

UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MASTER'S PROGRAM IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE STUDIES

**The effectiveness of local entities to citizens' complaints resolution.
Case study of Rulindo District**

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in Local Governance Studies.

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Declaration	iii
Certificate	iv
Acknowledgement	v
List of tables	vi
List of figures	vii
List of acronyms	viii
Abstract	ix
0. Introduction	1
0.1. Problem statement.....	3
0.2. Research questions	3
0.3. Research objectives	4
0.3.1. General objective	4
0.3.2. Specific objectives	4
Chapter 1. Literature review	5
1.1. Effectiveness	5
1.2. Local entities	6
1.3. Complaints handling mechanisms	7
1.4. The processes of handling complaint.....	9
1.5. The reasons for complaints persistence	10
1.6. Best practice for complaints management processes	11
1.7. Quality and skills for effective leader in charge of complaints handling	15

Chapter 2. Methodology	16
2.1. Research Approach	16
2.1.1. Instruments of data collection.....	16
2.1.2. Data Collection	17
2.2. Participants.....	19
2.3. Data analysis	20
Chapter 3. Data presentation and discussion	21
3.1. Data presentation.....	21
3.1.2. Factors that affect citizen satisfaction or dissatisfaction.....	22
3.1.3. Complaints handling mechanisms	24
3.1.3.1. The use of appropriate forums to make complaint	25
3.1.3.2. Citizen complaint handling	27
3.1.3.3. Complaint responsiveness and fairness	29
3.1.4. Challenges which constrain local leaders in implementing their responsibilities	31
3.1.4.1. Lack of equipment to handle complaints.....	31
3.1.4.2. Not being aware of his/ her role in the complaints process	32
3.1.4.3. Institutional capacity	32
3.1.4.4. Poor time management and Unplanned activities.....	33
3.1.5. Strategies to improve satisfaction in local entities.....	33
3.2. Discussion of findings.....	35
Conclusion and recommendations	36
References	38
APPENDIX	41

Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled effectiveness of local entities to citizens' complaints resolution, case study of Rulindo District submitted by me, for the fulfillment of a Master's degree to University of Rwanda, in Local Governance Studies is my own original work, it has never been submitted for fulfillment of requirements of any course of study. I also declare that no chapter of this report listed or incorporated in any other work of mine or others.

Signature:.....

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Certificate

Certify that the dissertation entitled effectiveness of local entities to citizens' complaints resolution, case study of Rulindo District is his own work and has been done under my supervision. It is recommended that this dissertation be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

Signature:.....

Name:.....

Title:.....

Address:.....

Date:.....

Acknowledgement

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Thank you

List of tables

<i>Table 1. Effective complaints management system.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristic of participants.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Table 3. Statistic of complaints handled through community outreach program.....</i>	<i>28</i>

List of figures

Figure 1. Complaints submitted to other institutions.....28

List of acronyms

AJB	:	Access to Justice Bureau
EP	:	Evening parents
CHM	:	Complaint Handling Mechanism
CM	:	Community Mobilization
CO	:	Complainant
COP	:	Community outreach programs
CW	:	Community work
FGD	:	Focus group discussion
GFP	:	Governance focal person
GoR	:	Government of Rwanda
GRM	:	Grievance Redress Mechanisms
GT	:	Grounded Theory
LA	:	Local Authority
LG	:	Local government
LGO	:	Local Government Ombudsman
MC	:	Mediation committees
MC	:	Municipal council
Minaloc:		Ministry of Local Government
Minijust:		Ministry of Justice
NGO	:	Non Government Organization
NCHR	:	National Commission of Human Rights
NST1	:	National Strategy for Transformation 1
OECD	:	Organization for economic co-operation and development
OO	:	Ombudsman office
PCHM:		Public Complaints Handling Mechanism
PMV	:	Parliament members visits
RGB	:	Rwanda Governance Board
UNDP	:	United National for Development Program

Abstract

This study aimed at finding out the root causes of dissatisfaction of citizens as one among factors that make people presenting their complaints to the high level authorities while they would have been resolved at local level through existing complaints handling mechanisms in Rwanda. The main objective of this research is to analyze how deeply local leaders handle citizens' complaints and to identify challenges which constrain those authorities while accomplishing their responsibilities. The methodology used to conduct this study was qualitative research where functional category based method employed to select respondents. Interviews and focus group discussion were conducted in order to collect data from respondents. The data was collected in Kinyarwanda language, transcribed and then translated into English as a research language. Coding system was applied to identify responses from individual interview and focus group participants. The study found that the dissatisfaction is due to the lack of trust among citizens to their closest leaders, getting responses which are different from the expectations and behaviors of both service providers and customers. However, citizens may also prefer to address their concerns to high rank authority hoping to get direct solution even though the claims require extra-means.

The study proved that citizens recognize the existing complaints handling forums and their effectiveness in responding to the requests of people but those forums are not efficiently implemented. According to the challenges, the research sorted out the lack of equipments, financial means and insufficient number of staff as barriers to the performance in lower entities. Despite many responsibilities, the study recommended local authorities to avail enough time and listen carefully complaints, handle them effectively aiming to satisfying aspirations of complainers and involve citizens themselves and other stakeholders in the process of handling complaints. Central government is recommended to empower local entities financially, in capacity building, augmentation the number of the staffs in order to help them to perform their duties.

Keywords: effectiveness, local entity, complaints, citizens, handling complaints

0. Introduction

In all countries around the world, including Rwanda, good governance is taken as the basis of development in any democratic form of government (RGB, 2018). It is apparently achieved while its major elements are met such as participation, rule of law, transparency, fairness and inclusiveness, responsiveness, consensus oriented, responsiveness, accountability, strategic vision, effectiveness and efficiency (UNDP, 1997). Besancon, (2003) says that governance is understood as the delivery of political goods beginning with security to citizens of nation-states.

However, to achieve these principles, Akpan, (2008) reveals that states and governments adopt the policy of decentralization which is perceived as a means of improving the efficiency and responsiveness of the public sectors. With the same perspective, OVE, (2001) argues that various reasons for linking decentralization with responsiveness to local demands and increased participation are usually based on a combination of efficiency, effectiveness and equality. Thus, Burall & Neligan (2005) in their research highlight that effective complaints and redress processes support the public accountability principles that underpin the efforts made in many jurisdictions to promote good governance while OECD (2001) strongly supports that engaging citizens in policy-making is widely considered as core element of good governance.

According to Dennis et al., (1983), the policy of decentralization has been attempted as a new ways of eliciting greater participation in development planning and administration. It is appeared to be at least a partial solution to their growing problem. Excessive centralization is viewed as the cause of poor performance and decentralization of one form or another as the corrective device. The main purpose of decentralization is to reduce overload and congestion in the channels of administration and communication. Thus, programs are decentralized with the expectation that delays will be reduced and that administrators' indifference to satisfying the needs of their clientele will be overcome. Therefore, decentralization is thought as a way of improving government's responsiveness to the public and increase the quantity and quality of the services it provides. It is a policy which helps implementers to manage public affairs effectively and efficiently.

The idea to carry out this research “*the effectiveness of local entities to citizens’ complaints resolution*” came after an observation made for several time on the big number of complaints presented by citizens when they meet the high rank authorities, especially the President of the Republic. Many people present their deepest need to present complaints so that everybody could wonder at first sight the role of local entities in the matter of handling complaints.

This study puts emphasis on how public entities deal with citizens’ complaints and grievances using existing complaints handling mechanisms. It focuses also on analyzing the facts that people are satisfied or dissatisfied, specifically paying attention on deep assessment of the root causes of dissatisfaction as one of factors that can make people claim to superior authorities without considering administrative channels. The researcher encloses the study in District of Rulindo as one among local entities in Rwanda.

NST1 indicates the enhancement of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to promote the culture of problem-solving in families and reinforce amicable settlement of disputes. Alternative mechanisms through which citizens’ complaints have to be handled locally in place in Rwanda include community assemblies (CA) “Inteko z’Abaturage”, mediation committees (MC) “Inteko z’Abunzi”, evening parents (EP) “Umugoroba w’ababyeyi”, governance month (GM) “Ukwezi kw’imiyoborere” and community works (CW) “Umuganda” (NST1, 2017-2024; EDPRS 2, 2013-2018) . Apart from these forums, there are other plate forms like Office of Ombudsman (OO), National Commission of Human Rights (NCHR) and parliament members visits (PMV). The top intent for these forums is to build citizen centered governance together with finding solutions to their problems.

