Volume 8   Issue Number 1   JUNE 2019

JOURNAL OF POLICY AND LEADERSHIP

JOURNAL OF POLICY AND LEADERSHIP

Centre for Policy and Leadership

School of Public Administration and Management

VOLUME 8   ISSUE NUMBER 1   JUNE 2019

CONTENTS

Emerging Issues from Conducting Researches in Tanzania: Reflections from selected cases

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Abstract

Different authors in Tanzania have reported on the challenges they encountered from the legal and policy framework in soliciting for a permit and engaging study's participants for data collection. Bearing those observations, this study draws experiences from the selected cases of four PhD researches conducted in Tanzania between 2011 and 2016. Our researches show that the processes of acquiring permission for field work and data collection varies. The permission to conduct study in some local authorities was granted by executive directors, others, by district administrative secretaries, council chairpersons as well as head of departments. The researchers' experience in data collection process is completely different when it comes to the actual process of data collection. The experiences provided by the researchers in this study are important towards helping other researchers to understand local-context legal and policy framework specific issues when designing their study.

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Introduction

The article surveys emerging issues from the legal and regulatory environment of conducting researches in Tanzania. These issues range from application of fieldwork permit, establishing rapport, listening to untold, shocking and sad stories; and respondents providing irrelevant information which was not intended (Morse and Field, 1995; Sarkar, 2014). Partly, these challenges can be explained by sensitivity

of some research topics which restrict the willingness of responsible authority to grant permission for data collection or reluctance of respondents to participate in the study.

Given these challenge, some authors like Benatar & Singer, (2000) argue that the researchers must have a clue on what is workable in research area according to local and cultural context. Having sufficient knowledge on local and cultural context is assumed to aid researchers in both permit acquisition and actual data collection. Nevertheless, obtaining a permit to do a research is not an end in itself, a researcher must further on obtain consent from an individual respondent/participant either for in depth interview, administered questionnaire or acquiring the documents needed for the study.

Furthermore, the experience of going through such processes may vary from one context to another. For example the empirical research by Kanashiro, (2005) shows that in some culture participants must be interviewed by researchers of the same sex, that is, women must be interviewed by their fellow women or in the presence of their partners while in other cultural context, respondents can participate for interview or focus group discussion, if they are given incentives.

The systematic empirical study of these variations and the way they are experienced by researchers is still limited. The conventional literature in this area report on the process of acquiring fieldwork permit and participant consent to participate in research (Ziosi et al, 1997; Leach et al, 1999; Rubinstein-Ávila 2009) but there is little which known concerning practical experiences in acquiring permit and the actual data collection process. Therefore, this study intends to shed light on this area by focusing on permit acquisition and the actual data collection process from the selected cases. The outcome of our research will provide answer to this question: what are the practical experiences associated with permit application, establishing rapport and the actual data collection process in Tanzania

Methodology

The study draws fieldwork experiences from four PhD researches which were conducted in Tanzania from 2011 to 2016. These PhD studies were conducted as part of research projects under decentralization by devolution financed by the Netherlands Initiatives for Capacity building in Higher Education (NICHE). The studies were conducted in different regions and districts in Tanzania; different organizations and individuals were involved. These studies went through the processes of permit application, establishment of rapport and the actual data collection.

Description of studies from which we drew experiences

Case 1: Programme Implementation process

The aim of this study was to see to what extent geographical differences in Contraceptive Prevalence Rates (CPR) was attributed to differences in the way the regions and local authorities implement family planning programme in Tanzania. To realize that, the implementation practices in four local authorities were compared on seven properties of programme implementation, namely exposure/dosage, adherence, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness, programme reach, adaptation and monitoring and control. These properties were examined across different levels of programme implementation starting from the ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Regional Medical Officer's office, District Medical Officer's office, and health facilities to clients' level.

