Impact of Political Transparency on Public Service in Uganda

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Abstract

Transparency is a significant political virtue to ensure efficient and effective public service delivery. This study examined the impact of political transparency on public service delivery in Uganda, using Agago district as a case study. A cross-sectional, correlation study was conducted. Questionnaires data of 110 public officials and interview data of 40 local community members in Agago district were analyzed using multiple regression and correlations. Results show that political transparency has a strong and positive impact on public service delivery with a 50 per cent variance among the variables. The insights gained from this study demonstrated the important role that political transparency plays in promoting quality public service delivery. But future research should enhance the sample size and consider a larger study area. Suggestions on how to expand on and refine the current study are addressed.

Keywords: Inferability, Political Transparency, Public Service Delivery, Uganda, Visibility.

Introduction

For long the concept of transparency had been one of the neglected areas in public service delivery. Recently, however, there has been growing interest on the concept to understand its impact especially in the decentralization era where management of service delivery is entrusted to the local level [1]. Transparency is taken as a tool to hold governments to account, address developmental failures, and repair leaky pipes of inefficiency [2, 3]. Since transparency is an inevitable tool to counter government’s effort to hold information from the citizens, secrecy ought never to be a system of a regular government [2]. Therefore, an institutionalized transparency enable increased access to government information, as an end in itself and binds governments to provide information to the citizens. This importance is demonstrated in the enactment of constitutional and legislative public rights to information in many developing countries. However, much as the spiral of decentralization demands local officials to be honest and transparent in their actions, they see transparency as a thorn in their sides. Because of this, it is not clear exactly how transparency affects service delivery against the idea that people are autonomous rational choosers. Etzioni [4] shows the link between transparency and its impact on public service delivery is often largely assumed rather than explicitly articulated. Even then, this claim is seldom explicitly explained.

In Uganda, transparency as an imperative principle to guide government’s response to development objective at the local level has been nearly futile. Agago district provides an interesting case study on this issue. Despite embrace of the decentralization policy, the district has been ranked at the top of the most non-transparent districts in terms of public service delivery in the country. Problems in political transparency of the district officials have been identified as an important constraint in public service delivery provision. This is confirmed by a review of ACODE reports; local governments’ council minutes and records of the district. A review of these documents by the researcher reveals rampant lack of political transparency in the district’s operations. A study by Deininger and Mpuga [5] on whether accountability could improve public service delivery in Uganda corroborates the review. They found that citizen’s satisfaction with the quality of public service often remains low. Yet in Uganda, local governments manage approximately 25 per cent of public expenditure and have wide-ranging service delivery responsibilities [6]. These indicate a seeming prevalence of crisis with political transparency in public service delivery. This is an ugly situation for the public sector performance and it explains why the researcher was interested in investigating the relationship between political transparency and service delivery in Agago district. After all, Albalate [7]
Given the dangers of current situations in Agago district, the primary aim of this study is to investigate the impact of political transparency on public service delivery. The objective of the study was to examine the impact of visibility as a factor of political transparency on public service delivery. Additionally, examine the impact of inferability factor of political transparency on public service delivery. This study was conducted in the local governments of Agago district in Northern Uganda. Therefore, the paper proceeds as follows: first, there shall be a review of literature and empirical studies on the construct of political transparency and public service delivery. This is done to achieve the objective set above and development of hypothesis thereof. This review shall be followed by methodological trends used to conduct the study. The bulk of the paper contains empirical results from field study conducted from June to October 2014 in Agago district. Thereafter, discussions of the results will follow. This will also include limitations, recommendations and suggestions for future research before a conclusion to the paper is provided.

**Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

Many Experts believe transparency has some relationship with political actions and is likely to influence public service delivery [8]. Following Seiichi Kondo [9], transparency is here taken to mean that reliable, relevant, and timely information about the activities of government is available to the public. Apart from being a strategy to inform the public, Barry [10] argues transparency is an important political apparatus with a broad range of processes, actors and power relations which produces different types. One type of transparency according to Latour and Weibel [11] is political that provides accurate information about the government, its operation, and the country as a whole, or permits the information to be collected and made available. Thus, political transparency can be understood to mean the principle of enabling the public to gain information about the operations and structures of a government entity [3].

