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EFFECT OF INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The tertiary institutions of learning play key role in the impartation of desirable knowledge, skills and attitudes to learners for the advancement of the society and the nation economic and social development. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of intellectual stimulation on service delivery in tertiary education institutions in Kenya. To achieve the set objective, the study developed research hypothesis and was statistically tested at $p = 0.05$ or < 0.05 . The theory on which the study was hinged on was Transformational Leadership Theory. The target population of the study was 31781 from which the researcher sampled 384 respondents using stratified and random sampling techniques. Structured questionnaires were the main tool to collect primary data from the targeted respondents. A pilot study was done to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics and presented using frequency distribution tables, figures and charts. From the findings, the correlation results showed that Intellectual Stimulation had a strong positive statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation with Service Delivery. The regression findings also showed a positive statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) relationship between Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery. Therefore, the study concluded that Intellectual Stimulation had a positive significant relationship with service delivery in tertiary education institutions in Kenya. Based on the conclusion, policies should focus on creating an environment where employees are encouraged to think critically, challenge the status quo, and contribute to continuous improvement.

Key Words: Intellectual Stimulation, Service Delivery, Tertiary Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, Tertiary institutions play a critical role in national development, individual empowerment, and sustainable development. In Kenya, the institutions play pivotal role in supporting realization of the Country's Vision 2030 aspirations, the Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), and the Kenya National Education Sector Strategic Plan (NESSP), 2023-2027. According to Adams (2018), tertiary institutions of learning are places for the impartation of desirable knowledge, skills and attitudes that are profitable to students and to society at large. These institutions continuously build on the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learnt at the lower levels of education to make the citizens live and function as productive members of the society, earning a living and contributing to societal progress (Anindo, Mugambi, & Matula, 2016). These institutions imbibe what is relevant to the needs of their environment and the people they serve. Thus, the crucial roles that tertiary institutions play in the educational, cultural, political and socioeconomic development of nations in the 21st century cannot be over-emphasized (Arifin, Rasdi, Anuar & Omar, 2017).

Tertiary education is instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty, and boosting shared prosperity. A highly skilled workforce, with lifelong access to a solid post-secondary education, is a prerequisite for innovation and growth: well-educated people are more employable and productive, earn higher wages, and cope with economic shocks better. Tertiary education benefits not just the individual, but society as a whole (Ansari & Wu, 2013). Graduates of tertiary education are more environmentally conscious, have healthier habits, and have a higher level of civic participation. Also, increased tax revenues from higher earnings, healthier children, and reduced family size all build stronger nations. In short, tertiary education institutions prepare individuals not only by providing them with adequate and relevant job skills, but also by preparing them to be active members of their communities and societies (Assadullah & Ullah, 2019).

Public tertiary Institutions in Kenya receive funds from the exchequer; as a result, there is a need to monitor their performance to see if the government's objectives are being met. This supposition underpins the dire interest of accountability, to measure their efficiency and productivity (Johnes, 2006). Tertiary Institutions under the Ministry of Education are categorized as Teacher Training Colleges, Technical Training Institutes and National Polytechnics. A total of 134 Tertiary Institutions had their annual performance evaluated. They comprise three (3) Teacher Training Colleges, 119 Technical Training Institutes and 12 National Polytechnics. In the case of Tertiary Institutions, there was marginal decline in performance from 3.2609 in the FY 2020/2021 compared to 3.2857 in the FY2021/2022. The Government continues to implement an elaborate and rigorous Performance Management framework for enhancing public service delivery.

The traditional approaches to public administration assumed public service production and delivery as a critical responsibility of the state. According to Aminah and Saksono (2021) today's rapidly evolving, highly sensitive citizenry, coupled with increased demand for accountability has made transformation of public service delivery becoming an important agenda for many governments around the world. These constant pressure for improving service delivery has increased the demand for effective leadership practices which has been responsible for increased productivity in public sector organizations (Odero, 2018; Ojogiwa & Qwabe, 2021). A study by Mumanthi et, al., (2021) specifically points out transformational leadership as a vital tool for improved service delivery especially in the education sub sector. Further, empirical evidence by Otswana, et, al., (2021) shows the existence of a significant relationship between public service delivery and transformative leadership variables such as intellectual stimulation. This underscores the importance of transformational leadership, in productivity and service delivery in public service.

