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Assessment on the implementation of Public Complaints Desk towards Improvement of Public Service Delivery among Local Government Authorities in Tanzania

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Abstract: The need for transparency in public service delivery is a growing concern among public and private entities in Tanzania. To achieve this need the government established mechanisms for checking public entities' responsiveness to transparency in public service delivery. One of these mechanisms is the Public Complaints Desk hence forth (PCD). One of the purposes for PCD establishment was to ensure that citizens receive quality public services and citizens' voices act as feedback to their service provider counterparts. This paper reports findings from an empirical study assessing the implementation of PCD in two Local Government Authorities in Tanzania (LGAs). Data collection involved interviews with key informants, document analysis and observation. Analyses based on description of how participants conceived the process of complaint management and the meaning these conceptions hold towards effective complaint management and public service delivery improvement in respective LGAs. Results seemed to reveal gaps in information flow between PCD and LGA's departments and units; lack of information on customer satisfaction with complaint handling response, and cases of inconsistency between the complaint management process in LGAs with instructions provided in the complaint management guide. This paper proposes a model for complaint management that improves the complaint management flow including a mechanism for tracking customer satisfaction with complaint handling and use of complaint information to trigger organizational learning for service delivery improvement in LGAs.

Key words: *Complaint; Public Complaints Desk; Public Service delivery*

1.0 Background of the study

Across the world, the pursuit of good governance pillars in public service delivery is a growing concern among nations in the world for sustainable governance (Edgar, Marshall and Basset, 2006; OECD, 2015; URT, 2012). This created a need to develop mechanisms for checks and balances to ensure quality service delivery to the public. Public Complaints Desk (PCD) is one of the mechanisms established by governments in order oversee public entities' pursuit of transparency in service delivery in a view for improvement.

At international level, Transparency International (2016:3), emphasizes that governments, companies, organizations and individuals are transparent when any of these entities and individuals is, "being open in the disclosure of information, rules, plans, process and actions". In order for entities to pursue this obligation, complaint redress mechanism like PCD in Tanzania, are established to enable citizens address complaints related to a particular institution or organization. The role of the redress mechanism is to ensure that these complaints are

effectively reviewed and responded to, based on national, international or specific organizations' standards.

In Africa, the inception of PCD idea can be traced from 1970s to 80s when different countries adopted decentralization policies in order to avail public services closer to people (Awortwi, 2011). Like other African countries, the establishment and implementation of PCD in Tanzania runs parallel with decentralization process specifically the enactment of the Local Government Reform agenda of 1996 (URT,1998). This agenda was translated into a government policy for decentralization by devolution (D by D) published in the policy paper on Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) of 1998 and officially set to operate from the year 2000 (URT, 1998). One of the key objectives of the LGRP which also is the substance for this paper was to improve service delivery at the local level. This objective is also articulated in Article No.8 (1) (c) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania 1977 (URT 1995) which states that;
"... the Government shall be accountable to the people; (d): the people shall participate in the affairs of their Government in accordance with the provisions of this constitution."

In-line with this constitutional submission, public organizations cling to the people (the public) who are the bona fide beneficiaries of quality services supplied by the public organizations. On the other hand, citizens reserve the right to lodge complaints against an individual, unit or department in the public entity that infringes citizens' right to quality public services. This right underpins the need for implementation of PCD in public entities.

This study was triggered by the challenges facing public organizations in the world and Tanzania in particular in effective utilization of public complaints as feedback on the organizations' pursuit for service delivery improvement (Boughen and Swetman, 2010; Shah, 2015; Wood, 2011). In Tanzanian context, some of the challenges include weak service delivery in public entities which contravenes with the requirements provided by the clients service charter (Ngowi, 2013), and persistence of ethical misconducts like; favoritism, use of abusive language to customers, absenteeism and overall lack of respect to other public servants as noted by Sikika (2010).

In ideal situation, the relationship between organizations with their customers is ought to exhibit an interdependence like the two sides of the same coin. This is due to the fact that, public and private organizations provide goods and services needed to meet customer needs (Bolkan, Griffin and Goodboy, 2014). Unlike private organizations, customers in public organizations like LGAs in Tanzania are all citizens in particular LGAs with statutory right to benefit from goods and services provided by respective LGAs.

