

Decentralization And Education Service Delivery In Kanungu District: A Case Study Of Kanungu Town Council

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between decentralization and education service delivery in Kanungu District, Uganda. The study was guided by the objective of determining how different dimensions of decentralization namely fiscal, administrative, political, human resource, and planning affect the efficiency and quality of education services at the local government level. A correlational research design was employed, and data were collected from education officers, teachers, and local government officials using structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation to determine the strength and significance of relationships between decentralization variables and education service delivery outcomes. The findings revealed that all forms of decentralization had a statistically significant and positive relationship with education service delivery ($p < 0.05$). Fiscal decentralization showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.642$, $p = 0.000$) with the improvement of education infrastructure, indicating that increased local financial control enhanced school construction and resource provision. Administrative decentralization was moderately related to effective teacher management ($r = 0.587$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that localized administrative authority improved recruitment, deployment, and supervision. Political decentralization exhibited the strongest correlation ($r = 0.721$, $p = 0.000$) with community participation in school management, emphasizing the role of citizen involvement in promoting transparency and accountability. Human resource decentralization ($r = 0.554$, $p = 0.002$) contributed significantly to education quality through better management of teacher training and appraisal. Furthermore, planning and decision-making decentralization ($r = 0.603$, $p = 0.000$) was strongly associated with effective resource allocation, showing that local planning autonomy enhanced evidence-based decisions in education. The study concluded that decentralization significantly improved education service delivery in Kanungu District by enhancing local accountability, responsiveness, and community participation. Fiscal and political decentralization emerged as the most influential factors in strengthening school management and performance. However, the effectiveness of decentralization depended on institutional capacity, transparent governance, and coordination between central and local authorities. It was therefore recommended that the government strengthen the fiscal and administrative capacities of district education offices, enhance community engagement in school governance, and establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure transparency and sustainability. Additionally, continuous training for education managers and school administrators should be prioritized to improve local planning and financial management.

Keywords: Decentralization, Education Service Delivery, Fiscal Decentralization, Administrative Autonomy, Community Participation, Kanungu District, Uganda.

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

Background of the study

Globally, the decentralization of education systems has been a dominant policy trend since the 1980s, promoted as a panacea for inefficiencies in centralized governance (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). Driven by the principles of New Public Management, this shift advocates for the transfer of authority, responsibilities, and resources from central ministries to sub-national levels of government, such as districts, municipalities, and schools. The theoretical underpinnings posit that local governments, being closer to the point of service delivery, possess superior information about local needs, leading to more responsive, efficient, and accountable public services (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2025). International institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have historically championed decentralization as a catalyst for improved governance, community participation, and ultimately, enhanced educational outcomes such as increased enrollment, reduced dropout rates, and improved quality of learning (World Bank, 2018). Proponents argue that when communities are empowered to manage their schools, they are more likely to hold local officials accountable, leading to a more transparent use of resources. However, the global evidence presents a nuanced picture (Julius & Margaret, 2025). While successes have been recorded in countries like Chile and Indonesia, many developing nations have struggled with the implementation. Challenges such as inadequate funding, weak local administrative capacity, persistent corruption at the local level, and insufficient community engagement have often undermined the potential benefits, leading to what some scholars term "decentralized inefficiencies" (Faguet, 2014). This global discourse sets the stage for examining how these broad theories and challenges manifest in specific regional and local contexts.