Statement of the Problem

The traditional approaches to public administration assumed public service production and delivery as a critical responsibility of the state. According to Aminah, & Saksono (2021) today's rapidly evolving, highly sensitive citizenry, coupled with increased demand for accountability has made transformation of public service delivery becoming an important agenda for many governments around the world. These constant pressure for improving service delivery has increased the demand for effective leadership practices which has been responsible for increased productivity in public sector organizations (Odero, 2018; Ojogiwa, 2021). A study by Mumanthi et, al., (2021) specifically points out transformational leadership as a vital tool for improved service delivery especially in the education sub sector. Further, empirical evidence by Otswana, et, al., (2021) shows the existence of a significant relationship between public service delivery and transformative leadership variables. This underscores the importance of transformational leadership in productivity and service delivery in public service.

However, despite the arrays of literature that strongly support the axis of relationships between transformational leadership and service delivery, this situation is not always true. While many recent empirical evidence (Gathundu, Nyambegera & Kirubi, 2018; Kahuari, Muraguri & Kinyua, 2019) indicates presence of stronger foundation for transformational leadership in public service institutions and specifically, greater embracement of transformational leadership practices by most tertiary institutions (Mugo & Kiboss, 2023), there has been a growing concern for dismal service delivery in these same tertiary institutions. Moreover, the many debates about the quality-of-service delivery in tertiary institutions in Kenya is culminating to a bold consensus that the quality of tertiary education is falling (Abali, 2018; Odipo & Wandede, 2019; Karanja & Muniu, 2018).

From the foregoing, it is interesting to find out that there is a glaring lack of consistent evidence that address the influence of transformational leadership on service delivery in the context of public sector institutions. There is a contradiction in

the empirical evidence to the nature of the relationship within transformational leadership-service delivery nexus. This implies that more empirical data is required to fully address this relationship in order to take a solid position in this contradictory literature thus necessitating the need to re-examine relationship between transformational leadership and service delivery in the context of tertiary education institutions in Kenya.

Majority of the studies examine impact of leadership on external service delivery. However, not much attention is paid to internal service delivery which is core to the organization eco-system. Internal service delivery is crucial for organizational success, impacting efficiency, employee satisfaction and ultimately external customer service. Transformational internal service delivery ensures smooth operations and collaboration across departments, leading to improved productivity and a positive work environment. This ultimately impacts positively on external customer service and overall achievement of organization mandate.

Objective of the Study

To examine the relationship between intellectual stimulation and service delivery in the tertiary education institutions in Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and service delivery in tertiary education institutions in Kenya.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Framework

Stewardship Theory

The stewardship theory has its origin in the field of Sociology and Psychology as a development from the works of the earlier researchers. Contrary to the Agency theory, Stewardship theory holds that managers are stewards for the organization (Kabiru, et al., 2018). Further, it views the manager as one who protects the owner's wealth by maximizing it through performance, in which the steward (manager) simultaneously serving his or her own interests as well (Makori & Kinyua, 2019). This double – fold target is actualized through maximized

profits since the management is part of the business and therefore, they feel motivated with the success of the organization (Mabati, *et al.*, 2020).

The stewardship theory holds that the agency costs such as monitoring, and control are no longer necessary and that gives high value to the firm (Solomon, 2020). Unlike the Agency theory, Stewardship theory is anchored on the value of trust and not suspicions. Trust cultivates a healthy and worthy decision-making environment, sufficient in stimulating the achievement of organizational goals than conflict (Mok, Chan, & Wen, 2020). Stewardship theory hence supports the role of insider directors who possess crucial knowledge that ensures that managers make quality decisions that necessary in enhancing organization performance and progress.