However, analyzing the existing tools (complaints handling mechanisms) put in place to respond to citizens complaints and re-reading the mandate of decentralized entities on one side, and considering the number of citizens who present complaints or who manifest a need to complain to superior authorities when they meet on the other side, it immediately creates an empty space in the mind of the researcher which should be fulfilled by the study. Therefore, this study aims to discover where the gap is, how effectives are local entities in the matter of complaints resolution, what effect do different complaints handling mechanisms bring in reducing the number of people

who submit their concerns to high level authorities and what challenges do local leaders face in the process of performing their duties?

0.1. Problem statement

Many authors conducted studies on reasons of attempting decentralization policy; they revealed factors of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, they deeply lightened strategies set to resolve citizens' complaints like complaints handling mechanisms and talked about effective leadership and the best practice to manage complaints, etc. But, perhaps few of them even none has entered beyond to analyze the factors that push citizens to claim to very high authorities while various tools to handle complaints exist at local level. In Rwanda, the expectation from decentralized programs is to decrease overload and congestion in the channel of administration and communication. And also, to reduce delays an expecting that administrators' indifference to satisfy the needs and aspirations of citizens/clients.

In contrast, even if various complaints handling mechanisms exist and regularly operate at local level with single purpose to find out accurate solutions to the problems of people, it is still appeared a big number of citizens who submit their complaints to high rank authorities when they meet as if the existing mechanisms are not operational or concerned entities do not handle them effectively. Thus, the researcher wonders where resides the gap, how effective are local entities to citizens' complaints resolution, what is the reason of dissatisfaction as a main factor that makes people to complain to superior leaders while adequate mechanisms are available and what challenges that face local leaders during implementation of their responsibilities.

0.2. Research questions

After observing the numbers of citizens who present their concerns to superior authorities during their field visits, analyzing different complaints handling mechanisms in place as tools to resolve citizens' complaints in Rwanda and re-reading the purpose, mandate and responsibilities upon to local entities, the researcher conducted this study with aim to answer the following questions:

1. What are the root causes of citizens' dissatisfaction in the matter of complaints handling and what impact that various complaints handling mechanisms brought in reducing the number of people who complain to high level authorities?
2. Why do citizens frequently use to present their concerns to superior authorities while Government set different mechanisms to handle them at local level and how effective are local leaders in implementing existing mechanisms?
3. What challenges that local authorities face in the process of handling complaints and strategies to overcome them?

0.3. Research objectives

0.3.1. General objective

The main objective of the study is to analyze the root causes of dissatisfaction of citizens and the effectiveness of local leaders in the process of handling complaints using existing complaints handling mechanisms and to identify challenges that local leaders face during that process.

0.3.2. Specific objectives

Specifically, this study aims:

1. To discover the root causes of citizens dissatisfaction on the matter of complaints resolution and analyze the effect of existing complaints handling mechanisms in reducing the number of complaints to superior authorities;
2. To find out the real factors that make people to complain to high rank authorities while there exist complaints handling mechanisms at local level;
3. To identify challenges that local authorities face in the process of performing their responsibilities and to propose strategies for improving the level of citizens' satisfaction.

Chapter 1. Literature review

The chapter of literature review provides a comprehensive review of the research domains that are relevant to this study. This review includes theories, concepts and typical mode of effective leadership, mechanisms and strategies used to handle citizens' complaints. It notices also the functionality of local entities and the manner which influence complainants to be satisfied or dissatisfied with services provided by public servants, especially in local governments. The aim is to systematically highlight the way of responding to the research questions and to achieve the objectives specified in this research.

1.1. Effectiveness

Encyclopedia defines effectiveness as the capability of producing a desired result or the ability to produce desired output. When something is deemed effective, it means it has an intended or expected outcome, or produces a deep, vivid impression.

Mitchell (2012) underlines that defining effectiveness, however, is not without controversy. Forbes (1998) says that two main approaches have been used to study effectiveness: the goal attainment approach and the system resources approach. Organizational effectiveness is usually defined using the goal-attainment approach as the extent to which an organization achieves its objectives (Miles, 1980; Price, 1972). For example, a widely used effectiveness measure in public management research is the percentage of pupils passing a specified exam.

The system resource approach, on the other hand, defines effectiveness as the ability of organizations to exploit resources in their environments. From a system resource point of view, government effectiveness can be assessed in terms of acquiring resources, or inputs, that support the organization's survival. As Seashore & Yuchtman (1967) assert, good performance involves "the ability to exploit [the organization's] environment in the acquisition of scarce and valued resources to sustain its functioning" (393). To this end of sustaining the organization's functioning, an organization's inputs can be more critical than its outputs. Moreover, regardless of the organization's accomplishments, it must have the resources required to operate. Therefore,

effectiveness in acquiring resources (e.g., funds) is a key indicator of performance (Selden & Sowa, 2004).

It also interrelates with performance and efficiency. The action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function is performance. Some understandings tend to compare effectiveness with ratio which is totally false. The ration of the useful work performed by a machine or in a process to the total energy expended or heat taken in is efficiency while the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result, success is effectiveness (Rezaul K., 2016).

However, this study emphasizes on analyzing the degree and level which citizens are satisfied or dissatisfied about complaints resolution in local governments.

1.2. Local entities

In this research, “Local entities” is standing for local government which is defined as the process to exercise economic, political and administrative authority in the managing local affairs (Cheema,1983). It comprises all mechanisms and processes and even institutions through which citizens articulate their interests, mediate their concerns or differences and exercise their legal rights and obligation. Although, the study assesses how local leaders exercise their leadership and looks beyond on strategies used to resolve citizens complaints and analyze strength, weakness, opportunity they have to resolve them and threats they meet.

Pratt & Yongvanitt (2015), define a “Leader” as someone who exercises power on behalf of people not over them. According to Economakis (2012), leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. Normally, leadership is a service. Thus, leaders exist to serve a purpose for the people who have chosen them to lead their constituents. Therefore, at the local level, elected representatives may handle grievances and suggestions through a roster system or as part of their representative duties (Brewer B., 2007).

Palmer (2001) says that effective leaders were identified as those who displayed a transformational rather than transactional leadership style as measured by the multifactor

leadership questionnaire (Palmer B. et al., 2001). According to their empirical data, Economakis (2012) concluded that the majority of people look for and admire leaders who are honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. People everywhere want to believe in their leaders. They want to have faith and confidence in them as people. Also, they wish that the words from their leaders can be trusted; they believe that leaders have knowledge and skill necessary to lead. In addition, they are personally excited and very enthusiastic about the direction in which they are led. In anyway, credibility is the main foundation for the leadership. Thus, people don't hesitate to address the problems to their leaders believing to get good solution.

Therefore, a credible leader has to create a strong sense of community and set clear mechanisms to exchange with his fellows. He must be able to manage their complaints.

1.3. Complaints handling mechanisms

As the specific aim of the study is to identify key factors which make complaints persist while different handling mechanisms are in place, authors define complaint as “an expression of discontent by a customer/consumer, addressed to a service provider, third parties or consumer protection agencies in the event of service failure” (Ateke et al., 2015). These authors describe it as a set of behavioral and non-behavioral responses which are triggered by perceived dissatisfaction with a purchase episode (Singh, 1989 as cited Ateke, 2015). Halstead & Droge (1991) view complaints as actions that directly convey expressions of dissatisfaction following service deliveries that fall short of acceptable or tolerable standards.

Therefore, as it is supported by Keiningham et al. (2015), complaints exist when customers experience a service performance that falls below their expectation, and the consequent dissatisfaction they feel. Thus, satisfied customers are less likely to complain than ones who are dissatisfied. Brian supports the idea saying that complaints arise because citizens experience inappropriate or discourteous treatment, omissions, mistakes, faults, inconsistencies, misleading guidance, unclear procedures, or displayed bias or injustices in their dealings with public officials (Brewer, 2007).

Existing of complaints engages service providers to take responsibility of handling them. Taleghani et al. (2011) explain complaint handling as the procedures and actions of service providers aimed at addressing customer complaints and recovering dissatisfied customers.

