



Community Involvement towards Public Offices' Enactment: A Case Study of Hanang District, Tanzania

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Abstract

The research examines community participation towards public offices' performance in Manyara region, Hanang district in particular. A sample size of 90 respondents was selected purposively and randomly from the Hanang district. The research used personal interview methods of data collection whereby questionnaires, interview guide and documentary review were employed as tools for data collection, and data was analysed by qualitative and quantitative approaches with the help of computer software statistical package for social science (SPSS) as employed for controlling data and analysis. This scientific study unveils that there was deplorable community participation towards public offices in Tanzania and the situation leads to community complaints. Further, the absence of community participation, education and anxiety towards public offices wind up to poor community enactment in the nation. Consequently, this research depicts that the cause of the aberrancy was absence of education to the community members and laxity from public officers who highly ignore the community participation in public office recital. Hereafter, the research recommends that the community ought to be interwoven in public office performance, build consciousness to the members by instructing them to assure that there is decline of complaints from the community towards public offices for public offices performance.

Keywords: Community, Involvement, Public Offices, Enactment

1 Introduction

World widely, community participation towards public offices' performance has been receiving great attention (Liu & Hu, 2019; Ebekozi, 2020; Manoharan, Ingrams, Kang, & Zhao, 2021). Today, all political parties in the UK for example, talk of giving local citizens greater decision-making powers to influence and shape the public services they use (Andrews, Ferry, Skelcher, & Wegorowski, 2020; Redden, Dencik, & Warne, 2020; Bua & Bussu, 2021). The root of community participation in the public offices' performance can be traced back to the western modern democratic theories and populism (De la Torre, 2019; Spasojević, 2019; Urbinati, 2019; Sager, 2020; Vidmar Horvat, 2021). The link between community participation and western democracy is associated with the idea of giving ordinary people the rights to take part in decision making that affects their welfare (Ahmadi & Rachmiatie, 2019; Auriacombe & Sithomola, 2020; Beresford, 2020; Hartz-Karp, 2020; Hill & Varone, 2021).

The problem of community participation towards public offices' performance has been seen in many parts of the world (Moon, 2020; Yahaya, 2021; Önder & Zengin, 2022). Apart from the usefulness of community participation, there are a lot of public complaints on the provision of social services in the public offices. In sub-Saharan Africa, some studies have been documented and shown that countries that engage their citizens deeply in the work of community raise more benefits (Evans, Holtemeyer, & Kosec, 2019; Nishimura, 2019; Madzwamuse, Rihoy, & Louis, 2020; Leheza, Dorokhina, Shamara, Miroshnychenko, & Moroz, 2021). In Zimbabwe for example, primary health care, community based health care and community programs were introduced in an endeavor to progress a community participation (Kweku et al., 2020). In Tanzania community participation towards public offices' performance can be traced back to the 1960s to 1970s (Muusya, 2019; Poncian, 2019; Delehanty, 2020; Odoom, 2021). Tanzania through socialism as a path to modern development initiatives, since independence, the government hunted to implement a participatory tactic with a view of attaining both bottom up and top down development initiatives (Dos Santos & Mombo, 2020; Yoon & Mudida, 2020; Schneider, 2021). The participatory style in Tanzania is categorized into three periods or phases. These are participatory plan in independence between 1961 and 1966 whose goal was to encourage people to work hard and implicate themselves in self-help projects as their contribution to the National development (Morley, Proudfoot, & Burns, 2019; Nkya, 2019; Nguyahambi, Chang'a, Matunga, Kilonzo, & Kontinen, 2020).

Consequently, the colonial local government authorities were abolished in 1972 followed by regional decentralization (Kessy, 2019; Mkoma & Rwekaza, 2021). Local governments were reestablished by the Act no 7-10 of 1982 (Matimbwa, Masue, & Shilingi, 2020). The determination of having local government authorities was to handover authorities to the people (da Cruz, Rode, & McQuarrie, 2019; Abdurakhmonov, 2020; Chen, Bretschneider, Stritch, Darnall, & Hsueh, 2022). Depicted by several researchers there before, local government has the right and power to play a part and involve the people in various social issues (Komba, Kontinen, & Msoka, 2019; Atisa, Zemrani, & Weiss, 2021; Charles, 2021). Likewise, there was an era of the Arusha declaration of 1967-1991. This epoch was branded by reforms in the public sector (Mbowe, Mrema, & Shayo, 2020; Ananga, Naiga, Agong, Njoh, & Vickers, 2021; Kabote, 2022). They were expected to increase efficiency and the capacity of public sectors to deliver quality services due to the fact that there were very pitiable services delivery of public services. Therefore, the government required to make reforms in its sectors in order to ameliorate its satisfactory service delivery to the community and augment the people participation to the public offices' performance.

Outspokenly, one of the key elements of the decentralization of local government is community participation towards public offices' performance (Noory, Hassanain, Lindskog, Elsony, & Bjune, 2020; Fasihi & Babune, 2021; Mgani, 2021). The Local Government Reforms emphasize on the efficiency and cost effectiveness of service delivery (Mapesa, 2020; Kipingu & Shayo, 2021; Madaha, 2021). The process of decentralization was bottomed-up, it started from sub-village level whereby people identified their problems, prioritized them and came up with alternative solutions to those problems taking into consideration availability of resources within those local areas (Cherono, Omar, & Nsavyimana, 2019; Biswas & Singh, 2021; Mkoma & Rwekaza, 2021). Concerning the ward level, the ward development committee scrutinized those proposals from villages, compile and forward them to the district level for further actions (Mgani, Nombo, & Chingonikaya, 2020; Mtuli, 2020; Msacky, 2021). This Reforms also state that, local authorities consult and involve communities through such mechanisms as public hearings and participatory planning (Likwelile & Assey, 2018; Kessy, 2020; Namasiku, 2020; Madaha, 2021).

