

Human Resource Practices and Service Delivery in Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract

Organisations, both public and private, are experiencing unprecedented paces of change, calling for a continuous re-evaluation of their operating models and other strategies to withstand those changes and benefit from them for sustained performance. New approaches that bring on board the modern strategic management techniques are necessary for the government to attain improved performance and the overall service quality. Effective human resource practices have been touted to be an effective management tool in changing a bureaucratic public sector to a more responsive as well as an innovative administration. This paper assessed the effect of human resource practices on service delivery in Kakamega County, Kenya. The accessible population comprised 381 respondents drawn from all the county ministries. A correlation survey research design and stratified random sampling technique was used to establish the units of study. Questionnaires were used to obtain information from the respondents, after which it was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 and data presented in the form of percentages, frequencies and tables. The study established that there is a positive and significant relation between human resource management practices and the service delivery in Kakamega County at 1% significance level ($r=0.806$, $p=0.000$). Following the hypothesis testing using regression analysis, the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that human resource practices greatly affected the service delivery in Kakamega County. The study recommended that more resources be invested in improving its human capital since the study found out that human resource management techniques are crucial in the service delivery processes.

Keywords: Human Resource Practices, Service Delivery, Strategic Management, County Government

1. Introduction

In the contemporary world, organisations, both public and private, are experiencing unprecedented paces of change. Consequently, they are continually re-evaluating their operating models and other strategies to withstand those changes and benefit from them for sustained performance. McInerney and Barrows (2000) stated that new approaches to the public sector management were imperative as the governments entered the new millennium. One of way of adopting to the current changes is developing key human resources for competitive advantage.

Jackson and Schuler (2000) as cited in Gamedze (2012) described human resource (HR) as the available talents and energies of people who are available to an organization as the potential contributors to the creation and the realization of the organization's mission, vision, strategy and goals. According to Fun (2010) the human resources are treated as an asset and a source of sustainable competitive advantages that rivalries cannot

imitate easily. Bruns (2014) noted that HR management has been proposed as being one of the core drivers of the modernization of the public sector, in particular with reference to the changing nature of people management and 'HR-public service partnerships' as an antecedent capacity of modernizing public service organizations. Dzansi and Dzansi (2010) posited that the human resource management (HRM) practices are essential to quality service delivery. The service delivery involves personal interaction between customer-contact employees and customers. In order to foster the effective interactions, employees must exhibit positive behaviours to convince customers.

Human resource management practices are critical factors which will influence employees' behaviours in delivering good quality service in accordance with organizational standards (Fun, 2010).

Gamedze (2012) carried out a research on the HRM practices on the South African Ministry for Home Affairs. The author noted that the HRM practices were the panacea to the challenges dogging the Ministry since there was inadequate attention to these practices. Gamedze established that employees need to be

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recruited and selected, trained and placed in a manner that will facilitate them to use their skills and abilities. In his study to establish the human resource development challenges facing the decentralised local government authorities (LGA) in Tanzania, Lufunyo (2015) used exploratory research design. The author noted that with the introduction of the New Public Management and Decentralisation model, the Tanzanian LGA understood that the public demanded quality and reliable services, and productive human resources were required to achieve those needs. Consequently the HRM under the decentralised units in Tanzania was affected through HR development for productive contributions to vision achievement and efficient service delivery.

Mutiso (2010) conducted a study through a descriptive research design to establish the relationship between HRM practices and the delivery of quality services in Kenyan public secondary schools, with a focus in the in Taita-Taveta County. The author found that the human resource recruitment and selection, teachers training and development, performance management, compensation management, and employee health and safety affected the quality of education services.

1.1 Statement of the research problem

Devolution is premised on the rationale that institutions closest to the citizens are the most likely to meet and properly articulate needs of the citizens (Onyango&Ondiek, 2015). However, there are instances where the decentralization of resources and power to the grassroots has not achieved the roles of service delivery as anticipated. According to Khalid (2010 as cited in Makanyeza, Kwandayi, &Ikobe, 2013), the Malaysian counties continued to encounter pressure to improve their service delivery. In Uganda, Nannyonjo and Okot (2013) noted that despite the fact that the decentralisation begun in 1997, the local governments were still grappling with a number of challenges such as inadequate financial resources, lack of trained and experienced workforce, nepotism, and corruption among others, and which affected service delivery. In Kenya, Onyango and Ondiek (2015) noted that the service delivery in Kisumu County was hampered by among other factors Member of the County Assemblies interference and political manipulation, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate citizen participation, poor human resource policy, lack of employee capacity, poor planning, failure to manage change, and poor monitoring and evaluation. In Murang’a and many other counties, Tilas (2014) affirms that the public were against the devolved governments as they felt that the services being offered were insufficient. The author also noted that the public had lost confidence in the county governments’ ability to utilise the public funds in a manner that would address their services needs. In Kajiado County, Makanyeza, Kwandayi and Ikobe (2013) noted that the service delivery was poor, and was affected by the lack of capacity of employees and skilled

personnel, political interference and poor coordination with the national government. Following these challenges, to the researcher’s knowledge, there are few studies is any on human resource practices adopted by the Kakamega County and how they affect the services delivery, this study sought to fill this knowledge and literature gap.