Practically, political transparency has become synonymous with democracy since it is an alloyed good and a hallmark of democratic government. Stiglitz [12] avers political transparency addresses the principal-agent problem caused by information asymmetries. This is because the agent (district officials) has more relevant information than the principal (citizens) which the agent wouldn’t be willing to disclose. Political transparency also creates a positive kind of relations between the producers of information (district officials) and the audience for whom the information is intended. This helps to create the kind of persons and institutions that are in a position to monitor, use, and assess the credibility of any information that is published. This means political transparency is not just a matter of making information public but a matter of molding institutions into forms that are able to perform transparently. Held and Koeing-Arkibu [14] believe political transparency provides mechanisms for steady and reliable information and communication between decision-makers and the stakeholders.

As a result, in matters of governance and organizations, ‘more-transparent-than-thou’ has become the secular equivalent of ‘holier-than-thou’ [4] though much of the current evidence relies on under-specified relationship between mechanisms and outcomes. Nonetheless, Fenster [14] argues political transparency is among the pantheon of great political virtues because it has a remarkable array of benefits that no right-thinking public officials could be against it. Hartman [15] contends political transparency can be used for full social and political redemption. This is because it allows truth to rise to the surface like cream, and so to abolish the esoteric in human contact and communication.

Several studies which are supported by empirical evidences, argue that policy making of a democratic governments is shaped by transparency. And most importantly, democratic governments have incentives to obfuscate evidence and remains accountable [16]. Shapiro [17] suggests “democratic leaders can never be entirely free from a commitment to truth-telling”. This improves quality of governance and empowers the citizens. According to Joshi [1], the logical chain linking transparency to empowerment is clear: information is power. However, recent studies have assessed the impact of political transparency on public service delivery with mixed evidences.

While assessing the impact of Citizen Report Cards on the performance of public agencies in Bangalore, India, Rivandra [18] found that Citizen Report Cards can bring considerable impact on local service delivery in some settings. Reinikka and Svensson’s [19] survey of education expenditure in Uganda show that Public Expenditure Tracking when combined with public
information campaigns can contribute to reduced leakages and thereby improved delivery of services. They also found that funds reaching schools increased substantially to 90 per cent from 13 per cent before information was made public. But a similar study by Sundet [20] found less impact of Public Expenditure Tracking in Tanzanian schools. In a multi-country case study, Robinson [21] found that budget monitoring initiatives can contribute to enhanced resources and efficiency in expenditure utilization. Mishra [22] found community scorecards monitoring service delivery can contribute to better users' satisfaction. In their field experiment on community-based monitoring in Uganda, Bjorkman & Svensson [23] found community-based monitoring contribute to more responsive delivery of service. They also found increased teachers’ attendance in schools as a result of community-based monitoring. A study on social audits in India by Singh & Vutukuru [24] found that social audits can contribute to exposure of corruption and enhanced effectiveness in programme implementation.

Shaxson [25] found the Extractive Transparency Initiative risks the negative effect of empowering the elite groups, technocrats and policy makers with new information, rather than empowering broader public stakeholders, who are more likely to use it to shift power balances rather than entrench them. Information provision about education-related entitlements has been found by Bannerjee, Anflo, Glennerster, Banerji and Khemani [26] has little impact by itself on the level of engagement with school systems by citizens claiming accountability. In another study by Pandey, Goyal and Sundararaman [27] when tied to a community-based information campaign, positive impacts were found. Jenkins [28] found that right to information campaign in India led to new legislation and widely mobilized constituencies to use information for developmental purposes.

Renzio, de Azeem and Rankumar [29] found that community monitoring by Uganda Debt Network has been successful in improving facilities at the local levels. They also found that monitoring by trained community workers led to identification of ‘shoddy works’ in schools and health units. In her comparative study of India and Uganda, Khemani [30] found out community engagement with information came to two strikingly different conclusions, positive in the case of India but negative in the case of Uganda.