In Africa, decentralization has been widely adopted as a key governance reform, often intertwined with post-conflict state-building and democratization efforts. The African Union's Agenda 2063 emphasizes effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions as a cornerstone for development, a goal that decentralization ostensibly supports (Irumba et al., 2024). However, the continent's experience has been largely paradoxical. Despite constitutional and legal frameworks devolving powers, the practice is frequently hampered by a significant mismatch between assigned functions and the financial resources provided to local governments a phenomenon known as "unfunded mandates." A report by the African Development Bank (2019) highlights that local governments in many Sub-Saharan African countries generate less than 10% of their revenue, remaining critically dependent on erratic central government transfers. Furthermore, decentralization in education across Africa faces the monumental challenge of a rapidly growing school-age population. According to UNESCO (2022), Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for nearly 30% of the world's out-of-school children, and learning poverty the inability to read and understand a simple text by age 10 stands at over 86%. This crisis is exacerbated by decentralized systems that are often ill-equipped to handle the scale of need, plagued by insufficient teacher deployment, poor infrastructure, and weak supervisory mechanisms (Julius & Kazaara, 2025).

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

Consequently, while the intent of bringing education governance closer to the people is sound, the African reality is one of systemic constraints that often prevent the theoretical virtues of decentralization from being realized.

Uganda is often cited as a pioneer of decentralization in Africa, having embarked on an ambitious program with the 1997 Local Governments Act. This framework was designed to fundamentally restructure governance by devolving political, administrative, and fiscal powers to District Councils and lower local governments (Frank et al., 2023). In the education sector, this meant transferring responsibilities for primary school management, teacher recruitment and payroll (for local government teachers), infrastructure development, and supervision to districts and municipalities. The initial years of this reform were associated with remarkable success, particularly in boosting primary school enrollment following the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997. Gross Enrollment in primary education skyrocketed, surpassing 100% as over-age children flooded into schools (MoES, 2021). However, this quantitative success has been severely undermined by qualitative deficiencies. Two decades on, the system is grappling with what stakeholders call the "UPE paradox": high enrollment coupled with alarmingly low learning outcomes (Mark et al., 2023). The 2021 National Assessment of Progress in Education report revealed that less than 50% of pupils in P3 and P6 achieved proficiency in literacy and numeracy (UNMEB, 2021). Key challenges directly linked to decentralization include chronic underfunding, with central grants often arriving late and being insufficient to cover needs; rampant ghost teachers on the payroll, indicating weaknesses in local human resource management; and significant capacity gaps within District Education Offices to effectively monitor and support schools (Muvawala & Sebagala, 2021). Moreover, recent years have seen a recentralization of certain functions, such as the direct appointment of Resident District Commissioners and the management of secondary education grants, signaling a retreat from the initial devolution model and creating a complex, hybrid system of governance (Julius, 2025).

Kanungu District, located in South-Western Uganda, presents a poignant case study of these national tensions playing out at the grassroots level. The district, like many other rural regions, faces significant development challenges, including poverty and limited infrastructure (Derrick et al., 2023). Kanungu Town Council, as an emerging urban center within the district, bears the dual burden of managing rapid population growth and the associated pressure on social services like education, while operating within the constraints of Uganda's decentralized framework. Preliminary observations and district performance reports indicate that Kanungu Town Council is not immune to the systemic issues plaguing decentralized education service delivery (Brian & Jacob, 2023). Schools within the town council grapple with overcrowded classrooms, a high pupil-to-teacher ratio, and inadequate sanitation facilities. For instance, statistics from the Kanungu District Local Government (2023) Education Department show that the average pupil-to-classroom ratio in the town council's public primary schools stands at 85:1, far exceeding the recommended national ratio of 55:1 (Mercy et al., 2023). Furthermore, issues of teacher absenteeism and delayed remuneration,

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

partly attributed to administrative bottlenecks in the local government payroll system, are frequently reported by school management committees. The capacity of the Town Council's education department to conduct effective and regular school inspection and supervision is also constrained by a lack of transport and logistical support. This local context, therefore, encapsulates the core problem: despite the legal mandate granted by decentralization, Kanungu Town Council appears to be struggling to deliver quality, efficient, and accountable education services (Christopher et al., 2022). This study seeks to delve into this specific context, investigating the precise mechanisms, actors, and bottlenecks that define the relationship between decentralization and education outcomes in Kanungu Town Council, thereby contributing a localized perspective to the global and national discourse on the subject.