Case 2: Participation and influence of female councillors in decisions of the council

The study sought to examine the relative participation and influence of the female councillors in the decision making of local authorities. The participation and influence of female councillors in this study was compared to that of the male councillors. The main question addressed by the study was 'How and to what extents do women councillors (try to) exert influence in the decision making of local authorities as compared to men councillors'. A total of 128 councillors from four local authorities were involved in the study. The minutes of the full council and committee meetings were analysed using a specific scheme. The number of attempts of the councillors was extracted from the minutes and the analysis was made. This was followed by observation of meetings which was done to see the behaviour of councillors during the decision making in the meetings. The sub-samples of 45 councillors were further interviewed using in depth interview guide.

Case 3: Performance of Decentralized Agriculture Extension Services Delivery

The study focused on the performance of decentralized systems of Agricultural Extension Services delivery in Tanzania. Two cases with similar administrative system were qualitatively researched to establish how formal, informal institutions and the availability of resources influence the process and outcome of service delivery. Service delivery was examined in the lens of different properties of decentralization. These included: local democracy, allocative and cost efficiency, coordination and tailor made services.

The data collection started with documentary review of government policies, planning and minutes of meetings in the two local authorities. This was followed by in-depth interviews with policy officers from the local authorities, Agricultural Research Institutes, NGOs and the field officers. Further the observations and focus group discussion with individual farmers was done. The key assumption was that decentralization increases proximity between government and citizens that in turn promotes local democracy and accountable government.

Case 4: Leadership style of the executive directors in the local government authorities

The aim of this study was to describe and explain the leadership styles of the executive directors in the local government authorities in Tanzania; and what explains the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the leadership styles in the performance of the local authorities. To realise this aim, all the executive directors by then (2012) 134 local authorities were approached and asked to fill in a self-reporting questionnaire. The leadership styles explored in this questionnaire were transformational, transactional and ubuntu. Alongside the questionnaire, eight executive directors were purposefully selected from eight local authorities and interviewed on the actual leadership practices displayed in the local authorities. The interviews also involved heads of department of the selected eight local authorities who were asked about the leadership styles of the executive directors.

Data analysis

A phenomenological analysis was done to describe the individual researcher's experiences during data collection (Limputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Each researcher describes in details the experiences acquired when requesting fieldwork permit and during data collection. The individual expiriences about fieldwork was narrated and presented separately. After the narration, the cross case analysis was done to group similar stories from different studies. The standing alone stories were highlighted and their uniqueness were explained and elaborated. The interesting expirinces that were expressed or observed from respondents were quoted to emphasise   the findings. Stories presented in this study were disscussed and agreed by all researchers that they are worth piece of information to share with other researchers who intend to conduct research in developing countries like Tanzania.

Experiences

Case 1: Experience related to getting permit to do a research

Acquiring the permit to conduct a research involves different processes. To start with the study on programme implementation, the following was the processes passed. The letter to introduce the researchers was granted by the Directorate of Research, Publications and Postgraduate Studies at Mzumbe University in Tanzania. This letter introduced the researcher to the office of the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) where the researcher requested for the clearance and introductory letters to conduct the study in their regions. The letter was granted and used to seek further approval to conduct research. The regional managers in this case Regional Health Secretary and Regional Reproductive and Child Health Coordinators agreed to participant in the study after receiving the introduction letter from the RAS' office. The differences arise in getting permission in local authorities where the study was conducted. In the first local authority the District Health Secretary (DHS) and the District Reproductive and Child Health Coordinator (DRCHco) approved to conduct the study and

agreed to participate in the study after receiving the introduction letter from RAS. In the second local authority the District Medical Officer (DMO), DHS and DRCHco endorsed the clearance when they were given the introductory letter from RAS office. In third and fourth local authorities the procedure was a bit different and took more time than expected. After submitting the introduction letter from RAS to District Health Secretary (DHS), the researcher was told that they couldn't grant the approval because they did not have a power to do that. He stated that:

"Go to the District Administrative Secretary (DAS) to get the clearance and approval because he is the one who govern the local authority and he is responsible for that" Health secretary.