Even if it is a responsibility of service providers to handle complaints, Sah & Rachel (2019) suggest that citizen must be engaged in project design. It is the same in handling complaints where citizens' engagement is a key element to make complainers satisfied. Thus, basing on principle of reciprocity of citizen engagement, the government is required to respond to citizen demands but it also extracts their input for consideration.

Brian (2007) underlines the existence of various mechanisms for responding to public grievances and providing redress in both developed and developing countries. Authorities at highest levels (Prime Ministers, Presidents or chief ministers) normally receive complaints and petitions that their offices address directly or pass to public servants for follow-up.

Still at National level, the Ombudsman is a citizen complaint handling authority whose office is empowered to investigate grievances and can often initiate direct investigations into administrative actions even when there is no specific complaint (Clark, 2005; Diamandouros, 2005). This office has expanded authority to investigate human rights violations reported. It is in his mandate to act as a link between the citizen, public, and private institutions and to investigate complaints of injustice, corruption and related offences in public and private entities. S/he is also to receive concerns from individuals and associations regarding the behavior of civil servants (Minijust, 2017).

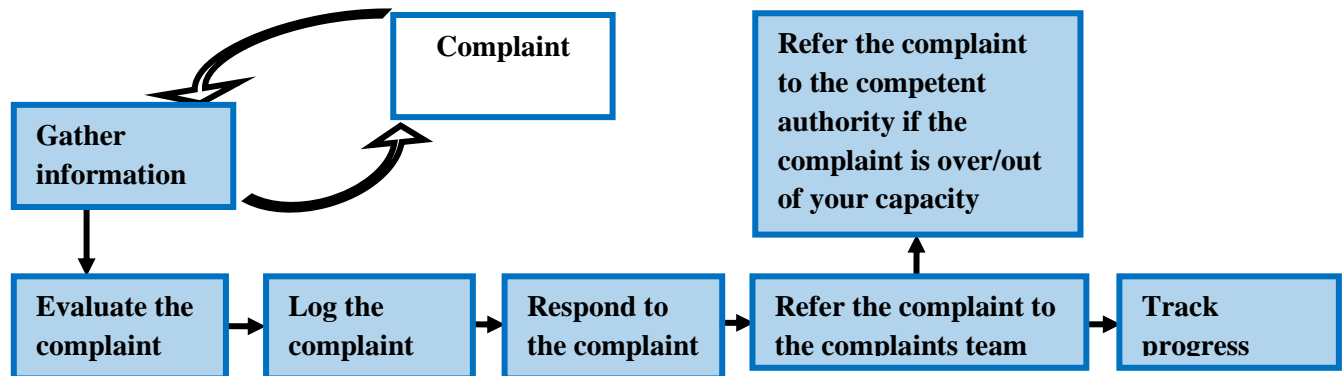
Apart from the Ombudsman office, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) also acts as an independent institution responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights in Rwanda. In the framework of protecting human rights, the Commission receives complaints, examines and investigates them (Minijust, 2017).

Similarly at the local level, elected representatives may handle grievances and suggestions through a roster system or as part of their representative duties. Government departments often have units or designated individuals to handle complaints together with supplementary appeal processes.

Particularly in Rwanda, in order to increase citizens' participation, Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) introduced home-grown initiatives such as the Governance month which mainly aims at solving citizens' complaints, fostering accountable governance and transparency (RGB, 2015).

1.4. The processes of handling complaint

The diagram below shows the steps to follow for handling complaints.



As it is shown in the diagram above, to gather information consist of gathering as much information as possible so that you fully understand the complaint and are able to decide if anyone else needs to be involved and what should happen next. Here below is important information to be found out:

- Detailed information of the complainant-full name, age, contact;
- What went wrong-exact and concise details of the problem, including dates and times if appropriate;
- What the effect was-the LGO calls this “injustice”. Knowing this will make it easier for you to express empathy, and will aid the complaints team in establishing more about the complaint and a potential remedy;
- Evidence - find out what supporting documentation or other evidence exists to support the complaint;
- Desired outcome - identify the outcome that the complainant would like to be for the complaint. Some complainants may have unrealistic expectations. For example, it is unlikely that the council will be able to give them large sums of financial compensation such as those awarded by the courts;

- Reasonable adjustments - find out whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made, and whether an advocate is required
- Safeguarding issues - be alert for any other action that may need to be taken in relation to a vulnerable adult or child.

Evaluate the complaint: Once you have all the information, you may decide if the complaint is something that should be dealt with by yourself or complaints team/committee. Sometimes complaints are made that should either be handled by another organization or are not appropriate to refer to the complaints team. For example: **Service request**-the complaint may actually be a request for a service, but could become a complaint if it is not dealt with properly.

Log the complaint: The complaints you receive could be made by e-citizen, letter, and telephone or in person. However a complaint is made, it is important that you keep a documented record of it.

Respond to the complaint: Once you have decided whether or not your council should handle a complaint, identified any reasonable adjustments required, raised any safeguarding issues and logged all the information, you are ready to respond to the complainant and refer the complaint to the appropriate place.

Keep track of progress: Check on progress with the complaints team. It is important to keep in touch with the complainant so that they feel supported and confident that their complaint is being processed.

Unreasonable and persistent: you may become aware of a complainant who persistently makes unreasonable complaints. Or, the complaint doesn't belong to your responsibilities. Refer these to competent organs.

1.5. The reasons for complaints persistence

According to Simon G.N& Anthony F. (2014), complaint may arise as a result of defective or poor product or service quality, unfulfilled expectations in the service encounter, or some unfulfilled promises given by the product manufacturer or service provider. Customers may complain about some attribute of a product or dimension of service quality that is perceived as dissatisfactory. Complaint may also result from dissatisfaction during the purchase, possession or

consumption of a product/service. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction of complainer may be strongly linked both with either his behaviors or the poor and quality service for providers.

Oliver (1980), views that dissatisfaction results from a discrepancy between customer expectation and perceived product/service performance. Day (1977) says that consumer's expectation is found to be a major factor affecting consumers' evaluation of their purchase experiences, it follows that, generally, consumers become dissatisfied when their expectations are not met by the current performance of a product or service. Consequently, they become disappointed and engage in complaining behavior.

Comparing to the author's observation, in the prevailing portrait of rural conflict in China, villagers are depicted seeking the help of higher authorities, including the courts, to fight injustices suffered at the hands of tyrannical and predatory local leaders. On the one hand, village leaders try to keep a lid on conflict by obstructing justice, often through intimidation tactics, especially when they are subjects of complaints from the villagers' perspective, on the other hand, resolution of a grievance typically requires the support of outside authorities "elite allies" far removed from the influence of local cadre networks (Ethan M., 2006).

Aggrieved villagers reportedly believe their chances of getting justice improve the further away from local leaders and the closer to the centre they seek help. Contrary, the author's survey indicates that local solutions, often with the involvement of village leaders are far more desirable and effective than higher-level solutions.

1.6. Best practice for complaints management processes

Mahadma (2014) gives orientation saying that complaints are received through various sources. Complaints from local government can also come to the center, where they are registered and reviewed by concerned teams to analyze the complaint. If the complaint is found to have a valid reason, it is referred to respective organ and simultaneously the complainant is informed.

But, according to Garrubba & Melder (2019), best practice for complaints management processes are widely reported and include the following: acknowledging complaints promptly; assessing complaints and assigning them priority; planning an investigation if one is needed;

investigating the complaint to determine the facts and options for resolution; responding to the complainant, including by keeping them informed of progress and providing a detailed response; providing a remedy where appropriate; advising on options for internal and external review if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the agency's response; considering if there are any systemic issues that warrant attention. For the authors, identified key areas of the complaints process are: collection of complaints, analysis of complaint data and action on complaints, as well as overarching directives (Mirzoev & Kane, 2018). The table below shows the effective complaints management system.