Aquilar, Caspartya and Seiler [31] reports a positive example from ETI in Nigeria, where road shows were used to disseminate audit report to community-based CSOs, community leaders, state government officials, sub national government officials, and traditional leaders within the zones.

Other studies [32, 33] have indicated that political transparency may produce negative and unintended effects. Increased political transparency may induce public disappointment with regard to how political decision making is actually conducted or may lead to information overload and confusion [34]. Further, decision makers may need to relatively closed doors to their work efficiently [35].

de Fine Licht [36] finds that political transparency does not affect acceptance of decisions or decision-making procedures. McGee [37] finds that the focus on aids statistics ignores citizens’ broader range of information demands; and in particular their concerns with the politics and relationship that shape aid allocation and conditionality.

In spite of these, there are abundant evidences in the literature [38] to show that political transparency is important. This is backed by the argument that transparency is a fundamental right, enhances the possibility of democratic accountability, contributes to public legitimacy, and promotes good behavior among elite actors [39]. Hence, transparency implies that the citizens have easy access to accurate and comprehensible information from their government. Humphrey, Sachs and Stiglitz [40] recommend the need to emphasize political transparency to control service delivery inefficiency.

Mitchinson [41] suggest local governments should be capable of handling task, efficiency both qualitative and quantitative within acceptable standards of probity and public conduct and achieve government-set standards of quality public service delivery.

The literature review reveals the citizens need to be endowed with accurate and comprehensible information from their governments. Etzioni [4] witnessed less research work on the impact of political transparency on public service delivery. Following the literature, and the popular theory of transparency , the researcher extended the above conceptual framework and proposes that visibility and inferability factors of political transparency is a way of analyzing the impact of political transparency on public service delivery. The relationship of the variables is referred to the following figure.
From Fig. 1 above, invisibility and inferability are factors of political transparency which are proposed to have an impact on public service delivery. These factors have the dimensions of completeness and accurateness for visibility and verifiability has the dimensions of useable and verifiable. Public Service delivery has the dimensions of effectiveness and efficiency though these dimensions were not studied since they were not the objectives of the study. Political transparency has been treated as an influence factor towards public service delivery provision. Britto and Perrant [42] defines that political transparency requires disclosing substantially and truthfully performance to those who are entitled to know. This definition has four parties. First, to be effective the disclosure must be mandatory so that an agent does not withhold information and discloses only those convenient to him or her. Secondly, the disclosure must be full and truthful since partial disclosure lead to information asymmetries. Thirdly, the disclosure of the performance should be to those entitled to only. This is supported by the popular theory of transparency which postulates that the public ought to obtain information which should make them take optimal choice. This is because access to information can strengthen citizens’ ability to hold government to account, resulting in overall more accountable political settlement when government and citizens relate in more informed, organized, constructive and systematic manner.

In light of the above, therefore, political transparency entails freedom of information, easy access to decision makers for the media, the decision making procedures are comprehensive, the language used is understandable, anyone interested can get the information he or she needs to form an opinion about an issue on the agenda. To surmise, the literal and figurative parameters of political transparency is that the information provided by the government must be complete and accurate (visibility) and useable and verifiable (inferability). Since transparency is about information, if information is not visible then the first and primary meaning of the Parentword, “transparency”-having to do with light and visual properties-loss its relevance. To be visible, information must reflect a high degree of completeness and this must be located described by many authorities as “effective transparency” (Fung, Graham & Weil, 2007). Meanwhile, the data must be useable and verifiable, if not the available information though may be complete and accurate will be valueless. The more visible and inferable the information is, the better the quality of transparency which would lead to improved public service delivery. High quality transparency depends not only on how visible information is made, but on how well it lends itself into accurate inference. Political transparency, therefore, is not just a tool to create visibility and keep policy makers accountable, but is to be seen in light of better practice standards of maintaining inferable data. Few (if any) studies have examined the impact of these factors of political transparency on public service delivery [4] more so in a local government setting of a developing country. This study suggests investigating the real and explicit impact of political transparency on public service delivery. Also quantitative in nature, the study required measurement and statistical predictability of the relationship between the study variables. This was done for testing the hypotheses derived from predicative theories and the following hypotheses were taken.

