fundamental influences on the programme under implementation and should never be ignored. Third, clients involve all the expected beneficiaries of the programme or undertaking, including direct or primary beneficiaries and indirect or secondary beneficiaries. And fourth, policy implementers cannot afford to do without the intra-relationships within and among themselves. For instance, different citizens ought to examine the system in which they operate.

The transaction model calls for cross-cutting and cross-sectoral analyses. Cross-cutting and cross-sectoral analyses necessitate frequent interactions and coordination among the key players, short of which the programme can partially or totally fail to realise the expected objectives. Formalities include, but are not limited to, the various rules and procedures that ought to be respected by all programme implementers, such as the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets (PPDA) regulations ([Public procurement and disposal of assets regulations, 2006](#)). This is true because public bureaucracies call for consistency in programme implementation. The mechanics of administration are essential because it is the dynamics and/or organisational politics which influence the policy direction. The formalities of organisation and the mechanics of administration are thus important as background, but the key to success in policy implementation is the capacity to constantly cope with contexts, personalities, alliances, and events.

First, contexts vary from one sector or department to another, depending on the technicalities involved. For instance, the health sector may call for unique considerations which may not be necessary for the education sector or the physical planning sector. Second, personalities in public organisations, including local governments, are often affected by environmental determinism, the mentoring process and hereditary factors. Third, alliances are both formal and informal; formal alliances involve members at the same level, such as middle management, while informal alliances could be based on other characteristics such as gender, religion, tribe, though not classified within the policy framework. And fourth, events in public organisations, such as local governments, would range from institutional to political.

Although the implementation theory is too general in terms of public policy in organisational settings rather than in policy implementation, certain attributes such as contexts, personalities, alliances, and events are relevant. Conversely, local citizens have to choose the right leaders and representatives for their areas so that policies are implemented as projected ([Patel & Sadie, 2021](#)). It remains inappropriate whether such policies have been effectively implemented. Traditionally, policy implementation treated technical officials as the core citizens. Technical officials had the value, discipline to adhere to rules, and impersonal relationships. Local citizens were excluded from the process of policy implementation but emphasised rule conformity and self-subordination. Policy implementation, therefore, involves translating goals and objectives into an operating, ongoing programme. There are two paradigms of policy implementation, namely administrative implementation and political implementation ([Selk, 2020](#)).

Accordingly, the implementation theory presents substantial ingredients for an effective policy implementation process. For instance, the transactional model proposes seven assumptions whose adoption would contribute positively to the process: a) policy is important in establishing the parameters and directions of action, but it never determines the precise path of implementation; b) formal organisational structures are important but not decisive; c) the programme's environment is a vital component of transactions affecting implementation; d) the process of policy formulation and programme design can be as important as the product; e) the implementer mind is collective and inevitable; f) clients significantly control the outcomes of implementation; and g) implementation is essentially dynamic.

Forms of policy implementation

This study presents policy implementation from two perspectives, which have been addressed as forms of policy implementation. The two categories are administrative implementation and political implementation.

Administrative implementation

The paradigm of administrative implementation presupposes a 'single-authority, top-down' approach to policy implementation. It emphasises the strength of laws and particular forms of government rather than dependence on citizens. Administrative implementation conceives the policy process as being 'scientific', 'rational', 'predictable', and in the end 'machine-like' ([Imperial, 2021](#)). This paradigm suggests that the traditional model of policy implementation was based on basic concepts which helped make the 'machine' the symbol and model for the study of administration. This helped to foster the view that policy implementation was but an automatic component within the rationalised administrative machine. The administrative implementation appears to focus on the scientific policy process. Under the process, we emphasise the idea of impersonal but qualified personnel that are selected based on a set procedure and deployed based on their qualifications. These personnel ought to be put in place in order to execute policies and so generate outcomes. Unfortunately, in the developing world, the choice and placement of qualified personnel in the bureaucracy may not be done with utmost faith.

Political implementation

The political paradigm, on the other hand, calls for the inclusion of elected officials such as local councillors or members of the national assembly, in the policy execution strategy. Elected officials are regarded as people's representatives who have been mandated by the populace ([Giebler & Werner, 2020](#)). The role of elected officials is thus to monitor the implementation of policies through close collaboration with the technical personnel ([Mwesigwa & Wahid, 2021](#)). Top-down supporters see policy-makers as the fundamental citizens who ought to focus their attention on factors that can be influenced at the national level ([Mwesigwa, 2015](#)). In contrast, bottom-up supporters' stress target groups and service deliverers ([Giudici, 2020](#)). The two groups are in each case connected by a strong civil society in order to get rid of possible self-aggrandizement that results from the local and national elite capturing local government.