Table 1. Effective complaints management system

Essential components	Guiding principles
Commitment: Develop a culture that values complaint	Guiding principles for appropriate culture and organizational commitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People focus: Be open to complaints from members of the public about standards of service delivery and organizational policies, procedures and practices. Be committed to promoting and implementing an accessible complaints system as a means to address problems with service delivery and to enhance the performance of the organization and its staff. - Responsiveness: Respond to complaints in a timely manner. Recognize and reward good complaint handling by staff. - Objectivity and fairness: Address each complaint with integrity and in an objective and impartial manner. - No detriment: Take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint is made by them or on their behalf - Openness and Transparency: A positive, open and transparent attitude to receiving, managing and responding to complaints
Facilitation: Make it easy for people to make	Guiding principles for facilitating complaints: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visibility and transparency: Widely publicize information about

<p>complaints to your organization</p>	<p>how and where complaints may be made to your organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessibility: Implement a system to manage complaints that is easy to understand and accessible to people who may require assistance. - Supporting: Support and assist people who need help to make a complaint. - Flexibility: Be flexible in how complaints may be made to or about your organization. Ensure making a complaint is free of charge. - Acceptance: Accept anonymous complaints where they raise significant issues and there is enough information to be able to look into the issues raised.
<p>Resourcing: Appropriately train, empower and adequately resource staff managing complaint</p>	<p>Guiding principles for equipping staff to manage complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training: Provide appropriate training, support and resources to staff who handle complaints. - Recognition: Recognize and reward good complaint handling by staff. - Delegations: Provide staff with appropriate authority and guidance to be able to resolve issues that commonly arise in the handling of complaints. - Empowering: Empower staff to effectively implement the organization's complaint handling policies and procedures as relevant to their role.
<p>Learning: Analyze complaints and their outcomes to improve systems and processes</p>	<p>Guiding principles for learning from complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Record keeping: Have appropriate record keeping policies and procedures in place and implemented to ensure that adequate records are made and retained about the receipt, handling and outcomes of complaints. - Monitor trends: Organizations should monitor trends on a regular basis as part of their activities directed at continuous

	<p>improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous improvement: Regularly analyze report and review the subject matter and outcomes of complaints to measure the quality of the organization's service and make system improvements. - Integration: Use information gathered from complaints to review the products, systems, services and procedures or the organization as a whole.
<p>Guidance: Develop policies and procedures to guide staff in the management of complaint</p>	<p>Guiding principles for the development of policies and procedures for the management of complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity: Develop policies and procedures regarding how complaints will be received, recorded, managed and reported. - Availability: Ensure policies regarding how complaints will be managed are available and communicated clearly to the public and staff

Source: Garrubba M & Melder A. 2019. Best practice for complaints management processes and evaluation: scoping review. Centre for Clinical Effectiveness, Monash Health, Melbourne, Australia

As it is illustrated in the table above, in order to reach the satisfaction of the clients, the leader who uses to manage complaints must be committed firstly and develop a culture of valuing complaint, being open, responsiveness, transparent and fairness. Secondly, he/she must also facilitate complainants by making easy to complain while is necessary; promote the principle of visible and transparency, accessibility and flexibility to people. Thirdly, for best practice to manage complaints, it is better to conduct appropriate training for staff managing complaint and availing adequate resource required. Fourthly, another component to consider is learning. It is necessary to deeply analyze complaints and their outcomes to improve systems and processes. Fifthly and lastly, it is better to set guidance. With this, he/she must develop policies and procedures to guide staff in the management of complaint.

1.7. Quality and skills for effective leader in charge of complaints handling

Generally, in the minds of customers, a person who handles complaints is seen as leader. This one must be competent and competence is a key aspect of credibility. Thus, a leader, he may have a big vision for where he wants his organization, family or business to go, but without the skills and knowledge to get there, he will lose followers' respect and loyalty (Kouzes & Barry, 2012).

Therefore, a staff in charge of complaints handling should be skilled and professional. They must be trained and the training should include information about how to interact with beneficiaries about complaints, the organizations' customer service standards, and internal policies and procedures in relation to Complaints Handling (Michel A., 2009).

Kouzes & Barry (2012) tried to identify a key admired skills and characteristics required for a leader to be followed and believed. Credibility comes at first place. The following characteristics are also so important: Ambitious, caring, cooperative, dependable, fair-minded, honest, Independent, Intelligent, Mature, straightforward, competent, determined, forward-looking, Imaginative, inspiring, loyal, self-controlled and supportive. The leader who meets these characteristics and takes them into consideration while handling complaints of citizens, the result may be measurable and the rate of dissatisfaction would decrease.

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1. Research Approach

This study on effectiveness of local entities to citizens' complaints resolution is based on qualitative method which refers to analyze how individuals think and react. It is directed on understanding experiences and motivations (Mohamed, 2017). In order to collect data, the researcher, assisted by his note taker conducted individual interviews in safe conditions. And, focus group discussion was also conducted as an opportunity to observe the group interaction on the topic under the research (Morse & Field, 1995). We encouraged and ensured the participants to express freely their point of views on the level of involvement of local authorities in resolving complaints of citizens and the reasons of dissatisfaction of citizens as factors which make them to submit complaints to the superior authorities. To make the field works easy, the researcher firstly developed an interview and focus group discussion guide basing on the research questions. Participants were all consented and the researcher guaranteed them the confidentiality during the whole process of the research. With a respect of ethical consideration, participants permitted to use audio recorder to simply insure no any missing of information. As convened to keep confidentiality, the research did never mention anywhere the participants' names.

After individual interviews and focus group discussion, the researcher proceeded to direct observation within community assembly in Gasiza cell in order to collect analytical data through observing the process of addressing and handling complaints on the ground. Additionally, the researcher used to analyze documents as an instrument which can bring compliment information about the topic under the research.

2.1.1. Instruments of data collection

In this research, different instruments were used to collect data. Before starting the entire activity, we elaborated an individual interview and focus group discussion guide, availing prime materials such as note books, audio recorder and pens for researcher and his notes taker. After arranging all necessities for data collection, individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. As it was in the research orientation, direct observation has been done in order

to gather accurate information about how community assemblies as one tool of complaints handling mechanism operate, particularly about the processes of receiving and addressing complaints. During collecting data, the language used is Kinyarwanda.

2.1.2. Data Collection

To start field works, the researcher processed firstly an official contact with Rulindo District authorities for getting permission for conducting research in that District. Being officially allowed, the process of elaborating informed consents was used, all required documents to be used available, the leaders of Shyorongi and Bushoki sectors helped us to inform the participants about the research, after that, we convened the period for interview in each sector.

2.1.2.1. Individual Interviews

To collect data, interviews were organized in 3 separate days. One day in Shyorongi sector, another day in Bushoki sector. The last day was reserved for staffs and authorities at District Head Quarter. The researcher interviewed key actors in complaints handling processes both local leaders and beneficiaries of services (customers). For this approach, eleven persons participated in the interview including 2 leaders at sector level; executive secretary of Bushoki sector and civil registrar and notary officer in Shyorongi sector. Also, 2 staffs in charge of customer care in both sectors were interviewed. At cell level, the acting executive secretary of Bugaragara cell in Shyorongi sector and Gasiza cell in Bushoki sector have been interviewed because executive secretaries of those cells were in annual leave.

At District level, 4 persons participated in the interview including Director of good governance, a staff in charge of community mobilization (CM), the coordinator of the access to justice bureau (AJB) and assistant coordinator in charge of judgments execution. Apart from local leaders, the interview was also made to a citizen who had a complaint not yet resolved.

2.1.2.2. Focus group discussions (FGDs)

According to Nyumba et al. (2017), focus group discussion is a technique where a researcher assembles a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic, aiming to draw from the complex personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of the participants through a moderated interaction. It is an opportunity to observe the group interaction about the topic (Morse & Field, 1995). In this study, the moderator facilitated a focus group discussion between 6 persons (3 males and 3 females) known under “governance focal persons” or “imboni z’imiyoborere”. The subject was about reason of dissatisfaction of citizens as factor which make them submit their complaints to the high authorities ignoring the existence of complaints handling mechanisms; the level of involvement of local leaders in effective resolving citizens’ complaints and challenges as was set on FGD guide paper.

2.1.2.3. Observation

According to Hesham (2017), qualitative research designs are similar in characteristics such the researcher is considered the primary instrument in research. To conduct a qualitative research regardless of the approach, direct observation comes among the steps that the researcher must follow. Direct observation allows the researcher to collect detailed data through observing a site or activities. In the study, the observation has been used where researcher participated in the community assembly in Gasiza cell. The purpose was to follow the manner which local leaders deal with complaints presented by citizens and observe how citizens perceive feedbacks on their concerns. Another objective was to analyze the relevance of community assemblies as a tool used to handle citizens’ complaints.

