THE EFFECT OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN KISUMU COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The Kenyan government begun a process of creating an Integrated Development Plan used by the municipalities to create a five-year strategic development plan. As a kind of business plan, Integrated Development Planning (IDP) is a mechanism that offers direction on municipalities' budgeting and decision-making processes. The plan provides framework for managing the use of land, infrastructure and managing environment. This study examined the effects of public engagement on service delivery in Kisumu County. Conflict theory and democratic theory served as the foundation for this study's analysis. Information from respondents was gathered using a descriptive research approach. The 177 personnel registered to vote in Kisumu County as of the general election of 2017 were the study's target demographic (IEBC, 2017). This was divided into 10 County Executive Committees (CECs), 40 county directors, 35 ward administrators, 70 village administrators, 15 chief officers, and 7 sub-county administrators who were in charge of the integrated development plan in Kisumu County. The KNBS determined the number of employees as of December 2021. The study chose 123 participants from Kisumu County's County Executive Committees (CECs), sub-county administrators, ward administrators, village administrators, chief officers, and county directors. The outcome estimated using the Yamane (1967) methodology at a ninety five percent confidence level. To gather data on independent and dependent factors, Kisumu County's sub-county administrators, ward administrators, village administrators, chief officers, County Executive Committees (CECs), and county directors were requested to respond to standardized questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to examine the findings. Findings indicated a positive and significant influence public engagement on service delivery in Kisumu County. The study concluded that performance targets aligned with a county's development plans influence service delivery. Open dialogue between the county government and the public is a vital component of effective governance. County governments that actively embrace and are committed to considering public input in their decision-making processes significantly enhance their public image. It was recommended that the county government of Kisumu should ensure that performance targets should be aligned with the county's development plans. The county government of Kisumu should hold open dialogue between with the public for quality deliberation and consensus. The county government of Kisumu should be open to and be committed to considering public input in the decision process.

Key Terms: *Public Engagement, Service Delivery, Devolution, Sustainable Development Goals, Public Interest, Governance, Accountability*

INTRODUCTION

The IDP is a government-initiated plan for Kenyan municipalities to initiate a five-year strategic development plan, guiding budgeting and decision-making processes to improve residents' living standards, outline land use management techniques, and establish an extension, the SDF, to inform land use and development decisions. (Clayton, 2017, Hashaw, 2019). The Integrated Development Agenda (IDA) is a government initiative aimed at improving living conditions for national residents. It coordinates projects, programs, and budgets internally and externally. New councils can alter policies and IDPs through local elections. The municipality's executive committee oversees IDP implementation, with municipal managers and coordinators overseeing operations. Without consultation, no IDA can be effective or gain public support. (United Nations, 2017).

The degree of development of every country affects the efficiency of its Integrated Development Plan (Kumahia, 2015). An effective integrated development plan has assumed the forefront as a crucial necessity for social, economic, and political growth on a global scale (Gisserlquit, 2016). Local and global governments benefit from public engagement because it improves accountability, efficiency, and legitimacy. It is responsible for an effective IDP across the general public and local elected and appointed authorities. The United States (US) constitution serves as an example of the core of democracy (Luis, 2013). Contributions from the populace promote the effect and devolution of power to nations, networks, and the government. By interacting with various public groups within the public and including them in decisions made regarding public administration, it recognizes local diversity (Roberta, 2014). In the United Kingdom, participation of the public has been developed separately from plans of creating social cohesion. If public views are not heard or considered, trust and social cohesion will be lost (June 2016).

An integrated development plan is crucial for global social, economic, and political growth. Public engagement improves accountability, efficiency, and legitimacy. The US constitution exemplifies democracy, promoting power devolution and recognizing local diversity. In the UK, public participation separates from social cohesion plans, as trust and cohesion are lost without considering public views (Kumahia, 2015, Gisserlquit, 2016, Luis, 2013, Roberta, 2014)

According to (Dena, 2015), institution's quality, laws, incentive and guiding structures produced when intergovernmental institutional connections determines the relationship between politicians and providers. People and decision-makers communicate through various means of voicing their opinions, such as voting, paying taxes, electing representatives, and contributing to other political organizations.