Now again, the central government may seem to expect that policy implementation modalities will be organised through the existing decentralised and centralised structures. This calls for a mutual relationship between the two levels of participation as this is considered essential in policy implementation. However, other academics insist that the central government can build and consolidate strong dominance at the expense of effective policy implementation ([Kooli & Muftar, 2020](#); [Naik, Kumar & Rao, 2020](#)). In addition, the impression of constant conflicts between central government representatives and local councillors continues to cast a huge shadow over effective policy implementation in a number of nations such as China ([Liu, 2020](#)). Once the two parties fail to complement each other, oblivious of the losses that they cause to the populace, little can be expected in the form of effective policy implementation.

Effective policy implementation demands a friendly relationship among the various citizens, including CSOs in public policy affairs management ([Ertan, 2020](#)). This condition is particularly strange given the existing local conditions where many local governments may not be able to fund more than 10% of their annual budgets. The same case reveals that policy implementation appears to be a challenge since the quality of any policy is assessed from its practical outcomes ([Kaye-Essien, 2020](#)). Although other scholars earlier pointed to the notion of resource envelope as a major challenge, there seem to be other, bigger issues surrounding policy execution in local areas ([Chen, 2020](#)). A case in point is NAADS, whose implementation has left a lot to be desired in most parts of Uganda ([Mwesigwa, 2011](#)). The goal of the NAADS policy was to reduce rural poverty but the existing circumstances in the countryside reveal that the poor were dropping back into poverty.

Contrary to expectations, the conditions of the NAADS beneficiaries in the districts continue to worsen; as such, Hoima's excellence in the 2006 national assessments has not attempted to translate into poverty reduction. To address this melancholy, citizens joined hands to make efforts that were aimed at identifying better mechanisms of implementation. One of them was to put NAADS implementation under the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) policy guidelines executed through the structures of decentralisation ([Isooba & Ssewakiryanga, 2005](#)). Despite these attempts, the outcomes have been limited because there has not been any systematic prescription regarding how the NAADS programme should be implemented. By implication, policy implementation ought to be the best stage but it is not clear whether this priority is considered by national and local governments. Policy implementation is informed by four factors: personnel resources, financial resources, administrative capability, and political support. Financial and personnel resources need to be adequate in order to allow for effectiveness in policy execution. Administrative capability advances the match between the demands on the ground and the expected outcomes. Political support calls upon local councillors to work closely with civil servants and other citizens in order to realise successful policy implementation. Administratively, central bureaucrats need not interfere in the policy direction. Financially, local revenues need to be sufficient in order to avoid over-reliance on grants, which affects the quality of policy outcomes. By looking at the conceptual framework, the study realised the need for effective citizen participation in policy formulation and policy implementation in the Hoima district.

Research problem

Policy implementation, in several local governments in Uganda, has failed to gain confidence among a cross-section of citizens due to its 'mismatch' with policy formulation resulting in little socioeconomic growth.

3. Research methodology

Research design

The study adopted the quantitative case study design. It was quantitative because the study involved testing a set of variables and analysed them using statistical procedures so as to establish whether the projected arguments, in the conceptual framework, had any accuracy. The case study design was chosen because the problems in this study involved an intensive investigation of the complex factors that contributed to the individuality of a political/administrative unit. The case study design was also used because the study intended to describe the characteristics of a contemporary phenomenon (citizen participation) despite its having been part of academic discourse for some time. The case study design allowed the researcher to collect data from a straightforward sample of respondents without discriminating any of the individual elements. The quantitative research was essentially chosen because, in this study, the researcher intended to generalise from the sample used to the entire study population of the district. The researcher's choice of case study design compares favourably with other scholars' recommendations while conducting similar studies.