2.1.2.4. Documents analysis

Mathews & Ross (2010) describe documents as written records about people and things that are generated through the process of living. The researcher made a careful search of the available documents connected to the topic under study including district annual reports (DAR), citizen report card (CRC) and the visit of parliament members report (VPMR).

2.2. Participants

The study was limitedly focused on authorities, employees and citizens of Rulindo District. All 17 sectors of Rulindo District did not participate in the research except only 2 selected sectors such as Shyorongi and Bushoki. The research was conducted in only 2 cells selected within these sectors namely Bugaragara cell of Shyorongi and Gasiza cell of Bushoki sector.

In collecting data, a total of seventeen (17) people participated in the study including ten (10) local authorities and employees at cell, sector and at district level (LA) and one (1) complainant representing citizens (Co). Six (6) people members of governance focal persons (GFPs) participated in a focus group discussion (FGD). Among all participants, eight people (8) are females while nine (9) are males. On educational level, only eight people hold a high level education, two persons are S6 holders and seven people are P6 holders.

2.2.1. Sampling and sample

The research sampled only 2 Sectors said above. And, within those sectors 2 cells were sampled, it means a one cell in each sector. The selection of research area was made on basis of their accessibility.

Target group in this study was especially local authorities and staffs at cell, sector and District level that are concerned with citizens' complaints. Secondly, the citizens were also targeted but the focus was strongly those who had unresolved complaints yet. On this category, the researcher interviewed a citizen met at Shyorongi sector; her complaint was not yet fully resolved.

Apart from categories above, the third target was also a focus group discussion composed with governance focal persons (GFPs) within sectors. GFPs are 2 persons at cell level (one female and male) selected by their neighbors basing on their integrity. The role of these persons is to help local leaders to raise awareness of citizens (mindset change) on public programs and policies. GFPs help people within their cell to analyze or assess together crucial issues that the community faces using citizen score card (CSC), arranging those issues on priority basis, then they try to find solutions for their own and make advocacy to superior institutions on big issues.

2.3. Data analysis

The recorded data from both interviews and focus group discussion were transcribed and translated from Kinyarwanda into English as described Bailey (2008). These records have been read many times to deeply absorb the content (Baribeau, 2009). During the process, the researcher used systematic examination of data to identify themes. The organization of data was done as defined Irwin (2013); Creswell (2013). In guidance of Beazley ideas, using codes, similar information was merged to formulate the major themes to answer the research questions (Beazley, 2007). Thus, realities and facts learnt through interaction, perception and discussion are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 3. Data presentation and discussion

3.1. Data presentation

3.1.1. Socio-demographic characteristic of the participants

As presented in previous chapter, seventeen people participated in this research, one side in individual interviews and other side in focus group discussion. Both women and men participated. On the educational level, some participants hold high level degrees, others are secondary and primary level holders as observed in the table below.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristic of participants

Research approach (RA)	Category& Code	Characteristics	Content	Frequency	Frequency %
Interviews (11 Participants)	Local leader/ employees (LA)	Gender	Female	4	36.3
			Male	6	54.5
		Education level	High	8	72.7
			Secondary	2	18.2
			Primary	0	0
	Complainant/Citizen (Co)	Gender	Female	1	9.1
			Male	0	0
		Education level	High	0	0
			Secondary	0	0
			Primary	1	9.1
Focus group discussion (6 participants)	FGD	Gender	Female	3	50
			Male	3	50
		Education level	High	0	0
			Secondary	2	33.3
			Primary	4	66.7
Total participants: 17					

As illustrated in the table above, participants in both sides tend to seventeen (17) persons due to eleven persons in individual interviews and six persons in focus group discussion. Total female participation is eight women (8) while nine (9) represents male. Regarding with educational

level, eight persons are holders of high degrees, four persons hold secondary certificates and five have primary education. In order to identify respondents, all participants are represented under particular code. The LA represents interviewees from local entities (district, sectors and cells), the code (Co) stands for complainant interviewed, and then, FGD represents participants in focus group discussion. Throughout analyzing data, each code is married with F or M to represent the type of gender for the respondent.

3.1.2. Factors that affect citizen satisfaction or dissatisfaction

According to various point of views expressed by participants and basing on arguments given by different authors, the research tried to find out key points corresponding with research questions. Thus, in the beginning, the researcher used to wonder why people use to present their complaints more likely to the high rank authorities while different mechanisms to handle them are in place in Rwanda. The way of responding to this assertion can refer to the factors that affect citizen satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

It is normal that in providing service to customers, some of them may be satisfied or not. It is an idea that Hempel (1977) supported by defining consumer satisfaction as "the extent to which expected product benefits are realized". Hunt stated that "satisfaction is not the pleasurable of the experience, it is the evaluation rendered that the experience is at least as good as it was supposed to be". Also, Swan & Trawick's (1979) research suggests that only confirmation of desired expectations would lead to satisfaction. However, Olive (1980) argues that dissatisfaction can result from a discrepancy between customer expectation and perceived product/service performance. According to Day (1977), consumers become dissatisfied when their expectations are not met by the current performance of a service. Thus, respondents supported this idea in the words below.

"Citizen can be dissatisfied because of not gaining from the response given at cell level as he/she had expected or the solution at sector level is not satisfying his/her expectations". (LA,F).

The interviewee used to quote a Rwandan say:

"...no any person who can be happy while he/she loses the trial". (LA,F).

Sometimes, customer's behavior can play an important role in satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Landon (1977) aligns with the idea that consumer complaint behavior appears to be a function of consumer dissatisfaction, the importance associated with that level of dissatisfaction, the expected benefit from complaining, and the personality of the individual. It seems clear that consumers who are dissatisfied are more likely to complain than are consumers who are satisfied.

According to Y Lu (2014), customer dissatisfaction weighs more heavily in terms of lowering customer loyalty than customer satisfaction does in terms of enhancing customer loyalty. In the same perspective, Harrison (2014) defends his point of view saying that dissatisfied consumer may decide to resolve his dissatisfaction in a private or personal way. The most private way is to do nothing at all and say nothing to anyone. Thus the dissatisfaction is felt but is then suppressed without having any effect on the individual's behavior.

Still on customer's behavior, some customers may not be satisfied because of their level of understanding things.

“There is a complainer who thinks that to address the problem to the visitor can bring a needed response than it can be for local leaders”. (LA, F).

Citizens themselves say that dissatisfaction can be resulted from negligence.

“There are some citizens who neglect local leaders considering them as lowers and incompetents to resolve their complaints”. (Co, F).

In contrast, citizens must administratively trust their leaders and respect them especially while they are accomplishing their responsibilities. In return, authorities as frontline employees should be competent and have knowledge about solving the problem at hand. Van Dolan et al. (2004) describe complaint handling competence as the extent to which employees can influence the outcome of the interaction through their skills. Complaint handling competence consists of social, professional, and methodological competence (Büdenbender & Strutz, 1996).

However, dissatisfaction of customers may be due to the service providers' behaviors even though Mattila (2001) believes that every individual perceives the seriousness of a (service) failure differently based on both situational and individual factors. Thus, a service provider who listen to the customer actively receive, process, and respond to messages in such a way that further communication is encouraged. For the complaint handling, listen carefully to citizen may lead to satisfactory.

“Some local authorities address the problems of citizens without caring well, not even understanding their nature and considering the manner in which citizens had already resolved them”. (Co, F).

Another issue raised is that local leaders do not have enough time to listen to citizens. This assertion notifies the response:

“There are leaders who give enough time to citizens to address their complaints and resolve them sufficiently, so that complainer goes with a satisfied heart”. (Co, F).

It is about this end, Carney (1996) argues that to be efficient in complaint management, the organization has to give priority to complaint handling, to improving the services and to avoiding customer losses. Also, Henneberg et al., (2009) have asserted that organizations must both process complaints effectively and demonstrate their genuine commitment to openness and empathy.

In this regard, the research went beyond to know exactly which mechanism could be most appropriate to handle complaints.

