



INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ON EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF BUNGOMA, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research study was to assess the influence of strategic planning on effective service delivery in County Government of Bungoma, Kenya. A Descriptive and correlation research design was adopted for the study. The study was anchored on Goal setting. The target population consisted of 130 respondents consisting of the county executive committee member, chief officer, directors, an accountant, finance officer, economist, supply chain officer and office administrators from the ten (10) departments in County Government of Bungoma including the office of the governor, human resource and county public service board as at January 2018. All the targeted 130 respondents in the 10 ministries in the County Government of Bungoma were sampled, thus forming a census study since the targeted population was specific in nature and limited in number. The questionnaire was used as the data collection instruments. Pilot study was conducted in the County Government of Kakamega using a sample size of 20 respondents to test the validity of the constructs of the questionnaire. Validity of the constructs of the questionnaire was further tested by a review of the supervisors while reliability was tested using reliability test. Data analysis and interpretation was based on descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics mainly using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). From the findings the significance test indicated that strategic planning is important in predicting effective service delivery as indicated by the results. The study hopes good relationship in organization would foster strategic planning and effective service delivery so as to ensure institutions are run professionally and therefore perform well. The study is important for the need for county governments to encourage strategic planning since it improves effective service delivery.

Key Words: *strategic planning, service delivery, County Government of Bungoma*

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INTRODUCTION

In many developing countries, the issue of Organizational Service Delivery is a challenge that needs to be addressed given the low quality of service provision and the pressing needs of the poor (Besley & Ghatak, 2007). Khalid (2010) supports this view when he states that local councils in Malaysia continue to face pressure to improve their Organizational Performance. The increased level of education of the population has led to a more vocal and more discerning citizenry that expects better services and accountability from its local government. Moreover, rapid industrialization and urbanization of countries have created a challenging environment for the local government (Khalid, 2010). Tamrakar (2010) affirms that in Nepal, organizational Service Delivery in the public sector has remained lower than what was targeted when Nepal announced delivery of public services to its people through a planned development effort.

Regionally, the problem of poor organizational Service Delivery due to poor strategic management practices or culture is a problem that is faced by many towns in the world, especially in Africa and other developing countries. Humphreys (1998) alluded to the fact that, delivery of services has a direct and immediate effect on the quality of the lives of the people in a given community. Poor services can make it difficult to attract business or industry to an area and it will also limit job opportunities for residents (Humphreys, 1998). Hence, as Besley and Ghatak (2007) indicate, improving organizational Service Delivery in the public sector is one of the biggest challenges worldwide.

Some of the strategic management practices that the county government is employing include development of a county integrated development plan 2018-2022 which improves service delivery through outlining development priorities to be focussed on during implementation, public

participation during the annual planning and budgeting cycles which enhances inclusivity and involvement of the stakeholders in development planning, periodic monitoring and evaluation.

The focus is on addressing the infrastructure challenge of high electricity and transport costs, through investing in renewable energy and road infrastructure. In addition, the plan seeks to leverage on the benefits of the National Investments in the Standard Gauge Railway (Bungoma County CIDP, 2018-2022). For successful implementation of the CIDP, the following key strategies are being pursued: ensure prudent management of county resources with fiscal expansion for frontloading infrastructure investments; industrialization and export oriented growth through value addition, agro processing, light manufacturing; increased employment creation through fast tracking skills development and harnessing the demographic dividend; strong public/private partnerships for sustainable development; and strengthening governance mechanisms and structures according to the Annual Development Plan (ADP, 2017-2018).

It is in this context that the study intended to investigate to what extent strategic planning were being adopted by the county government of Bungoma and to determine factors associated with county government in adopting a strategic management framework as suggested by the western literature where the country borrowed the system (Bungoma CIDP, 2018-2022).

Statement of the Problem

There have been a lot of inefficiencies in effective service delivery by county governments to the public. It is a well-known fact that effective service delivery by county governments is faced with a lot of challenges ranging from corruption, political interference, poor working condition, outdated and outmoded systems, and lack of funds, tribalism, nepotism, procedures and practices among others and adversely affects effective service delivery