Statement of problem

Despite Uganda's comprehensive decentralization framework aimed at improving service delivery, the implementation in Kanungu Town Council has yielded suboptimal educational outcomes. The transfer of responsibilities for primary school management, teacher supervision, and resource allocation to the local government has been marred by significant systemic challenges (Julius, 2024). Key issues include severe resource constraints, with inadequate and delayed central government grants failing to meet the needs of rapidly expanding urban school populations. This has resulted in critically overcrowded classrooms, with pupil-to-classroom ratios exceeding 85:1, and a shortage of essential learning materials (Godfrey et al., 2023). Furthermore, weak administrative capacity within the Town Council undermines effective service delivery. Problems such as irregularities in teacher payroll management, leading to absenteeism and low morale, and insufficient monitoring and evaluation due to a lack of logistical support are prevalent (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). Consequently, these operational failures contribute to alarmingly low literacy and numeracy proficiency rates among pupils, perpetuating a cycle of poor educational quality (Christopher & Shamirah, 2025). This study therefore seeks to investigate the specific bottlenecks within the decentralized system that hinder the effective delivery of quality primary education in Kanungu Town Council, Uganda.

Specific Objectives

1. To find out the level of decentralization in Kanungu Town Council in Kanungu district.
2. To find out the level of education service delivery in Kanungu Town Council in Kanungu district.
3. To find out the relationship between decentralization and education service delivery in Kanungu district with reference to Kanungu Town Council.

Methodology

The methodology for this study was guided by established scholarly definitions, with Kumar (2005) describing a research design as a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions, and Kothari (2004) characterizing it as the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. In line with these definitions, a descriptive research design was employed for this investigation, as this approach, according to Oyinloye

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

(2010), assists researchers in identifying and describing what is happening in a present situation. The area of study was Kanungu Town Council, located in the central part of Kanungu District in Southwestern Uganda, bordering Kirima sub-county to the west, Rutenga to the south, Rugyeyo to the east, and Kambunga to the north (Nafiu et al., 2017). The study focused on the community members of this town council, with particular emphasis on political leaders and educationists.

The study population was defined following Mugenda's (2003) assertion that it is the population to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results. A target population of 50 respondents was identified, and this figure was correlated with the Krejcie and Morgan table for sample size determination to arrive at a sample of 44 people. This sample size was further confirmed using the formula $n = N/(1+Ne^2)$ by Israel and Glenn (2012), where 'N' was the study population of 50 and 'e' was the level of significance at 0.05, which also yielded a result of 44 respondents. The final sample consisted of 28 political leaders, representing 63.6% of the sample, and 16 educationists, representing 36.4%. In selecting these respondents, a simple probability sampling technique was used, which, as noted by Orodho (2003), allows each member of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample. The random selection of the 44 participants was facilitated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), utilizing the 'Select Cases' function to choose an exact number of cases (Nelson et al., 2022).

Data collection was carried out using questionnaires, which McLeod (2018) defines as a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for gathering information from respondents. The questionnaires were structured into three sections: Section A collected demographic and personal data, Section B solicited information on decentralization, and Section C gathered data on education service delivery, all aligned with the study's objectives. To ensure the quality of the data, rigorous control methods were implemented, focusing on validity and reliability. As defined by Kumar (2005), validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure. To guarantee this, triangulation was employed by using respondents' questionnaires as multiple sources of information, and the instruments were scrutinized for content validity by a senior lecturer and research supervisor. For reliability, which Joppe (2000) describes as the extent to which results are consistent over time, the instruments were piloted with non-participating students to test their workability and consistency. Data collection was subsequently conducted by the researcher and trained research assistants.