1.2 Objective

Establish the effect of human resource practices on service delivery in Kakamega County.

1.3Hythothesis

H0₁: Human resource practices have no effect on service delivery in Kakamega County.

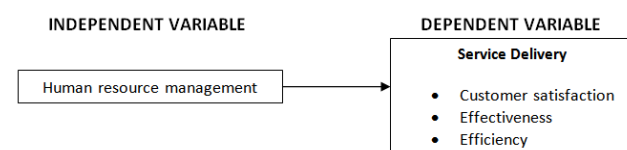


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework
Source: Researcher own self conceptualisation (2017)

2. The concept of service delivery

Davis (2014) noted that in as far as the Local Government Act, the constitution or/and any other legislations that are studied, the phrase service delivery has not been defined either deliberately or ignorantly. However, the author stated that service can be viewed as a system or arrangement that supplies public needs while delivery is the periodical performance of a service. Therefore, service delivery is a system or arrangement of periodical performance of supplying public needs (Davis, 2014). According to Helmsing (1995) as contained in (Hussein & Wanyoike, 2015)’s study, service delivery to people is the deliberate obligatory decision by the elected or appointed officials to serve or deliver goods and services to the recipients.

In service delivery, the system of delivery must view tax payers as customers; this therefore calls for placing a high priority on delivery of personalized efficient customer service. The attitudes exhibited by service providers, employees and managers must be aimed at developing good working relations and ensuring that tax payers/citizens are handled well while being served. Service provision or delivery is an immediate output of the inputs into the health sector, education sector among other sectors. Increased inputs should lead to improved service delivery and enhanced access to services.

3. Research Methodology

The study used the correlation survey research design. Orodho (2003) noted that this design is a method of

collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The study was conducted in Kakamega County, which is located in the western part of Kenya, and whose geographical coordinates are 0° 17' 0" North, 34° 45' 0" East.

The study targeted Kakamega County headquarter and its all the ten ministries. These respondents included the management staff in the administration, finance, procurement and information technology departments.

Table 3.1 Sampling Frame

Ministry	Target Population	Sample (30%)
Public services & Admin.	48	14
Health	112	34
Finance	18	5
Agriculture and Livestock	45	14
Transport	28	8
Land and Housing	22	7
Environment and Water	19	6
Social Services and Youth	24	7
Education, ECD and Polytechnic	44	13
Trade & Industry	21	6
TOTAL	381	114

Source: Kakamega County Human Resource Department’s Annual Report, 2016.

The sample of the study was obtained from each stratum after dividing the population into ten strata as per the County’s ministries. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the required sample from the target population of 381.

Questionnaires were used to obtain information from the respondents. Each item in the questionnaires was developed to address specific research objectives. The pilot test was carried out in Vihiga County, which is different from the intended county of study.

The content validity, which refers to whether the instrument accurately measures what it was intended to measure, was enhanced through the use of expert judgment, where the researcher consulted with her supervisors and lecturers from the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology’s School of Business and Economics. Their advices and contributions assisted in the framing of the questionnaire and the interview items as well as the questions.

Cronbach’s alpha (α) that was developed by Cronbach in 1951 was used to provide a measure of the internal consistency of the tests carried out, with values expressed as a number between 0 and 1. The Cronbach’s alpha was computed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. As noted by Tavakol (2011), high values of alpha ranging from 0.70 to 0.95 were deemed acceptable. As shown in Table 3.3 below, the researcher considered the research instruments as being reliable since the Chronbach’s Alpha was 0.79.

Table 3.3 Reliability tests

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.790	12

Source: Field data (2017)

After receiving the permits to carry out the research from the various bodies, the researcher and research assistant administered the questionnaires to the sampled respondents after explaining the purpose and the significance of the study. The questionnaires were checked to ascertain that they were fully filled and if not, respondents were asked to fill in the gaps.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used for analysis to generate data array that was used for subsequent analysis of the data. The SPSS version 21 has descriptive statistic features that assisted in the analysis of the means, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages.