In these two cases, the clearance started from the District Administrative Secretary (DAS) and further approval was given by District Executive Director. The last approval was given by the District Medical Offices, District Health Secretaries and District Reproductive and Child Health Coordinators. The clearance to conduct study at the ministry level was granted by the ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Reproductive and Child Health department. However, the process was not straightforward. It started with submission of the introduction letter (given by Mzumbe University) to the ministry's open registry. The researcher was asked to make follow up two weeks after submission of the letter. Unfortunately, the letter was not found when the researcher made follow up for feedback. The researcher re-submits a second letter and asked a student from Mzumbe University attached in the ministry for fieldwork to make follow-up of the letter. After two weeks the researcher received a call from student informing that the original letter was found in the Reproductive and Child Health Department. The researcher went to the respective department and introduced to the responsible staff on family planning programme.

Experience related to data collection process

The researcher's local knowledge and the reputation of researcher's institution had an influence on the decision of participants to approve their participation in the study. In our observation, during the introduction at the organizations and departments as a way of creating rapport the participants seemed to have smiling faces. This was particularly the case when the researchers introduced themselves that they are affiliated to Mzumbe University. Some respondents asked some questions related to admission criteria and procedures for joining Masters Programs offered by the University. For instance, a DRCHco from one local authority needed the clarification and qualifications for someone to join the Master of Science in Monitoring and Evaluation.

> "… Eheee! I am very happy to meet you today. I heard that there is new programme offered by Mzumbe University called Health Monitoring and Evaluation. I would like to know if I am eligible to join that course…" DRCHco from LGA

The complexity of getting the respondent' consent and willingness to participate in the study either for interviews, filling questionnaire or cooperating to provide the requested documents increases from normal citizen to the respondent who have a certain managerial position. For instance, in the study on programme implementation, the data collection from the clients and health providers were easily done. The clients and providers were easily accessed, open-minded and cooperative; and responded positively to the questions asked and document requested. The difficulties start at the level of local authority. In some local authorities the researcher made several appointments prior but some of them were often cancelled and re-scheduled and some were not fulfilled.

The huge complexity was experienced at the level of central government (regional and the ministry level). At regional level the officials were having a lot of excuses and their appointments were not fulfilled. This led to re-scheduling of the interviews where some of them were done after working hours to save field-work time and to access all the targeted respondents on time. The researcher decided to make appointments with the officials and continues to collect data in local authority office, health facilities and from clients while waiting for the appointments.

A complicated and unique case was observed at the ministry when making appointments with the officials for interviews. The researcher was assigned the first official for interview by the head of section. The complexity started when researcher requested the consent to interview the assigned official. The official claimed that he does not have time for interview because he is engaged in a certain activity that had a deadline. While seating in an office of this official trying to negotiate for an appointment, the head of section entered into the room claiming that there was an urgent question asked by the Minister which must be answered. The official and the head of section started to brainstorm the answers and asked the researcher to assist. The head of section probed the researcher by saying:

> "You are doing a research on family planning programme implementation. I believe you have read enough literature and you already collected some data from the local authorities and health facilities as you explain in your introduction. I believe you have seen a lot. Help us to answer these questions" Head of Section.

The researcher hesitated to respond, but he realized that it might be an opportunity for him to create a rapport and trust from these officials in order to gain access to interview them. He participated in brainstorming the answer for the questions asked by the minister with caution that is should not interfere with his study. After completing the task, the official asked the researcher to give him a draft of interview guide to know the issues that he would like to ask during the interview. Knowing the negative implication of giving a respondent an interview guide beforehand that it may affect the quality of data given by a particular respondent, the researcher told the official that he does not have the interview guide. He further explained that he would like to know the ministry' experiences in implementing family planning programme particularly programme implementation. He replied that: "Ooooh! There is someone who is concerned with programme implementation. I will give you her number so that you can make appointment to interview her" An official at the ministry.

The researcher was given the telephone number as promised. Unfortunately, a researcher and this particular official spent more than one-hour discussing social issues. What is important to note is that this official refused to be interviewed with the reason that he is occupied with activity which has a deadline. However, the researcher took this as an opportunity and probed some information relating to

his study. He managed to get some information that helped him to horn his interview guide and identified the areas that needed more probing when interviewing the official who is concerned with programme implementation.