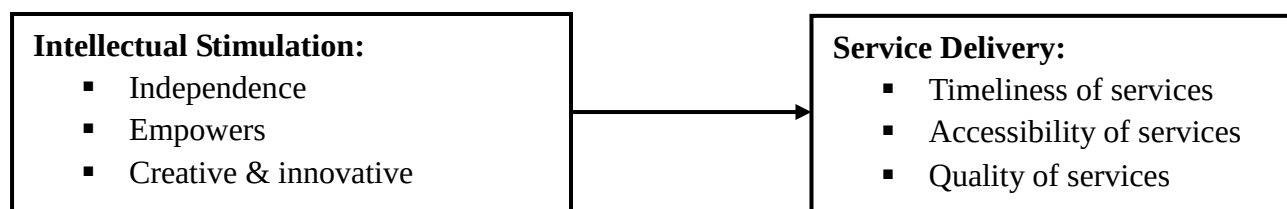
Transformational Leadership Theory

The theory was pioneered by Downton (1970) and later advanced by other scholars like Burns (1978). The theory argues that leaders and followers in any organizational set up can influence each other and advance to higher levels of morality and motivation in achieving organizational goals by implementing marketing strategies formulated (Bass, 1998). The theory argues that transformational leaders can inspire employees to change attitudes, perceptions, and motives thus improved service delivery. Transformative leaders are considered to more futuristic thinkers than transactional leaders who reward individuals rather than behavior. Rotherme and LaMarsh (2012) acknowledge that

transformative leadership is purely dependent on the leader's personality traits to energize followers and articulate the vision, mission, and goals of the firm.

The theory opines that any organizational that is committed to quality service delivery, leaders not only need to have skills of influencing workers but also techniques of transforming the organization from an old state to a new state that is characterized by minimal resistance to change, creativity among workers, new product development, diversification, knowledge management and ability to align and realign its policies to changing business trends (Rajala, Ruokonen & Ruismäki, 2012). As organizations strive to survive in the changing business environment,

Scott (2014) contends that transformative leadership should not only embrace policies that promote employee skills and knowledge but also identify new ways of motivating workers, integrating technology in service delivery, and identifying models of implementing new changes in the organization. This theory underpins this study based on the assumption that state agencies are likely to experience improved performance in terms of employee and customer satisfaction, service efficiency and effectiveness if they embrace transformational leadership practices such as employee empowerment, employee motivation, technological initiatives and change management.



Independent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

Intellectual Stimulation

According to Bass and Riggio (2016), transformational leadership is comprised of four main parts: mystique, inspiration, intellectual

stimulation, and individual consideration. According to Dvir, Kass, and Shamir (2022), transformational leadership includes the idea of commonly helpful goals, motivation, emotional connection, vision, and common values. Intellectual stimulation is a key

factor of transformational leadership, through it, transformational leaders inspire supporters to challenge their own opinions, expectations, and standards and when suitable those of the supervisor that could be obsolete or unsuitable for addressing the problem at hand (Sundi, 2013). Here, the leaders question the assumptions and beliefs of the organization and encourage employees to be innovative and creative, therefore approaching old problems in new ways. The leader empowers followers by persuading them to propose new and controversial ideas without fear of punishment or ridicule. They do not impose their ideas judiciously and certainly on employees (Orabi, 2016). The supervisor challenges the subordinates to see problems from a different perspective, thinking outside the box. In this way, the supervisor makes the workers active thinkers within the organization and consequently employees become more involved in the organization (Vasilagos, Polychroniou & Maroudas, 2017).