Area of study

The study was conducted in the Hoima district located in mid-western Uganda

Target population

The study targeted three units of the population, i.e. elected councillors, appointed officials, and central government representatives. All the district, sub-county, and municipality, and municipal division councillors in Hoima district were considered as locally elected officials. The study also considered all the appointed staff at the district, municipality, municipal division, town council, and sub-county headquarters. In addition, it considered all the central government representatives. The accessible population became the sampled population using [Krejcie and Morgan's \(1970:608\)](#) table. These included: a) a total of 91 out of 169 elected councillors; b) 100 out of 211 technical officials; and c) all the 3 central government representatives. In essence, out of the 91 elected officials selected, 92% were accessed; out of the 100 technical officials selected, 76% were accessed; while 67% of the 3 selected central government representatives were accessed. Overall, out of 194 respondents who had been sampled for the study, 164 were accessed. The accessibility generated a proportion of 84% of the sample. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select all the study respondents, namely the local councillors, central government representatives and technical officials. In order to capture the heterogeneity of the population, a simple random sample was generated from each of the sub-populations ([Amin, 2005](#)). Respondents were selected as indicated in Matrix A1, in which the choice of the representative sample of a population of 383 people was used as the population by looking at level (N), which is the target population. The sample size (S) was then 194 respondents which, was appropriate to the study population.

The following methods were used: a) general interviews were administered using the questionnaire. At the end of the day, quantitative methods turned out to be more dominant than qualitative ones. Local councillors were more willing respondents (92%) than technical officials (77%). Overall, of the required minimum 126 (65%) SAQs needed, the researcher achieved 161 (84%). Such a response rate was high compared with a number of studies.

Quality control

The outcomes of three of the five external consults (75%) were subjected to content validity tests (CVTs). The outcomes indicated that: a) 35.2% of all the factors in the questionnaire were very relevant; 39.8% were relevant; 20.4 % were irrelevant; and 4.6% very irrelevant; and b) 54.3% of all factors in the interview guide were very relevant; 28.6% were relevant; and 17.1% were irrelevant. By inference, the instruments generated an average CVI as follows: very relevant (44.7%), relevant (35.6%), irrelevant (16.7%) and very irrelevant (3.0%). The overall CVI indicates that since the instruments yielded a total of 80.3% for very relevant and relevant cumulatively, they were treated as valid for data collection after corrections were made. The outcomes generated from the inter-consult coefficient revealed the following: a) respondents' profile ($3/3 = 1.0$); b) challenges to local citizen participation ($3/3 = 1.0$); and alternatives to citizen participation ($2/3 = 0.6$). The overall CVI was that the outcomes of the inter-consult coefficient average for the five scales were 0.87 (>0.60). Reliability of instruments was attained through pre-tests that were held in an interval of two weeks in Buseruka and Kitoba sub-counties using 13 randomly selected respondents. The outcomes revealed that the instruments were 78% reliable and as a result, the outcomes generated from the pre-tests enabled the researcher to make necessary adjustments in terms of addressing key factors and revising imprecise questions.

Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) which was used to establish the level of relationship between the study variables in order to make sense of the data. As a result, all data on the level of policy implementation were initially analysed using means (μ) and standard deviations (SD).

4. Results and discussions

Level of policy implementation in Hoima District

Policy implementation in the Hoima district was assessed using four items, namely: personnel issues, financial issues, administrative capacity and political support. The level for each of the four factors

was further assessed using specific items on each of which respondents were asked to rate their opinion by indicating the level to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Data under each construct were analysed using descriptive statistics involving frequencies, percentages, means and SDs. The responses were analysed separately in relation to each of the mentioned factors of policy implementation.

Personnel resources

The first item in policy implementation was personnel resources. In the context of the study, personnel resources include both technical officials and elected councillors who, hopefully, work in harmony as they carry out the implementation policies at the local level. Policy implementation is realised through various projects that ought to benefit all the citizens in specific jurisdictions. Table 1 presents the outcomes generated from the field.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics on the level of personnel resources in Hoima District (No=164)

Constructs	μ	SD
My district has adequately trained staff to implement local projects.	3.26	1.148
The project implementation staffs have sufficient knowledge and skills.	3.25	1.230
My district makes timely communication on policy implementation.	3.10	1.223
My district has adequate capacity to control its policy performance.	2.99	1.284
My district employees desire improved quality of policy outcomes.	2.65	1.321
Average	3.05	1.241

Legend: 3.80-5.00 (very high), 3.10-3.80 (high), 2.40-3.10 (moderate), 1.70-2.40 (low), 1.00-1.70 (very low)

Source: Primary data, 2021.

