

Determinants of Employee Service Delivery in County Governments in Kenya; A Case Study Elgeyo Marakwet County Government, Kenya



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ABSTRACT: The study aims at examining the determinants of employee service delivery at the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet. The study was guided by the following specific objectives; the effect of employee training on employee service delivery at Elgeyo Marakwet County, the effect of employee competence on employee service delivery at Elgeyo Marakwet County, the effect of organizational leadership on employee service delivery at Elgeyo Marakwet County and the effect of organizational culture on employee service delivery at Elgeyo Marakwet County. The researcher used a descriptive research design. The study targeted 2,400 employees of Elgeyo Marakwet County. Yamane's (1967) formula will be used to determine the sample size. A sample of 342 employees were chosen to achieve the study objective. The study used stratified random sampling to group the respondents into strata and simple random sampling to pick the respondents from the strata. A pilot study was conducted in Uasin Gishu County so as to test reliability and validity of the instruments for collecting data. Content validity test was done to test validity of the questionnaires while Cronbach's alpha coefficient was performed to test the reliability of the research instrument. Self-administered questionnaires were issued to collect data. Analysis of data will be performed using inferential and descriptive statistics and presented by use of charts, tables and graphs. Study findings were significant to the employees of Elgeyo Marakwet since it provided a framework for development of effective program of employee's motive that led to improved job satisfactory, leading to high performance, profitably and ultimately success of Elgeyo Marakwet. The study found that a unit increase in training corresponded to a .207 increase in employee service delivery, while a similar increase in employee competence yielded a .316 rise, increases in organizational leadership and organizational culture were associated with .301 and .271 increases, respectively. The study recommended that the county to continue investing in training initiatives, particularly in induction programs and frequent training sessions, to nurture employee talent and support career advancement and also the county should foster a culture of continuous learning and development within the organization so as to build upon the strengths identified in employee competence and service delivery.

KEYWORDS: Training, Organizational Leadership, Motivation and Service Delivery

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Public sector managers around the globe now face a common set of challenges when it comes to meeting the increased expectations of their customers (Dalton, 2013). While these challenges may be consistent in the way they come, the ways in which they are being confronted and the results that are being achieved vary considerably. One of these common challenge faced by every organization is how to service its customers better. Luthuli (2009) argued that most people are accustomed to the very good or enhanced service delivery provided by the private sector and is worthy the monies paid for. The same people view the public sector as another provider of services, for which they also pay for but in this case in the form of taxes.

In order to address this, the public sector must find ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery. Luthuli (2009) further proposed that the Public Service should provide value for money by improving the quality of service (accessibility for all and satisfactory customer experiences and outcomes) and reducing the costs involved in providing those services. The need for a customer-oriented focus coincides with the tightening of government budgets, providing value for money is a core concern today. This is prompting the public sector to explore new sustainable models for service delivery. These are models that can improve customer experience and outcomes through enhanced service levels at the same or reduced cost (Fourie, 2011).

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The primary development goal for any country is to achieve broad based, sustainable improvement in the standards and the quality of life for its citizen. The public service and in particular the civil service play an indispensable role in the effective delivery of public service that is key function of state economy. When the delivery of service is constrained or becomes ineffective, it affects the quality of life of people and natural development process (Kobia & Mohammed, 2006).

Devolution in the United Kingdom occurred along territorial and communal lines and promoted efficient cooperation within the devolved units, according to Peterson and colleagues' research published in 2001. Local communities were able to exert social pressure against extortion and corruption as a consequence. In fact, over the past three decades, an increasing number of nations have further decentralized the administrative, fiscal, and political responsibilities of the central government to sub-national governments. These helped Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland succeed. Italy and Spain are other nations that profited from devolution. Devolution has frequently also been motivated by the desire to bring the people's government closer to them (Peterson, et al. 2001).

It's been implemented in South Africa, Nigeria, and Ethiopia in Africa (World Bank, 2012). However, Tewfik (2010) in his study on Transition to Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience established that Ethiopia faced several challenges at the beginning of the implementation of the devolved governance. Similarly, Bardhan and Mookherjee (2000) in their study on Capture and governance at local and national levels, observed that improved access of local elite to public funds in South Africa and Nigeria, two countries that have relatively successfully implemented devolution.