Furthermore, additional scrutiny was done, compiled and discussed at the district level, in the District Management Team (DMT) and Council Standing Committees and final approval was done by Full Council (Diallo, Schioler, Samuelson, & Drabo, 2021; Orgill, Marchal, Shung-King, Sikuza, & Gilson, 2021; Clark & Whiteside, 2022).. Community participation in Tanzania is still questionable because there are a lot of community complaints towards public offices' performance which face people in different ways (Kessy, 2020; Kigume & Maluka, 2021; Mdee & Mushi, 2021). The general objective of this study was to assess the community participation towards the public offices' performance. The research specially aims at assessing the role of community participation in redressing public complaints and scrutinizes measures taken in redressing public complaints and assessing the challenges faced by the community participation in redressing public complaints.

2 Methods and materials

The study was conducted at Bassotu, Gehandu and Nangwa wards in Hanang District. Hanang District is one of the six districts of the Manyara Region of Tanzania. It is bordered to the north by the Mbulu District and Babati Rural District, to the southeast by the Dodoma Region and to the southwest by the Singida Region. Mount Hanang is located within the boundaries of the district. According to the 2002 Tanzania National Census, the population of the Hanang District was 205,133 and following the 2012 Tanzania National Census, the population of Hanang District was 275,990.

The district has twenty five (25) wards (National Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved, 21 July 2016). The researcher chose those wards because there was a lot of complaints on service delivery from the community towards public offices. The study used survey as a research design whereby cross-section survey design was incorporated in the collection of substantial data for completion of the work. Quantitative approach involved a number of respondents, listed questions are raised and response choices are predetermined. In this study, descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentage were used. Since, population can be defined as the targeted group to be studied in a particular place. Thus, the population of this research was all people from Hanang district in Tanzania. Deliberate or purposive sampling was employed. The study employed purposive sampling technique to select a sample of twenty-one (21) public officers. The research used simple random sampling technique to select a sample of sixty-nine (69) community members. The Researcher used simple random sampling to have an equal chance to be selected in the sample where by proportion at simple random sampling was applied.

Data collection methods applied in this study are structured interview, which is a common technique used in social survey was used to collect the data from the selected participants. Observation in which Non-participant observation was used in order to get the true information from the respondents. The researcher prepared an observation guide for the observation of the material conditions of community participation towards public offices, public offices' performance in this case included time for consultation and suggestion boxes. The tools used in this study include closed ended questionnaires to the respondents and Interview guide used for Ward Executive Officers, Livestock Officers, Water Department Officers, Agricultural Officers, Ward Education Officers, Ward Health Officers and Community Development Officers. Data were collected from various reports and documentary reviews from Ward offices, and other sources such as articles, advertisement and pictures. This was done through utilizing the secondary sources such as related books, scholarly materials, journals, articles, and reports.

The researcher intended to cover a sample size of approximately forty five (45) respondents; twenty one (21) ward public officers (six officers from each Ward) and twenty four (24) community members (eight people from each Ward). Respondents from public offices were sampled using purposive sampling technique due to its convenience

and not expensive; the sample from the community was selected using stratified sampling technique to ensure that all clusters of people in terms of age and gender are included in the sample.

Data analysis refers to the computation of a certain measures along with searching for patterns of relationship that exist among the data group. Data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) simple descriptive statistics in which frequency and percentage was applied as a method in the data analysis. Quantitative data are numbers representing counts or measurements. The quantitative research design was supplementing the qualitative research design to factors threatening the community participation. Qualitative or categorical data can be separated into different categories that are distinguished by some no-numeric characteristics. Qualitative data was used to capture the people's perception from the key informants.

