

ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF EXTERNAL AUDIT IN PROMOTING  
ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN KENYA: A CASE OF KENYA NATIONAL  
AUDIT OFFICE

ENOCK CHANAI MOGAKA  
MBA/2013/41631

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## ABSTRACT

Kenya National Audit Office (KENAO) is the external auditor of the Kenyan public sector. The research project sought to assess the performance of the Auditor-General and Kenya National Audit Office in improving accountability in the public sector in Kenya. It sought to assess the gains attributed to KENAO on the improved public sector accountability in the eyes of —Wanjikul. The study considered key factors which affect the performance of KENAO in enforcing accountability mechanisms like organizational independence, exchequer funding level, adequate qualified professional staff and the compliance with professional auditing standards. A descriptive method was used in the research design and the target population was 123. Stratified and random sampling methods were used to select national level ministries after the researcher had first identified the strata and their proportions in the populations to pick six accounting officers and thirty two managers of the audit office, giving a sample size of 38 respondents. The research collected primary data from the respondents using interviews and a semi-structured questionnaire, while secondary data was collected from published journals, PAC reports, PIC reports and KENAO's audit reports. A pilot study was administered on a sample of respondents to check on the clarity of the instruments, which improved their validity and reliability. Regression model was used to analyze the data using SPSS version 16 and the findings were presented using tables and figures. The study revealed that Kenya National Audit Office's independence and authority is a critical professional attribute for auditors, that provision of adequate resources is critical in ensuring efficiency in audit processes, qualified and competent professionals are crucial in ensuring quality of audit process and that professional auditing standards provide a framework to promote quality audit work that is systematic. The study concludes that independence of the Office, provision of adequate resources, sourcing of qualified and competent professionals and adherence to professional standards, enhanced performance of Kenya National Audit Office. This study recommends that the audit activities conducted by Kenya National Audit Office must be independent, and auditors of Kenya National Audit Office must be objective in performing their work. This would enhance efficiency in the audit engagements which will help in safeguarding the government resources. There is need to ensure adequate allocation of resources and funding to the Office and staff needs to continuously update themselves of the changing auditing standards, auditing methodologies and technology and sharpen their skills in spearheading good governance and public sector accountability.