In Tanzania, PCD operations are guided by the government complaint management guide (URT, 2012). This guide articulates the government expectations in complaint management as strongly stated in the authoring statement posited by the permanent secretary public service management who argue that;

"This process (meaning complaint management) *shall enable public institutions to transform themselves* (through learning and self appraisal) *as a result of using complaints as customers' feedback on service delivery for organizational improvement…the process shall strengthen*

internal organizational capacity to recognize, process, respond and consequently use complaint information to improve service delivery." (p.v).

This statement reveals the nation's rationale for initiating complaint redress mechanism with improving service delivery to citizens as an optimum goal. It further emphasizes on the need for public organizations to consider complaints as feedback on the performance of organizations in service delivery to citizens in Tanzania.

Studies by Straus and Seidel, (2005), and Vos, Huiteman and de Lange-Ros, (2008) differentiate complaint handling with complaint management based on the premise that, handling of complaints stands for operational activities directly aimed at helping customers resolve their complaints. On the other hand, managing complaints entail overseeing complaint handling which consist of other indirect business of planning and control of complaint handling and long term analysis of complaints in order to identify and review possible felt problems within organizations' internal and external service delivery processes. In view of these studies, the scope of complaint redress for government organizations and institutions like LGAs in Tanzania involves both complaint handling done by PCD and complaint management involving PCD with other actors within the LGA system. Together, the processes of complaint handling and management are guided by the complaint management guide (URT, 2012).

In ordinary usage, a complaint is an expression of grievance or resentment (World web dictionary). This is similarly conceived by Bonion and Warner, (2014:9) who argue that, a complaint is 'a specific grievance of anyone who has been negatively affected by an organization's action or who believes that an organization has failed to meet a stated commitment.

Complaints are expressed against individuals, sections, units or departments responsible in fulfilling some obligations which form part of, or complete the relationship between service provider and service beneficiary in this case the public based on the afore noted principle of public entities accountability to the citizens (Brewer, 2007).

Complaint redress mechanisms like PCD occur in different forms. Ringold *et al*. (2012), classify these redress mechanisms into three forms. The first is units from within government organizations or agencies. These redress mechanisms consist of complaint offices, communication channels and websites set by the government to harness complaints about programs or services set to be provided to the public by the government as the main provider or through donors supporting government programs. This form of complaint redresses mechanism is similar to PCD implemented in Tanzania LGAs as provided by the public complaint management guide (URT, 2012).

The second complaint redress mechanism is independent redress institutions. This consists of diverse set of institutions that operate outside the formal government bureaucracy such as tribunals, civil society organizations, sector specific entities like labor relations board among others (Ringold *et al*., 2012). What differentiates independent redress mechanisms with units like PCD is that, the units within government organizations are capable of taking immediate actions against an individual or public entity directly implicated in the complaint. This can take place

when the incumbent is found guilty of an incidence that breaches the public service regulations or any such regulation that binds the incidence committed. In contrast, the independent complaint redress institutions provide advisory judgment only.

The third complaint redresses mechanism is a function within the judicial systems. A court as a judicial organ may act as a complaint redress mechanisms depending with the configuration of the local legal traditions. In this mechanism, courts can hear complaints and request for redress regarding the failure of service providers to comply with their statutory and contractual obligations, and can rule out for review of the regulations that govern service delivery (Ringold *et al*., 2012).

In public service perspective, people express complaints when they are unhappy with a decision, quality of service, the process involved in service delivery and the unacceptable behavioral traits demonstrated by service providers in a particular entity serving the public (Brewer, 2007; Sikika, 2010). Since quality service delivery is the primary concern, the need to develop mechanisms for receiving, processing, reporting and using complaints based on outside-in frame of reference is indispensable. Coats and Passmore, (2012) consider outside-in frame of reference as utilization of feedback from service users to inform service providers of the quality of services provided. In so doing, service providers learn from complaints and understand the point of weakness towards envisaged service quality and transform their entity for improved service delivery.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

PCD is set at the premise that public service delivery adheres to the principles of good governance including accountability and transparency as articulated in action plan for the defunct open government partnership (URT, 2012). In order to ensure that public entities are accountable and observe transparency in their service delivery to citizens, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania developed a guide to oversee PCD implementation in LGAs among other government organization (URT, 2012). Moreover, the operation of PCD activities like activities in other public entities in Tanzania is guided by the Clients' service charter (URT, 2015).