3 Results and discussion

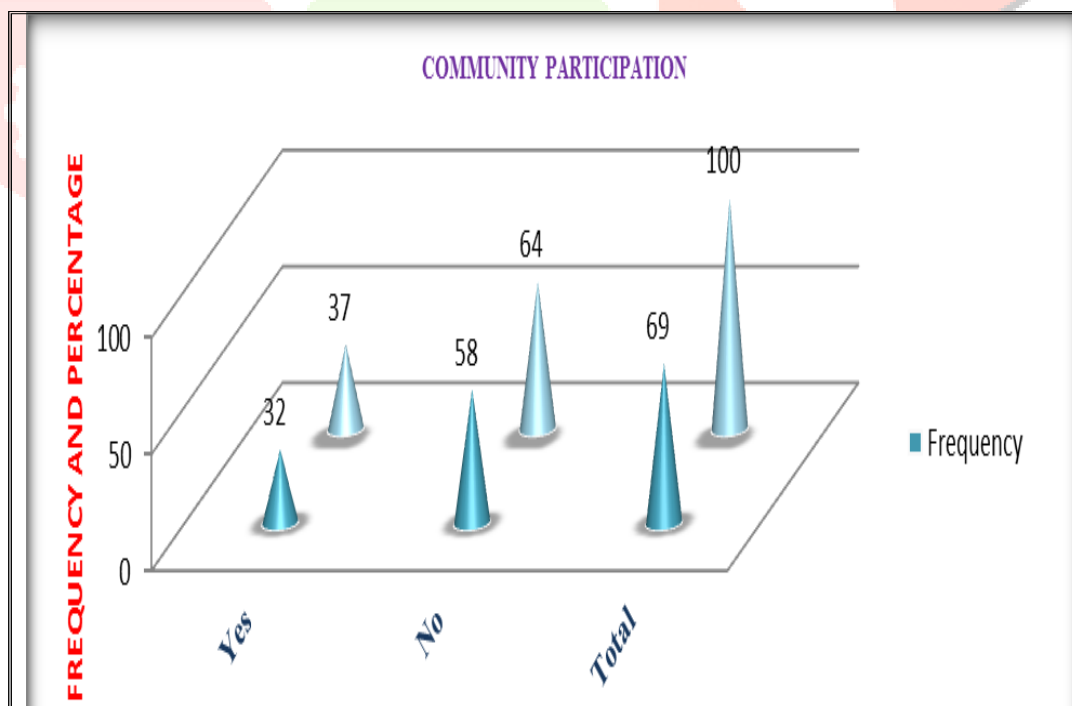
This part presents the results, data analysis and discussion of the observations of the study. The data were collected by means of data collection methods. The collected data have been presented infrequencies and percentages; tables were designed to elaborate such quantitative data. The investigation was based on assessing the community participation towards public offices' performance in accordance with the specific objectives which were as follows: to assess the role of community participation in redressing public complaints, to analyze the challenges facing the community participation in redressing the public complaints and to examine the measures taken to address the public complaints. Quantitative and quantitative data analysis and discussion were done.

3.1 The role of community participation in redressing public complaints

3.1.1 Community involvement towards public offices' enactment

The first objective of this study was to assess the role of community participation in reducing public complaints in the public offices. This objective was realized basing on more than a few questions on community's participation towards public offices' performance. Their responses' compatibility with the objective was clearly presented, explained and discussed. The first question of this particular discussion was asking if there was community participation towards public offices' performance. Respondents were required to inform in the study whether there was community participation or there was no community participation towards public offices' performance. The question was answered by all respondents of the study.

Figure 1: Community involvement towards public offices' enactment



With reference to the figure1, depicted that, about 36% (32) of the respondents said that the community participates towards public offices' performance while about 64% (58) of the respondents said that the communities do not participate towards public offices' performance. Basing on the findings above the majority of respondents urged that the community does not participate in the public offices' performance. It seems that, the community is aware of being involved in the public offices' performance.

The findings from interviewed respondents corresponded to the data above that there is less community participation in public offices' performance. Maintaining a center of attention resting on citizens has been challenging in an environment dominated by fiscal crisis and pressure for cuts and quick fixes. Ultimately, the community will decide the future of public

services (Auriacombe & Sithomola, 2020). The only question is how they will do so: actively, by stepping forward as participants in robust and informed debate or passively, by stepping back and allowing politicians to take decisions on their behalf.

3.1.2 Public offices' performance

Respondents who received and gave services in public offices were obliged to rate the public offices' performance due to service provision in public offices, all respondents answered the question.

Figure 2: Responses view on performance of public offices

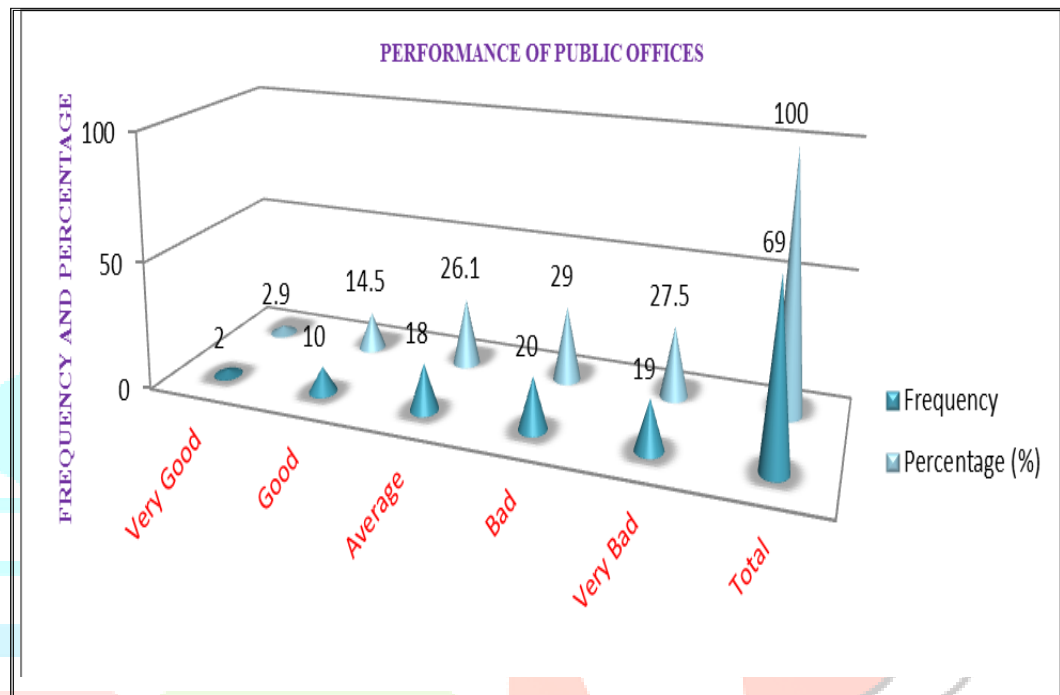


Figure 2 displays that about 3% (2) of the respondents supposed that public offices performance was very good, approximately 15% (10) of the respondents declared that the performance was good, about 26% (18) of the respondents pronounced that the performance was average, and around 28% (19) of the respondents said the performance was very bad. Around 29% (20) of the respondents stated that it was bad. With this data the performance of public offices is not outstanding, not good, and not very bad but it is average. This data correlated with the data given by the respondents who were interviewed, they affirmed that public offices' performance when it was compared with other service providers, its performance was average but the aim of public offices is to perform wonders in service provision so as to attain the total quality management.