In Africa however, corruption hinders development in underrepresented nations by misappropriating aid funds and diverting resources to fruitless endeavors. Despite devolution-centered reforms, African local governments struggle to achieve reform outcomes. Local governments are responsible for less than 5% of total public spending in resource-poor rural and congested urban areas, according to a study of 30 African nations (Harrison 2017, Zanello *et al.,* 2015, Kyohairwe 2014)

The Kenyan people have received several highlights from the 2010 constitution, with the provisions for a significant devolved government ranking among its most essential features. Devolution in Kenya aims to empower the population to self-govern and improve budgetary perfection. The 2010 Constitution transformed the nation's IDP system, promoting self-governance and increased public involvement in state authorities. However, effective governance remains a challenge despite the constitution's requirements and the country's potential. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and regional integration are significantly influenced by the Integrated Development Plan. Kenya invests heavily in rural development initiatives, but there has been no improvement in the implementation of public projects benefiting single-family units. Citizen participation is crucial for IDP, as it increases decision-making and helps the most vulnerable. The UN believes citizen participation is essential for achieving the SDGs, which aim to end hunger, poverty, and support agriculture (Ndung'u 2014 , CoK, 2015 , Philip & Abdillahi, 2013)

The Kisumu County Development Plan (CIDP II) aims to build on the success of the first CIDP, focusing on inclusive, sustainable growth and recovery. The plan aligns with global targets, the African Union's Plan 2063, and the President's 'Big Four Plan'. It focuses on economic growth, improved governance, effective public service delivery, and a business-friendly climate, while reducing access disparities to essential resources. However, this has not been well realized due to financial constraints, human resource issues, and management challenges. The Kisumu County Government encountered financial, human resources, and management difficulties. The national government's slow disbursement of funds and cash shortage were the root causes of the financial problems. In addition, the county faced issues with its leadership since the operations were hampered by certain top executives' lack of experience. It is for this reason therefore, that the study aims at filing the gap by establish the effects of public engagement on service delivery in Kisumu County.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to establish the effects of public engagement on service delivery in Kisumu County.

RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Literature Review

Conflict Theory

Social conflict theory, one of the four significant paradigms of sociology, is credited to Karl Marx as its pioneer. The underlying premise of conflict theory is that 'conflict is always multifaceted, while the contrast between them can be ascribed to different sources. In view of this, conflict governance and resolution emphasize strong teamwork, characterizing traits, conflict resolution techniques, and reaching a consensus (Mills, 2011). Conflict theory provides five prerequisites for any effective partnership (Tajfel & Turner, 2014). Stakeholders need to understand how interdependent they are. Solutions can be realized only when disagreements are spoken about freely and creatively, when stakeholders accept shared responsibility for choices, and when cooperation is a developing process. The conflict theory also claims that owing to the inherent diversity of disputes, preconditions may be challenging to embrace and apply. To resolve a dispute, however, all sides must be satisfied with the overall result and put aside their interests (Lulofs & Cahn, 2010).

Conflict theory proponents namely Petro Celli, Piquero, and Smith (2013) contend that societal agreement on the functions and bounds of the federal, regional, and municipal levels of government is necessary for effective devolution. Devolution sometimes necessitates significant central redistribution to prevent regional uprisings in communally divided societies. However, since they promote economic inefficiencies and political instability, such policies undermine substantial devolutionary gains. Devolution should adhere to specific similarity norms since it also needs devolved areas to have a critical mass of residents, economic activity, and wealth to reap its advantages, particularly in allocation efficiency.

Conflict is the principal characteristic of collaboration that government and other parties, including NGOs and the commercial sector, are now experiencing. The resulting complexity calls for a highly professional toolset full of practical management abilities in public participation and conflict resolution. Each partner in such collaboration should pinpoint the primary sources of contention, such as incompatible systems of thought, confusing structures, problems with data management, interrelated elements, and conduct. Conflict's adverse effects can lead to partner dissension; divergence from priorities can lead to inefficiency, poor use of limited resources, and the demise of coalitions. It can even completely block the realization of targeted change (Tajfel & Turner, 2014).

Managing conflicts has become a significant issue, particularly inside companies. Due to public officials' personal interests, disagreements might influence how decisions are made in county administration. The

influence of the decision-making process may have been favorable or harmful (Lulofs & Cahn, 2010). Developing a budget must critically assess public perceptions of the devolution process. Devolution process errors may result in leaders having low expectations and low levels of public participation. This widens the chasm between the state's officials and its citizens, impeding the counties' ability to flourish.

On the other hand, understanding increases public engagement in the development process and raises the bar for designated leaders. This study sought to carry off the concepts of public policy and conflict theory to investigate the integrated development plan 2013-2017 on delivery of service in Kisumu County.
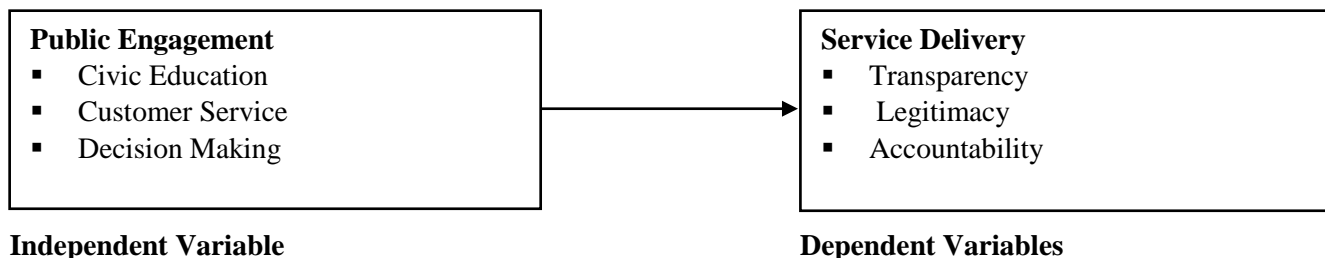
Conceptual Framework