An examination of Kenya's history reveals that for the majority of its independence, Kenya has been a unitary state with a highly centralized government that has had an imperious control over the sub-national governments and the other arms of government, namely the legislature. Ndung'u (2014) established that Kenya as a country has not had experience in devolution. For two reasons, the nation hasn't actually had any practice with devolution.

First, under the Kenyan autonomous Constitution of 1963, regionalism—commonly referred to as "Majimboism"—was introduced but did not flourish. Soon after Kenya gained independence in 1964, the first government, led by Jomo Kenyatta, amended the constitution, essentially abolishing the regional governments in favor of the provincial administration, which was under central control, and the local government system. Second, the local governments established in accordance with Kenyan legislation (Local Government Act, cap. 265) were not given substantial political, administrative, or fiscal authority. Instead, through the administration officers, the central government continued to maintain authority over the local governments (Ndung'u, 2014)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Public service delivery in the Government of Kenya is committed to continually improve the lives of the people through a transformed public service at the county levels which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all (Dalton, 2013). The long struggle for a new constitutional dispensation was finally realized upon the promulgation of the constitution 2010; this document came along with a promise for not only a new but a better Kenya (Mukabi, et. al., 2015). Chief among its provisions was the migration from unitary to dual system of government; with it came the national and forty-seven county governments. It was envisioned that devolution would take governance to the grassroots and enable an enhance citizen participation in decisions making and over sighting which would potentiality translate to equitable distribution of resources as well as better, reliable and efficient public services to the citizens. With all these in place, it would be expected that Kenyans would have already started benefiting through improved service delivery in the counties. However, despite the fact that the creation of county governments 'promised' Kenyan citizens better lives ahead, Kenyans are yet to obtain these benefits (Mukabi, et. al., 2015).

A major reason is the financial constraints experienced by county governments due to low allocation of budget by the national government. Resources in the county governments have not yet realized the interest of Kenyan citizens as expected. Involving citizens through public participation, efficient resource mobilization and accountability of local leaders are crucial in service delivery within counties. However, there are no adequate mechanisms to enable the citizens to fully participate through public participation in shaping development agenda, equally allocate resources, furthermore the county government has not put in place mechanisms to disclose information of expenditure (Mwamuye & Nyamu, 2014). These concerns require immediate attention.

Available research studies look at how decentralization enhances participation (Von Braun and Grote, 2002; Ahmad, et al., 2005; Brinkerhoff, et al., 2007); design and emerging mechanisms of participation in sub-national governments (Azfar, et al., 1999; 2008; John, 2009; Matovu, 2011; Joshi and Houtzager, 2012); and, factors influencing citizen participation in local governments (Esonu and Kavanamur, 2011; Yang and Pandey, 2011; Bay, 2011; Michels, 2012).

Many of these studies do not cover service delivery in Kenyan County governments. Many of the researchers also did their study outside Kenya. Therefore, the gaps in literature and that the issue in Kenya is not clearly discussed sets the pace to carry out the current study. Furthermore, considering the amount of public resources that go into the county governments and their position in

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affecting the lives of the common mwananchi, it is necessary to assess the factors influencing service delivery in county Governments in Kenya so as to offer guidance and suggest appropriate solutions to the challenges and potential complexities that exists. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to assess the determinants of employee service delivery in Elgeyo Marakwet County.

Objective of the Study

- i. To determine the influence of training on employee service delivery in Elgeyo Marakwet County Government
- ii. To establish the effect of organizational leadership on employee service delivery in Elgeyo Marakwet County Government

Empirical Literature

Training and Employee Service Delivery

Employee skill development is a tool that managers can utilize to service standards and their desired level of performance. The challenge for the organization is to design training options that give employees the information or skills they need and then measure whether those training options were effective in producing desired outcomes.

Omwamba (2018) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of in-service training on service quality in Kisii County Government. He found that the county's performance fell short on a number of fronts, including a lack of fair training opportunities for all employees, biased trainings, and an undeveloped internal training policy that instead relies on public service training programs at the national level.

Researchers Jagero et al. (2012) investigated the connection between on-the-job training and productivity in the Tanzanian branches of DHL and FedEx. The purpose of this research was to evaluate current courier company on-the-job training programs and evaluate the effectiveness of courier company employees. We employed questionnaires as our research tools, using the correlation survey design, to study the relationship between variables. The survey revealed that organizations' workers participated in a variety of on-the-job programs, either in response to an evaluation of employee needs or because of the fluidity of business operations. Given the study's limitations (including its focus on only one area), more research is warranted.