The government at all levels should behave towards consumers (Citizens) as if they had another choice in a full public monopoly, otherwise loss of community support and strong opposition from the people in time affects the performance of many services. When the quality of public services deteriorates beyond a certain point, people exercise their outlet options and organize locally to have private suppliers to deliver services such as water, health and education services (Chinyele & Lwoga, 2019).

3.1.3 Responses view on feedback to the complaints brought to the office

Among the myriad possible mechanisms of public feedback, particularly effective feedback had been a device of issuing public report on the performance and integrity of the government. Respondents were asked if the public offices were giving feedback to the community complaints. As depicted in figure 3 herein.

Figure 3: Feedback to the community complaints

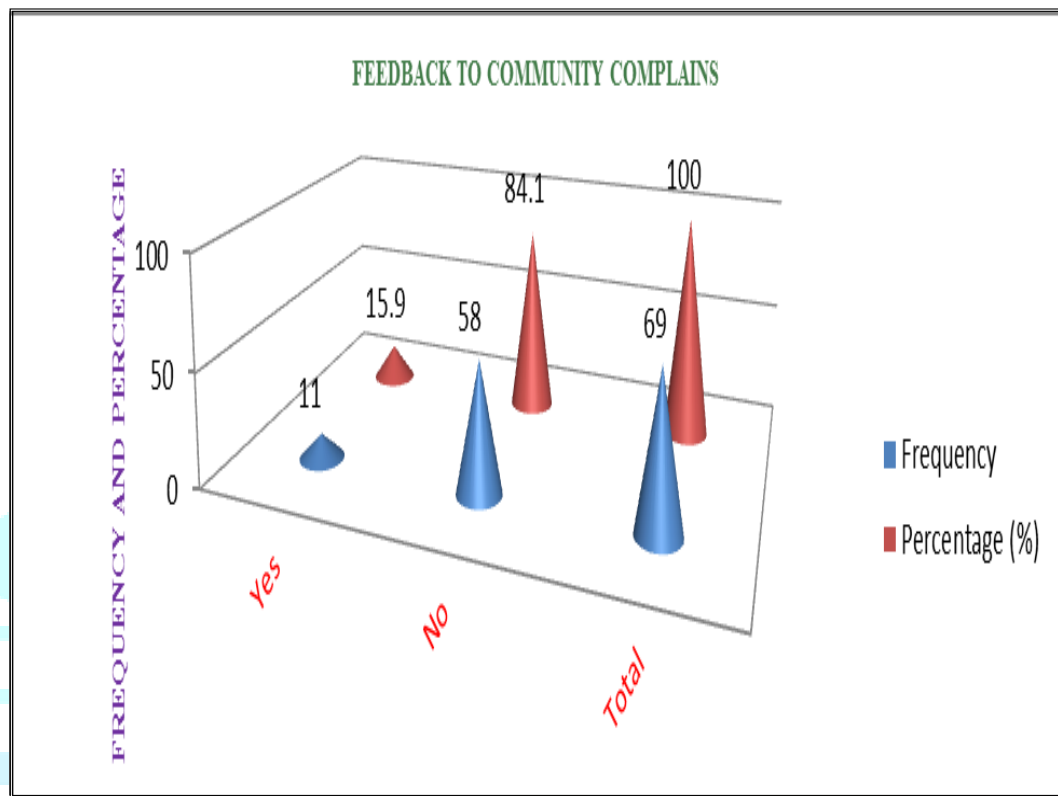


Figure 3 proves that about 16% (11) of the respondents said that the offices give feedback to the community complaints brought to the public offices. On the other hand, about 84% (58) of the respondents disagreed with the question, they replied that there was no feedback on various community matters from the public offices. It is important that the community knows what is happening to what they have brought to the offices so that they continue giving information on various matters concerning public offices.

With this data, public offices do not give feedback on complaints brought to the offices by the community. Feedback is very important to everything human being can do. Feedback allows the community to take action against government employees who are found guilty of wrong doing or who are slow in responding to public complaints. The data above does tally with the data provided by the interviewed respondents as they said that they usually give feedback to the community complaints but by using the findings of this study reveal that there is no habit of public offices to give feedback to the complaints brought in by the community members.

For instance, in other countries like Singapore, there was feedback unit which entertained criticisms of services from the public and take step store move unnecessary regulations and other causes of recurring complaints. Surveys indicated that the system worked well. The same can be done to our country especially in public offices for the purpose of fostering community participation hence removal of public complaints and service satisfactory from the public offices to the community(Liu & Hu, 2019).

3.1.4 Challenges facing the community participation in redressing public complaints

This objective was assessing challenges facing the community participation towards public offices' performance. There were several questions asked to the respondents of this study. The following are the challenges facing the community participation towards public offices' performance.

3.1.5 The way the community participates towards public offices' performance

Respondents gave the information to the study on how they were participating towards public offices' performance. All respondents answered the question and their responses are summarized.