Despite the existence of such important guides in open access, service delivery in LGAs is still complained against. While the public expect quality services from public entities, sometimes the expectation has never been attained due to existence of some public servants who do not transact their roles according to the expected public service conducts and standards as reported by Sikika, (2010) and Ngowi, (2013) respectively. Notwithstanding these findings, there is no sufficient body of knowledge from Tanzania perspectives on what LGAs learn from complaint management process, and whether how PCD is implemented benefits the citizens and the LGAs as envisioned by the complaint management guide. These concerns triggered researchers to conduct this study in order to contribute in bridging the identified knowledge gaps.

1.2 General objective

To assess the implementation of PCD towards public service delivery improvement among LGAs in Tanzania

1.3 Study questions

What are the views of PCD staff and HoDs on the process of complaint management?
What are the views of PCD staff and HoDs on the contribution of PCD in improving service delivery?
What are the views of PCD staff and HoDs on opportunities and challenges in the utilization of PCD in improving service delivery?

2.0 Methodology

This paper is based on a qualitative study that sought to assess the implementation of PCD towards public service delivery improvement in two Tanzanian LGAs. Nested in interpretive paradigm, the study sought to describe individual participants' experiences on how PCD implementation is conceived and implication of this conception in service delivery improvement. According to Kivunja and Kuyini, (2017), interpretive world view strives at understanding individuals and their interpretation of the world around them. Based on this belief, knowledge is generated based on subjective interpretation of individuals' experiences, and what is real is subject to multiple interpretation. The choice of the world view is based on the nature of the study which requires precise focus to specific unit (PCD) within LGAs and seeks for in depth understanding of how the process of complaint management is implemented through PCD.

The study adopted phenomenography design. According to Marton, (1994), phenomenography aims at understanding different qualitative ways in which participants experience, conceptualize and perceive the phenomenon. In this study, researchers' target phenomenon is PCD implementation in the Tanzania LGAs as is conceived by heads of departments and PCD staff in respective LGAs. The choice of phenomenography is based on the need for an objective way to study qualitative experiences. According to Alsop and Tompsett, (2006), phenomenographic studies ensures objectivity through focusing on multiple data sources to understand individuals' conception of the phenomenon.

2.1 Study area

The study was conducted in Kondoa and Mpwapwa LGAs in Dodoma Region of the central Tanzania. The choice of these LGAs was purposive based on existence of functional PCD units and availability of PCD staff working in the units and heads of departments who had experience in complaint management. According to Creswell, (2012) one of the major criterion for selection of study location, sites and participants is being information rich. This was observed by researchers as an important condition for the choice of the study sites and participants.

2.2 Population and sample

The study population was PCD staff and head of department (HoD) in respective LGAs. The choice of the population was purposively done because PCD staff and HoD are key actors in complaint management in light of complaint management guide (URT, 2012). Based on the sensitivity of information in the PCD unit, the study sample consisted of one (01) PCD staff from each LGA. On the other hand the study involved HoDs for Human Resource Management in Kondoa and HoD for land in Mpwapwa. The choice of HoDs based on their experience in handling complaints directed in their departments.

2.3 Data collection methods

Data for this study were collected through interviews with key participants including PCD staff and heads of department for human resource management and land for Kondoa and Mpwapwa LGAs respectively. Another data source was documents. The choice of these data collection methods was made purposive because of the nature of the study problem which required individuals' experiences and need for documents to verify accomplished PCD activities. Specific documents required as recommended in the complaint management guide (URT, 2012) Data collection was guided by an interview guide for PCD staff and head of departments (Appendix 1) and document analysis protocol (Appendix 2).

2.4 Data analysis

Data analysis was done in line with PCD's adherence to complaints handling guide (URT, 2012). Content analysis was made where researchers described individual study participants' conception of how PCD was implemented and the meaning these conceptions hold in line with complaint management guide and service delivery improvement.