(Ofunya, 2013). This has pushed organizations to the need to adopt strategic management practices that support plans, choices and decisions that will lead to competitive advantage and to archive profitability, success and wealth creation since business environment is dynamic (Kourdi 2009). According to Mintzberg and Quins (2004), 90% of well-formulated strategies fail at implementation stage and only 10% of formulated strategies are successfully implemented. The successful implementation of strategy is fully dependent on involvement of all the stakeholders in an organization. Strategic management practices address the question of why some organizations succeed, others fail (Melchorita, 2013), and it covers the causes for organization's success or failure (Porter 2001). According to controller of budget covering financial year 2017/2018 counties spend on recurrent expenditure comprising mainly salaries and allowances with Bungoma County not being left out having spend 900,242,820 shillings on recurrent expenditure with zero expenditure on development budget within the first quarter with 81% of the recurrent expenditure went to personal emoluments (Controller of Budget, 2018). This implies that most of the development projects on the county development plan are not implemented due to emphasis on recurrent expenditure than development expenditure thus hinders effective strategy implementation due to inadequacy of funds. Kandie (2010) on the factors affecting service delivery in local governments did not examine the strategies that can be adopted to improve service delivery in local authorities however Njau (2001) on challenges of strategy implementation concluded that whereas some firms realized the need to change their strategy due to change in the competitive environment, they lacked finances and managerial empowerment to do so. It is from this perspective that strategic planning in organizations is a priority; hence it prompted the study focus on the effect of strategic planning on service delivery in the

County Government of Bungoma Kenya which is a driving force in gaining competitive advantage.

Objective of the Study

The study sought to investigate the influence of strategic planning on effective Service Delivery in the County Government of Bungoma, Kenya.

Research Hypotheses

H₀1: There exists no significant relationship between strategic planning and effective Service Delivery in the County Government of Bungoma.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The Goal Setting Theory

This theory was proposed by Luthan's (1985) while explaining that good intentions do not necessarily lead to performance in the study on organizational justice and decision making. Luthan's (1985) argues that goal setting must be linked with task performance. As such, every employee must understand individual targets and consequences of performance or lack of it.

Proponents of this theory such as Van (1996) argue that when employees appreciate the implication of non-performance by being assigned specific and measurable targets, there is overall dedication towards work in an organization. Further, goal setting leads to team effectiveness as individual employees are able to appreciate the interdependence of tasks in a production line (West, 2011).

The end result of this approach is elimination or at least reduction of a feeling of prejudice and discrimination while reprimanding unwanted behaviour or rewarding success since it is based on attainment of individual targets (Whitley and Kite, 2010).Ebeclin and Tatum (2005) argue that if you cannot measure success, probably you are rewarding failure. Individuals in an organization therefore must have clearly stated goals to achieve intended

performance, they argue. From this angle, a goal is seen as a road map to where the individual or an organization intends to go.

Ebeclin and Tatum therefore suggest that a goal must be written down, quantifiable and precise. On the same note Lawrence (2010) argued that for goals to be useful tools to steer the organization towards a desired end, they must be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound. This concept is now commonly referred to as Management by Objectives (MBO) and can be traced to the studies carried out by (Robbins 2005).

However, opponents of the theory such as Lim (2010) argue that the performance of an individual employee goes way beyond one's self to the organization and hence performance cannot solely be attributed to an individual's effort but rather the entire team effort as well as the organizational structure. While opposing the application of the goal setting theory in organizations oriented to social services,

Bem (2011) argues that this approach ignores multiple realities including an individual's talents, abilities, skills and capacity and hence it is a judgmental approach which should not be applied uniformly across the organization since this would create an antagonistic organizational culture. While disagreeing with the views of Bem (2011), Nicole (2000) suggests that organizations never realize performance unless they are linked to individual performance through a goal setting process. This theory anchors the variables of strategic planning and strategy implementation since formulating strategy is about setting goals and aiming to implement them.

In the context of county governments, the goal setting theory can be employed to illustrate how it should be ensured that the employees' goals are in congruent with government's goals. The employee performance should be adjusted in such a way that it will be in cue with institutional performance. Fiscal

adjustments are investigated in context of responses to shocks measured by deviations from budgeted surplus. Positive shocks do result to adjustment in income tax rate but negative shocks result to upward adjustment of tax rates. It is concluded that in the short run, unexpected increases in equalization do not have a stimulative effect of government spending.

Review of Variables

Effect of Strategic Planning on Effective Service Delivery

Strategic planning is an organization management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources to strengthen operations. Strategic planning involves identification of most important options towards the realization of a practical vision (Bryson, 2015). A strategy is seen as the approach to be used step by step by an organization to most effectively accomplish its mission towards a practical vision. It is a set of procedures and tools designed to help leaders, managers and planners think and act strategically. In this study, strategic planning was measured by Timely planning, Organizational control systems, Organizational competitive advantage and Organizational resource utilization.