Figure 4: The way the community participates towards public offices' performance

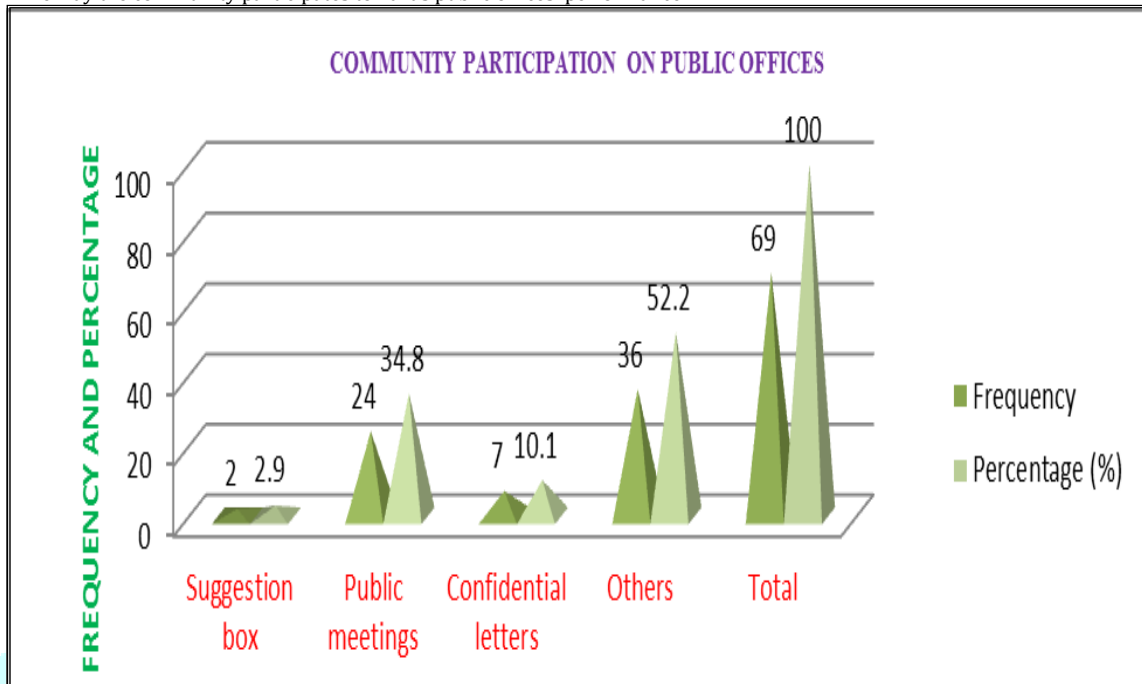


Figure 4 displays that about 10% (7) of the respondents assumed that, the society uses confidential letters in order to participate in public offices' performance. Confidential letters contain confidential information sent to the public office for arrange of subjects related to the offices 'performance. Worker scan perform services which require them to get confidential and appropriate information from the community. This is good and safe way of involving the people towards public offices' performance because the public will be free to give any information.

Confidential information should be received in a strict confidence with a reasonable degree of care to prevent disclosure of information to others, the information is not divulged either directly or indirectly to other people unless authorized to do so in writing by the office in charge. Moreover, the confidential information are not reproduced for any purpose other than performance of the office and the office is the one which determines the treatment of any confidential information and if there is any disciplinary measure to be taken, the office has the right to do so (Komba et al., 2019).

3.2 Suggestion boxes

Suggestion boxes are used to collect information from various people and this is very essential in all human venture public offices use the suggestion box to elicit information from their publics.

Figure 5: answers about if the office has a suggestion box

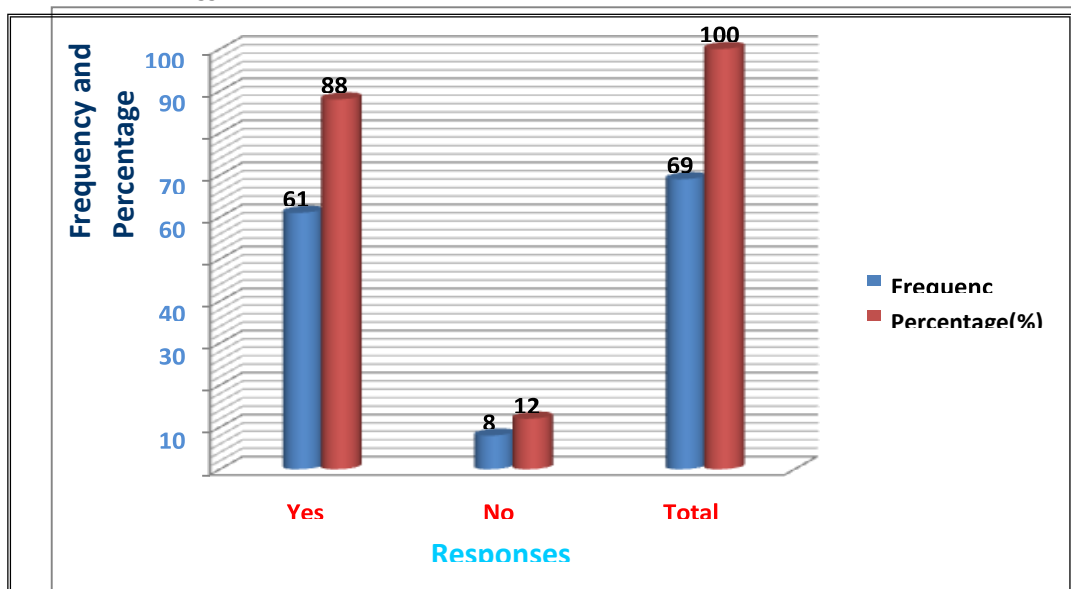


Figure 5 reveals that around 12% (8) agreed that the office has suggestion boxes. Suggestion boxes are very important in any institution because they are interactive suggestion system that enables users to submit insightful ideas for the improvement of public office. On the other hand, around 88% (61) of respondents said the offices have no suggestion boxes. With this data many people who used to have some public matters to be done by the public offices have to find substitute ways of taking part.