The researcher communicated with the newly assigned officer to make appointment for interview. An officer was out of office for two weeks and agreed to meet when she will be back to Dar-es-salaam. The researcher travelled from Morogoro to Dar es Salaam which is about 195 km. The researcher spent four hours in the reception waiting to interview the official as agreed. At last the official sent a message apologizing that she will not be able to participant in interview. Instead she asked the research to call her after one week so that they can make another appointment. The researcher called her a week after to make another appointment as agreed. The second appointment was scheduled in two weeks to come. Again the researcher travelled to Dar es Salaam and waits at the reception for three hours and finally the officer arrived and the interview was done in her office. After the interview the researcher requested some documents for the secondary data. The official told the researcher that she is a bit busy preparing a certain report and asked him to send an email elaborating the required documents and the specific data. The researcher did this.

It takes almost three months to get the requested data after series of telephone and emails remainders. The researcher decided to change the technique of making follow up due to the experience gained during the first and second appointments for interviews at the ministry. It was learnt that the official has a busiest schedule and it is even more difficult for her to cooperate when she is in office environment. Since the official was informing the researcher about the training/workshop as a way to apologize, the researcher takes this as an opportunity and asked to meet the official when she attends training/workshop in other region. The researcher thought that the official might have time to search for the requested document when she is out of office environment. Therefore, the researcher and the official meet twice in other region where she was attending training before getting the data. In the first visit (during the lunch time) the official failed to sign into the system. She found that there are some changes that were done and she was supposed to request a new password. She promised to make follow up and agreed to meet on the second day. In the second day she experienced similar problem and agreed that the official will send the documents through email when arrived in her office. It takes more than two weeks until the researcher meet the official in another region when attending the training. This time the official managed to access the documents although with an internet connection from the researcher. After downloading and sharing the documents with the researcher they realized that the data was not updated. The official promised to send an updated data soon after going back to Dar-es-salaam, but this was not done.

Similar experience was gained while requesting documents from the same ministry but in another section. It took about three months to make follow up, but it was not successful. While waiting for the appointment to meet the official from the ministry, the researcher realized that his organization and ministry of health were organizing a joint training. The researcher requested the organizers to be involved in the training. The request was granted, and lucky enough one of facilitators was the official from whom the data for the study was requested. This was an opportunity for the researcher to create a rapport with this official. The researcher sat with the official during the lunchtime discussing social issues and reminded him about the data. After three days of training the researcher managed to acquire the requested data which was followed for three months.

Case 2: Experience related to getting permit pursuing research

Of the four local authorities studied, getting a permission to conduct research was a bit complicated in one local authority only. Formally, an Executive Director in the local authority is responsible for granting or not granting permission for a research to be carried out in his/her local authority, but this was not the case in this particular local authority. When a researcher went to local authority, the District Executive Director refused to grant permission with the reason that she is not responsible for that. Instead she directed a researcher to go to the council chairperson to ask for such permission. To meet a council chairperson was not simple as expected due to his busiest schedule in the local authority as well as in his ward. It took almost a week to meet him. At last, a researcher managed to meet the council chairperson and explained the purpose of visiting his office. In the first place, the council chairperson also refused to grant permission on the ground that he is not responsible for that. Instead he argued that the District Executive Director knows what to do but seemed to avoid her responsibilities. The council chairperson referred the researcher back to the District Executive Director. In this time, the researcher decided to discuss this with one of the committee Clark (responsible for organizing and arranging meeting) and the district legal officer, they said that:

> "…Because of the tension between the administrative staff and the councillors, the executive director is afraid to grant permission… for the purpose of your research go back to the council chairperson and explain to him that the permission is sought from him because he is the council chairperson and the District Executive Director will also approve as a council secretary" Legal Officer.

This was done and the council chairperson agreed to grant the permission. The researcher went back to the District Executive Director informing that the council chairperson has agreed and then she was also asked to grant the permission of which she agreed.