Strategic planning is a process not done as a once off activity but as a continuous process. It helps stakeholders in an organization or a project determine what they intend to accomplish in a specified period of time (Barry, 2015). This ensures that employees and other stakeholders are working towards common goals that have established agreement around intended outcomes or results, assess and adjust the organizations direction in response to actions that shape and guide what an organization serves, what it does and why it does it, while focusing on the future (BSSI,2014). Strategic planning thus enhances target attainment and thus service delivery, for example, UN Agencies (UNA) drives focus through its engagement acceptance process which is also a central component of the

organization risk management system. The process ensures that the organization only accepts projects that emphasize their strategic plan. Specifically, this assessment checks that new projects offer effective contributions to national capacity development and incorporate the three dimensions of sustainability, which are; sustainable project management, sustainable infrastructure and sustainable procurement. A case in point is where they ensure that all projects are screened and approved using minimum sustainability standards with higher sustainability targets negotiated wherever possible.

It should be noted that strategic planning is not given the weight it deserves as an important aspect for ensuring transforming the lives of the people (Paul, 2015). In another study on sustainability, in India, rated the strategic planning in local government as moderately low primarily due to uncertainty regarding factors such as failure to get continuous support. It is important to note that the details of the strategy must be based on the whole spectrum of environmental, social and political conditions. It was noted that performance strategy created during the design phase with its complement of completion indicators are more than the norm in development projects around the world (IFAD, 2012). According to Schilder (2013), successful efforts, involve stakeholders support. Strategic plan development requires consideration and articulation of values and priorities; the plan should reflect views expressed by all those involved in the process.

According to Mulwa (2010), strategic planning concerns itself with vision, mission, goals and values of the organization, which the organization will serve, organization role in the community further concerned with resources needed – people, money expertise, relationships and facilities. Bryson (2015) observed that strategic planning is a technical approach that is, the planning team should be hybrid so that there is some assurance that both political and technical concerns are addressed. It fuses

planning and decision making. County governments in Kenya face various challenges especially related to strategic planning. For instance, there is evidence that there are no satisfactory resources availed to complete the necessary internal and external oversight and audits that are in county governments legislation (GoK, 2015). Second there is no guarantee that ordinary counties will be fully knowledgeable and able to act effectively in developing plans for effective service delivery. Thirdly the county government programs are subject to cumbersome processes of coordination with other government agencies opening a loop hole for fraud and corruption. This is especially significant against broader efforts to decentralization.

Effective Service Delivery in County Governments

Jackson and Eunice (2014) Effectiveness is the ability of a person, function or organization to accomplish a given goal, purpose. Effectiveness is considered as the means of doing the right thing.

Municipal Research and Services Centre (2013) defines effective service delivery as the actual producing of a service such as collecting refuse and disposing it or lighting the streets. Whitaker (2010) concurs with this argument and observes that depending on the kind of service being offered, each service has a primary intervention of transforming the customer and that the client himself or herself is the principle beneficiary. Whether it is learning new ideas or new skills (education), acquiring healthier habits (health), or changing one's outlook on family or society (social services), only the individual served can accomplish the change. He or she is a vital co-producer of any personal transformation that occurs (Whitaker, 2010). The service provider or agent can only use his or her skills and conduct activities to facilitate the process. Whitaker further insists that in delivering services, the agent helps the person being served to make the desired sorts of changes by supplying encouragements, suggesting options,

illustrating techniques, and providing guidance and advice but the agent alone cannot bring about the change. Both the citizen and the agent together produce the desired transformation (Whitaker, 2010). In this study, effective Service delivery will be measured by Health services Water and sanitation services, ECDE education, Infrastructure development, Environmental services and Trade & Local industries

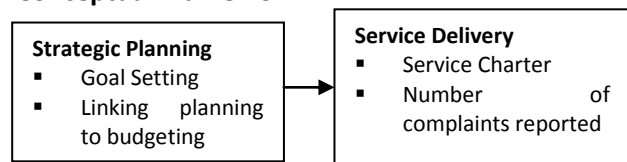
As a crucial responsibility of government and government institutions, the public service should deliver services that a society requires to maintain and improve its welfare. To do this, government institutions require organizational structures and suitably qualified people who must be supported to deliver the services they are responsible for (Whitaker, 2010). He argues that public services are delivered by a nexus of relationships between beneficiaries, politicians and service providers (such as bureaucrats, doctors, and teachers). They insist that it is necessary to analyse the incentives that govern the behaviour of politicians and service providers, if services are to match the best interest of the beneficiaries. The authors further argue that the main concern in public service provision is how the obligations of the different parties is defined and enforced. The same view is held by Tamrakar (2010) who states that public service delivery is characterized by compliance with rules and it is determined by inputs. This is evident given the fact that the role of formal contractual relationships is often quite limited or typically absent in public service delivery, when compared to the market.