Suggestion boxes have been identified as a contributing factor in the management of today’s public offices. This is necessary in order to instill a sense of belonging in all who have one thing or the other to do with the organization and also to inculcate organizational pride in the members of staff whose suggestions may be valued by the management (Yahaya, 2021).

3.2.1 Person who processes complaints found in the suggestion box

Not only the above questions, but also the Researcher asked respondents a person who was responsible in processing the complaints found into the suggestion box. The question was answered by all respondents. In figure 6 their responses are summarized.

Figure 6: Person who process complains found in the suggestion box

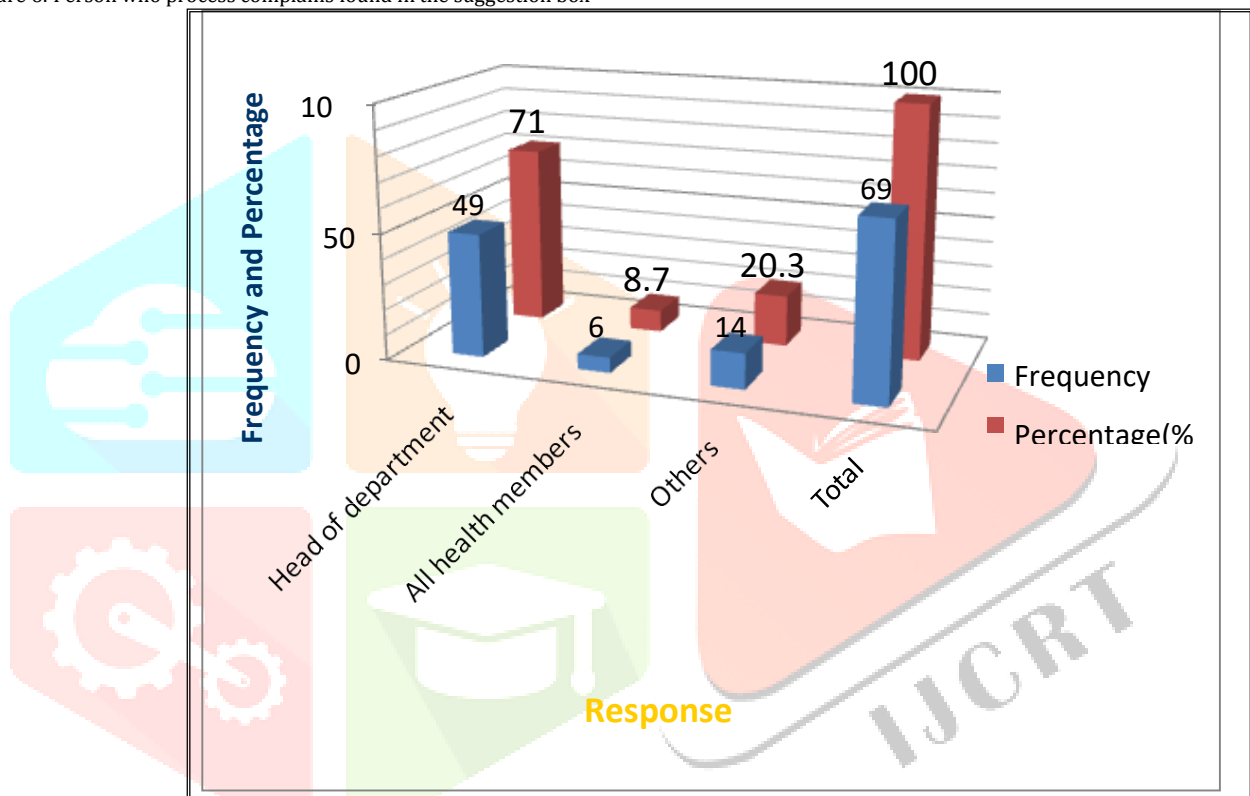


Figure 6 explains that, approximately 71% (49) of the respondents believed that the complaints found in the suggestion box were processed by Heads of departments, approximately 9% (6) of the respondents said that the complaints are processed by all staff members and about 20%(1)of the complaints are processed by other ways. The meaning of the data above is that the respondents have seen no complaints and the method of collecting those complaints is not known to them at all. Only heads of departments decide how to get such information and what to do with the complaints brought in the office.

3.2.2 Department which deals with community's complaints

Respondents were asked if there was any department which deals with community's complaints towards public offices' performance. The responses were summarized.

