

Abstract

The public sector has experienced a growing demand for accountability and the need to optimize value within the constraints of limited resources. This research sought to assess the effect of internal audit function on financial accountability in the county government of Laikipia, Kenya. The specific objective of the study was to evaluate the effect of independence of the Internal Audit function on financial accountability of Laikipia County Government. The study targeted 105 employees working in the finance and economic planning department. Out of these, a sample of 51 employees were chosen and 48 questionnaires were duly filled and qualified for analysis. Data was gathered, sorted, coded, and entered on SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was applied to provide a summary of the data using mean as well as standard deviation metrics. Correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to explore relationships and provide insights into the variables. The outcomes were presented using tables and charts. The questionnaire was found to be reliable, and the data was normally distributed and homogeneous, with no intercorrelation between the variables under study. The model adopted in the study was confirmed significant using ANOVA. Independence of the audit function was found to be a positive and significant predictor of financial accountability. The study recommended that policymakers should: enhance the independence of the audit function in Laikipia County Government by structurally separating the internal audit section from the Finance and Economic Planning department to strengthen its oversight capacity; implement measures to manage conflicts of interest, minimize management interference, and ensure adherence to auditing standards. To enhance effective financial accountability in the public sector, future research should examine factors influencing internal audit effectiveness.