Data preparation included transcription of data collected through interviews and documents into verbatim by typing in word processing application. This was followed by thorough review of the data by the researchers. This review highlighted segments of meaningful texts, phrases and sentences relevant for the study. These segments were assigned codes related to particular segments as suggested by Creswell (2012). Researchers searched and combined codes with similar content into new categories indicating issues and ideas relevant to the study (Denscombe, 2007). Researchers reviewed the emerging themes across categories based on converging ideas across study participants and data collection methods across sites. In each theme researchers identified excerpts as evidences to support interpretation of findings.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Views of PCD staff and heads of department on the process of complaint management

In order to understand the complaint management process through PCD, researchers reviewed the complaint handling guide (URT, 2012). The guide reveal that complaint handling process involves the role of PCD unit in complaints receiving, documenting, analyzing, distributing to relevant department or unit where the complaint relate, monitoring handling process and sharing the resolution attained to the customers (URT, 2012:13). To understand what LGAs afforded, researchers interviewed the PCD staff and relevant Heads of Department (HoDs) who had experience in complain handling as were found in their work stations in Kondoa and Mpwapwa LGAs.

Findings seemed to reveal that, complaints management process was conceived differently in different LGAs. This difference lead to variations in the way complaint management is implemented. While implementation variation is a natural phenomenon in view of diversity in LGAs' work contexts, some differences seemed to contravene with the requirements of the complaint management guide (URT, 2012). The standard process for complaint management recommended by the guide posits that, complaints must first be received, documented and analyzed in the PCD unit. Analyzed complaints are distributed to respective departments or units for handling while PCD unit making follow-up to ensure that complaints are timely handled and

complaint solution is sent to the customers by the PCD unit (URT, 2012:17). The following representative processes depict how complaint management was conducted.

"…complaints received (by any office in the LGA) are channeled to PCD unit for documentation. If it cannot be handled by PCD office, it is referred to relevant department… PCD unit make follow-up to the department for feedback. Complaint handling report is tabled in Council Management Team (CMT) meeting every Friday from 2:00 p.m. for discussion and action. PCD unit will give feedback to the complainant." (Interview with PCD staff in Kondoa District Council, 12th October 2017).

This was corroborated with interview with HoD Human Resource Management, who affirmed the explanation from the PCD staff and added that;

"…complaints that require funds are channeled to full council for decisions and action. Complaints with security implications are reported to the District Commissioner – (an authority with mandate to warrant coercive forces like police to be involved). Complaint reports are sent to the Regional Administrative Secretary on quarterly basis for information." (Interview with HoD –Human Resource Management – Kondoa, DC, 12th October 20).

On the other hand, the following representative statement represents how complaint management process was conceived by the PCD staff in Mpwapwa.

"…complaints can be received in PCD unit or by District Executive Director (DED). Those received (meaning complaints) in PCD are reported to DED who forward the issue to respective department or unit for handling. Those [complaints] received directly in DED's office are sent to respective departments or units for handling. Responsible departments give feedback to the complainant." (Interview with PCD staff, Mpwapwa, DC, 23rd October, 2017).

Findings from the two LGAs seem to present a sharp contrast in the way complaints are received and managed to the stage of conferring feedback to the customer. This contrast is based on the implications of the process adopted by each LGA. The complaint handling process held in Kondoa LGA seems to reveal a culture of collaboration between PCD and departments and units. This collaboration has led to innovation in complaint management as chance for weekly deliberation of complaint cases is set aside in the CMT meeting. Creation of this innovation reveals progress towards learning from complaints. This is because of the degree of ownership of complaint management process held by the council. Overall complaint handling process in Kondoa LGA can be interpreted as a collaborative repertoire aimed at a shared sense of accomplishment. This conception is highly in keeping with service delivery responsiveness expected of public entities as recommended by the complaint management guide.

On the contrast, the complaint handling mechanism practiced in Mpwapwa LGA, seemed to take away the role of PCD unit in analyzing, recording handling complaints as most complaints are taken to higher authorities like departments. While this can be another version of PCD implementation, it seems to render the PCD unit redundant. Although it is possible for PCD activities to be handled at the top offices, considering the diversity of citizens' needs and difficulties in accessing higher LGAs' offices places the need for PCD as a space for customers

to vent out their concerns indispensable. In this case, complaint management seems to be conceived as an event that can be addressed by anyone possible, rather than a process that requires critical dialogue and collective decision among service providers as recommended the complaint management guide (URT, 2012).