H1: Political transparency is expected to positively impact public service delivery

H2: Visibility is has a significant effect on public service delivery

H3: Inferability has a significant and positive effect on public service delivery.
Methodology

This is a cross-sectional, correlation study to examine the impact of political transparency on public service delivery in the local governments of Agago district in Northern Uganda. The researcher proposed a triangular method in data collection and analysis for the study.

Sample Procedure

The population for the study is the public officials of Agago district from which purposive sampling was done to select 110 of them. Also a random sampling of 40 community members was done to constitute the population of the study as well. A total number of 150 study population was used for the study. Before commencement of the data collection process, the researcher confirmed the voluntary participation of the study. All participants were informed that they can participate freely and if any participant wants to withdraw at any time, they will be allowed to do so. Primary data collection through interview schedule and questionnaire and documentary review was used to collect secondary data. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions. The questionnaire was an inexpensive way of data collection was designed on the basis of the objectives and hypotheses. It consisted of three sections, namely, demographic profiles, visibility and inferability. The last two sections used 5-points Likert scale measurement. Documentary checklist guided the researcher on the documentary information required for the study. It was also used to requests for such dockets from local governments in the district.

Measurement Scale

Testing hypothesis needed data and a survey questionnaire was developed on the basis of reviewed literature for the purpose. Following variables have been selected for the survey questionnaire. The visibility factor of political transparency was used by the researcher to establish the completeness and accuracy of information provided to the citizens. The questions were on established rules on conflict of interest, open service delivery principles, availability of code of conduct, laid down accountability principles, and published performance documents. While the inferability factor of political transparency established the useable-ness and verifiability of information with questions on compliance with requirements of Freedom of Information, reliable information on government intentions, reliability of government forecast, detailed information on government operations, and ease of access of information.

Data Analysis and Statistical Packages

Two main forms have been proposed for data analysis. Firstly, content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data where all the qualitative data collected through interview and documentary records were categorized, interpreted and analyzed under the theme. These were used to corroborate and triangulate findings obtained from quantitative data. Secondly, SPSS Ver. 14 was used to analyze quantitative data. SPSS helped to subject data collected into descriptive statistics and determine the relationship between the variables as they were accompanied by ordinal scale through correlation, and the impact of political transparency on public service delivery was determined through regression analysis.

Results

Response Rate, Reliability, Demographic Profiles, and Descriptive Statistics

Response Rate

The researcher distributed 110 questionnaires to respondents. The number of return was 106 making a response rate of 96.3 per cent. 4 questionnaires were discarded due to uncompleted or having large number of missing data. The number of questionnaire that is found useable was 102. Only 10 out of 40 were not interviewed.

Reliability

By applying Cronbach’s alpha reliability test through SPSS (Ver. 14) software, the researcher found highly correlated items with their respective variables as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferability</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political transparency</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1, all variables were above .70 showed high internal consistency of item of variables. Overall reliability of scale used in this survey questionnaire was found to be .802 that shows higher internal consistency among the scales. However, the reliability of individual scales were found different for each other and varied from .760 to .844.

Demographic profiles

The demographic profiles of the respondents are presented in Table 2.
Table 2: Demographic profiles of the respondents (n=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 18 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-35 years</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 35 years</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divorced/Separated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post graduate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure in service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 2-6 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 6-10 years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates the age allocation of respondents from Agago district at which the research was conducted. As can be seen from table, the majority of the sample’s age (n=40) was over 35 years, 39.2 per cent of total respondents. The gender allocation of the respondent, the table indicates the majority of the sample (n=78) were male, 76.5 per cent of the respondent, the rest (n=24), i.e., 23.5 per cent of the respondents were female. Majority of the respondents (n=81) i.e., 79.6 per cent were married which shows that most of them had primary responsibility outside their work schedules as well. The respondents, qualification level were categorized; their qualification levels were divided into 3 levels, i.e., 12 (11.7 per cent) were post graduate holders, 65 (63.8 per cent) were bachelors degree holders, and 25 (24.5 per cent) were diploma holders. Frequency distribution of the respondents’ experience is shown in the Table as well. It can be seen that most of the respondents’ experience level was between 2-6 years (36.2 per cent), between 6-10 years (29.6 per cent), and over 10 years (27.4 per cent) followed by less than 2 years (6.8 per cent).