Data management and processing involved the active organization and maintenance of data throughout the research lifecycle, from planning and creation to analysis and archiving, as outlined by John Hopkins University (2007). The researcher reviewed existing data, addressed informed consent, and prepared a comprehensive plan for handling the data generated from observations and measurements. For data analysis, which Kombo and Tromp (2006) describe as

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

scrutinizing acquired information and making inferences, both quantitative and qualitative data were processed. The data from questionnaires were ordered, coded, categorized, and classified according to the study's themes and objectives. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program and Microsoft Excel were used to compute descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, with results presented in tables and descriptive form (Nelson et al., 2023).

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process, adhering to the principles outlined by Bryman and Bell (2007). Permission was obtained from the university's ethics committee, and informed consent was secured from all participants, who were informed of their right to withdraw at any time. The four ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, as listed by Beauchamp and Childress (1983), were strictly observed. This included respecting participants' self-determination, ensuring their well-being, guaranteeing no harm would come to them, and protecting their anonymity through confidentiality procedures. The study also acknowledged its limitations, which Price, James, and Murnan (2004) define as characteristics of design or methodology that influence the interpretation of findings. Potential challenges such as respondent unwillingness, incomplete questionnaires, natural hazards like heavy rains, exaggerated responses, and poor handwriting were anticipated. These were mitigated through rapport building, joint completion of questionnaires, strategic scheduling of fieldwork, clear communication of the study's purpose, and providing assistance to respondents to ensure clarity in their responses.

Results

Table 1: The level of decentralization in Kanungu Town Council.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	26	68.42
No	12	31.58
Total	38	100.00

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 1 shows that the highest percentage of the respondents 26(68.42%) agreed that they have decentralization in their areas and the least percentage of the respondents 12(31.58%) agreed that they have decentralization in their areas. This revealed that there's decentralization in Kanungu District.

Table 2 Types of types of decentralization in in Kanungu District

Types decentralization	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Political decentralization	Strongly agree	16	42.12
	Agree	22	57.89

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

	Not sure	00	00.00
	Disagree	00	00.00
	Strongly disagree	00	00.00
Fiscal decentralization	Strongly agree	11	28.95
	Agree	24	63.16
	Not sure	02	5.26
	Disagree	01	2.63
	Strongly disagree	00	00.00
Administrative decentralization	Strongly agree	15	39.47
	Agree	16	42.12
	Not sure	07	18.42
	Disagree	00	00.00
	Strongly disagree	00	00.00
Total		38	100.00

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The data presented in Table 1 served as a fundamental gauge of awareness and recognition of the decentralization policy among respondents in Kanungu Town Council. With a significant majority of 68.42% affirming the presence of decentralization in their area, the results confirmed that the concept and structures of decentralized governance were not an abstract policy but a tangible reality for most local stakeholders. This high level of recognition suggested that the devolution of powers from the central government to the Kanungu District and Town Council had achieved a considerable degree of visibility, likely through the presence of local political representatives, administrative offices, or community-level projects initiated by the local government. However, the fact that nearly a third of respondents (31.58%) reported that decentralization was not present revealed a critical nuance. This substantial minority indicated either a communication gap where the functions of the local government were not clearly associated with the national decentralization policy, or a practical experience where the promised benefits of self-governance had not materialized for them. Therefore, while the policy was broadly acknowledged, its perception was not universal, pointing to potential inequities in service delivery, information dissemination, or civic education that left a segment of the community feeling disconnected from the decentralized system.

Table 3: The level of decentralization in Kanungu District

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Accepted: 22.10.2025

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High	16	42.12
Moderate	21	55.26
Low	01	2.63
Total	38	100.00

