

Review of: "Understanding dis-functionalities in multi-agency policy collaborations in Kenya"

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This paper has the potential to make an interesting contribution to the literature on collaboration between public sector organisations for policy implementation in developing countries but as it stands I find it very confusing.

First, I'm not clear as what the author is trying to do starting with the opening sentence of the Introduction which doesn't make sense to me. The aim(s) of the paper is somewhat elusive and appears in several not necessarily complementary guises. Thus, my first recommendation is to clearly delineate the aim of the paper. Once this is established, much greater coherence can be given to the structure of the paper and the coherence of the argument. As it stands, the paper draws on various literatures and it is not clear as to why. There is, in fact, too much reviewing of literature in the paper. Indeed, it forms the bulk of the paper yet the title of the paper tells us it's about Kenya. The paper would benefit from a shorter more focused literature review that is clearly aligned with the aim of the paper. At present I'm just not sure what the paper is about - policy implementation issues associated with multi-agency collaboration, trust and policy implementation, dysfunctionalities (also dis-functionalities in the title) in public organisations that affect policy implementation or what.

Another part of the paper requiring attention is the methodology. Some additional information is needed eg how interviewees were selected; the breakdown of positions in terms bureaucratic level; what questions were asked; were they all asked the same questions? What's the significance of audited documents (and what are they?); were there only five respondents for the second round of interviewing? If so why?

The data presentation should be the most interesting part of the paper as it's original empirical research. But, the section(s) present the data in a rather unsystematic way. By this I mean that the author sprinkles around a few quotes but most of the "data presentation" sections comprise further discussion and literature review. Assertions are made but the reader is not provided with the data to back them up. If there have been multiple interviews then there should be rich data to present in an organised way. We can then learn, I would think, what the officials think about collaboration and whether there are differences between say - urban-rural, different levels in the hierarchy, female-male, different organisations. Isn't it the officials' views on collaboration that the research is aimed at revealing?

Another issue is where trust fits in. There appears to be an assumption (a reasonable one) that it is important for collaboration. But other variables might also be relevant eg capacity, motivation, established work practices.

Finally, there are many sentences, especially among those dealing with the literature that simply didn't make sense to me.