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics in the form of means and standard deviations for the independent and dependent variable for the respondents were computed and presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics: overall mean and standard deviations for political transparency and public service delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public service delivery</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.2943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political transparency-visibility</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.2954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political transparency-inferability</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.2932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable: Public service delivery

Table 2 shows that the mean value of political transparency-visibility is 2.95 which is near to 3 and it means that most of the responses of respondents are positive and their responses in support of political transparency-visibility at 5 Likert scale and these responses can deviate 1.2954 from the average responses of the respondents. The mean value of political transparency-inferability is 3.0 which are exactly 3 and it means that most of the people are satisfied with inferability. Responses can deviate 1.2932 from average responses of the respondents. The mean value of public service delivery is 2.97 which are also near to 3; it means that most of the
people respond positively. The responses of people can deviate 1.2943 from average responses of respondents. The above mean values of independent variables show that political transparency of district officials depend on the visibility and inferability of information.

**Statistical Measures and Hypotheses Testing**

Before testing the hypotheses, a correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Political transparency was considered as the independent variable through the factors of visibility and inferability. Dependent variable included the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery though not directly measured. The results of correlation are presented in Table 4.

### Table 4: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political transparency-visibility</th>
<th>Pearson correlation</th>
<th>Political transparency-inferability</th>
<th>Public service delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political transparency-visibility</td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.491(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.509(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.509(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political transparency-inferability</td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>.491(**)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.491(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.491(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service delivery</td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>.509(**)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.491(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.491(**)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Table 4 indicates that political transparency-visibility is positively correlated with public service delivery with the value of 0.509 which is significant at 1 per cent. Political transparency-inferability is also positively related with public service delivery with the value of 0.491 which is significant at 1 per cent. The correlation of 0.491 shows political transparency-visibility and public service delivery explain the variation in one another to the extent of 50.9 per cent (0.509)². The correlation of 0.509 explains the variation in one another to the extent of 49.1 per cent (0.491)².

Furthermore to determine the impact of political transparency on public service delivery, the researcher applied regression analysis where beta and t value were used for hypothesis testing. The results are presented in Table 5.

### Table 5: Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>35.054</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>5.834</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>35.712</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>5.976</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferability</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>32.397</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td>5.692</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Hypotheses proposed that political transparency would significantly correlate with public service delivery. The data in Table 5 offered support to these hypotheses. There is a positive correlation between political transparency and public service delivery variables. Political transparency is found to be significantly related to public service delivery, political transparency (R² = .25; β =50; p<0.001). Therefore, findings support H1 which states that there is a positive impact of political transparency on public service delivery. In the study, H2 suggested that visibility has a significant effect on public service delivery. Results show that visibility has a positive and significant relationship with public service delivery (R² = .259; β=.509; p<0.001). Therefore, the researcher concludes that visibility does significantly impact on public service delivery which does support H2. The researcher also proposed H3 where inferability has a significant and positive effect on public service delivery. Results showed that inferability has a positive and significant relationship with public service delivery (R² = .241; β =.491; P<0.001). In conclusion, therefore, inferability significantly and positively impact on public service delivery which support H3. Henceforth, in the end, the researcher concluded that political transparency has strong positive impact on service delivery provision.
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of political transparency on public service delivery in Uganda. After interpretation of results, the H1, H2 and H3 are sustained and there is a significant impact of political transparency - visibility and inferability on public service delivery. It means that for proper service delivery there must be full political transparency. In a study, Islam [43] has shown that governments that are more transparent govern better as measured by a wide number of governance indicators such as government effectiveness, regulatory burden, corruption, voice and accountability, the rule of law, bureaucratic efficiency, contract repudiation, and expropriation risk. He adds that as better governance has also been empirically demonstrated to be correlated with higher growth rate, it can be extrapolated that there is a close relationship between greater transparency and how fast economies grow.