Public Engagement		Service Delivery
▪ Civic Education		▪ Transparency
▪ Customer Service	→	▪ Legitimacy
▪ Decision Making		▪ Accountability

Independent Variable   **Dependent Variables**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: (Author, 2022)

Public Engagement in the Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017
In his research, Nicholson (2015) found that involvement by the public in the policy-making procedure may result in amplified gladness, viability in politics, confidence, assurance, trust, understanding, enjoyment, and a sense of wealth. Farrell (2014) outlined the advantages of public participation. He updated health in partnership activities and found that patient involvement improves relationships with professionals and increases quiet fulfillment and confidence.

Voting captures involvement of how much a country's citizens may choose their legislature, the flexibility of expression, free media and affiliation opportunities (World Bank, 2015). When governments collaborate with the people, accountability increases, advancing good governance to provide organized components for public involvement, inclusivity, and room for arrangement are needed to give all public access to governmental institutions. Yes, there are problems when meetings and involvement are absent. Whatever the case, these initiatives frequently focus on topics where the public interest is already high, such as food or health. They have not been sufficiently imitated by the government as a fundamental piece of the absolute equality and law-making course, leading to poor management by the county government.

The research also hinted how political governance ensures a society's connection, since social and monetary controls provide the essential foundation for any general public. The direct public contribution to decision-making by individuals or groups participating in general activities must be strengthened. This can be solved by recognized official channels including monitoring groups, planning processes, the change viability associated with instruction, the quality and management of school network, and the fraction of public-private institutions in training arrangements.

This becomes a justification for social capital, a project necessary for both social and financial development in the public sphere (Dale & Newman, 2010). Given this particular situation, there's a significant likelihood that county government will endeavor to provide relevant and high-quality assignments to the poor local networks and, therefore, lower poverty. Analysts are becoming more frequently expecting participation. They should support and promote the growing number of notable trans disciplinary research projects that include stakeholder engagement (Stephens & Graham 2014). Many inquiries and weaknesses have been found, and workable engagement mechanisms have been built. It is widely acknowledged that academic institutions must

develop their agents' size to network and share information with government representatives, businesses, and certain rooted parties and organizations (Smith 2015).

There has been an arrangement between citizens and local governments to increase how public input is essential at the local level, but that is by no means enthusiastic about public engagement as an interest for cooperation in decision-making. Better results are produced in public meeting at local government levels and also endorse good governance (Seyed *et al*., 2017). Political risks are less frequent at the local level, or in comparatively small scale. The gap between those who live in poverty and those in positions of authority is not as vast, and the possibility of rapid gains and outcomes is greater. Experience has shown that emphasizing accountability connections in service delivery may frequently produce immediate benefits that make a difference for poor people. Finding the flaws in the present service delivery methods, making them public, and shared with the authorities might lead to swift action (Kyohairwe, 2014).

Building effective public involvement depends on raising the capacity limits of both the people and the government. A significant barrier to efficient decentralization is frequently the ability and motivations of county governments. Building government infrastructure, capability, civil society groups, as well as the public groupsis essential to refining public input. County governments must plan and carry out initiatives that improve the quality of life for county residents and growth initiatives and interventions that provide a public benefit (Abuya, 2016). ICT tools for the 17 governance initiatives the government has reviewed, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the general public are still being examined. The report also hinted that political governance maintains a community's coherence insofar as social and economic management lays the fundamental framework for every society. Therefore, governance encompasses the state's ability to relate to and communicate with the public and the duty of social and public groups and their collaboration.

Poor service deliveries in health and education, corruption, youth unemployment, insecurity, income inequality, neglect of rural areas, insufficient apprehension of the rights of the public to get involved in governance activities, and perceived in-difference by the government to the people are some of the primary challenges that participants in the study encountered (Varyanne *et al*., 2014). With the passing of different Policy Acts, public engagement has improved under the new framework. Good governance has emerged in emerging countries as a tool for eradicating widespread poverty. This level signified satisfaction with relations and perceptions of the value of including diverse stakeholders at various project phases. Stakeholder attitudes and perceptions of their commitment may assist in fostering fruitful relationships. According to Smith *et al*. (2015), participatory action research is a long-standing, cutting-edge technique that includes researchers and stakeholders actively joining an information creation aggregation focused on bringing about social change.

Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2019) state that research to date indicates that fundamental municipal service delivery in emerging nations, including South Africa, has been the source of growing community impatience. Numerous academics have contended that because many communities in South Africa still lack access to basic services, the rise in protests against service delivery can be linked to organisational shortcomings in delivering adequate care. Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2019) examined South African citizens' satisfaction with the provision of fundamental municipal services and examined their conceptions of it, drawing on data from the South African Social Attitude Survey. The nature of the investigation was quantitative. The results showed that a number of factors, including conceptions of relative deprivation and inequality, unequal access to services, the provision of subpar services, unmet political promises and high levels of poverty, including disparities resulting from the post-apartheid regime, influenced citizens' dissatisfaction with service delivery. At that time, many African municipalities were dealing with comparable issues related to service delivery, hence the study was pertinent.

Manaf, Mohamed, and Harvey (2023) looked at how Malaysian people and public servants perceived the accountability of providing local government services. Using a quantitative methodology, the study collected 1,160 questionnaire responses from local government employees and citizens. The results showed that

respondents had a generally positive opinion of the services offered to society. Three issues with accountability were identified, though: the first was the inadequate involvement of citizens in programmes; the second was the handling of complaints; and the third was the tardiness in repairing the deteriorated basic infrastructure. The study theoretically adds to the body of knowledge in public management about the relationship between community expectations and staff accountability for providing public services. The study's practical recommendations included including residents in decision-making processes to enable them to keep a close eye on public employees providing local government services.

Gumah and Aziabah (2020) assert that "improving and elevating the quality of citizens' lives requires efficiency in public service delivery." On the other hand, poor public service delivery has a significant negative influence on the standard of living for citizens. According to the efficiency of public services theory, direct citizen surveys are a helpful instrument for gauging public service effectiveness. The impact on human life, which was seen as a result of how well public services were provided, was the primary factor to be considered. Gumah and Aziabah (2020) state that the study used data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey to demonstrate that the implementation of a comparative analytic methodology can yield analytical leverage in assessing public views of public services delivery using a perception index. The findings demonstrated that there are disparities in how important and auxiliary services are seen to be efficient or inefficient, and that these disparities have been found to reflect the spatio-economic characteristics of citizens. According to the study, public services can improve people's lives through a variety of policy initiatives, including stepped-up efforts to combat corruption, increased funding, better oversight, and strengthened institutional capacity for expanding the availability, calibre, and visibility of public services.

According to Sharifuzah (2023), there is a growing consensus over how local government bodies (LGAs) should deliver public services, with the gap between the service provider and the recipients being viewed as more important. Comparing how these two parties are seen is important in Malaysia since the government wants to create a useful system that will increase the accountability and performance of LGAs. The study's goal, according to Sharifuzah (2023), was to determine how differently service users and providers perceived the standard of LGA service delivery. Both sides' perceptions were gauged according to how satisfied they were with the LGAs' service performance. Three chosen Kedah LGAs' staff members and 347 service users (the general public) together made up the 105 service providers who took part in the survey. The study's conclusions showed that there were differences in perceptions about how LGAs delivered services between the staff members and community respondents. The study advances our understanding of how service users and service providers have different expectations when it comes to local service delivery.

The public's opinions of the quality, affordability, accessibility, and responsiveness of healthcare services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were investigated by Angawi and Moonesar (2020). This study was cross-sectional and descriptive. Convenience sampling was used to disseminate an online self-administrated questionnaire between July 2019 and March 2020. 1,232 respondents provided data, which was subsequently analysed with the application of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). According to the research, the public's impressions of quality and accessibility were generally good. The majority of the healthcare statements about quality, accessibility, and satisfaction had an overall agreement rate of more than 50%. In contrast, the overall agreement rate for responsiveness was much lower and varied for the affordability aspect. Regarding responsiveness, the findings indicated that over 60% of participants concurred that physicians do not spend enough time with them. In terms of the affordability of healthcare services, thirty percent of the respondents were unsure if they could afford medical care without suffering financial hardship. Even though Saudi Arabia provides the general people with free health services, issues with healthcare affordability are a worry and ought to be at the top of the nation's attention as it moves towards privatization. The responsiveness of the healthcare system should also be a priority in order to strengthen it.

Customer satisfaction with the service delivery of a few chosen public service organisations was evaluated by Mengste, Teshome, Belete, Gizaw, and Mulugeta (2020) in the Dire Dawa municipal administration. Since pertinent data were once gathered at public service organisations by distributing questionnaires to clients, the research used the cross-sectional field survey approach. 206 employees and 870 customers were chosen at random to participate in the study as respondents, and a mixed research design was applied to meet the study's goals. The replies of the respondents were analysed using percentages, mean values, frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, and Spearman's correlation. The study's findings showed a favorable correlation between customer satisfaction and the five service delivery characteristics; however, there was only a minor association between the service delivery dimensions and the overall level of customer satisfaction. The main obstacles to providing services include a lack of a service mentality and a decline in employee motivation, the prevalence of rent-seeking behaviour and corruption, a lack of regular stakeholder consultation, a lack of integration and cooperation, a shortage of skilled labour, an inadequate supply of machinery and equipment, inappropriate and ineffective grievance handling procedures, a failure to promptly revise existing rules and regulations, an inability or undercapacity of middle managers to oversee and manage staff, and a discrepancy between supply and demand were thoroughly identified. Lastly, potential recommendations were made for resolving the main issues with the service delivery procedures in the research area based on the conclusions and analysis.