According to Chukwuemeka et al. (2017), the government should keep expanding ICT's possibilities in order to boost worker productivity via the development of new knowledge, expertise, and skills that would, in turn, boost individual performance and the organization's overall success. Education and growth are also beneficial because they provide a skilled labor force that can drive strategic priorities and realize long-term goals in the twenty-first century economy. The focus of this research is on ICT as the primary engine for service delivery, while human resource management is ignored.

Human resource needs, such as staff training, should be taken into account as part of an organization's overall strategy, according to Kihara (2016). Businesses who invest in their employees by providing training see improved results. Company executives should take the lead in communicating the new strategy to employees and rallying support behind it with promises of financial rewards for success. The strategy implementation process may be improved by giving workers a chance to make personal contributions and provide recommendations. Yet, leaders are responsible for ensuring that their strategy, objectives, and timely input all correspond with the requirements of human resources. Last but not least, it is important to have objective performance reviews and to base promotions on actual accomplishments. The private sector isn't the only one that needs a case.

Training as a strategic human resource management technique and organizational performance in Kenyan firms was also the subject of research by Waiganjo et al. (2016). Human resources' strategic role in boosting organizational output is the primary focus here. Unfortunately, the report fails to acknowledge the work that goes into putting human solutions into action.

Study by Hogarh (2012) utilizing a descriptive research method to examine the effects of training on the performance of employees at the Sic insurance company limited in Ghana. The study focused on the positive effects of training and the difficulties associated with it. It was shown via this research that workers prefer the off-the-job training option over others since it is more practical for them to learn in this setting. On the other hand, Ngari's (2015) research on the effect of in- service education on the productivity of the county's judges in Nairobi shows that such education has a significant impact. The study, which was done using a descriptive research approach and focused on specific aspects of the transfer of information, found that off-the-job training is very important. Due to the study's narrow focus on one subset of the insurance industry, more research is required.

According to Kum, Cowden, and Karodia (2014), the common conception of creating an intrinsic program is that it requires daily all-day long sessions of group training. Training and development refers to the process of educating workers so that they can better fulfill their roles in the organization. Today's high-performance businesses understand they must use effective methods of training and development if they want to maintain or increase their market share (Vinesh, 2014). When it comes to maximizing the value and potential of the people working for a company, training and development are the most crucial factors (Vinesh, 2014).

Research into the effect of in-service training on service delivery was conducted by Dennis and Onkware (2018) in the Kenyan county of Kisii. The research employed a structured questionnaire with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Primarily,

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the questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The study found that the county's level of service delivery was subpar due to a number of factors, such as the following: insufficient training opportunities for county employees, a bias toward training certain employees over others, a reliance on the public service training policy of the national government rather than developing its own policy to meet the county's unique needs, and a lack of stakeholder participation in training initiatives.

Organizational Leadership and Employee Service Delivery

Leadership is essential to the growth and survival of any group or company. Several correlations between leadership traits and indices of service performance have been found in the literature, both in commercial and public sector companies. Gaitho's (2017) analysis of the literature on the topic of the relationship between ethical leadership and effective service delivery highlights the importance of practitioners working to ensure that their organizations follow best practices in ethical leadership and accountability. The study also emphasizes the need of policymakers establishing a regulatory framework to foster effective leadership, strengthen ethics, and ensure accountability for improved service delivery. This lends credence to the research that seeks to determine what factors impact public sector workers' ability to provide quality service to the public.