Trying to be part of the council Committee Clerk and establishing rapport

As explained in the description of the study, in order to understand the activities of the councillors, one of the ways used was the analysis of the minutes of the meetings. The minutes of three financial years were analyzed. Getting the minutes of the meeting in the local government authority either hard or soft copies appeared to be a challenge. This needed to establish a rapport with the council Committee Clerks who are basically responsible of arranging, organizing and keeping records of the meeting on behalf of the Executive Directors. One of the techniques used was to become part of this team, which is to help in sorting and arranging the documents of the meeting. This was achieved since the researcher spent about 40 days in each LGA excluding frequent visit for interviews and collection of minutes of the observed meetings. It should be noted that, this was not part of researcher's work. Through this a researcher became well-known in the local authority and it was easy to be given all minutes of the meetings without any objection. Even after data collection, the researcher is still in touch with the council clerks of the four LGAs and they are in good relationship.

Scheduling the interviews based on convenience

It was a bit complicated to get some of the councillors for interviews since many councillors are occupied with many tasks in the council as well as in the ward. Apart from that there are councillors who are employed and others who are engaging in business and farming activities to generate income for their living. Due to this, the researcher scheduled the interviews based on the convenience of the councillors.

The researcher decided to interview the councillors when they visited the local authority for meetings or any other activity. The researcher decided to make the appointments for interviews based on the schedule of committees and full council meetings. This increased the likelihood of getting many participants for interviews. However, some councillors refused to be interviewed in the local authority's office/premises and preferred to be interviewed in their home or other places. This needed a researcher to be flexible in order to get many participants for interviews.

The general experience shows that getting the councillors for face to face interviews particularly in urban local authorities like Dar es Salaam was a challenge. Compared to other local authorities, the councillors in Dar es Salaam often cancelled the appointment for interview due to many reasons including the busiest schedules and traffic jams. This was opposite to what was experienced to rural local authorities where many participants volunteered to be interviewed. For instance, one respondent in one urban local authority cancelled our appointment few minutes before the time of the interview and told the researcher that she had something important to make follow up. It was then agreed to meet the next day, but it was not possible and this was scheduled to telephone interview which was also re-scheduled several times before deciding to cancel and interview other participants. This suggests that a

researcher who is collecting data in urban local authorities needs to be more creative and flexible during the data collection than collecting data in rural local authorities.

A specific example can be drawn from the interview with a certain councillor in Dar-es salaam, an urban council, who frequently cancelled the appointment for interview claiming to be busy with other activities. In one of the appointment, when the researchers arrived in his office, a councillor said that he cannot carry on with interview and asked to re-schedule the interview, but the researchers stayed in his office for more than an hour discussing other issues including politics. After few minutes discussing politics and other issues, the researchers decided to probe on the issues related to the study, but this was not made clear to the interviewee. In the end the researcher asked to make appointment for telephone interview and it was agreed. Unfortunately, telephone interview was cancelled twice and finally it was done after changing the modality. The researcher proposed to interview him in the morning when he is on the way to the office. This was only possible in Dar es Salaam due to traffic jam that travelling from home to the office can take more than an hour. The interview with this participant took one hour and half and all issues which were asked before the actual interview were clarified and confirmed.

Another participant in one of the urban council shown a behaviour which is completely different compared to other interviewed participants. In the first place, the participants cancelled several appointments and suggested to make a telephone interview which was scheduled. During the interview, she reminded that she has many tasks to perform and would not have enough time for interview. The researcher explained to her that the interview will take not more than 45 minutes. She agreed and the interview started. Unfortunately, the interviewee was not ready to respond to the questions and the probing. In most cases, the interviewee was responding that 'I don't know' to many questions asked by the researcher. The researcher tried to clarify the questions and tried to make it more clear, but still the participant was reluctant to respond to the questions.