During the study, the factor “personnel resources” was approached using five constructs. Table 1 reveals that, regarding whether “the district has enough trained staff to implement local projects”, most of the respondents (30%) agreed while 29% remained undecided, thus generating a mean of 3.26 and an SD of 1.148, interpreted as “high”. This revealed that policy implementation in the form of local projects relied on trained staff in the Hoima district. This outcome also shows that policy implementation was highly regarded, and depended upon the availability of trained staff in Hoima district. In addition, the outcomes showed that if the available staff were not trained, the chances would be higher for local project implementation not to be as successful as they would when the same staffs were trained.

In an interview, a member reacted to the question “how competent is the DTPC?” thus:

We have a well-trained Technical Planning Committee membership though they are not enough since some of the positions are yet to be filled. In fact, the time when we had most of the Technical Planning Committee being ill-trained is now history. I can say emphatically today that none of the members is below first degree in addition to the wide experience they have accumulated over the years. There is no doubt that the district's failure to implement policies successfully after all the competence of the staff is not questionable. (DTPC member, 8 February 2021)

It was established that, as regards whether “the project implementation staff have enough knowledge”, most of the respondents (39%) agreed while 22% remained undecided and only 13% strongly disagreed, thus yielding a mean of 3.25 and an SD of 1.230, interpreted as “high”. The outcome indicated that having trained staff alone was not enough without adequate knowledge to implement those local projects effectively. The outcomes further showed a close link between training and expertise among staff that are responsible for project implementation in Hoima district. The study indicates that, concerning whether “the district makes timely communication on policy execution”, most of the respondents (34 %) agreed while 22% disagreed and 21% remained neutral, hence generating a mean of 3.10 and an SD of 1.223, interpreted as “high”. The outcome, generated from Table 6.1, indicated that respondents recognised the nature and timeliness of information flow about policy execution. The high ranking of the aspect implied that the respondents perceived well-timed communication as one of the core issues corresponding with effective personnel resources, which affected the eventual policy implementation process.

The outcomes, shown in table 1, further reveal that two of the five constructs of personnel resources were rated differently by the respondents reached in Hoima. For instance, regarding whether “the district has adequate capacity to control its policy performance”, most of the respondents (26%) disagreed, 16% strongly agreed while 14% strongly disagreed, thus generating a mean of 2.99 and a SD of 1.284, interpreted as “moderate”. This outcome indicated that the adequacy of capacity to control policy performance is significant as regards the level of personnel resources. Also, during one of the FGDs, when the study participants were asked about “whether the district has enough personnel resources?” they argued:

For so many years, we have never had enough personnel resources. This is mainly so because of most of the levels of education in the district. The district does not have any higher institution of learning and as such, the poor who cannot afford to take their children to Kampala or other places are left out. This situation has thus left our district without enough personnel, especially those that are needed in the most essential sectors such as health. (Central government representative, 15 February 2021)

Regarding whether “the district employees desire improved quality of policy outcomes”, most of the respondents either strongly disagreed (25%) or disagreed (26%) while only 11% strongly agreed, hence yielding a mean of 2.65 and an SD of 1.321, interpreted as “moderate”. The outcome indicated that the desire for improved quality is essential in determining the level of personnel in the policy implementation process. The general view of personnel resources in the Hoima district revealed an overall mean of 3.05 and an overall SD of 1.241, interpreted as “moderate”. This outcome revealed that respondents considered personnel resources in Hoima district as “moderate”.

During one of the interviews, a participant stated:

The main citizens involved in policy implementation in Hoima are technical officials in the different departments and units who discharge the policies into projects and programmes. In addition, under the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets (PPDA) provisions, competent technical officials are important in project implementation. (Central government representative, 15 February 2021)

Concerning the abilities of the technical officials in the district, the informant remarked:

The competence of Hoima District Technical Planning Committee cannot be underestimated; we have a young and energetic Technical Planning Committee membership which, I believe, has the required competence to realise an effective policy implementation strategy in our district. (Member DTPC, 8 February 2021)

The study has, therefore, established that personnel resources are critical to policy implementation in local governments in Hoima district. By and large, once the degree of personnel resources is high, then the level of policy implementation is projected to improve proportionately.