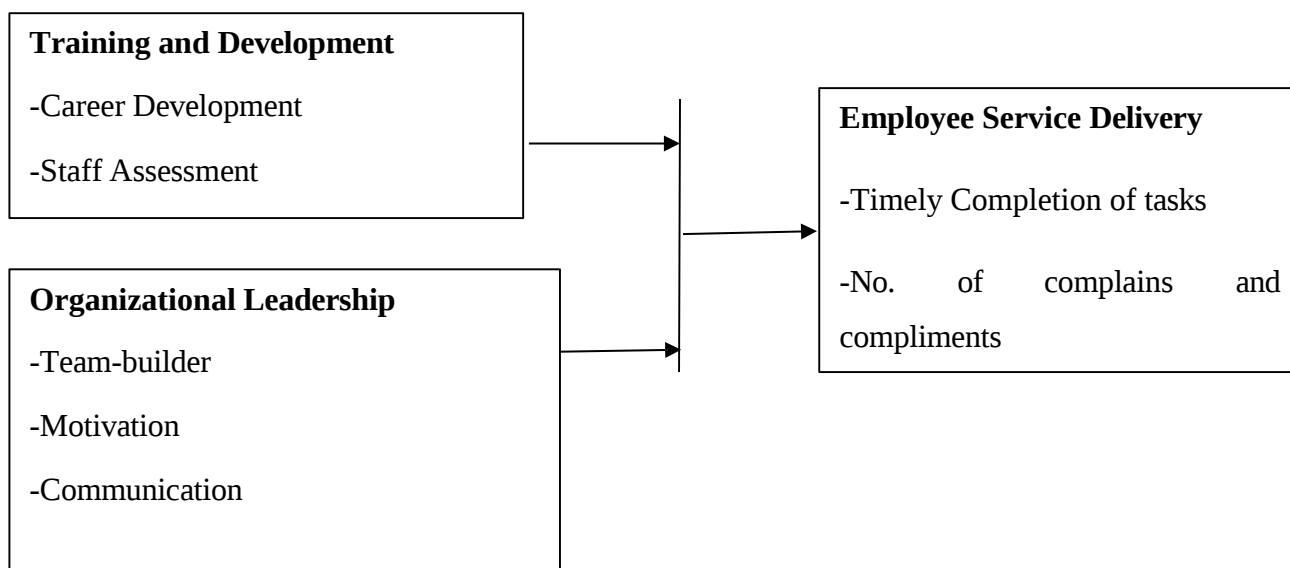
The goal of the research conducted by zer and Tnaztepe (2014) was to probe the most influential institutions with regard to their leadership styles and the influence these styles had on their ability to get things done. The business under scrutiny was a Turkish firm that facilitates international trade. The sample consisted of people with white collar jobs in both managerial and non-management tracks within the firm. As a whole, 215 full replies were included in the analysis. As only a relationship-centered and a transformational leadership style are substantially associated with business performance, the study's main hypothesis was only partially supported by the data. In terms of the second hypothesis, which compares leadership styles, transformational leadership was shown to have a significant impact on the success of the company. When the criteria for leadership style were examined, it was found that the most common form of management in all three countries is relationship-based.

The purpose of the study by Hallam, Dorantes Dosamantes, and Zanella (2017) was to examine the unique role that hierarchical culture and leadership play in SMEs, as well as their effects on employees' feelings of responsibility toward the company and the role that job satisfaction plays in mediating those effects. The findings revealed that transformational management affected organizational responsibility both straight and indirectly (via job satisfaction). One of the unintended consequences of bureaucratic culture was very large. Organizational accountability was significantly influenced by factors such as a bureaucratic and supportive culture. Malaysian researcher Arham (2014) looked at how different styles of leadership affected the efficiency with which small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) carried out their administrative tasks. What was found was a correlation between leaders' actions and the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with transformational leadership being more crucial to SMEs' success than value-based leadership. One of the key findings is that the way in which SME leaders exercise their authority has a direct bearing on how well their companies perform in the area of administration.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research was applied in this study and it is research that describes an occurrence, and it is used to document and describe the phenomenon of interest providing a clear answer of who, what, when, where, why, and way (6 Ws) of the research problem and data is typically collected through a structured questionnaire. The design was chosen so as to achieve the study objective of examining the determinants of employee service delivery in Elgeyo Marakwet County.

Data Collection Instrument

This study used questionnaires to collect data from respondents. A questionnaire is easy to administer. Questionnaires also reduce bias since the researchers' own ideas would not affect the responses in a certain manner unlike if it could a face-to-face study. The questionnaire were constructed using a Likert scale with close-ended questions. The questionnaire were selected because it enabled the researcher to be consistent in asking questions and data yielded were easy to analyze. The questionnaires were formulated according to study objectives in a systematic procedure

Data Analysis Technique

Data was then be analyzed through the use of descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Descriptive statistics included mean, mode, percentage, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics included multiple regression analysis using the model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y represents Employee service delivery