Intellectual Stimulation leadership utilizes behavior to inspire individuals by providing a common benefit and a challenge to supporters (McCleskey, 2019). The supervisors by creating a challenge and providing employees with a purpose they can motivate them. Consequently, the leader upholds teamwork, enthusiasm, and positivity among followers through a positive vision of the future and through relaying high expectations that subordinates would want to attain (Gomes, 2018). The positioning of personal needs in line with requirement of the organization is an important plan of intellectual stimulation. Intellectual Stimulation Leaders try to cultivate the spirit of corporation and obligation by clarifying the vision, mission and important plans of the organization and making solid determination among the staff (Renjith, Renu & George, 2015).

The goal of Ligombi, Msomba, and Pesha's (2023) study was to evaluate how intellectual stimulation affects worker performance in improving IRUWASA's successful management of water supply services. The study used a quantitative research design, and structured questionnaires were used to gather data. 109 IRUWASA employees were chosen for the study using a proportionate simple

random selection technique. The quantitative data was analyzed using multivariate correlation analysis. The study's conclusions showed that, in the context of effectively overseeing water supply services at IRUWASA, intellectual stimulation and worker performance were significantly positively correlated. Additionally, the study found that effective management of water supply services is positively correlated with employee performance. As a result, it was determined that cultivating traits of intellectual stimulation ought to be given top priority and actively promoted. Employee performance can be improved in this way, which ultimately resulted in IRUWASA's water supply services being successfully managed.

The goal of Kasse, Guyo, Muchelule, and Noor's (2024) study was to investigate how intellectual stimulation affected Kenyan water works development agency' (WWDA) performance. The positivist research paradigm and descriptive research design were used. The 116 projects in the eight Water Works Development Agencies (WWDAs) served as the study's population, and the organizations' 116 projects served as its unit of observation. A semi-structured questionnaire was employed to gather primary data for the study. According to the study, intellectual stimulation and WWDA performance in Kenya were positively and significantly correlated. According to the findings, WWDA should promote intellectual stimulation among its leaders in order to enhance their performance. This can be accomplished by giving staff members the chance to participate in problem-solving and creative thinking exercises. Leaders should also push staff members to question their preconceptions and prejudices and to consider fresh, creative approaches. Leaders should also give their staff members opportunities for training and development so they may improve their knowledge and abilities. Additionally, managers should foster a culture of ongoing learning where staff members are motivated to look for fresh insights and concepts.

Service Delivery

Improving service delivery through increased accountability has been a significant implicit motivation behind the trend towards constitutional bodies in developing countries

(Alahakoon & Jehan, 2020). The standard theoretical argument for the transfer of responsibilities to lower tier of government is that the closer proximity of local policymakers to citizens increases the flow of information and better enables the public to monitor and to hold to account, government officials (Alahakoon & Jehan, 2020). Conversely, elected local policymakers, responding to this greater citizen vigilance, focus on improving service delivery to get re-elected (Finn, 2020) Service delivery is an essential function in the relationship between government and citizens (Amuhaya, Namusonge, & Nthigah, 2018). Government performance is measured service delivery to the people (Wairima, Mose, & Otiso, 2021).

The researchers used accessibility, availability, reliability, and quality of services as a measure of service delivery in the public sector (Wagana, Iravo, Nzulwa & Kihoro, 2017; Antony & Alala, 2018; Ngairah, 2025). Majority of previous service delivery research focused on one measure of service delivery that is, service accessibility (Wairima, Mose, & Otiso, 2021; Muda, Tumsa, Tuni, & Sharma, 2020; Kariuki, 2025). There is paucity of research on the influence of board governance on service delivery measured from multiple dimensions (citizen's satisfaction, quality of the service and service accessibility) (Keraro & Isoe, 2015; Muriuki, Cheruiyot, & Komen, 2017; Oketch, Cheruiyot, Namusonge & Sakwa, 2018). In this

study, service delivery is conceptualized as accessibility of services, timeliness, efficiency of services, quality of services and citizen satisfaction in public sector.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design as its main aim was to gather quantitative and qualitative data that describes the nature and characteristics of the intellectual stimulation and service delivery. This study was guided by the positivist philosophy where scientific processes are followed in hypothesizing fundamental laws, then deducing the observations to determine the truth or falsify the said hypothesis about the relationship that exists between the intellectual stimulation and service delivery in Kenya. The target population of this study was the tertiary institutions in Kenya which comprises of public teacher training colleges, technical training institutes and national polytechnics, with a population of 31781 targeted respondents. This led the study to a calculated sample size of 384 respondents from which 328 responses were received and analysed.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics for Intellectual Stimulation