3.1.3. Complaints handling mechanisms

As it is said above, various mechanisms for responding to public grievances and providing redress exist in both developed and developing countries. In some countries, the highest level authorities receive complaints and petitions that their offices address directly or pass to public servants for follow-up (Brian B., 2007). Contrary, in Rwanda, receiving and addressing

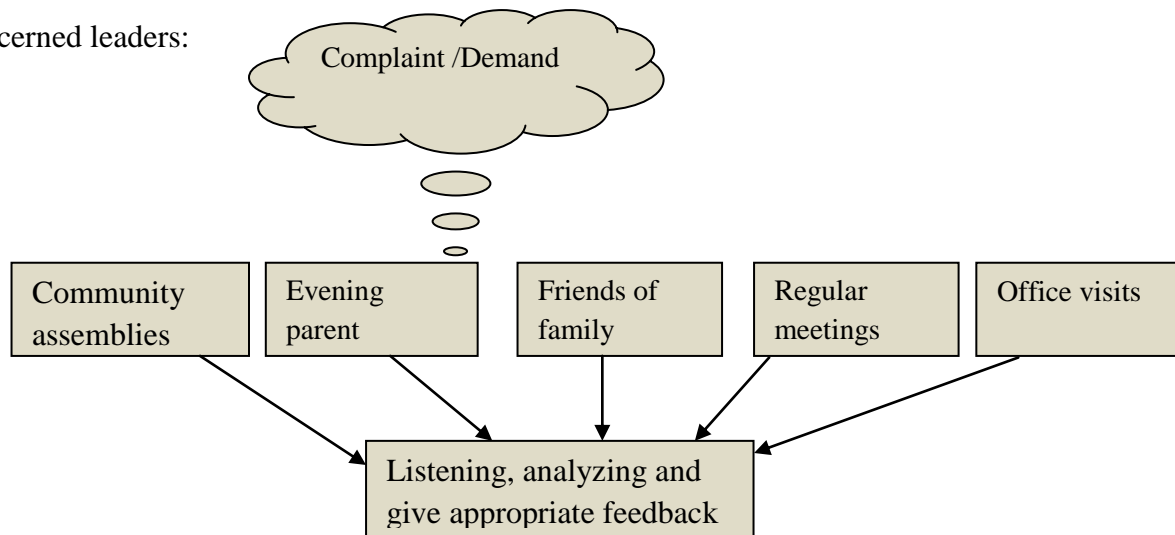
complaints is the most major task of local government where elected representatives are obliged to handle grievances through plate forms in place.

Apart from local leaders, the GoR in order to strengthen the citizen centered governance, put emphasis on citizen’s engagement and participating in solving their own problems (Minaloc, 2018/19-2023/24). This policy highlights community outreach programs (COP) and governance month (GM) among tools through which complaints and demands are addressed.

Participants listed various tools existing at local level for problem solving especially at family level such as conflicts management committees (CMC), friends of family “Inshuti z’Umuryango” and evening parents “Umugoroba w’ababyeyi” forums. They also underlined Mediator committees at cell and sector level without leaving behind other forums like community work (CW) or regular meetings with local leaders. Additionally, there are also governance focal persons known as Imboni z’Imiyoborere who intervene especially in family disputes.

3.1.3.1. The use of appropriate forums to make complaint

The diagram below summarizes channels through which complaints can be made directly to concerned leaders:



Analyzing channels which people can use to make their complaints, the diagram above can briefly indicate the functionality of existing mechanisms. Firstly, complainant may submit

his/her concern through weekly community assemblies, monthly evening parents or in regular meetings with authorities and citizens. He/she can also present his/her concern directly to leaders in their respective offices. But, the issues concerning families are several times raised by friends of family or one member of the family while that issue already became serious. After receiving these concerns, a leader is required to give feedbacks on each issue. Here the role of citizens must be applied.

However, even though these forums exist, citizens criticize them not to respond effectively to their complaints. Not because of inefficiency of the programs but due to other factors or ineffective implementation of them. Of course, it will not be possible to find one complaint mechanism that suits every community context. A mix of mechanisms should be used to ensure full coverage and access (Anna Wood, 2011).

Participant criticized community assemblies in these words:

“...Community assemblies?...they are organized every Tuesday of a week, in afternoon at three o'clock (3:00pm), but they start late, while people need to go back home for activities of evening”. (GFP, M).

“COP is an appropriate approach to handle community problems with which citizens have to play a great role in addressing their own complaints. But, this forum has been a main space to communicate public programs; receiving and handling complaints come after”. (GFP, M).

Some complaints are not given due to their nature. When the problem relates with conflicts between spouses is not talked.

“Another observed issue is that, during community assemblies, some people do not present their problems because of their nature. Evening parent deals only with family conflicts”. (GFP, M).

The Rwandan culture does not permit to reveal family's life.

“It is a shameful to say publicly the problem relating to the family life. If you have dispute with your spouse, it is not easy to present it in public except when the problem became very serious”. (GFP, F).

Some complainants prefer to reveal their problems in privacy area with a trusted leader, when the leader doesn't avail time to listen, the complainant takes his/her own decision either to say nothing or to go up to high authority. Thus, handling citizens complaints require full involvement of leaders because customers expect responses to their needs and fairness from them.

3.1.3.2. Citizen complaint handling

According to Mukumbareza (2014) in Turkyilmaz & Ozkan, (2012); Di Nisio & Di Battista, (2010), citizen complaint handling refers to intensity of complaints and the way in which the government manages these complaints. Chen, Huang & Hsiao, (2006) see that citizen complaint handling is measured in terms of ease of lodging complaints, response time to complaints lodged, and how well the complaints are handled. The table bellows figures yearly complaints received and handled through community outreach programs.

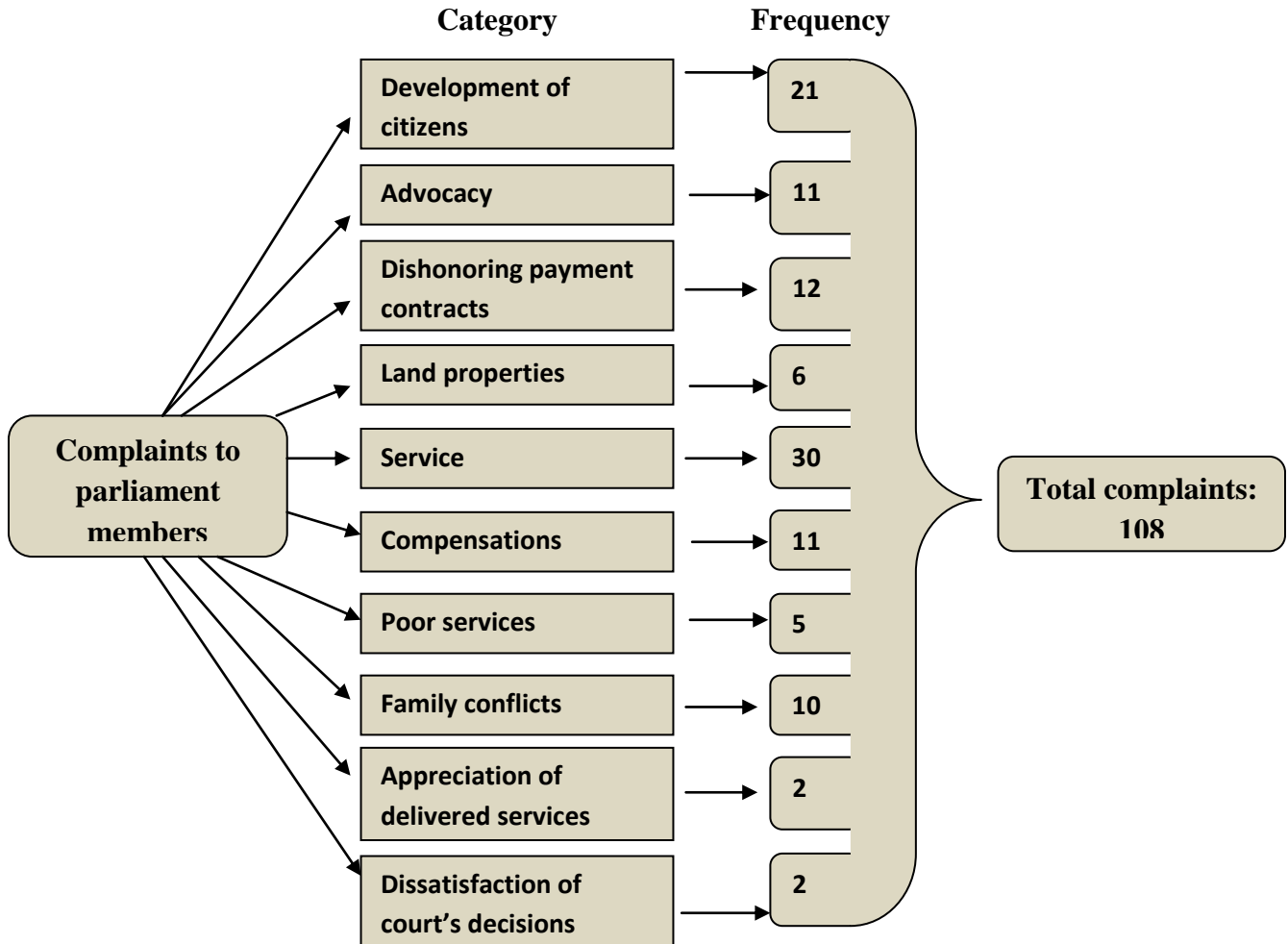
Table 3. Statistic of complaints handled through community outreach program