According to Tamrakar (2010), public services should be concerned with what customers want rather than what providers are prepared to give. Yet in most of the developing countries public service delivery is characteristic of ineffective, cumbersome, too procedural, costly, red taped and not transparent systems. Tamrakar (2010) further argues that generally, public servants have acted as masters

without any sense of accountability and transparency instead of acting as servants of people (Tamrakar, 2010). However, the citizens have become familiarized to the enhanced service delivery from the private sector and thus, they now view the public sector as another provider of services for which they pay taxes.

Counties do provide vital services that promote local economic development, enhance human capital, and serve social safety net functions (Kamla, 1998). There are two major operations of county governments which include providing economic development programmes, and public services (Kamla, 1998). Devolved governments are expected to operate in line with stringently defined financial processes and practices. There are many functions that have been devolved to the 47 county governments in Kenya since their inception in early 2013. It is claimed that the funds disbursed by the national government are insufficient to run the operations at county levels. There are other constraints that have been hampering the operations of county governments. It has been revealed that revealed that there is an overlap on the role of national government and county government in delivery of service in some functions (Onyango, 2015). The operations devolved to the county governments include public health and sanitation, agriculture, pre-school education, and infrastructure maintenance and development. Others include environmental services, and operating public local industries.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Sources: Author (2019)

METHODOLOGY

The study sought to adopt descriptive survey research design since it explained the relationship between the study variables. According to Sekaran & Bougie, (2011) descriptive study is undertaken in order to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of the variable of interest in a situation hence it is relevant in this study. The study targeted 130 respondents, employees from all the 13 targeted departments consisting of agriculture, finance health, roads, education, public service, trade, gender and sports, lands and environment. The study used questionnaire as a tool for collecting the data. The primary data was gathered using questionnaire for

closed-ended and open ended questions to collect data from respondents. The advantage of using this type of instrument is the ease that it accords the study during the analysis (Okello, 2015). Descriptive analysis was used due to numerical data gathered using closed-ended questions. Correlation and regression analysis was also used to determine the relationship of the variables. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software was used for analysis to generate data for subsequent data analysis and it has descriptive statistics features that assisted in variable response comparison to give clear indications of response frequencies.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on strategic planning on effective service delivery

	N	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Max	Min
Our department connects our goals and action plans to an accountability system, and we follow through with rewards and consequences.	93	2 (2.2)	11 (11.8)	18 (19.4)	39 (41.9)	23 (24.7)	4.41	1.300	5	1
Our department set goals annually, review them monthly, communicate them frequently and revise plans based on progress.	93	5 (5.4)	13 (13.9)	20 (21.5)	33 (35.2)	22 (24.0)	4.71	1.201	5	1
The departmental meet most of our goals.	93	5 (5.4)	8 (8.6)	21 (22.6)	39 (41.9)	20 (21.5)	4.01	1.261	5	1
Our department hold's frequent meetings for budgets for our projects.	93	3 (3.2)	19 (22.9)	21 (22.6)	37 (39.8)	13 (11.5)	4.56	1.271	5	1
The Department sets budgets and targets to be achieved	93	7 (7.5)	14 (15.1)	21 (22.6)	43 (46.2)	8 (8.6)	4.81	1.302	5	1
Our department follows strictly the set budgets in order to achieve objective	93	2 (2.2)	8 (8.6)	11 (11.8)	42 (45.2)	30 (32.2)	4.76	1.264	5	1

The results as illustrated in Table 1 indicated that department connects goals and action plans to an accountability system, follow through with rewards and consequences. (mean =4.41; std dev. = 1.300).