Financial resources

The second item on policy implementation was financial resources. This factor was assessed using five items. Table 2 illustrates the outcomes generated from the field upon administering the questionnaire to selected local councillors and technical officials from Hoima district and summarized using means and SDs.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on the level of financial resources in Hoima District (No=164)

Constructs	μ	SD
My district has adequate finances to implement its projects.	2.29	1.309
My district is enjoying the opportunity for allocation of finance.	2.88	1.513
My department or unit is allocated adequate resources.	2.84	1.344
My district provides training regarding financial management.	3.91	1.188
I am satisfied with the fiscal accountability in my district.	2.89	1.291
Average	2.96	1.329

Legend: 3.80-5.00 (very high), 3.10-3.80 (high), 2.40-3.10 (moderate), 1.70-2.40 (low), 1.00-1.70 (very low)

Source: Primary data, 2021.

The second variable of policy implementation “financial resources” was assessed using five constructs. Table 2 reveals that three of the five items were rated as “moderate”. For instance, regarding whether “I am allowed sufficient opportunity for allocation of finance”, most of the respondents (29%) strongly disagreed, 14% disagreed while 21% agreed and 20% strongly agreed respectively. These outcomes generated a mean of 2.88 and an SD of 1.513, interpreted as “moderate”. This outcome indicated that the respondents in Hoima considered the opportunity for the allocation of finance as an important factor. By inference, once citizens are given adequate opportunity for the allocation of finances, the level of financial resources will advance proportionately. It was revealed that concerning whether “the department or unit is allocated adequate resources”, most of the respondents strongly disagreed (37%), 27% disagreed while 15% and 8% agreed and strongly agreed respectively. The outcomes yielded a mean of 2.84 and an SD of 1.344, interpreted as “moderate”. This outcome reveals that the respondents considered resource adequacy at the departmental or unit level as an important factor for a reasonable level of financial resources.

Regarding whether “I am satisfied with the fiscal accountability in my district”, most of the respondents (28%) agreed while 18% strongly disagreed and 24% disagreed respectively, hence yielding a mean of 2.89 and an SD of 1.291, interpreted as “moderate”. The outcomes showed that the respondents considered financial responsibility as an essential concern in policy implementation. On the other hand, concerning whether “the district provides training regarding financial management”, most of the respondents (27%) agreed while 10% disagreed, thus generating a mean of 3.91 and an SD of 1.188, interpreted as “very high”. This outcome showed that the respondents considered the guidance in financial management as a core element of local financial resources. By inference, the outcome revealed that when citizens are trained in financial management, fiscal discipline will help to move

the financial level of the district to a higher plane. In contrast, as regards whether “the district has adequate finances to implement its projects”, most of the respondents (29%) agreed while 24% strongly disagreed, hence generating a mean of 2.29 and an SD of 1.309, interpreted as “low”. This outcome revealed that there was a contradiction between training in financial management and the adequacy of finances. Training in financial management could be a successful precursor when backed by an adequate amount of finances in the district. In the absence of sufficient finances, the level of financial resources could remain low in the Hoima district.

Overall, financial resources yielded a mean of 2.96 and an SD of 1.329, interpreted as “moderate”. The general outcome revealed that the level of financial resources in Hoima district was largely small and had a direct impact on policy implementation targets for the district. The outcome was further supported by a participant during one of the interviews, who stated:

Hoima district has not been that successful in mobilising enough finances for policy implementation. Moreover, there is a great rural-urban divide; urban areas have relatively better local revenue compared to their rural counterparts. Hoima district relies heavily on central government transfers complemented by development partners such as World Vision working within the district. (District councillor, 15 February 2021)

In addition, a participant noted:

Our district does not have enough financial resources to invest in all the approved programmes and projects; as a result, there is a persistent tendency for us to keep on rolling-over our annual projections. This denies us the opportunity to meet the national and local development goals. (Central government representative, 15 February 2021)

The above revelations indicated that the financial position of the district was still “low” and so it needed to be stepped up. In addition, the revelations indicated that even the sources of revenue available to the district were still inadequate.

Administrative capability

The third item under policy implementation was administrative capability. The study assessed the scale of administrative capability using five items which were expanded using percentages, means and SDs. The outcomes are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on the level of administrative capability in Hoima District (No=164)

Constructs	μ	SD
My district encourages teamwork among the technical staff.	2.88	1.513
The district conducts annual meetings for performance appraisal.	2.84	1.344
My district conducts constant capacity building for its staff.	2.22	1.305
My departmental competencies are understandable to all members.	2.99	1.284
My department allows you to do what you can perform best.	2.65	1.321
Average	2.72	1.353

Legend: 3.80-5.00 (very high), 3.10-3.80 (high), 2.40-3.10 (moderate), 1.70-2.40 (low), 1.00-1.70 (very low)

Source: Primary data, 2021.