Findings from interviews were corroborated with findings from document analysis. One of the indicators for effective PCD implementation is existence of documents showing activities done by PCD unit. Analysis of documents is summarized in Table 01.

Table 1: Document analysis summary

LGA	Action plan 2017/18	Number of complaints recorded (site ledger) 2016/17	Number of site visits 2016/17	Number of activity reports 2016/17	Number of feedbacks to customers 2016/17	Number of feedbacks - Customer satisfaction with complaint handling	Innovations
Kondoa, DC	√	46	5	4	2	0	1
Mpwapwa, DC	X	15	2	0	1	0	1

Key: (√) = Available; X= not found

This table seems to reveal existence of complaints handled through PCD unit in the two LGAs. Experience from Kondoa LGA reveals commitment made by the PCD unit and the HoDs in this LGA in managing complaints. Existence of 46 recorded complaints, action plan, site visit reports and activity reports seems to suggest that complaint management is a felt need. Some representative reports noted include; Village reports to Ward Development Committee of April, 2017, and site visit report for PCD activities in August, 2017. These documents depict processes held and resolutions attained where a number of complaints were handled through PCD unit and some referred to departments for handling while PCD unit taking an active role in monitoring handling progress. This means addressing customers' complaints is given due priority in this LGA. This commitment indicates progress towards service delivery improvement.

On the other hand, experience from Mpwapwa seems to reveal complaint management lethargy. This lethargy could have been caused by inadequate collaborative experience among key stakeholders in complaint management process as revealed in the process adopted in receiving and handling of complaints. This seems to suggest that the LGA has not developed mechanisms to enforce PCD activities such that if a customer fails to access the DED or HoD can hardly be heard. The unit had no action plan for its activities which means no monitoring and evaluation of PCD activities by the LGA done. This practice affects organizational learning from complaint information and complaint management process. Overall, the complaint handling process noted in Mpwapwa LGA, seemed to lack alignment with complaint handling guide as summarized in Appendix 04 (URT, 2012:33).

Despite the strengths identified in both Kondoa and Mpwapwa LGAs, lack of reliable information on how complaint resolutions were shared with customers and whether customers were satisfied with feedback for their complaints raises a big question on whether services complained against were improved. This seems to suggest that, PCD activities are more of

routine operations rather than strategic activities that generate information for organizational learning and transformation.

3.2 Contribution of PCD in improving service delivery

The second question intended to ascertain views of PCD staff and HoDs on the contribution of PCD in improving service delivery. As noted in the background to this paper, quality public service delivery is the optimum goal for the implementation of PCD in public organizations like LGAs in Tanzania. For PCD implementation to satisfactorily achieve improvement in service delivery, it must have served two purposes. The first purpose is to ensure benefits accrue to individuals and their families and the second is benefit to society or groups within the society. In so doing, PCD will have met public value (Pidd, 2012). Although it is difficult to clearly identify benefits to individuals and the society through PCD activities, the following representative examples from both Kondoa and Mpwapwa LGAs seemed to reveal some progress towards service delivery improvement. This case is reported as a scenario with pseudonyms because of sensitivity of the information.

"Two Village leaders for Irumawi and Mitaka (pseudonym) complained against delayed feedback over boarder disputes involving their villages Irumawi versu Kwadisa and Mitaka versus Harambee (pseudonym). PCD made follow-up to the department complained against and was informed that the complaint could not be resolved due to failure of the GPS to read the boarder beacons due to obscured visibility as it was during the rainy season". PCD office reported the incidence during the CMT meeting, shocked by the incidence, CMT ruled out that all departments and units have to report to CMT weekly over progress in resolving the complaints directed to their offices." (Interview with PCD staff – Kondoa (12th October, 2017).

In view of this scenario, it is evident that some major complaints that may tarnish the image of the entire organization might be caused by a very tinny reason. What seemed to reactivate complaints in view of above scenario was neither weather nor the GPS machine but lack of timely feedback to complainants on progress towards complaint management. However, the resolution made by the CMT that, progress in complaint handling had to be reported on weekly basis is a positive indicator towards organizational learning from complaints. If PCD could have not reported this incidence, the reputation of the LGA to the customers who complained would be poor. On the other side, such a sensitive dispute to be reported to PCD suggests that either the PCD staff or the unit itself is trusted by the citizens. On the other hand, the delayed feedback over boarder dispute is failure to adhere to service standards recommended in the complaint management guide which emphasize on timely feedback to customers (URT, 2012:33). In this scenario PCD appears like a mirror reflecting in efficiency and lack of commitment among some public service providers as well as what need to be done for organization's self appraisal.