Case 3: Experience related to getting permit to do a research

The request for data collection was laid to two districts involved in the research by using introduction letter provided by the University. The expectation was that these local authorities could formally grant permission for data collection without obstacles. On the contrary there was no response for about one week after submitting the letter. In reaction to that the researcher sought for advice from his colleagues with prior experience in researching local government authorities. As a result, the researcher realised that close follow up and informal contact with responsible officials of these authorities could speed up the processing of the permit. Based on this fact, the researcher informally contacted the human resource officer of the LGA who is responsible for permit processing and agreed that he would make follow up of the request. It took only two days for the officer to process and respond to the request. In addition to that, the officer took the researcher to District Executive Director and introduced him further. Following that introduction, the District Executive Director instructed the key respondents in the department of

Agriculture and Livestock through memo to assist the researcher for all necessary information. The copy of the permission was sent to ward offices to inform them about researcher visit and the kind of data he was interested in. To smoothen data collection process, the researcher established rapport with the district agricultural extension officer who helped to arrange the interviews with field workers who have direct contact with farmers.

Experience related to data collection process

The first phase of interviews was done with the agricultural field workers and farmers. The actual interview with field workers took place in their offices, during field trips and in the field during field supervision. While for the farmers the interviews and focus group discussion took place in the field. The original plan was to interview field officers in their offices but after discussion, the researcher realised that the interview in the offices would not be sufficient because the officers would have little time to spend for interview in the office. Alternatively, the strategy was to accompany the field workers to the field and interview them on the way and at the field or sometimes in the office.

The most interesting thing regarding field interview was the revelation of some behaviour which could not be possible in the office. For example, one of the probing questions for interview was why field workers prefer visits to livestock keepers than farmers engaged in crop growing? The first response was that they do that because of emergence and the livestock keepers' problems are more pressing that need more priority than crop growers. But during the field interview, the researcher noticed that the field workers give priority to livestock keepers because they pay something in return.

With respect to farmers, the interviews and the actual focus group discussions were conducted in the field with farmers and their groups. The purpose of doing this in the field was to retain the natural setting in which farmers and their groups could provide the valid opinions and views about their contact with extension officers. Ideally, the focus group discussion participants are supposed to range between six to eight members who are homogeneous in their character or sometimes heterogeneous for the purpose of collecting different information (Ritchie, 2003). However, this is not always the case. As argued by Jakobsen (2012) conducting focus group discussion needs some modification rather than just respecting a local culture. In this research, the local culture of farmers was a main challenge in organising focus group discussion. Most farmers spent most of their time in farming activities and were not willing to waste their time for nothing. Their suggestion was to organise the focus group discussion formally and to provide some incentives like (lunch/breakfast) for the participation. In this particular case, some adjustment was necessary because of limited budget. This includes visiting the targeted farmers in their farms or in their groups and asking them to participate in the focus group discussion in

their farmland. In this way, six focus group discussions for each of the two cases (Morogoro Municipality and Hai District Council) were organised. The participants were crop growers, horticulture farmers' groups, and livestock keepers. In each of the group, researcher recruited between four and eight members depending on the availability of farmers who were willing to participate. In some of the groups, the discussion was conducted without disturbing the natural setting: the farmer's going on with their poultry feeding activities or watering their garden while participating in the discussion. In fact, this strategy was successful because it made the group participants to tell the truth about their actual activities they are involved in. The experience shows that conducting focus group discussion in the field can provide more reliable data because the farmers contribute on the basis of their actual experience and what is transpiring in the field. They cannot lie because the truth reveals itself. They cannot be bored because they are discussing about their actual experience.

Case 4: Experience related to Acquisition of a permit to pursue researches

Conducting research in local authorities required permission at two levels. First, as an academic researcher need to have a letter of introduction from the directorate of research and postgraduate studies at Mzumbe University. The letter from this directorate introduced researcher to all relevant and concern organizations and individual whom researcher intended to meet in the process of conducting research. Second, since the study involved local authorities, researcher had to seek permission from the ministry responsible for regional administration and local government. The ministry is the overseer of all the activities taking place in all local authorities. At the ministry, researcher submitted the introduction letter from the university; and was directed to the directorate responsible for local government. In this directorate, the researcher was then directed to the department of local government where the researcher talked to the head of department about the research study. The discussion also involved seeking permission to conduct field work at the local authorities; specifically, with executive directors of the local authorities. With regards to the permission, the researcher was told that he did not need a different letter to take with him to respective local authorities. It was said that since the ministry was now aware of the study and its purpose, it was now a question of visiting respective local authorities and introduce himself/herself to the executive director and proceeds with research. It was also told that the introduction letter from the university was sufficient even to the local authorities.