	Cases	Received	Resolved cases	Oriented to other	%
	Year	cases		institutions	
Rulindo District	2019-2020	664	648	16	97.6
	2018-2019	680	671	9	98.7
	2017-2018	3238	3224	14	99.6
	Total	4582	4543	39	99.1

Source: *Rulindo District annual reports 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020.*

As it is indicated in the table above, during three years, local leaders in Rulindo district handled four thousand five hundred and forty three complaints out of four thousand five hundred and eighty two received complaints while thirty nine cases have been oriented to other concerned institutions for handling.

Figure 1. Complaints submitted to other institutions



Source: Report of parliament members' visit in Districts, December 2019-January, 2020.

The figure above shows 108 petitions submitted by citizens of Rulindo District to parliament members while they were in ordinary visit within Districts. Among the petitions given, there are some which relating with development issues. i.e: access to electricity, proper water, maintained feeder roads and connect District with paved roads. Some questions require advocacy because they are not in the competence of local entities. There are people who claimed against companies which dishonored to pay their salaries. Other issues related with land property disputes, service, giving compensations against damaged properties for public interest, poor service delivery, family conflicts, dissatisfaction of courts' decisions and citizens who appreciate what they have achieved because of good leadership.

3.1.3.3. Complaint responsiveness and fairness

With regard to responsiveness and fairness in relation to complaints, 100 % of respondents indicated that local leaders due to many responsibilities do not have time to understand the complaint and make analysis before giving solution or advising to complainant on progress. In addition, all respondents indicated no monitoring on complaints had been undertaken. They don't even apologize if there is a delay in handling citizen's complaint while an apology can act as invaluable compensation and can go far in improving the relationship between the organization and its customer.

Normally, all complaints received would be documented in a "Complaints Register", investigate and responded to in a timely manner (World vision, 2009), but respondents contrast this by saying:

"Their (local leaders) time is very limited so that they could not listen to complainant that is the reason why anytime citizens meet high rank authority you find so many complaints". (Co, F).

Lovelock and Wirtz, (2007) and Brown, (2000) underlined that, in general, customers make their complaints in person to contact employees and therefore these employees play a crucial role in creating complaint satisfaction. As customer contact employees are considered to have a critical role in the recovery of failures (Maxham & Netemeyer, 2003; Boshoff & Allen, 2000), they should also play an important role for creating complaint satisfaction in face-to-face complaint handling encounters.

Contact employees who listen actively receive, process, and respond to messages in such a way that further communication is encouraged (Thorsten Gruber et al, 2011). Basing on this argument, we can enumerate principles for effective complaint handing such as Accessibility, Communication, Timeliness, Fairness, Credibility and Accountability.

- **Accessibility:** It is well publicized. It is easily accessed and understood, by staff and by the public.

- **Communication:** It includes early direct contact with the person making the complaint and continued contact through the complaints process. There is effective communication between customer and service provider regarding complaints. There is effective communication where the complaint involves more than one body. There is an effective recording and feedback loop so that improvements can be made.
- **Timeliness:** handling complaint should not take longer time, it would be done timeliness. The period between receiving complaint and resolving it must be short depending on the nature of complaint. It may require direct solution or there will be investigations and analysis.
- **Fairness:** It is clear about roles and responsibilities. Complaints are dealt with in an open-minded and impartial way. Responses are proportionate; one size does not fit all.
- **Credibility:** It is managed by someone who can take an overview and can implement changes in the complaints system. It includes a robust review by someone who has the independence and authority to ask questions, get at the facts and recommend changes in response to complaints. There is effective leadership that ensures that the complaints system and learning from it has a high profile across the institution.
- **Accountability:** Information is provided in a clear and open way and is properly managed. There is follow-up to ensure any decisions are properly and promptly implemented. There is regular monitoring to ensure timescales and satisfaction levels are met. There is periodic review of the process, to keep it up to date and keep the public informed.

Even if some participants accuse local leaders to not have time to receive and handle effectively complaints, others suggest that there should be a synergy in finding solutions to the problems. Executive secretary of sector must partner with other stakeholders to receive and address citizens' issues. Even citizens themselves must be fully involved. Typical example is conflict management committee in Bugaragara cell, Shyorongi sector composed with different stakeholders including trustworthy persons.

“Executive secretary is not necessarily only he who must deal with citizens’ complaints, other stakeholders and even citizens must be involved. They are them who know the problems of their neighbors”. (Co, F).

However, the process of handling complaints in local governments may be affected by various challenges that face service providers.

3.1.4. Challenges which constrain local leaders in implementing their responsibilities

The scope for effective and accountable decentralized governance varies greatly between countries, depending on historical, economic and political conditions. Typically, though, performance and accountability of sub-national or local governments are constrained by a number of factors: limited resources, weak institutional capacity, inadequate mechanisms of accounting and accountability, and limited availability of information (Nick D. 2005). In addition to that, there is also a challenge relating to citizens engagement and rapidly evolving technologies and socio-economic demographics. As a result, service levels fall far short of what is required. However, the study strongly focuses on factors which affect citizens' satisfaction.

3.1.4.1. Lack of equipment to handle complaints

As a leader, it is a compulsory to receive all kinds of complaints, from all kinds of people. To be able to handle complaints effectively, a leader needs to be equipped himself with information that will help him to decide what the next steps should be (LGO). Therefore, he must be able to think about the consequences when a complaint is not resolved.

These ideas are similar with what has been responded by a participant who had unsolved problem:

“Sometimes, local leaders handle the problems without any information; they even don't want to hear the manner how citizens were handled them before, ignoring that citizens have more information on that complaint”. (Co, F).

The result when complainant is not satisfied with a local authority's response is that, he/she may challenge it via court proceedings, an ombudsman scheme or other high level authority office. However, when the complaint is more complicated, the authority himself refer it to either ombudsman or in the courts if it relates with legal procedures or in other competent organs.

3.1.4.2. Not being aware of his/ her role in the complaints process

A leader is considered as councilor/advisor, he/she needs to find out as much as possible about any complaint you receive and then decide the most appropriate way to respond to it. Being familiar with counseling complaints procedures will help him/her to advise the complainants on how to go about submitting their concerns. And, as authority, he/she is supposedly give a support to his/her line authorities at lower level by making sure that they understand the procedures and, keeping in touch with them till complaint is processed. A crucial part of his/her role is to identify any reasonable adjustments that need to be made, so that he/she can ensure these are accounted for when the complaint is processed.

Employees at sector level support the argument above saying like this:

“there is a big challenge when a complainant doesn’t met his/her expectations, he/she goes at your superior, then your boss calls you asking why you didn’t resolve the citizen complaint, and I immediately tell him to support me because I have done what I was able to do. So, synergy is necessary in citizens’ complaints handling”. (LA, F).

3.1.4.3. Institutional capacity

Nick (2005) supports the idea that local governments often suffer from weak institutional capacity. Decision making processes are unsystematic, mechanisms of accountability between officials and elected representatives are inadequate, and there is a shortage of officials with the necessary technical, managerial and financial skills. This is often due to the lack of financial resources to attract and retain high calibre staff. Dennis et al. (1983) prove that decentralization was weakened by the failure to transfer sufficient financial resources to those organizations to which responsibilities were shifted. As a result, service levels fall far short of what is required. This affects totally the process of handling complaints because if the received complaint requires deep investigations and while concerned authority doesn’t have means to descend to the field, already procedures shall be paralyzed and complainant will not be responded satisfactory.