A more similar scenario was noted in Mpwapwa LGA. This was in the process of resolution when researchers visited the site for data collection as summarized in the following case:

"...I reported for my first appoint in October 2016...I met a number of citizens with different land problems. Some complained against multiple allocations of plots. Very serious complaints came from land owners in Maziwa, Mwanakia and Bondeni (Pseudonym) who offered their land to the LGA during land survey for urban planning but were not yet compensated, the plots were

sold and were in use by the new owners after buying...Citizen complaints reached the District commissioner who decided to form an interim committee to oversee the complaint." (Interview with HoD for land in Mpwapwa- on 23rd October, 2017).

This scenario reveals that, an alternative complaint redress mechanism can be adopted in contexts where PCD cannot successfully resolve the complaint. In this scenario, all complaints logged were found by the committee (five members including HoD for land) as valid claims which were then reported formally to the District Commissioner (DC) for further action. It was learnt that the intervention by the DC was because the LGA was implicated in the complaint over compensation to landowners.

Resolution made by the committee which was approved by the DC was that the LGA should return the plots ownership to the farm owners who were not compensated. It was further decided that the customers who were allocated the plots complained against had to be compensated by being given new plots in other sites after completion of site survey. On the other hand, the land officer who caused multiple plot allocation was reported to the disciplinary authority and the incumbent was terminated from service. The customers who suffered from multiple plot allocation had to be allocated new plots when another cycle of land survey completes. Consequently the complainants received their right through the intervention by the committee and the complaints were successfully resolves.

Despite the loss to the LGA through land compensation and termination of the land officer, the successful complaint redress reveals true accountability of service provider to customers. Big questions to reflect include how to ensure public service providers are accountable to the people prior to people making them accountable? In this scenario, complaint redress mechanism could be interpreted as a lever for organizational change transformation in as far as it acts as a mediator for the citizens in the same manner it does to the organization itself.

3.3 Challenges and opportunities in PCD implementation

The third question sought to understand views of PCD staff and HoD's on challenges and opportunities in the utilization of PCD for improvement of service delivery in LGAs. Findings reveal that despite the successful cases of complaint management, one of the challenges facing PCD implementation is attitude among some HoD that, PCD is just an operational function that occurs when complaints arises. This conception of PCD was noted during the interview with PCD staff in Mpwapwa LGA in response to the follow-up question that inquired for the nature of collaboration between PCD with HoDs. Such attitude could be one of the reasons for unreliable feedback to PCD on complaints received and handled by departments.

Similarly, in both Kondoa and Mpwapwa LGAs, there was a common problem of inadequate facilities like computers for data entry (complaints) and storage facilities for hardcopy documents like lockable cabinets. Furthermore, there seem to be lack of alternative channels for complaint receiving. This is because it was found that, complaints submission was only based on written form, face-to-face visit to the PCD office and through mobile phone calls to the PCD staff. These mechanisms are not only cost full to the complainants, but also do not allow a room for reporting a complaint in anonymity which may threaten the safety of complainants.

Considering the importance of PCD as a mechanism to inform public organizations of their standing in service delivery, and considering the need for space for citizens to vent out their concerns regarding services offered by LGAs, researchers consider a dire need for LGAs to reactivate PCD units and empower the staff there-in. The nature of empowerment needed include providing sufficient training on customer complaint handling and management, improve communication systems between customers and the PCD unit by availing facilities and budget for PCD activities. Moreover the LGAs need to ensure monitoring and evaluation of PCD activities in order to add value to LGAs' service delivery to citizens. Monitoring will also help the LGA consider areas complained against in planning and budgeting, and overall use of complaints to inform organizational learning. It was also found that, PCD implementation is currently based in LGAs, while most complaints reported came from villages. In view of this finding, researchers consider the need for PCD to be extended to low level LGAs especially wards and villages in order to reach majority of citizens who need PCD services.

In order to improve PCD practice, researchers propose the need for adoption of an Integrated Complaint Management Model (ICM) (Figure 1) in improving complaint management, and ensuring data rich PCD units with information on customer/complainant satisfaction with complaint solution.