At the local authority level, the permission to collect data, specifically from the heads of department was granted by the executive directors themselves. This was after submitting introduction letter from the university and personally talked to the executive directors. After the approval the executive director called the meeting of all the heads of department and introduced the researcher and

asked the researcher to talk about study. Both of us, researcher and the executive director, asked the heads of department to participate in the study.

Experience related to data collection process

Geographically, the local authorities are scattered all over the country which made it a challenge in terms of time and traveling cost to visit each of them. The convenient approach to access all the executive directors was to look for opportunities for meetings and workshops where all executive directors meet in one place, and hence easy to access all of them. So, researcher had to look for such meetings and ask permission from the organizers to talk to the executive directors in order to introduce the study and ask for their participation in the study.

Data for this study was collected using questionnaires; interviews and observations. With questionnaires, the challenges were to find out the gatherings or meetings where all the executive directors come together. This approach seemed effective for two reasons: first, the executive directors were brought together in one location and hence easy access to all executive directors on one location. Second, given the geographical coverage of all the local authorities, being in one spot saved both time and resources to go around the entire country in search for executive directors in the local authorities. The response rate was relatively high, although some respondents managed to collect the questionnaires but failed to return them. Some of the excuses put forward were purported lack of hard data from their local authorities.

With regards to interviews and observations, the main challenge was the assurance that the executive director will be present at their local authorities; and have time for the interview. To address this challenge scheduling of appointments was important. Prior to the interviews, respective executive directors were contacted by phone and asked for the appointments. Interview dates and time were set and agreed upon, however when it came to actual implementation re-scheduling were often done. My experience shows that most of the executive directors were very busy with desk works and interferences from various visitors who wanted to see and talk to the executive directors. The executive directors had ample time after office hours. So I had interviews after 3.30 pm. At these times, there was very few interferences from other people who also wanted to meet the executive director.

Discussion

This section compares the experiences of conducting research across different cases involved in the four PhD research in Tanzania. The comparison was mainly in two main themes: the process of acquiring permit for data collection and the actual data collection process.

Experiences within the lens of acquiring permit for data collection

In general, the processes of acquiring permit for data collection in the four studies provide more or less the same experience. The researchers use the introduction letter given by the Mzumbe University's directorate which is responsible for research and publication. The requests were laid to different authorities responsible for their research interest. Although in a varying degree, the authorities granted the permission for data collection. Nevertheless, some differences were noted with respect to time taken by responsible authorities to process the request and the constellation of authorities through which the requests had to be processed. In study one and three for example the researcher had to take the request to the ministry responsible for health and Agriculture down to Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) offices, District Administrative Secretary and then Executive Directors and District Health Secretary. While others for example in study two and four the requests were directly laid to respective local authorities. Another difference noted is at the authorities for granting permission. Although, all local authorities involved in the research are subjected under similar administrative system with similar structures and authorities, some of them have established their informal rules concerning the authority of the council. For example, in some local authorities the permission was granted by the Executive Directors and District Administrative Secretary whiles in other local authorities it was granted by the council chairperson and head of departments. It is not clearly who is formally responsible for granting the permission to conduct the research in the local authorities. This is because the experiences from these studies show that different authorities in different local authorities granted the permission. For instance, it was noticed in one local authority that the Executive Director refused to grant the permission and referred a researcher to the council chairperson. This shows that it is not a straightforward and uniform process to get a permit for fieldwork. This needs a researcher to be flexible as well as be creative while seeking the permit for fieldwork. Otherwise it could be very difficult to get the permission on time given the limited time frame for many researchers.