The third item under policy implementation in the Hoima district was administrative capability, which was assessed using five constructs. Table 3 shows that all the five constructs, except one, were rated as “moderate”. For instance, regarding whether “the district encourages teamwork among the technical staff”; most of the respondents (29%) strongly disagreed while 21% disagreed and 20% strongly agreed. The results yielded a mean of 2.88 and an SD of 1.513. In essence, teamwork strengthens the degree of administrative capability which is necessary for policy implementation in the Hoima district. Concerning whether “the district conducts annual meetings for performance appraisal”, the majority of the respondents (29%) agreed, 24% strongly disagreed while 20% remained undecided, therefore yielding a mean of 2.84 and an SD of 1.344. Indeed, annual meetings intended for performance appraisal remain an important concern in administrative capability, especially when such appraisals are done from a systematic point of view rather than on the basis of technical biases in favour of a few members.

With reference to whether “my departmental competencies are understandable to all members”, the majority of the respondents (26%) strongly agreed, 21% agreed while 24% remained undecided, thus generating a mean of 2.99 and an SD of 1.284, interpreted as “moderate”. The study reveals that departmental competencies remain critical to local governments since they are a basis for administrative competencies, which are necessary for policy implementation in the Hoima district. On whether “my department allows you to do what you can perform best”, the majority of the respondents (26%) disagreed, 25% strongly disagreed while 19% agreed, thus yielding a mean of 2.65 and an SD of 1.321, interpreted as “moderate”. The outcome, here, indicates that individual freedoms and liberties are essential in the case of Hoima district for realising the administrative competencies that are needed for successful policy implementation.

It was established that if Hoima district encouraged teamwork among the technical staff, conducted annual meetings for performance appraisal, had departmental competencies that were comprehensible to all members, and had departments that allowed members to do what they were able to perform best, then the administrative capability would improve and so would the level of policy implementation. Instead, it was established that regarding whether “the district conducts constant capacity-building for its staff”, most of the respondents (41%) strongly disagreed while the least number of respondents (7%) strongly agreed, thus generating a mean of 2.22 and an SD of 1.305, interpreted as “low”. The outcome, which was indicated in Table 3, seemed to suggest that the study considered regular capacity-building for the staff as a less important consideration in administrative capability. This impression translates into ineffective policy implementation and, by inference, constant capacity-building for the technical staff is unlikely to promote the quality of the administrative capability in the Hoima district.

To get an overall picture of the scale of administrative capability in Hoima district, it was established that the general mean was 2.71 and the overall SD was 1.353, interpreted as “moderate”. The outcome seems to suggest that the respondents reached during the study considered administrative capability in Hoima district to be reasonable. This outcome was supported by a participant who noted that:

The administrative competence of technical officials in the district is good following the appointment of more trained staff compared to the previous years when most of our 'technical' staffs were under-trained. I believe that those technical members have the prerequisite capacity needed for effective policy implementation in the Hoima district. (District councillor, 15 February 2021)

In addition, a participant stated:

The administrators' commitment to achieving the preferred goals of the district cannot easily be quantified; all I can say is that most of them seem to be committed although there are generally many constraints to deal with as a district before we can consolidate our limited achievements. (DTPC staff, 8 February 2021)

The study pointed to the view that the respondents in the Hoima district recognised the commitment of technical officials to policy implementation through successful administrative capability. It was revealed that the administrators' commitment to achieving the requisite administrative capability was improving. Nonetheless, the absolute administrative capability could, in part, be realised, given strong political support, which the next section delves into.

Political Support

It was established that political support was a very critical component of policy implementation in local governments, especially under democratically elected institutions of local governments. This is because elected members have the people's mandate and so they are the voice of the people. Table 4 presents the outcomes generated from field data concerning the item “political support” in which questionnaires were administered to selected local councillors and technical officials in Hoima district. Percentages were generated from the frequencies alongside means and SDs.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics on the scale of political support in Hoima District (No=164)

Constructs	μ	SD
Bureaucrats and local councillors complement each other.	2.50	1.233
Local councillors in my district are committed to the policy outcomes.	2.29	1.309
Local councillors consult bureaucrats during policy implementation.	2.08	1.189
Councillors provide bureaucrats with the opportunity to improve skills.	3.73	1.198
My district organises annual workshops for policy assessments.	3.36	1.314
Average	2.79	1.249

Legend: 3.80-5.00 (very high), 3.10-3.80 (high), 2.40-3.10 (moderate), 1.70-2.40 (low), 1.00-1.70 (very low)

Source: Primary data, 2021.