In this study, the questionnaire findings were not very different from the results of the interview conducted with members of the local community. About 70 per cent of those interviewed agreed that political transparency has an important function to perform in proper public service delivery. They however, noted that the level of political transparency practice by officials in Agago district was very much low. They seem to suggest that the despair in poor public service delivery is due to political imposition of transparency’s limitation. In this regards, Somin [44] argues this is the state’s withering in the wake of public ignorance. More than half of the respondents further suggested that the more political transparency, the greater the chance that they will be watching the performance of their governments so keenly. This is in line with the finding of Kolstad and Wiig [45] in respect to their analysis on the empirical evidence on transparency and corruption in resource-rich developing countries. They find that a higher degree of media competition can ensure the good quality of available information.

Furthermore, one interviewee supported findings from the questionnaire and responded thus: “If we know exactly what our government is doing, we would be able to call our elected leaders to account”. This view resonates the idea that open data and right to information promote inclusion and empowerment, transforming power imbalances that result from asymmetric information, and bringing new (previously marginalized) stakeholders into policy debates. For example, evidence from survey experiment by Humphreys and Weinstein [46] indicate that Ugandan voters are strongly receptive to new information about the performance of their MPs. Although, they also found that the dissemination campaigns provide no evidence that MPs respond to higher level of transparency or that their prospects for reelection are threatened by it. Given the scenario, an elder was also full of sanction-able transparency as shown in the following responses: “transparency that has the potential to trigger sanction is effective of improving public officials’ responsiveness”. Another respondent elaborated on the importance of transparency as he further had this to say: “… to be effective, information should be fair, reliable, timely, complete, consistent, and presented in a clear and simple manner”. This view is in consonant with the assertion of Michener and Bersch [47] that transparency dispels opacity, the first refuge of corruption, inefficiency, and incompetence. However, transparency in reporting is not neutral. It is part of the construction of a variety of actors, devices, and organizations capable of generating, monitoring, maintaining, and circulating the information. Labaree [48] suggests this impulse in contemporary policy to atomize, quantify and digitalize obfuscates the complex, idiosyncratic and contextually bound world and renders silent alternative epistemological criteria by which we may understand the fullness of the material world. Although Barry [10] suggests that transparency represents not only the processes of monitoring and auditing, but also sets of practice, methods, and instruments aimed at producing particular kinds of information tailored for specific audiences. As such a study by Reinikka and Svensson [49] found that public access to information can indeed be a powerful deterrent to capture of funds at the local level. Similarly, many respondents supported in the following words “Political transparency does not just happen. There are few government programs in the country which could make our political leaders accountable to us. Worst of all, the government seems not committed to carry out sufficient institutional reforms for this cause”. This is contrary to the finding of Meijer [50] that whatever the case may be, transparency is always a necessary condition for accountability, since access to information constitutes the first step in accountability process. And it helps to reduce undesirable scandals in public service delivery like corruption by public officials [51]. Just like in Agago district, Saito [52] found that service users in Mukono and Rakai districts in Uganda were of the opinion that their elected leaders were corrupt and responsible for the lack of development in their areas.
As to why political transparency was not so much practiced by the politicians in the district, an elder had this to say: “because political leaders are at their wit’s ends, they have greater incentives for self-dealing at our own expenses”. This view corroborates the assertion of Callon, Lascoumes and Bathe [53] that transparency illuminates only selected procedures and the ways those particular procedures structure and organize social phenomena and relations. In furthermore, another respondent said, “Political transparency should not just be a matter of making information public but should form our society in a population that we can be able to recognize and assess the value of probably modifying information provided”. This proposal is in line with the suggestion of Latour [54] that transparency is not just intended to make information public but to form a public which is interested in being informed. For instance, in a study by Bjorkman and Svensson [23], when treatment communities in Uganda became more involved in monitoring the providers following the intervention, the results suggested that the health unit staff responded by exerting a higher effort into serving the community.