Almost all participants underlined this challenge as very crucial and all of them raised the problem of insufficient operating funds in governance of lower level. It is also added a big problem of insufficient number of staffs comparing to the responsibilities upon to local governments.

3.1.4.4. Poor time management and Unplanned activities

Participants revealed that in LG, staffs implement activities that they didn't plan before. Normally, LG operates as implementing organ not as policy making institution. Being implementing organ, each Ministries and public institutions implement their duties through LG. Therefore, ministries and public institutions often call local leaders to participate in constant meetings and workshops while meetings were not planned by the local authorities. And even if were planned, meetings are too many to get time to provide services.

Citizens criticize the ways on which services are delivered:

“Authorities do not have time...really, they don't have time. It means that you may come as example seeking local authority for any demand/complaint, when you start to tell him/her, the telephone rings, immediately he/she tells you 'sorry, go out for a moment I am going in this and that'. Do you understand, Authority, then, it is finish. He/she may also tells you 'wait for a moment I will come to see you, you stay there sitting and sitting like this manner we sit, you wait and wait until you become tired and you go back home...' (it means that leaders don't have enough time?) Yes, they don't have enough time” (Co, F).

3.1.5. Strategies to improve satisfaction in local entities

Referring to the constraints defined by Nick (2005), weaknesses and challenges shown above could be moved out on partnership with various stakeholders. On one hand, the central government as policies makers must continue to play a key role to ensure the functionality of local institutions and prevent any kind of corruption at local level as a barrier against quality

service delivery. Also, it is required to strengthen capacity building for staffs and financially empower local governments (cells and sectors) and augmenting the number of staff.

On the other hand, local leaders must use effectively the mechanisms in place to resolve citizens' complaints. Citizens ask local authorities to involve themselves in a deep process of understanding complaints, listening carefully to their clients in order to satisfy their needs.

“Local leaders should value complaints of citizens; they must avail enough time to understand their problems. After a certain time, they must give feedback to the service seeker, isn't it?”. (Co, F).

Because of many responsibilities, authorities cannot satisfy the needs of citizens above all in the matter of complaints, reason why there needs involvements of others.

“If you look at local level, leaders seem to be volunteer workers and they have many responsibilities, so, how can they satisfy people while they do not yet accomplish what they are asked by their bosses? It is impossible”. (FGD, F).

They (local leaders) have to engage citizens themselves in the process of handling their own complaints, because they are them who have full information, and normally citizen talks freely to her/his neighbors.

“Citizens tell freely their concerns to the GFPs more than they do to those leaders. Do you know why? They look us as neighbors, we are known each other. We sit together to assess the problem till we reach the root cause. We make conclusion together. She/he goes satisfied”. (FGD, M).

However, the performance in local government is not a concern for only leaders, everyone has an obligation. Citizen is the centre of good governance, therefore, authorities are primarily required to empower citizens, to raise their mind, engage them fully in governance activities including complaints management.

3.2. Discussion of findings

Firstly, the results on factors that affect satisfaction or dissatisfaction strongly reveal that dissatisfaction itself causes customer complaints. Dissatisfaction may be due to the lack of trust; staffs who handle complaints must interact with customers and trusted each other. The main aim of citizen satisfaction is to gain citizen trust (Hao, 2010). Some complainants become dissatisfied because they don't meet their expectations, others make unreasonable complaints. But, results of the study show that appeared dissatisfaction is linked both with either the behaviors of complainant or service providers. In addition, citizen may give a complaint which doesn't belong to local government responsibilities. However, the study revealed that for several time citizens submit their concerns to higher authority hoping to get direct responses even though what they claim require extra-means.

Secondly, the results of this study show that existing forums to handle citizens' complaints are more appropriate and contribute effectively in management of citizen complaints but some time these forums are not efficiently implemented. In contrast, there are issues which cannot be handled publicly because of their privacy; others belong to the competence of other organs which do not use the same processes of handling complains as local entities. Those issues are more likely to be delayed until they are submitted to superior authority.

Thirdly, the study proved that local entities are challenged with a big set of responsibilities so that some activities are too slow than they would be. The lack of sufficient equipments, low number of staffs, financial means and unskilled personnel in complaints and customers' needs management stand as crucial barriers in the performance of lower instances.

Forth and finally, the results of the study have found that local leaders fulfill many responsibilities. It is suggested that the engagement of different stakeholders including citizens themselves is a gate way to raise the performance of basic institutions. Making a good planning of actions can also contribute to the success. However, police makers might empower local governments in developing policies and procedures regarding how aspirations of citizens will be well managed and reported satisfactory.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to find out root causes of citizens dissatisfaction which can be factors that make people submit their concerns to superior authorities without considering the existing complaints handling mechanisms. As objective of the study, the research focused on analyzing the ways how local authorities effectively handle citizens' complaints, assessing the relevance of existing mechanisms set to handle complaints and identifying challenges that local authorities face in the process of implementing their responsibilities including finding solutions to citizens complaints and propose strategies to remove those barriers.

Qualitative approach was used to conduct this research. Participants were selected basing on their functional categories. The researcher used individual interviews and focus group discussion to collect data. And also, observation and documentation have been conducted to get accurate information. The Kinyarwanda language has been used in collecting data. Recorded information has been transcribed and translated into English.

In order to easily identifying participants' views, both individual interviewees and FGD members; the researcher applied a coding system. Codes were grouped by categories, and then merging similar codes into themes relatively with the research questions.

After analyzing and discussing data, the results of the study identified some factors that may cause citizens dissatisfaction such as lack of trust among customers and service providers, behaviors of both sides, responses which don't meet the expectations, seeking direct responses from high authorities etc. However, citizens recognize the existing mechanisms set to handle complaints even if sometime they don't implement them efficiently.

Among challenges, the study point out insufficient equipments in local entities, low number of staffs while there is a huge set of responsibilities, financial means and unskilled staffs in complaints management. The study ended by suggesting that both central and local governments to work interactively, engage citizens and others stakeholders in order to effectively reach the satisfactory goal.

Recommendations

The ways which authorities handle complaints or the manner which they pursue issues of service improvement contribute to how effective they are as civil servants. Leaders exist to serve a purpose for the people who have chosen them to lead their constituents. The satisfaction and participation of citizens constitute a basic tool of measurement of performance. Basing on results of the study, the researcher suggests to local authorities, police makers and citizens to imperatively work together for the interests of people because citizen is the center of governance.

Particularly, in order to arise citizen's satisfaction, local leaders are recommended to respond to complaints in a timely manner, to be positive, open and transparent in receiving, managing and responding to complaints. They must address complaints with objectivity and fairness. Central government as policy maker is suggested to empower staffs at local level to effectively implement the organization's complaints handling policies and procedures as relevant to their role. Citizens are recommended to trust their nearest authorities and interact actively with them. Stakeholders and citizens engagement in the process of handling complaints is a key strategy for success.

Regarding with existing mechanisms, the effect is apparently un-discussable. Hence, policies and programs implementers are advised to use them efficiently with a unique purpose to improve participation and effectively respond to as many as possible requests of people. However, concerning with the privacy of some complaints, involved leaders should implement a system to manage such complaints, give support and assist people who need help to make his/her complaints in safety condition.

Finally, despite many responsibilities for local institutions, establishing a plan of action and implementing rigorously the provisions, it should be one of strategies to reduce congestion of the overloaded works. Central government is strongly recommended to empower local entities firstly in providing appropriate trainings to staffs. Secondly, give a financial support in order to improve their equipments, facilitate them to accomplish well their duties including citizen's complaints handling. Lastly, to designate where possible a particular staff responsible for only citizens complaints management, monitoring and assessing the outcome.

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APPENDEIX

1. Recommendation letter from University of Rwanda to Rulindo District introducing student and requesting assistance during the research
2. Letter from Nsengimana Oswald to Mayor of Rulindo District requesting assistance in the research
3. Admission letter from Rulindo District allowing the student to conduct the research in District.
4. Consent form used to conduct interview and focus group discussion.