Integrated Complaint Management model

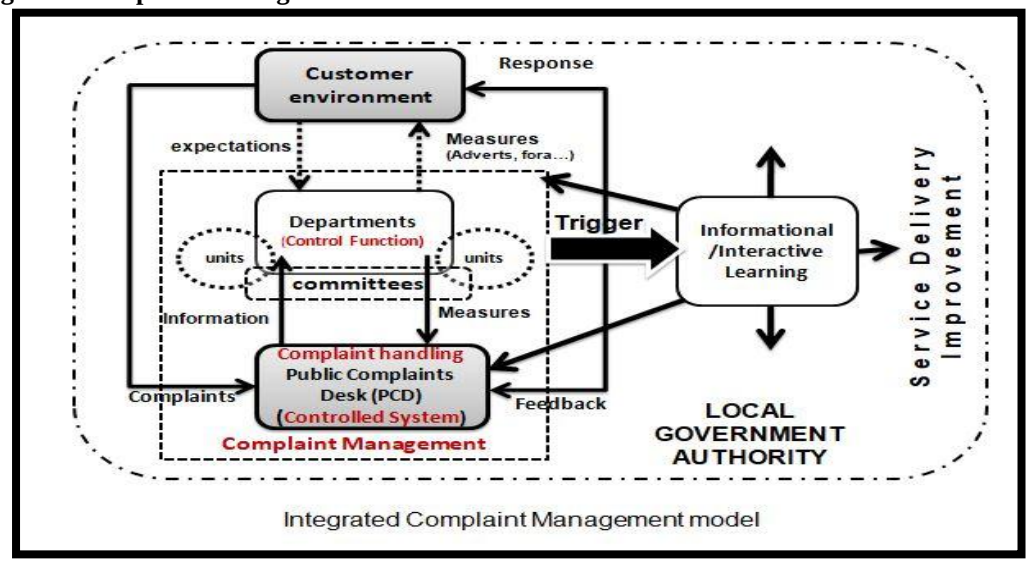


Figure 1: Integrated Complaint Management model

Source: Adopted from Vos, Huiteman and de Lange-Ros, (2008) and modified by the researchers to suite complaint management process in Tanzanian LGAs

The model illustrates alternative mechanisms for sharing complaint information across complaint management actors. It considers a customer as a citizen or non citizen served by a particular LGA. Furthermore it espouses the need to consider obtaining information about customer satisfaction with complaint redress. The model advocates for the use of complaint management process to inform organizational learning, change and transformation.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The development of management guide is one of mechanisms to ensure consistency in complaint handling among implementing entities. However, the existence of the guide does not automatically warrant effective complaint handling due to diversity in the implementation context among LGAs and diversity of implementers. It is on this ground that, researchers throw to policy thrust on the need to create a clear communication flow of complaint handling between units in low level LGAs and their high level counterparts. This will help to facilitate tracking of implementation of complaint management from bottom-up as well as top-bottom. Additionally, the communication flow will facilitate feedback sharing between PCD at LGA level and the lower levels hence bridge the gap on customer satisfaction with complaint handling responses.

Researchers consider complainant responsive feedback as a critical aspect in complaint handling in line with public service standards articulated in client's service charter. Yet more, researchers consider the need to accord PCD unit the legal binding and acquaint it with requisite staff with rich experience and expertise in good governance, customer service management and proficient in verbal and written communication. These competencies will enable PCD staff to handle complainants in a customer responsive tone, facilitate deeper analysis of the root causes of complaints and smart at communication with other actors in the control function and customers. In this endeavour, researchers anticipate realizing PCD being a useful source of data for problem solving and customer satisfaction in matters related to transaction of public services by public entities.

4.1 Recommendations

In order to improve how complaints are managed through PCD in Tanzania, researchers recommend for the adoption of the Integrated Complaint Management model (Figure 01). Used effectively, the model will help to guide implementation of complaint handling through PCD and overall complaint management through LGA's control function (Departments, units and relevant committees). Effective adoption of the ICM model in practice will facilitate organizational learning and subsequently maximize LGAs' responsiveness to service delivery improvement. Furthermore, the paper recommend for further research on customer satisfaction with complaint handling response for improved service delivery.

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