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of public service and its contribution to the development of the country, Oyekola, Ajani, Asamu, and Olajire (2022) evaluated how young and middle-aged adults in Ibadan, Nigeria saw it. The study used a concurrent triangulation mixed methods research methodology to collect primary data from persons in Ibadan, Nigeria, who are young to middle-aged. Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to identify two variables from quantitative data, which were described using inferential and descriptive statistics. Thematic content analysis was also used to evaluate the data from qualitative research. The results demonstrated that respondents' opinions on public service in Nigeria, regarding both its nature and its compensation, were unfavourable. Job security was viewed favourably, although the majority of people saw corruption and poor behaviour in the public sector unfavourably. Additionally, the majority of final-year undergraduates had an unfavourable perception of public service, while the least negative perception was held by public sector employees. The study's findings will help Nigerians who provide and receive public services, as well as the Nigerian public service, which will use them to create policies that will keep an unproductive, ineffective, and self-serving workforce of public servants. For the first time, the study gauges public service perception in Nigeria with regard to its implementation and compensation. It was advised that more research be done to determine the reasons behind young and middle-aged persons' strong preference for and bad impression of employment in Nigerian public service. Enhancements in the provision of services and the circumstances around public service in Nigeria will also aid in rectifying the unfavourable perception.

METHODOLOGY

The study was descriptive in nature. This design was preferred since it enabled to show the ebb and flow of circumstances, relationships, and connections related to the investigation issue. (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The target population consisted of 177 personnel registered to vote in Kisumu County as of the general election of 2017 (IEBC, 2017). The KNBS determined the total number of employees as of December 2021 (KNBS, 2021). A sample size was drawn from the target population (Kothari and Gaurav (2014) using Yamane (1967) formula, at 95% confidence level as illustrated;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population (177)

e = level of significance (0.05)

$$\frac{177}{1 + 177(0.05)^2} = 123$$

FINDINGS

This study sought to examine the effect of public engagement on service delivery in Kisumu county. Data was collected through questionnaires and key informant interviews. The study issued 123 questionnaires to household heads, out of which 116 were completed and returned; hence was a response rate of 94%. Sammut, Griscti and Norman (2021) advise that a 50% response rate is sufficient, 60% is good and an exceedance of 70% is very good. López (2023) maintains that a response rate of 70% is excellent. Furthermore, Shiyab, Ferguson, Rolls and Halcomb (2023) affirm that response rates of 50% and above are acceptable for analysis. Consequently, the study's response rate of 94 was ideal, satisfactory and reliable

The study findings indicate a positive and significant influence public engagement on service delivery in Kisumu County (β =0.238, p < 0.05). These findings concur with those of Nicholson (2015) who found that participation by the public in the policy-making process may result in amplified gladness, viability in politics, confidence, assurance, trust, understanding, enjoyment and a sense of wealth. When governments collaborate with the people, accountability increases, advancing good governance to provide organized components for public involvement, inclusivity, and room for arrangement are needed to give all public access to governmental institutions (Farrell, 2014). Yes, there are problems when meetings and involvement are absent. Whatever the case, these initiatives frequently focus on topics where the public interest is already high, such as food or health. Experience has shown that emphasizing accountability connections in service delivery may frequently produce immediate benefits that make a difference for poor people. Finding the flaws in the present service delivery methods, making them public, and shared with the authorities might lead to swift action (Kyohairwe, 2014). Building effective public involvement depends on raising the capacity limits of both the people and the government. A significant barrier to efficient decentralization is frequently the ability and motivations of county governments. Building government infrastructure, capability, civil society groups, as well as the public groups is essential to refining public input. County governments must plan and carry out initiatives that improve the quality of life for county residents and growth initiatives and interventions that provide a public benefit (Abuya, 2016). According to Smith *et al*. (2015), participatory action research is a long-standing, cutting-edge technique that includes researchers and stakeholders actively joining an information creation aggregation focused on bringing about social change.

In the same vein, Oanh (2020) assessed the third sector organization's use of community participation in the provision of public services in the United Kingdom. The study used a case-study methodology with two UK-based third-sector organisations that provide public services. The study's conclusions demonstrated the value of community engagement in providing public services as a means of promoting social capital and cohesiveness. As a result, consideration must be given to stakeholders' interactions, social networks, and capacities while implementing community engagement. The findings and their policy implications were examined, with a particular focus on frameworks that facilitate the promotion of public values.