The fourth factor under policy implementation was “political support”, which was assessed using five factors, as presented in Table 4. The outcomes indicate that one factor was rated as “moderate”, two factors were rated as “low”, and the remaining two factors were rated as “high”. With reference to whether “bureaucrats and local councillors complement each other”, for the most part (32%) the respondents disagreed, 25% strongly disagreed while barely 6% strongly agreed, thus yielding a mean of 2.50 and an SD of 1.233, interpreted as “moderate”. Consequently, it was revealed that the respondents considered the relationship between local bureaucrats and local councillors as fair. Nonetheless, the relationship between local councillors and bureaucrats needed to be translated into effective political support for effective policy implementation in the Hoima district.

The two factors that were rated as “high” pertained to whether “local councillors provide bureaucrats with the opportunity to improve their skills”. Regarding these factors, most of the respondents (40%)

agreed, 29 % strongly agreed while the minority (6%) strongly disagreed, thus yielding a mean of 3.73 and an SD of 1.198. In addition, concerning whether “my district organises annual workshops for policy assessments”, more than half the total number of respondents (37%) agreed or (20%) strongly agreed while one-third of the respondents (15%) strongly disagreed and 11% disagreed, thus generating a mean of 3.36 and an SD of 1.314. The outcomes from the two items revealed that the study considered the view that when local councillors provide bureaucrats with the opportunity to improve their skills, the level of policy implementation in the Hoima district could be enhanced. It was revealed that once the Hoima district organises annual workshops for policy assessments, the level of policy implementation would go up.

The study indicates that two of the items under political support were unfortunately rated as “low” (Table 4). For instance, concerning whether “local councillors in my district are committed to the policy outcomes”, the majority of the respondents (37 %) strongly disagreed, 27% disagreed while only 8% strongly agreed, thus yielding a mean of 2.29 and an SD of 1.309. Concerning whether “local councillors consult bureaucrats during policy implementation”, nearly all the respondents (42%) disagreed, 28% strongly disagreed, and only 11 agreed, hence yielding a $\mu=2.08$ and an SD =1.189. It was revealed that the commitment of local councillors to policy outcomes in the Hoima district was low. In addition, it was revealed that local councillors' ability to consult bureaucrats during policy implementation was equally poor. The study exposed the crucial nature of these items, which negatively affected the level of political support in the Hoima district. The study indicated that once the local councillors in the district are committed to the policy outcomes and once those councillors consult bureaucrats, the level of policy implementation in Hoima district will be very high.

Table 6 shows that the average mean for political support was generally “moderate” ($\mu=2.79$), and even when the overall mean for policy implementation was “moderate” ($\mu=2.88$), the study pointed out that the level of policy implementation in Hoima district was not yet acceptable. This was confirmed by one of the interviewees, in which it was noted that:

Our degree of policy implementation in Hoima as a district is still poor when compared with other districts. This condition is manifest in most of the sectors, even with the most critical sectors which should have had special attention. This is, in part, due to low political support since most of us the councillors are not aware of their responsibilities. In order to ensure that local councillors become more supportive of the policy implementation process, there is a need for them to be continuously trained in order for them to expand their capacity regarding policy implementation dynamics. We also need to offer them incentives which will, hopefully, motivate them to carry the 'mantle' of monitoring the policy implementation process to the latter. (District councillor, 15 February 2021)

Table 5 presents a summary of the means and SDs for the four items that were investigated under political implementation. This is followed by the overall mean of all the items studied.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Policy Implementation in Hoima District

Policy Implementation	Mean	SD
Personnel resources	3.05	1.241
Financial resources	2.96	1.329
Administrative capability	2.72	1.353
Political Support	2.79	1.249
Overall	2.88	1.293

Source: Primary data, 2021.