Experiences within the lens of data collection process

Regarding data collection process, it has been seen that the researchers' experience is completely different when it comes to the actual data collection. Nature of the respondents, the area/location of the study and the study approach contributed to these variations.

The respondents in lower cadres were a bit easy and cooperative compared to the respondents in higher cadres. It was easy to access the respondents such as the clients, councillors, and the farmers as compared to the respondents such as the heads of department, Executive Director and the bureaucrats at the ministry. For instance, the experience given in study 1 that a researcher spent about three months making follow up for interviews and to get documents at the ministry of health. The clients and providers in lower cadres were easily accessed, open-minded and cooperative and respond positively to the questions asked and document requested. The huge complexity was experienced from the local

authorities' office, at the region and the ministry level in the central government. The researcher made several appointments, but they were often cancelled and re-scheduled and some were not fulfilled. In some instances, the researcher made appointments with the officials and continues to collect data in other study areas while waiting for the appointments. This seems to be a unique and an important experience noticed. A researcher gained experience of dealing with all kinds of respondents in lower and higher cadres.

The respondents in lower cadres appear to be more flexible as compared to the respondents in higher cadres. For instance, the interviews with the councillors and the farmers took place either in their officers, in the field or at their home, whereas, the interviews with the respondents in higher cadres such as executive directors and heads of department took place in their offices. This is an important tip for any researcher to note. The researchers should be flexible as much as possible to deal with the differences that may arise when dealing with different respondents. Different experience during the data collection process was contributed by the location of the study i.e. the area where the study was conducted. It was a bit easy to get data and the respondents in rural settings compared to urban settings. This was indeed featured in study 2. The experience of getting the respondents for face to face interviews particularly in urban council like Dar es Salaam was a bit difficult compared to rural settings. As it was noted in study one and two, the respondents in Dar es Salaam often cancelled the appointment claiming to have the busiest schedules and traffic jams. While the respondents in rural settings like Mkuranga volunteered to be interviewed. It was also noted that in some instance the interviews were conducted by telephone before or after office hours to overcome the claimed busy schedule which hindered face to face interviews. This was done in study 2 where one of the participants was interviewed in the morning when he was on the way to the office. This was also experienced in study 4 where the executive directors were interviewed after office hours because they had ample time for that. This entails the researchers that, the study in urban setting should be well-designed, flexible and well-planned to encounter all challenges that may arise.

The experience of the researchers varies depending on the approach adopted by a particular study. This was observed by all researchers who shared their experience in this study. An example of this is in study 3 regarding focus group discussions where the participants were the farmers. Focus group discussion requires a least six or eight members sitting together in the way that participants see each other. It was a bit difficult to organize the farmers and convince them to come together for focus group discussion due to variation in environment and distance where the discussions took place. The researcher had to combine different strategies to make sure the goal is archived. For instance, in some instance the focus group discussion was done without disturbing the natural setting, the farmer's going

on with their poultry feeding activities or watering their garden while participating in the discussion. A notable experience was noted in study 4 where administering a questionnaire to the executive directors of all Local government authorities was a challenge. The study approach requires visiting all local government authorities to administer questionnaires. The researcher had to make follow up to know the schedule of meetings where all executive directors convey. This approach seemed effective because the executive directors (from higher cadre) are less occupied when they relieved of their day to day activities in their offices/local authorities. In addition, being in one spot saved both time and resources to go around the entire country in search for executive directors in the local authorities. This might be an important piece of experience for other researchers.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Based on the acquired experiences from this research, the study concludes that without re-structuring the legal and regulatory environment of conducting researches in Tanzania, desired research outcomes will be compromised. This is evidenced by a number of emerging issues ranging from application of fieldwork permit, establishing rapport, listening to untold, shocking and sad stories; and respondents providing irrelevant information which was not intended. Through these experiences, the researchers might design their study in a way that it may reduce the obstacles and by so doing realise their research goals. However, the experience provided in this study is not the yardstick for conducting research in developing countries. This is because the experience may differ from one field of study to another. Likewise, the way or approach of dealing with these challenges might be different. Yet, it may help the researchers to learn how to go about while doing their research.

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