Lee (2022) asserts that open-source mobile apps offer a fresh medium for enhancing citizen-government communication. In particular, the participation of individuals in public service delivery broadens the conversation about mobile apps to include coproduction. What public services are offered on apps and coproduced, as well as the variables that influence governments to permit coproduction, are still unknown. Lee (2022) assessed ways in which local governments vary the public services they offer through their mobile applications and investigated the variables that influenced both the coproduction and diversification of public services on these platforms. The findings indicated that the adoption of mobile apps and their use as coproduction platforms are influenced by the institutional structure and financial capabilities of a government.

Additionally, the community's wealth and diversity of race widen the range of public services offered on the app, giving residents more chances to participate in coproduction activities like service request and evaluation.

The privatisation experience of American communities, according to Warner and Hefetz (2008), demonstrates a sharp decline in the usage of complete contracts and a sharp increase in joint contracting, or hybrid public-private delivery of city services. According to the report, city managers have realised that a straightforward division between public planning and market delivery is no longer sufficient. Instead, they must adopt a strategy that strikes a balance between efficiency, market management, and citizen happiness. While transaction costs economics highlights the difficulties in managing contracts, New Public Management places a strong emphasis on efficiency and competitiveness, while New Public Service prioritizes citizen involvement. However, city management believe that all three must be balanced. The investigation demonstrated how municipal administrators evolved into a middle ground where they combined market forces with public delivery and paid more attention to the needs of citizens during the service delivery process.

Twum et al. (2023) examined stakeholder participation in the strategic management process for government service delivery. The major goal was to identify the variables that contribute to a government department's inadequate stakeholder participation in strategic management procedures for service delivery. Actor Network Theory (ANT)'s four moments of translation concept was applied as a theoretical framework to comprehend and elucidate the interaction between the network's initiator and other actors in bringing disparate interests into alignment to accomplish service delivery objectives. It was assumed that the phenomenon was ontologically subjective and that the leading research philosophy should be an interpretive paradigm, with a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative elements, wherein the reliability of the qualitative data was tested with the help of quantitative data. The study found that during the development and execution of service delivery strategies, stakeholder participation might alleviate non-service delivery. According to the findings, a network of like-minded individuals should be formed in order to maintain ongoing participation in the execution of strategic plans and the provision of services in accordance with the mandates of government agencies and departments. The findings suggested that in order to strengthen stakeholder connections and align service delivery expectations and lessen service delivery issues, extensive planning and relationship-building between government departments and citizens were required.

Naz (2009) asserts that the use of information, communication, and technology (ICT) in the form of e-governance has the potential to significantly improve public sector reform and modernization. Experience with e-governance in both developed and developing nations has demonstrated that ICT may be a vehicle for increased service delivery with the aim of raising the calibre of services. Additionally, e-governance can encourage "good governance," which means that increasing civic involvement can lead to more chances for direct representation, voice, and support for a more democratic government. In his presentation and discussion, Naz (2009) examined the survey results that aimed to investigate if e-governance may enhance service delivery by modifying the principal-agent relationship. It also attempted to clarify the high standards of public service. There were policy recommendations made to help Fiji reap the benefits of e-governance. In order to adopt e-governance and reap the rewards of high-quality services and contented clients, strong leadership was needed.

According to Hacker and Tsiane (2012), Botswana's home ministry, Labour and Home Affairs, was frequently criticized and ranked lowest in performance rankings due to inadequate customer service at the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. After determining the underlying reasons for the breakdown in service, the executives of the department implemented a transformative strategy to significantly enhance customer relations. Focusing on the organization's quality culture, managerial intervention, on-site improvement projects, and unconventional staff engagements were its main components. The accolades and testimonies that followed show that a government agency may achieve significant, long-lasting improvements in customer service by focusing on raising the service-mindedness of its employees.

Gordon (2010) examined issues surrounding how postsecondary education might enhance public participation with government-provided e-services. Among the topics discussed were how to close the digital divide, which can be caused by problems with the actual infrastructure being provided, problems with funding restricting access to available resources, and obstacles related to education. Another topic covered was how to foster trust in online technologies. There are several issues facing the networked society that are best solved by education. Engaging with new technologies and paradigms, having faith in virtual environments, comprehending procedures and using online services, and translating one's current personal paradigms to the virtual realm are a few of these. The networked world presents issues for education itself. In particular, tertiary education was susceptible to the changes brought about by the contemporary networked world, but it can also benefit from some of the new prospects. The ability to help students become more proficient researchers and to allow them to do genuine research during their studies was very noteworthy. These abilities should equip students to take an active role in the information-rich and knowledge-rich society they would be growing up in.