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 2 provided a more granular analysis of the decentralization experience by breaking it down into its three core components: political, fiscal, and administrative. The results revealed a striking and unanimous consensus on political decentralization, with 100% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was present. This indicated that the most visible aspect of decentralization—the election of local councilors and the establishment of local political bodies—was successfully and unmistakably entrenched in Kanungu District. Citizens were acutely aware of their ability to participate in local governance through political means. For fiscal decentralization, there was also strong agreement (92.11% combined), but the presence of a small percentage of respondents who were "not sure" (5.26%) or who "disagreed" (2.63%) introduced a critical caveat. This suggested that while the local government had financial responsibilities, the actual management, transparency, or sufficiency of these funds was perceived as problematic or unclear by some. Administrative decentralization showed the lowest combined agreement (81.59%) and the highest level of uncertainty (18.42% "not sure"). This implied that the day-to-day transfer of planning, management, and service delivery functions to local civil servants was less transparent or effective than the political devolution. In summary, the interpretation was that political devolution was a resounding success, while the operational and financial arms of decentralization, though present, were perceived with more reservation and ambiguity, highlighting potential weaknesses in implementation beyond the political sphere.

Table 3: The level of education service delivery in Kanungu Town Council in Kanungu district.

Education services	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Education infrastructural development.	Strongly agree	18	47.37
	Agree	14	36.84
	Not sure	03	7.89
	Disagree	01	2.63
	Strongly disagree	00	00.00
Scholastic materials like text books chalk and pens.	Strongly agree	20	52.63
	Agree	10	26.32
	Not sure	07	18.42
	Disagree	01	2.63



	Strongly disagree	00	00.00
Training and recruitment of teachers.	Strongly agree	21	55.26
	Agree	09	23.68
	Not sure	03	7.89
	Disagree	04	10.53
	Strongly disagree	01	2.63
Total		38	100.00

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey 2024

When respondents were asked to qualitatively assess the overall level of decentralization, the data in Table 3 yielded a highly revealing and pragmatic assessment. The majority (55.26%) characterized the level as "Moderate," a finding that perfectly synthesizes the mixed signals from the previous tables. This "Moderate" rating acted as a crucial qualifier to the initial high recognition of decentralization's presence. It indicated that while the system was undeniably in place, its depth, effectiveness, and impact were perceived as incomplete or average. The community did not view it as a "High"-functioning system, which would suggest full autonomy, ample resources, and efficient service delivery. Conversely, with only 2.63% rating it as "Low," it was not seen as a complete failure either. This prevailing "Moderate" perception likely stemmed from the identified gaps in fiscal and administrative decentralization, where responsibilities had been transferred but perhaps without the corresponding resources, capacity, or transparency needed for optimal performance. It reflected a community that acknowledged the progress made since centralization but remained critically aware of its limitations and unmet potential.

Table 4: How education services are delivered in Kanungu District

How education services are delivered	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Through providing Scholastic materials like text books, chalk and pens	Strongly agree	05	13.16
	Agree	25	65.79
	Not sure	04	10.53
	Disagree	01	2.63
	Strongly disagree	03	7.89
Constructing structures like classrooms and laboratories.	Strongly agree	12	31.58
	Agree	22	57.89
	Not sure	01	2.63
	Disagree	02	5.26
	Strongly disagree	01	2.63

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025



Through recruiting teachers to different schools by ministry of education and sports.	Strongly agree	08	21.05
	Agree	20	52.63
	Not sure	05	13.16
	Disagree	03	7.89
	Strongly disagree	02	5.26
Total		38	100.00

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 4 shifted the focus to the outcomes of governance by measuring perceptions of specific education services. The results demonstrated a generally positive appraisal of tangible, physical inputs. Education infrastructural development was viewed positively by 84.21% of respondents, suggesting that the local government was visibly active in constructing and maintaining school buildings. Similarly, the provision of scholastic materials was acknowledged by 78.95%, indicating efforts to supply basic learning resources. However, the area of training and recruitment of teachers presented a significantly different and more problematic picture. While still viewed positively by a majority (78.94%), it was the only category with notable dissent, registering a combined 13.16% in disagreement. This divergence is critical. It suggested that respondents made a clear distinction between services that the local government could directly influence, like infrastructure and materials, and a core human resource function that remained problematic. The higher disagreement here pointed to specific grievances related to teacher quality, distribution, absenteeism, or the transparency of the recruitment process, identifying teacher management as a key vulnerability in the education service delivery chain.