Figure 7: Answers on department which deals with the community's complaints

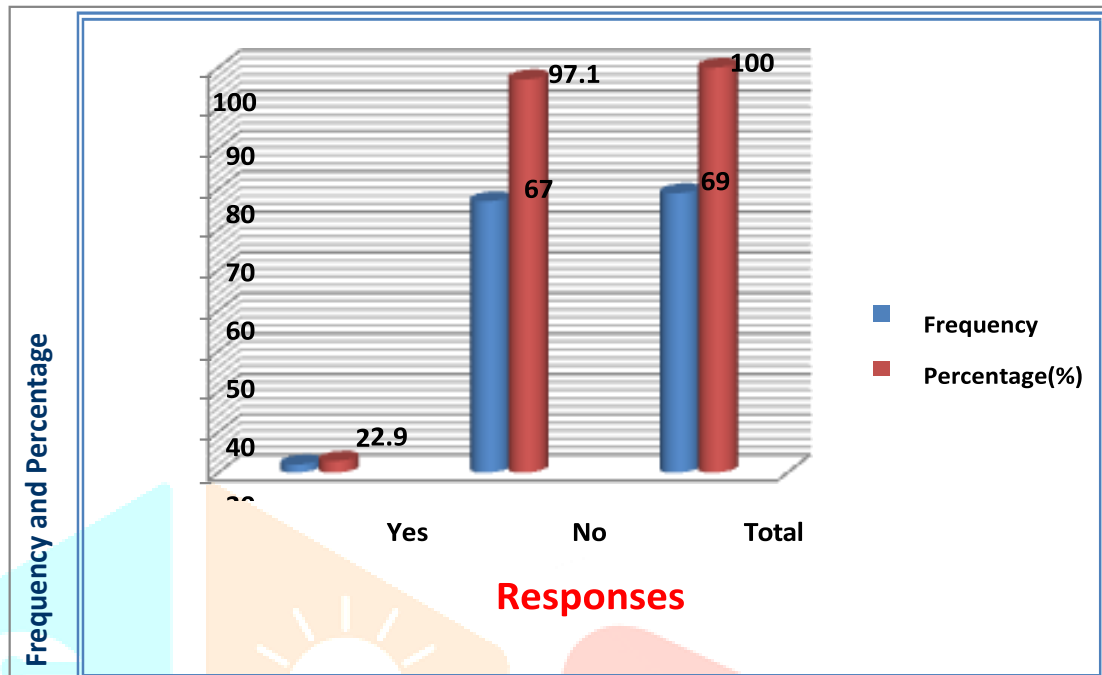


Figure 7 illustrates that, around 3% (2) said that there was a department which deals with people's complaints. On the other hand, around 97% (67) of the respondents said that there was no department which deals with people's complaints. This means that any issue related to administrative matter assent to the office without any specification of where to send them specifically people's complaints. In Malaysia for example, there set a public complaints bureau in 1971 as independent organization to look into complaints against public agencies. This is the best way to handle different administrative matters and if possible the department should not be handled by the government (Nishimura, 2019).

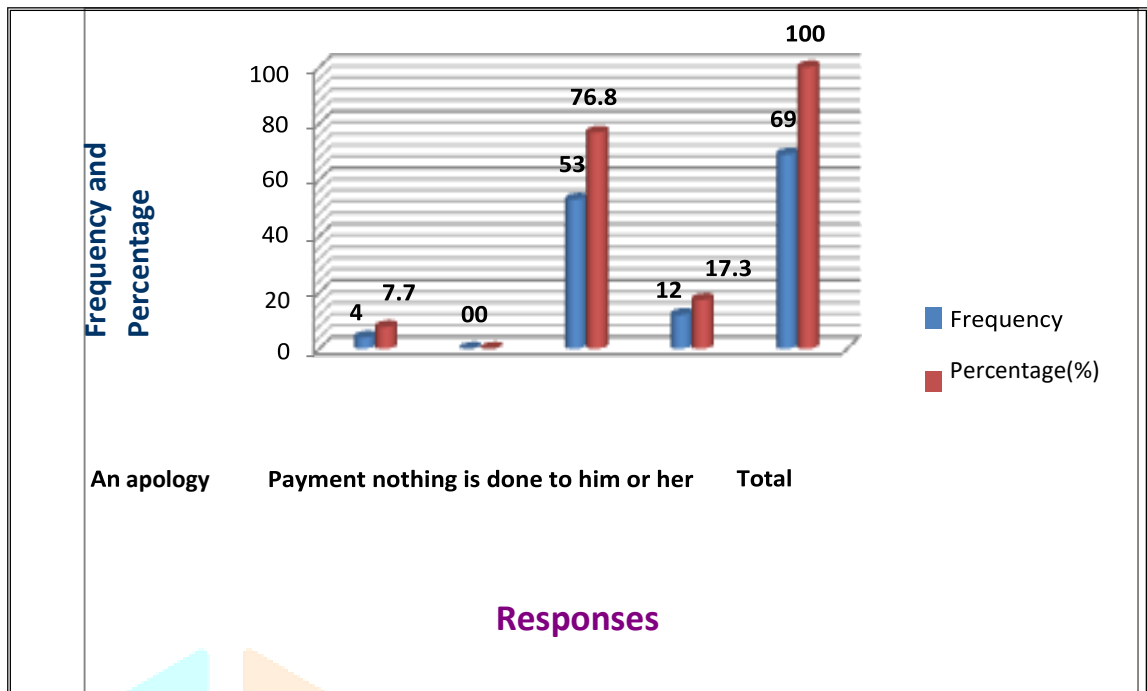
3.3 Measures Taken to Public Complaints

There was a question directed to the respondents to answer if there were measures taken by public offices to public complaints towards public offices' performance.