CONCLUSIONS

Performance targets aligned with a county's development plans have a profound impact on service delivery. When a county's performance targets are in sync with its development plans, it creates a clear and strategic roadmap for governance. This alignment ensures that every action, program, and resource allocation is geared toward achieving the overarching development objectives of the region. Such cohesion fosters a more coordinated and purposeful approach to governance, where various departments and agencies work in harmony to realize the common vision of progress. It enables efficient resource allocation, minimizing waste and redundancy, and ultimately results in improved service delivery to the public. County executives, which often include elected officials like county governors and their administrative teams, play a pivotal role in motivating the public to actively engage in the pursuit of set development plans. These leaders are not only responsible for setting the vision and agenda for the county but also for rallying public support and participation. Through effective communication and engagement strategies, county executives can inspire the community to take ownership of the development plans, fostering a sense of collective responsibility. When citizens are motivated and engaged, they are more likely to contribute their efforts, ideas, and resources, which can accelerate the implementation of development initiatives and enhance service delivery outcomes. An effective organizational structure is a fundamental requirement for the successful execution of county development plans. It provides the framework within which different departments and agencies can collaborate, coordinate, and communicate effectively. With a well-structured organizational setup, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined, eliminating confusion and overlapping mandates. This, in turn, streamlines decision-making processes and ensures that activities are carried out efficiently and in line with the county's development priorities. A clear and effective organizational structure, in conjunction with performance targets, enhances the county's capacity to achieve its developmental goals. Additionally, a capacity development policy is vital for ensuring that projects are implemented within the projected time frame. Such a policy focuses on enhancing the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of the workforce and stakeholders involved in development projects. By investing in the professional development of staff and fostering a culture of continuous learning, counties can build a pool of skilled individuals who are better equipped to plan, execute, and monitor projects effectively. This, in turn, helps in adhering to project timelines, minimizing delays, and ensuring that projects are completed on schedule. Capacity development policies also contribute to improved project quality, as knowledgeable and skilled teams are more likely to make sound decisions and implement best practices, ultimately benefiting the public by delivering services and infrastructure promptly and efficiently.

Open dialogue between the county government and the public is a vital component of effective governance, particularly in the context of public engagement. When there is a free and open exchange of ideas, concerns, and feedback between the government and the public, it creates an environment for quality deliberation and

consensus building. Such dialogue allows for the exploration of different perspectives, the identification of common goals, and the resolution of potential conflicts. Quality deliberation and consensus-building are essential because they lead to well-informed decisions and policies that have broad-based support. This, in turn, positively impacts service delivery, as government actions and initiatives are more likely to align with the needs and preferences of the community. Access to adequate information about public engagement meetings is a critical factor in promoting service delivery. When the public is well-informed about the timing, location, and purpose of public engagement meetings, it encourages participation. This information enables citizens to plan and prepare for their involvement, ensuring that their input is relevant and constructive. Adequate information also fosters transparency and trust in the government's commitment to engaging with the public. As a result, service delivery benefits from the active involvement of an informed and engaged community. Counties that provide incentives to members of the public during public participation meetings can significantly enhance public engagement and, consequently, service delivery. Incentives can take various forms, such as recognition, small rewards, or opportunities to influence decision-making. When citizens perceive that their participation has a meaningful impact and that their efforts are valued, they are more likely to actively engage in public processes. This heightened participation not only generates valuable input but also creates a sense of ownership and responsibility among the public regarding the services provided by the county government. Having accessible and well-known venues for public engagement and scheduling meetings on days when the majority of the public can attend are essential elements for the effective delivery of services. Accessibility ensures that people from various backgrounds and locations can easily participate in public engagement activities. Well-known venues reduce confusion and make it more convenient for the public to attend. Scheduling meetings at times when most people are available increases the likelihood of broader participation, which, in turn, ensures that the government receives diverse perspectives and insights that can improve service delivery. Effective communication is essential for ensuring that citizens can understand and engage with the government's initiatives. Using language that is clear, concise, and free from jargon or technical terms makes it easier for the public to comprehend the issues under discussion and provide meaningful input. This approach facilitates more inclusive and effective public participation, resulting in improved service delivery that addresses the real needs and concerns of the community.

County governments that actively embrace and are committed to considering public input in their decision-making processes significantly enhance their public image. Openness and a commitment to public engagement are essential for establishing trust and transparency in governance. When county governments actively seek and value the opinions, concerns, and suggestions of their constituents, it sends a powerful message that they are responsive and accountable to the public. This enhances their reputation and builds a positive public image, which is crucial for maintaining public confidence and support. On the other hand, the public also plays a vital role in addressing social problems within their communities. Taking the initiative to address these issues often requires active and assertive action. By using pressure to advocate for the redistribution of resources towards various projects in the county, the public can influence decision-makers to prioritize solutions to critical social problems. This assertiveness can manifest in various ways, such as community organizing, lobbying, or public demonstrations, to push for the allocation of resources to address pressing needs. Public pressure can be a powerful force for change, encouraging governments to act and allocate resources where they are most needed. Clear and defined opportunities for the public to influence project development decisions are essential for effective governance. When the process for public input is well-established and communicated, it ensures that the public has a structured and accessible channel for participating in decision-making. These opportunities can include public hearings, consultations, surveys, and feedback mechanisms. Clarity in these processes makes it easier for the public to engage, and their input can lead to more informed and balanced project development decisions that align with the actual needs and aspirations of the community. Devolved systems that are committed to fully considering public input in project development decisions tend to perform better in terms of service delivery and community satisfaction.