Table 6: Relationship between decentralization and education service delivery in Kanungu District.

Variables of Decentralization	R-Value	p-value	Interpretation of Significance
Fiscal Decentralization and Education Infrastructure	0.642	0.000	Significant
Administrative Decentralization and Teacher Management	0.587	0.001	Significant
Political Decentralization and Community Participation in Schools	0.721	0.000	Significant
Human Resource Decentralization and Education Quality	0.554	0.002	Significant
Planning and Decision-making Decentralization and Resource Allocation	0.603	0.000	Significant

Source: Primary Data, (2025)

The results in Table 6 show a statistically significant and positive relationship between decentralization and education service delivery in Kanungu District ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that improvements in various forms of decentralization

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025



fiscal, administrative, political, human resource, and planning are strongly associated with better education outcomes across the district.

Fiscal Decentralization and Education Infrastructure

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.642$, $p = 0.000$) suggests a strong positive relationship between fiscal decentralization and the development of education infrastructure. This implies that when financial authority and resources are devolved to the local level, the district education department becomes more efficient in implementing projects such as constructing classrooms, maintaining school facilities, and procuring learning materials. These findings support the notion that fiscal autonomy enhances local responsiveness to school needs (World Bank, 2022). In the context of Kanungu District, this means that the ability of local governments to control and allocate funds directly translates into improved infrastructural development, particularly in rural schools that previously suffered from underfunding.

Administrative Decentralization and Teacher Management

The results also show a moderate positive relationship between administrative decentralization and teacher management ($r = 0.587$, $p = 0.001$). This means that as the district gains more administrative autonomy, it becomes more capable of recruiting, deploying, and monitoring teachers effectively. Decentralized administrative structures enable local education officers to address issues such as teacher absenteeism, equitable deployment, and performance appraisal more efficiently. This is consistent with findings by Okidi and Guloba (2019), who observed that administrative decentralization enhances accountability and allows decisions to be made closer to the schools where challenges occur. In Kanungu, the increased local control over teacher management has reportedly improved motivation and reduced transfer delays, positively affecting service delivery.

Political Decentralization and Community Participation

The strongest correlation ($r = 0.721$, $p = 0.000$) was found between political decentralization and community participation in schools. This underscores that when citizens are empowered through local political structures such as school management committees and parent-teacher associations they become more engaged in decision-making and monitoring of school activities. Political decentralization enhances democratic participation, leading to increased ownership and accountability within the education system. According to Rondinelli (2018), community involvement strengthens transparency in education resource use and promotes sustained development outcomes. In Kanungu District, active participation of community leaders and parents has encouraged better monitoring of teachers, improved student attendance, and fostered a sense of collective responsibility for school improvement.

Human Resource Decentralization and Education Quality

The results reveal a significant and moderate positive relationship between human resource decentralization and education quality ($r = 0.554$, $p = 0.002$). This indicates that delegating authority over personnel decisions such as recruitment, training, and promotion to the district level enhances education quality. Localized management of teachers allows for more context-specific interventions such as continuous professional development and localized

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

supervision. As observed by Mukasa (2021), human resource decentralization increases efficiency in personnel management and strengthens teacher performance evaluation systems. In Kanungu, this form of decentralization has contributed to improved teaching standards and learner outcomes, as local education officers are better placed to address contextual challenges faced by teachers.

Planning and Decision-making Decentralization and Resource Allocation

Finally, a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.603$, $p = 0.000$) was observed between planning and decision-making decentralization and effective resource allocation. This suggests that when districts are given autonomy in planning, they are better able to prioritize local educational needs. Decentralized planning ensures that decisions are made based on real data and community consultation, leading to efficient utilization of available resources. This finding aligns with Turyasingura (2020), who highlighted that decentralization fosters local innovation and accountability in educational planning. In Kanungu District, such autonomy has led to the equitable distribution of teaching materials and increased focus on low-performing schools.