The study sought to establish how the respondents responded in terms of the descriptive statistics for Intellectual Stimulation and the findings were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Intellectual Stimulation

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
My supervisor re-examines critical assumptions as to whether they are appropriate	9.8%	17.1%	30.2%	30.2%	12.8%	3.19	1.159
My supervisor looks at problems from many different angles	13.4%	17.4%	28.0%	29.3%	11.9%	3.09	1.215
My supervisor seeks different opinions when solving problems	11.9%	17.4%	28.0%	27.7%	14.9%	3.16	1.226
My supervisor does not impose ideas on employees, allows independence	8.8%	7.9%	22.6%	39.9%	20.7%	3.56	1.164
My supervisor empowers employees to come up with new ways of doing their job	8.8%	13.4%	28.4%	31.1%	18.3%	3.37	1.184
My supervisor encourages innovation and creativity at work	8.8%	11.9%	24.7%	36.9%	17.7%	3.43	1.171

From the findings presented in Table 1, a majority of the respondents (30.2%) remained

neutral that their supervisor re-examines critical assumptions as to whether they are appropriate,

29.3% agreed that their supervisor looks at problems from many different angles, 28.0% remained neutral that their supervisor seeks different opinions when solving problems, 39.9% agreed that their supervisor does not impose ideas on employees, allows independence, 31.1% agreed that their supervisor empowers employees to come up with new ways of doing their job, and 36.9% agreed their supervisor encourages innovation and creativity at work. A study by Orabi (2016) noted that, in intellectual stimulation, the leader empowers followers by persuading them to propose new and controversial ideas without fear of punishment or ridicule. They do not impose their ideas judiciously and certainly on employees.

Qualitative Analysis on Intellectual Stimulation

The study sought to find the opinion of the respondents on how intellectual stimulation does enhance service delivery in their organization. From the findings, the respondents said that intellectual stimulation encourages employees to think critically, take greater initiative and apply innovative approaches to their assignments, leading to better

overall performance, intellectual stimulation equips employees with the ability to adapt to changing job demands, new technology, and competitive market pressures, which is essential for maintaining high-quality service in a dynamic environment, intellectual stimulation encourages employees to view problems from multiple angles and use their own experience to find optimal solutions, and that intellectual stimulation fosters a sense of ownership, leading to more responsive and effective service delivery. The findings were similar to the observation by Sundi (2013) that intellectual stimulation is a key factor of transformational leadership and through it transformational leaders inspire supporters to challenge their own opinions, expectations, and standards and when suitable those of the supervisor that could be obsolete or unsuitable for addressing the problem at hand.

Descriptive Statistics for Service Delivery

The study generated a descriptive statistics table for Service Delivery and the findings were summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Service Delivery

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
The services in the organization are easily accessible	12.5%	19.5%	23.2%	29.3%	15.5%	3.16	1.261
The services in the organization are timely	10.1%	11.9%	25.6%	35.1%	17.4%	3.38	1.195
The services in the organization are of great quality	9.8%	17.1%	30.2%	30.2%	12.8%	3.19	1.159
Citizen satisfaction (complements) on services delivered by the organization have greatly improved	13.4%	17.4%	28.0%	29.3%	11.9%	3.09	1.215
Citizen satisfaction (complaints) on services delivered by the organization have greatly reduced	33.7%	21.9%	23.2%	13.0%	8.3%	2.4	1.294
There is accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and equity on services rendered by the organization	11.3%	33.0%	26.1%	19.9%	9.6%	2.84	1.16
The board ensure strict adherence to the budget and publishes expenditure and service delivery reports periodically	25.7%	23.2%	31.6%	11.8%	7.6%	2.52	1.209