3.3.1 Measures taken to an affected person by the public offices' performance

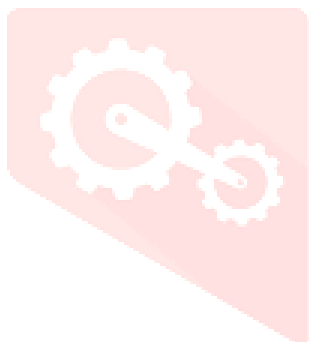
The Researcher wanted to be acquainted with what was done to a person who was affected by public offices' performance. The question was answered by all respondents and their responses were summarized.

Figure 8: Measures taken to an affected person by public office



As it has seen from figure 8 the data shows that about 8% (4) of the respondents said that the affected people were tendered apologies. There may be a need of something else for the people who could be affected by the public offices' performance. No respondent 0% (0) said that the communities are paid.

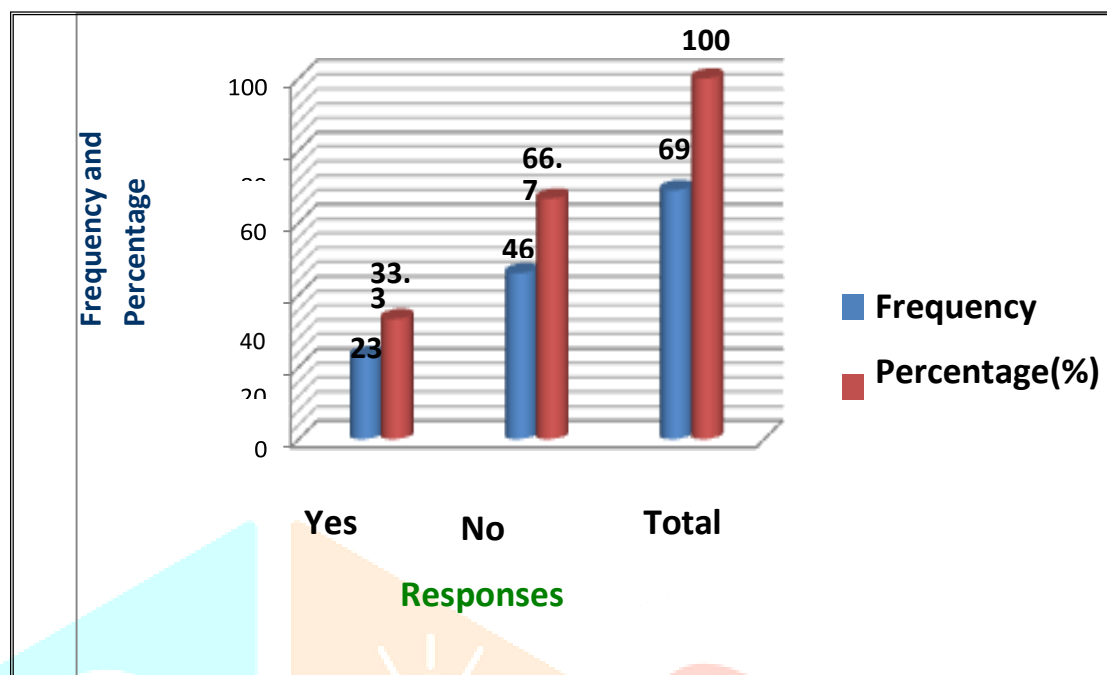
Many respondents accounting for 77% (53) said that nothing was done to a person who was affected by the public offices' performance. Around 17% (12) of the respondents said that the affected people are treated using other ways. The data above went hand in hand with interviewed respondents who said that there were no measures taken to the affected person as a result of the public offices' performance.



3.3.2 Time for consultation when public officers are away from the offices

The community and the office to handle it effectively their responses are shown in Figure 9:

Figure 9: Time for consultation when public officers are away from the offices



As it was seen from the data presented in figure 9 about 33% (23) of the respondents said that the offices give consultation hours to the community and about 67% (46) of the respondents said that the offices do not do such things. The researcher employed another tool for this question to find out the truth of the above data, things went upside down. The Researcher used non participatory observation to detect events and behavior in the public offices, there revealed that the communities were not given consultation hours when the public officers were away from the offices. The consultation includes education, information sharing and negotiation with the goal being a better decision-making process all the way through public offices consulting the general public. This process allows the people to hear and have a voice in the future undertakings.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

The wrapping up of the study findings were drawn based on the findings presented and investigated in chapter four of this investigation. In due regards, while the researcher strived to overcome subjectivity in the course of making use of the respondents or participants and data collection methods, yet the study does not claim to be totally objective. As it has been seen earlier that, community participation plays a crucial role in addressing the public complaints; public offices should not close its eyes on the role of the communities towards the public offices' performance, the office has to take community complaints as a challenge and not as a conflicting issue, feedback should be given to the community, suggestions should be put in the boxes so that people could put whatever was good for public offices' service delivery improvement and strong measures are needed to people who in one way or another are harmed as a result of the public offices' performance.

4.2 Recommendations

The major intention of this study as stated earlier was to indicate the level of community participation and complaints' management aimed at drawing answers that will have an impact on the public offices' performance in the Tanzania's total quality service perspective. Apart from this matter-of-fact allusion for the public offices, the general community is expected to benefit from the findings of this study. Eventually, the researcher suggests that further research should be done on the effects of consultation, feedback on the public offices' performance, impacts of wasting time during the services' delivery towards public offices and on the public offices' performance in all levels. This will help in deeper understanding of public offices' performance aimed at achieving full community's participation and services delivery.

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Notes on author's biography

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