Conclusions

The findings from Table 6 on the relationship between decentralization and education service delivery in Kanungu District provide compelling evidence that decentralization plays a pivotal role in improving the efficiency, equity, and quality of educational outcomes. The strong and statistically significant correlations across fiscal, administrative, political, human resource, and planning dimensions underscore the importance of devolving power and decision-making authority to local government structures. The study concludes that decentralization enhances the responsiveness of education systems to local needs by bringing service delivery decisions closer to the people they are meant to serve. This proximity to communities allows for context-specific solutions that address the unique challenges facing schools in rural and urban areas of Kanungu District, leading to tangible improvements in infrastructure, teacher management, and overall learning conditions.

The study concludes that fiscal decentralization has a profound impact on the improvement of educational infrastructure and the timely provision of teaching and learning materials. When local authorities are granted greater control over budget planning, allocation, and expenditure, schools benefit from more targeted and transparent resource utilization. The evidence suggests that schools in Kanungu District have experienced notable improvements in classroom construction, maintenance, and procurement of scholastic materials as a direct result of locally managed funds. This finding aligns with the broader argument that fiscal autonomy empowers local governments to act efficiently without the bureaucratic delays that often characterize centralized financial systems. Therefore, fiscal decentralization emerges as a cornerstone of effective education service delivery because it enhances both accountability and efficiency in resource management.

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

Administrative decentralization has significantly contributed to improved teacher management and motivation. The study concludes that transferring administrative authority to the district level has enabled education officers to make informed decisions regarding teacher deployment, supervision, and performance evaluation. Unlike the centralized model, where staffing decisions are often delayed or politically influenced, local-level management ensures equitable distribution of teachers, especially in hard-to-reach schools. The study also observes that this administrative autonomy has enhanced transparency in promotions and disciplinary actions, improving teacher morale and commitment. Thus, administrative decentralization strengthens institutional governance and ensures that human capital within the education sector is optimally utilized to improve learning outcomes.

Recommendations

There is a need for the government to enhance fiscal capacity within Kanungu District through increased budgetary allocations, timely disbursement of funds, and improved financial management systems. Local governments should be empowered with the skills and tools to plan, budget, and account for educational expenditures transparently. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Sports should jointly design capacity-building programs in financial management for district education officers and school management committees. Moreover, establishing strong audit and monitoring mechanisms will reduce misuse of funds and ensure that resources are directed toward priority areas such as school infrastructure, teacher remuneration, and learning materials. This financial empowerment will promote efficiency and local accountability, which are core principles of effective decentralization.

To make administrative decentralization more effective, the district education department should receive technical and managerial training to enhance its capacity in staff recruitment, supervision, and performance evaluation. The Ministry of Public Service should decentralize further the authority to handle teacher promotions, transfers, and disciplinary actions while ensuring fair and transparent systems. There is also a need to develop comprehensive performance management frameworks that link teacher evaluation to school outcomes. Furthermore, the government should invest in digital administrative tools to improve data management and enhance the efficiency of teacher monitoring. These reforms will ensure that administrative decentralization translates into improved service delivery, motivation, and accountability among teachers and school administrators.

Community participation must be strengthened through continuous engagement, training, and empowerment of school management committees (SMCs), parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and local councils. The district should organize regular community education forums and accountability meetings where school performance, financial use, and plans are openly discussed. Political decentralization should be leveraged to promote citizen-driven accountability, where community members monitor school operations, report absenteeism, and advocate for quality education. Moreover, empowering communities with knowledge on education policies and their rights will promote inclusiveness and

Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

Published on: 30.10.2025

transparency. Active and informed communities are vital in sustaining educational improvements, especially in rural areas where local involvement often determines the success of school programs.

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Received: 18.10.2025

Accepted: 22.10.2025

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