The department set goals annually, review them monthly, communicate them frequently and revise plans based on progress (mean = 4.71; Std

dev= 1.201). The departmental meet most of our goals (mean = 4.01; Std dev= 1.261) department hold's frequent meetings for budgets for our projects (mean = 4.56; Std dev= 1.271). The Department sets budgets and targets to be achieved (mean = 4.81; Std dev= 1.302). Department followed strictly the set budgets in order to achieve objective (mean = 4.76;

Std dev= 1.264)

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on effective service delivery

	N	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Max	Min
The Department has a service charter	93	2 (2.2)	10 (10.8)	20 (21.5)	40 (43.0)	21 (22.5)	4.23	1.218	5	1
The Department offers services as per service charter	93	0 (0.0)	16 (17.2)	15 (16.1)	43 (46.2)	19 (20.5)	4.61	0.972	5	0
The Department service charter helps in offering effective service delivery.	93	3 (3.2)	11 (11.8)	12 (12.9)	42 (45.2)	25 (26.9)	4.01	1.352	5	1
The Department has less number of complains in terms of effective service delivery	93	5 (5.4)	9 (9.7)	20 (21.5)	37 (39.8)	22 (23.6)	4.02	1.271	5	1
We have a mechanism for receiving complaints from customers in our Ministry	93	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	9 (9.7)	60 (64.5)	21 (22.6)	4.81	1.302	5	0
The rating of customer satisfaction levels in our department by external public is relatively not satisfactory	93	3 (3.2)	8 (8.6)	11 (11.8)	43 (46.2)	30 (30.2)	4.61	1.404	5	1

The Department had a service charter (mean = 4.23; Std dev= 1.218) The Department offered services as per service charter (mean = 4.61; Std dev= 0.972). The Department service charter helped in offering effective service delivery (mean = 4.01; Std dev= 1.352) The Department had less number of complains in terms of effective service delivery(mean = 4.02; Std dev= 1.271) They had a mechanism for receiving complaints from customers in our Ministry (mean = 4.81; Std dev= 1.302). The rating of customer satisfaction levels in their department by external

public was relatively not satisfactory (mean = 4.61; Std dev= 1.404)

Testing Hypothesis

This section of the research provides information about testing of the research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Strategic planning and effective service delivery

H₀₁ There exists no significant relationship between strategic planning and effective Service Delivery in the County Government of Bungoma.

Table 3: Model Summary of strategic planning

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.356 ^a	.127	.001	2.052

From the study findings in Table 3, the value of R-square is 0.127. This implied that, 12.7% of variation

of effective service delivery was explained by strategic planning.

Table 4: ANOVA test on Strategic planning and effective service delivery

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	61.980	1	61.980	1.002	.0008 ^a
	Residual	19486.493	125	61.862		
	Total	19548.473	126			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic planning
- b. Dependent Variable: service delivery

From the findings in Table 5, at 0.05 level of significance the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variable namely; strategic planning is important in predicting of effective service

delivery as indicated by significance value=0.008 which is less than 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.003 < 0.05$).

Table 5: Coefficients Model of strategic planning

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.802	1.084		16.704	.000
	Strategic planning	.512	.208	.356	.901	.003

- a. Dependent Variable: service delivery

From Table 5, the study findings revealed that strategic planning had significant influence on effective service delivery in the County government of Bungoma (t-statistic=0.901, p-value=0.003 < 0.05). Therefore, at 5% level of significance the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that strategic planning had a positive influence on effective service delivery in the County government of Bungoma. Thus, for every unit increase in strategic planning there was a corresponding increase service delivery in the County government of Bungoma by 0.512.

SUMMARY

In view of statistical results the value of R-square was 0.127. This implied that, 12.7% of variation of effective service delivery was explained by strategic planning. From the findings at 0.05 level of significance the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variable namely; strategic planning is important in predicting of effective service delivery as indicated by significance value=0.008 which is less than 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.003 < 0.05$).

CONCLUSION

Influence of strategic planning on effective service delivery was studied. The study made a number of important contributions into the county government.

The findings of the study resulted in an understanding that strategic planning has influence on effective service delivery. Organizations need to enhance and manage their strategic planning for them to survive.

The findings of this study have a number of significant implications for managers. First, managers can use the results to assess what decision-making processes they can use to increase the effective service delivery. It also provides managers with an indication on areas that requires higher or lower investment to support responsiveness.

The practitioners may gain more understanding as well as direction in the academic body of knowledge, which involves relationship in effective service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In today’s changing market environments, effective service delivery is perceived to be a significant. The study therefore recommended that for organizations to be more competitive so as to cope with more highly dynamic environments there is need to be keener in to enhancing their strategic planning. The study recommended that firms should streamline with all parties in strategic planning matters in order to improve service delivery.

Recommendation for Future Research

- The current research focused on County

government of Bungoma so it can also be done on a wider perspective to include all regions

- The relationship between strategic planning and organizational service delivery in Kenya.
- Cross-boundary research on other strategic
-

planning other than what was mentioned. In future studies should collect data from a larger population and compare with other firms to further validate or extend theories and variables identified in this study.

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