Table 2 shows that a majority (29.3%) of the respondents agreed that the services in the organization are easily accessible, 35.1% agreed that the services in the organization are timely, 60.4% either remained neutral or agreed that the services in the organization are of great quality, 29.3% agreed

that citizen satisfaction (complements) on services delivered by the organization have greatly improved, 33.7% strongly disagreed that citizen satisfaction (complaints) on services delivered by the organization have greatly reduced, 33.0% disagreed that there is accountability, transparency,

responsiveness, and equity on services rendered by the organization, 31.6% remained neutral that the board ensure strict adherence to the budget and publishes expenditure and service delivery reports periodical. A similar study by Alahakoon and Jehan (2020) observed that, improving service delivery through increased accountability has been a significant implicit motivation behind the trend

towards constitutional bodies in developing countries.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation Analysis was done so as to establish the strength and type of relationship that existed between Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery. The results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation between Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery

		Service Delivery	Intellectual Stimulation
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	1	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	328	328
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation	.812**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	328	328

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table 2, the findings show that Intellectual Stimulation had a strong, positive and statistically significant correlation against Service Delivery at Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of 0.812 for Intellectual Stimulation.

The study sought to find the effect of Intellectual Stimulation on the dependent variable (Service Delivery). The study generated a model summary table using SPSS and presented the results in Table 4, 5 and 6.

Linear Regression Analysis for Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery:

Table 4: Model Summary Table for Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.812 ^a	.660	.659	.46294

a. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation

From Table 4, R-Square was .660 meaning that 66.0% of the total variance in the dependent variable, Service Delivery could be explained by Intellectual Stimulation.

The study further sought to find whether there was a positive significant relationship between the Service Delivery and Intellectual Stimulation and presented the results in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA Table for Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	135.620	1	135.620	632.800	.000 ^b
	Residual	69.867	326	.214		
	Total	205.487	327			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation

From the ANOVA Table 5, the study found that p-value was .000 implying that a positive significant relationship existed between Service

Delivery and Intellectual Stimulation. This implied that the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and

service delivery in tertiary education institutions in Kenya was rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted.

The study further generated a coefficient table from the dataset using SPSS and presented the results in Table 6.

Table 6: Coefficients table for Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	.808	.090		9.000
	Intellectual Stimulation	.656	.026	.812	25.156

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

Table 6 shows that Intellectual Stimulation was found to contribute positively and significantly for each unit increment in the dependent variable, Service Delivery. This implied that the model equation; $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$ became; $Y = 0.808 + 0.656X_3$.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study examined the relationship between intellectual stimulation and service delivery in the tertiary education institutions in Kenya. Through the correlation results, Intellectual Stimulation had a strong positive significant correlation with the dependent variable, Service Delivery. The regression findings further confirmed that there was a positive significant relationship between Intellectual Stimulation and Service Delivery. Therefore, the study concluded that Intellectual Stimulation had a positive significant relationship with service delivery in the tertiary education institutions in Kenya. In a similar study,

Kasse, Guyo, Muchelule, and Noor's (2024) study on how intellectual stimulation affected Kenyan water works development agency' (WWDA) performance, concluded that intellectual stimulation and WWDA performance in Kenya were positively and significantly correlated. Also, Ligombi, Msomba, and Pasha's (2023) study sought to evaluate how intellectual stimulation affects worker performance in improving IRUWASA's successful management of water supply services. Their study concluded that, in the context of effectively overseeing water supply services at IRUWASA, intellectual stimulation and worker performance were significantly positively correlated.

Based on the conclusion on intellectual stimulation, policy makers in the tertiary education institutions in Kenya should focus on creating an environment where employees are encouraged to think critically, challenge the status quo, and contribute to continuous improvement.

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