Table 5 reveals that, out of the four items assessed under policy implementation in Hoima district, personnel resources yielded the highest mean value ($\mu=3.05$) while the three items (financial resources, administrative capability and political support) yielded relatively similar outcomes. Analytically, the study agreed, in part, with the implementation theory, particularly the transactional model, which considers policy implementation as 'a transaction'. This implies that personnel resources, financial resources, administrative capability and political support need to be harmonised

for the policy implementers in Hoima district to frequently deal with the tasks, environments, clients and each other. As a consequence, the study indicated that policy implementers in Hoima district could not afford to do anything without the intra-relationships within and among the key citizens presented under the transactional model. In addition, the different citizens dealing with the policy implementation process would make thorough cross-cutting and cross-sectoral analyses. The study argued that such analyses would involve regular interactions and coordination among the key citizens, whose absence could lead to total or partial failure of project implementation to realise the expected objectives.

It was revealed that, concerning personalities in Hoima district, the effect of environmental determinism, the mentoring process, and hereditary factors were vital factors. Alliances would either be formal, involving members at the same level or informal, based on other individual characteristics such as gender, religion and tribe, though not classified within the district policy framework. Although the implementation theory is too general in terms of public policy in organisational settings rather than policy implementation in local governments, certain attributes of the theory such as contexts, personalities, alliances, and events remained relevant. It was established that the notion of exclusion of local community members from the policy implementation process was still manifest as one of the study participants observed:

Local councillors' support during policy implementation in Hoima district is not yet excellent; as per now, because most of them cannot recognise the technicalities involved in most of the policies. Besides, few of them mind about the success of any policy implementation process as long as they get some financial incentive, from the programme or project. (Hoima district councillor, 8 February 2021)

The study indicated that councillor commitment to policy outcomes in Hoima district was not yet impressive and, as a result, local councillors' ability to consult bureaucrats during policy implementation was lacklustre.

5. Discussion

The study on policy implementation is very handy given the degree of service protests currently happening across a number of nations; these are a consequence of (an) implementation deficit/s thus supporting the machine model regarding a well-formulated plan supported by popular citizen participation ([Igne, Biljohn & Lues, 2020](#)) even if the model only focused on the legal decision-making there is a notable agreement with the games model on policy implementation rolling from total wisdom to implied wisdom in the implementation process ([Garcia, Myers, Morones, Ohene & Kim, 2020](#)). Even though the games model did not unswervingly address the idea of “tolerable know-how” among the technical staff in project implementation, its supporters emphasised the role of negotiation and exchange of power, which calls for an adequate amount of knowledge. In addition, the outcome supports the tradition held by [Ying Tan \(2019\)](#) who contends that technical officials ought to be at the core of policy implementation since they have the value, discipline to abide by the rules and impersonal relationships. Although Linder brought into play other qualities of staff, such as value, attention is paid to the role such calibre of citizens played in the ultimate policy implementation. This outcome, on the other hand, disagrees with [Nwapi \(2020\)](#)'s position, which stressed that the achievement of policy objectives would only be realised through planning and programming of functions and assignments.

The outcome accepts the transactional model regarding the implementer's mind is collective and inevitable thus, the model presents a cooperative and predictable intellect of the policy implementer, which is closely associated with the capacity to control the policy performance, as revealed by this study. Nonetheless, the general outcome disagrees with the transactional model, which argues that policy implementation does not automatically depend on personnel issues but it is the clients who control the outcomes of policy implementation ([Chand, 2020](#)). On the positive side, the general outcome is matched with the administrative implementation paradigm, which conceives the policy implementation process as scientific, rational and predictable as noted by [Bhusal, Awasthi &](#)

[Kimengsi \(2020\)](#). The paradigm emphasises the strength of law, and that is why these components can only be realised under an effective personnel, whom this study found to be moderate in the case of the Hoima district. By inference, when there is appropriate fiscal accountability, then the level of financial resources at the grassroots level will be excellent. In a study conducted by [Lian and Yin \(2020\)](#), it was discovered that once local citizens are empowered, they would be able to drive development programmes in their areas

6. Conclusion

The study focused on one objective of the level of policy implementation in Hoima District, which was assessed using four items, namely: personnel issues, financial issues, administrative capacity and political support. Using descriptive statistics the four aspects were uncovered. It is clear that giving attention to each of the four aspects is likely to consolidate the gains made as well as enhancing policy implementation processes in the district.

Limitation and study forward

This study zeroed on policy implementation alone and yet a number of issues affecting policy implementation may not necessarily originate from it but from policy formulation, which was never covered. From the study, Hoima district is encouraged to exploit all the four aspects, viz personnel resources, financial resources, administrative capability, and political support, in its quest to enhance and/or consolidate policy implementation

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