β_0 represent the intercept when x is zero

x_1 represent Training

ϵ represents error term

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Training and Employee Service Delivery

Table 1: Training and Employee Service Delivery

			N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Elgeyo	Marakwet	County	291	1	5	3.78	1.160
considers training as part of county strategy.							
Induction	training	is a well-	291	1	5	3.74	1.167
planned exercise in the County							
Elgeyo	Marakwet	County	291	1	5	3.75	1.250
conducts training programs frequently							
Training helps employees of the County to be more productive			291	1	5	3.59	1.172
Providing employees with the technical skills necessary for their roles			291	1	5	3.79	1.216
Align training programs with career development plans managed through HR services.			291	1	5	3.72	1.227
Valid N (listwise)			291				

Source: Researcher (2024)

The findings in table 1 demonstrated that across Elgeyo Marakwet County's training initiatives, the mean effectiveness score stood at 3.74 (Std. Deviation = 0.24). Induction training, a meticulously planned effort within the County, garnered an average rating of 3.74 (Std. Deviation

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= 0.25). Additionally, frequent training programs held by the County exhibited an average rating of 3.75 (Std. Deviation = 0.31), enhancing employees' skills. Notably, training significantly contributed to employees' productivity, with a mean score of 3.59 (Std. Deviation = 0.29). Furthermore, the alignment of training programs with career development plans overseen by HR services yielded an average rating of 3.72 (Std. Deviation = 0.30), fostering skill enhancement and career growth.

Organizational Leadership and Employee Service Delivery

Table 2: Organizational Leadership and Employee Service Delivery

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Management provides employees with frequent feedback on their performance which in turn improves employee service delivery	291	1	5	3.66	1.261
Top management communicate county news effectively and in a timely manner to form basis for decisions regarding service delivery.	291	1	5	3.54	1.257
County leadership strive to continuously improve the quality of work life which improves employees service delivery	291	1	5	3.71	1.204
Employees feel confident in the top management effectiveness	291	1	5	3.68	1.205
Encourage leaders and employees to continuously seek ways to improve processes and service delivery through innovation and feedback.	291	1	5	3.70	1.216
Invest in Leadership Training	291	1	5	3.64	1.248
Develop cross-functional teams and promote collaboration between different departments to address complex service delivery challenges.	291	1	5	3.76	1.230
Valid N (listwise)	291				

The findings in table 2 demonstrated that management provided employees with frequent feedback on their performance, which improved service delivery (Mean = 3.66, Std. Deviation = 1.261). Top management communicated county news effectively and timely, forming the basis for service delivery decisions (Mean = 3.54, Std. Deviation = 1.257). County leadership continuously strove to improve the quality of work life, enhancing service delivery (Mean = 3.71, Std. Deviation = 1.204). Employees felt confident in the effectiveness of top management (Mean = 3.68, Std. Deviation = 1.205). Leaders and employees were encouraged to seek ways to improve processes and service delivery through innovation and feedback (Mean = 3.70, Std. Deviation = 1.216). Investment in leadership training was noted (Mean = 3.64, Std. Deviation = 1.248). Developing cross-functional teams and promoting collaboration between departments addressed complex service delivery challenges (Mean = 3.76, Std. Deviation = 1.230).

CONCLUSIONS

The research findings on training initiatives within Elgeyo Marakwet County demonstrated a high level of effectiveness, particularly in induction programs and frequent training sessions, which significantly contributed to skill enhancement and career growth for employees. With an emphasis on aligning training programs with career development plans overseen by HR services, the county demonstrated a proactive approach in fostering employee skill development and productivity.

Employee competence and service delivery within the county's departments were found to be notably strong, with employees exhibiting proficiency in effective communication, problem-solving, and adherence to professional standards. Noteworthy strengths included employees' adaptability to changes, thorough understanding of relevant laws and regulations, and commitment to maintaining professional boundaries with stakeholders. These findings highlight the competency and adaptability of the county's workforce, contributing to effective service delivery and customer satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) The county to continue investing in training initiatives, particularly in induction programs and frequent training sessions, to nurture employee talent and support career advancement.
- b) The county should foster a culture of continuous learning and development within the organization so as to build upon the strengths identified in employee competence and service delivery.
- c) The Elgeyo Marakwet county ought to enhance leadership practices and communication channels in order to strengthen organizational culture and employee engagement.

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