In agreement with interview findings and the questionnaire survey, documentary evidences further supported the situation in Agago district. A study by Roberts [55] on the benefits of transparency reveals that transparency positively affects public perceptions of political decisions and decision-makers. Hope Sr. [56] asserts that where there is no transparency, there is absolutely no distinction between personal and public property. When asked how political transparency affected service delivery in Agago district, an interviewee agreed with the questionnaire findings, as shown in the following words, “Political transparency can increase our sense of control by making public officials accountable for their actions and also increase our understanding of how public service should be delivered”. In response to the same, another respondent said “Political transparency can increase or cause wide range of positive quality service delivery efficiency”. A view held by Heald [3] also. Accordingly, as suggested by Fenster [57] merely requiring disclosure of more information might have little effect in the face of efforts to manipulate such information through false and misleading statement. Siegle, Weisein and Halpern [58] contend that transparency complements and reinforces predictability, reduces uncertainty, and inhibits and reduces the scope of corruption among public officials. Fung, Graham and Weil [59] recommend providing information that is easy for citizens to use; matching information content and formats to users’ level of attention and comprehension; and having flexible information policies that can adapt to users’ changing needs. Kuriyan et. al. [60] recommends the use of ICTs to reduce the distance between government service provider and user with more access to decision makers’ information and platforms to raise concerns and issues. While Peixoto [61] commends the use of media as one of the main vehicles that provide the public with accessible information, acting both as a mechanism for external control on government action, and as a platform for citizens to voice concerns. In their study on the impact of Freedom of Information (FOI) on the UK central government, Hazell and Worthy [62] find that the media has a key influence on the impact of FOI as a key user and defender of FOI and “a key conduit for shaping wider perception of FOI”.

**Future Implications**

There are numerous directions in which future research could develop based on these findings. Thousand of studies have investigated transparency and its consequences on public service delivery. However, few studies (if any) have examined the impact of political transparency on public service delivery in a developing country. One area for future research is replicating this research with other samples within a developed country. A second area for research would focus on the relationship between political transparency and public service delivery on a larger scale. This research could seek to explain the relationship between these variables on a regional basis and such like. Thirdly, the study ignored the other variables which can contribute towards public service delivery improvement. This calls for an enhanced sample size and extension to other local governments in Uganda.

**Recommendation**

This study provides insight understanding how governments can improve public service delivery through political transparency and contributes to the dearth of studies empirically testing the claims of political transparency advocates. This properly portrays the importance and benefits that citizen gain in the face of political transparency. Under circumstance of heightened political transparency, district officials are willing to constraint themselves in order to constraints their desires and make a credible commitment to public service delivery provision. Indeed these results, offer support from a new policy reason to augments that political transparency is an important driver of public service delivery. For scholars of policy diffusion, this paper highlights for local politics to encourage and promote
political transparency. For researchers and policy makers involved in designing, or promoting decentralization mechanisms, this paper highlights the need to consider local politics that may lead these mechanisms to succeed or fail. In the circumstance, what is especially needed is the creation of transparent institutions, including a change in mentality. If not, then perhaps, in the terminants of local government, Oxford:

“...naire method, interview...”

To gain maximum delivery of public service, governments use political virtues to increase performance. Political transparency as a political virtue is a helpful tool to meet the needs of the local populace especially in a decentralized system of governance. There are a lot of factors in political transparency which help governments in this matter. Visibility and inferability considered the important elements of political transparency which helps governments to satisfy the needs of the local populace in terms of public service delivery provision. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of political transparency on public service delivery in Agago district, Uganda. For this purpose questionnaire method, interview checklist and documentary analysis were used to collect data. After using different test in SPSS results showed that political transparency-visibility and inferability has strong positive impact on public service delivery. These results were supported by interview data as well as documentary evidences. The people of Agago are contended that political transparency promote and increase the provision of public service delivery. Results indicated that political transparency-visibility and inferability positively related with public service delivery.

**Conclusion**

Every government attempt to promote quality public service delivery and wants to attain maximum delivery through various political tools. To gain maximum delivery of public service,

**References**


NYU, the International Political Economy Seminar at Princeton, UCLA.


