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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.:IJAR-50736

Date: 21/03/25

Title "Strengthening Ethical Values and Accountability in Local Governance: Citizen-Led Strategies in the Greater Kigezi Sub-Region of Uganda"

Recommendation:

- Accept as it is
- Accept after minor revision.....Yes.....
- Accept after major revision
- Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		Yes		
Techn. Quality		Yes		
Clarity	Yes			
Significance	Yes			

Reviewer Name:Dr. Feroze Ahmad

Date:21 /03/2025

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

(To be published with the manuscript in the journal)

The reviewer is requested to provide a brief comment (3-4 lines) highlighting the significance, strengths, or key insights of the manuscript. This comment will be Displayed in the journal publication alongside with the reviewers name.

This manuscript offers valuable insights into the critical role of citizen engagement in promoting ethical governance and accountability within local administrations in Uganda. The study's mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies for enhancing public service delivery. Its actionable recommendations are highly relevant for both policy practitioners and scholars interested in strengthening governance in developing countries.

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This paper examines the role of citizen-led strategies in enhancing ethical values and accountability within local governance in Uganda, with a particular focus on the Greater Kigezi Sub-Region. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including local government officials, civil society representatives, and community leaders. The research aims to highlight how citizen engagement can foster ethical governance and combat corruption, thereby improving the effectiveness of local governments in service delivery.

Strengths:

1. **Relevance and Importance:** The study tackles a critical issue in the context of Uganda's decentralization reforms and the broader debate on improving public governance in developing countries. The topic of ethical values and accountability is crucial to enhancing public service delivery.

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- 2. Methodological Rigor:** By employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The use of surveys and in-depth interviews with multiple stakeholders strengthens the robustness of the findings.
- 3. Actionable Recommendations:** The paper offers practical, evidence-based recommendations, such as empowering citizens and enhancing political accountability. These recommendations are relevant not only for Uganda but for other nations grappling with similar governance challenges.
- 4. Clarity and Structure:** The paper is well-organized, with a clear presentation of research objectives, findings, and conclusions. This ensures that the study is accessible to a wide audience, including scholars, policymakers, and civil society leaders.

Weaknesses:

- 1. Limited Generalizability:** The study focuses exclusively on the Greater Kigezi Sub-Region, which may limit the broader applicability of the findings. Expanding the geographical scope could strengthen the paper's conclusions.
- 2. Potential Bias:** The inclusion of local government officials and community leaders as primary respondents may introduce response bias, as these individuals might underreport issues like corruption or inefficiency.
- 3. Superficial Analysis of Structural Barriers:** While the paper discusses challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiency, it could benefit from a deeper exploration of the structural limitations within local governance systems that impede accountability efforts.
- 4. Limited Long-Term Perspective:** The paper does not assess the long-term impact of citizen-led accountability strategies, which would provide valuable insights into the sustainability of the proposed interventions.

Significance:

The study provides an important contribution to the understanding of citizen-led strategies in strengthening accountability and ethical standards within local governance. It is highly relevant in the context of Uganda's decentralization policy and the broader challenges faced by many African nations in improving governance and combating corruption.

Recommendation for Publication:

I recommend the paper for publication, with minor revisions to address the limitations regarding generalizability, response bias, and structural analysis. The study is well-structured and provides meaningful contributions to the literature on local governance and citizen engagement.