When decision-makers prioritize the active involvement of the public, they tap into the collective wisdom and local knowledge of the community. This input leads to more relevant and efficient projects that directly address community needs, ultimately improving the overall quality of life for the residents. In such systems, public participation becomes a cornerstone of governance, enhancing the government's effectiveness and the public's sense of ownership and involvement in local development. County government engagement with stakeholders that focuses on building relationships can lead to more effective and sustainable governance. Collaborative engagement fosters mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation among government entities, community organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders. Building strong relationships among stakeholders ensures that there is a shared commitment to common goals and objectives. It promotes a collaborative approach to problem-solving and project development, which can lead to more innovative and holistic solutions. Additionally, these positive relationships contribute to a more harmonious and supportive environment for governance, benefiting both the government and the community it serves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the county government of Kisumu should ensure that performance targets should be aligned with the county's development plans. This alignment ensures that resources and efforts are strategically directed, promoting a coordinated approach to achieving broader developmental goals. County executives must engage and motivate the public to actively contribute to these plans, fostering collective ownership. An effective organizational structure is fundamental in ensuring efficient execution, clarifying responsibilities, and enhancing decision-making. Moreover, a capacity development policy is essential to empower the workforce, improving project implementation timeliness and quality. By prioritizing these factors, Kisumu County can optimize service delivery and progress towards its development objectives effectively.

The county government of Kisumu should hold open dialogue between with the public for quality deliberation and consensus. Encouraging quality deliberation and consensus-building ensures inclusive decision-making and strengthens community involvement. Adequate information about public engagement meetings is essential for transparency and engagement. Providing incentives for public participation can motivate citizens to actively contribute, leading to improved service delivery. Accessible and well-known venues for public engagement meetings should be prioritized, making it easier for the community to participate. Furthermore, using simple and local language during public forums ensures effective communication and meaningful public involvement in the decision-making process, enhancing overall governance and service delivery in Kisumu County.

The county government of Kisumu should be open to and be committed to considering public input in the decision process. This is fundamental in building trust and transparency, which are essential for effective governance. It conveys that the government values and respects the opinions and concerns of its constituents, thus enhancing its reputation and public image. When citizens see that their voices matter, they are more likely to actively engage, leading to better-informed decisions and policies that enjoy widespread support. It is important for the public to proactively address social problems by taking assertive action. By mobilizing their communities, applying pressure to reallocate resources towards critical projects, and advocating for their needs, citizens can play a pivotal role in influencing policy decisions. This advocacy can take the form of community organizing, lobbying, or other collective efforts to ensure that resources are allocated to address pressing local challenges. The county government should establish clear and defined opportunities for the public to participate in project development decisions. Providing accessible channels, such as public hearings, consultations, and feedback mechanisms, ensures that community members can actively engage in the decision-making process. This clarity simplifies public involvement, leading to more well-informed and balanced project development decisions that align with community needs. Devolved systems that genuinely consider public input in project development perform better in terms of service delivery and community

satisfaction. Public participation becomes a cornerstone of governance, enhancing government effectiveness and the community's sense of ownership and involvement in local development. Engaging with stakeholders, including community organizations, businesses, and other entities, is essential for the county government of Kisumu. Such engagement helps build productive relationships, promoting mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation among various stakeholders. Collaborative relationships foster a shared commitment to common goals and objectives, enhancing problem-solving and project development. Positive stakeholder relationships create a supportive environment for governance, benefiting both the government and the community it serves by ensuring projects are well-received, efficient, and effective.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study was limited to service delivery in Kisumu County. However, there exists an opportunity for broader exploration within other counties in Kenya bodies. Conducting further research on these counties could yield valuable insights into the similarities and distinctions among them. This study employed a quantitative approach for data collection and analysis. Further research could employ mixed methods. Combining qualitative and quantitative techniques would allow researchers to gather both numerical data and in-depth narratives. Qualitative data can provide contextual insights and offer a deeper understanding of the effects of financing risks on performance of projects. This could lead to richer findings and conclusions. The study focused on public engagement, public perception, public awareness and demographic factors.It was noted that 44% of the variability in service delivery in Kisumu County could be explained by other factors. Further studies could look into other possible variables that affect service delivery. This would not only add to theory on Integrated Development Plan and service delivery.

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