The inferential statistics was also used and involved correlation analysis and regression analysis. Correlation analysis was used to gauge the relationship between the variables, and Spearman’s rank-order correlation was applied since the collected data was in ordinal scale. The multiple regression analysis was used to gauge the relationship among the variables and determine whether the null hypothesis was to be rejected or accepted, and was presented as follows; $Y = \alpha + \beta E + \epsilon$, Where; Y= Service delivery, α is Alpha = Constant, β = Beta, E = HRM practices, ϵ =error term.

Before carrying out the study, the research sought permission from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology through the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. The researcher also sought permission from the County to administer the questionnaires to the respondents. To ensure confidentiality, information was used only for the purpose of this research and the names of the participants were omitted on the questionnaires to ensure anonymity.

4. Results presentation, analysis and discussion

Table 4.1 Response rate

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Successful	103	90.35%
Unsuccessful	11	9.65%
Total	114	100%

Source: Field data (2017)

Table 4.1 shows the response rate following the administration of 114 questionnaires to the respondents. The results depict those 103 questionnaires, which represent 90.35%, were completely filled up and collected back with only 9.65% uncollected. Therefore, the researcher considered this response to be very good.

4.1 Human resource management and service delivery

Table 4.2 Minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation of human resource management practices

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees training and development	103	1.00	5.00	3.8058	1.17205
Presence of a compensation management program	103	1.00	5.00	4.1262	1.05421
Well formulated performance management policy	103	2.00	5.00	4.0971	.95501
Favourable working environment	103	1.00	5.00	4.0874	.89778
Valid N (list wise)	103				

Source: Field data (2017)

Table 4.2 shows that there were no outliers in the response of the respondents since the minimum value are 1 while the maximum is 5. Majority of the respondents agreed that employee training and development, compensation management program, a well-formulated performance management policy and provision of favourable working environment were crucial human resource management practices conducted by the Kakamega County with a mean of 3.81, 4.13, 4.10, and 4.09 respectively. Table 4.8 also show standard deviation of 0.96 and 0.90 implying that there was no deviation in the respondent’s responses on the well-formulated performance management policy and provision of favourable working environment as useful HRM practices. However, the results of the standard deviation of 1.17 and 1.05 indicate that there was no consensus on the presence of human resource management practices through employees training and development, and a compensation management program respectively.

4.2 Correlation analysis: Relationship between human resource management and service delivery

Table 4.3 Relationship between human resource management and service delivery

	Service delivery	HRM
Service delivery	1.000	
HRM	0.806**	1.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
N=103

Source: Field data (2017)

Table 4.3 indicate there is a positive and significant relation between human resource management practices and the service delivery in Kakamega County at 1% significance level (r=0.806, p=0.000, which is <p=0.01).

These results are in agreement with the past studies conducted by Fun (2010) and Mutiso (2010) who noted that human resource practices greatly affected the delivery of quality services.

4.3 Regression analysis: Regression analysis of human resource management practices and service delivery

From the results of the model summary, R² is 0.594, which means that 59.4% of the variation in the service level at Kakamega County was explained by the human resource management practices. Also the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.771, showing a significant positive relationship between human resource management practices and service delivery at Kakamega County. The ANOVA regression results in Table 4.15 shows that the regression model was feasible in explaining the relationship between human resource management practices and service delivery at Kakamega County at 95% confidence level as indicated by the F-value (F=147.747, p=0.000 where p<0.05). Thus, there is a goodness of fit between the human resource management and service delivery. The simple linear regression model can be written as Y= 0.692 + 0.790E₁+ ε. The results in Table 4.15 were used to test the second hypothesis of study that states that, H0₂: Human resource practices have no effect on service delivery in Kakamega County. The study rejects the null hypothesis at 5% significance level because the beta value is not equal to zero (0.790≠0), and concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between human resource practices and service delivery in Kakamega County. These findings agree with the works of Dzansi and Dzansi (2010) and Mutiso (2010) who posited that the HRM practices are essential to quality service delivery.

Table 4.4 Regression results of human resource management practices and service delivery

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.771 ^a	.594	.590	.39137		
a. Predictors: (Constant), HRM						
ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	22.630	1	22.630	147.747	.000 ^b
	Residual	15.470	101	.153		
Total		38.100	102			
a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery						
b. Predictors: (Constant), HRM						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.692	.265		2.615	.010
	HRM	.790	.065	.771	12.155	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

Source: Field data (2017)

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought to examine the effect of human resource management practices on the service delivery in Kakamega County and was guided by the null hypothesis H_{01} : Human resource practices have no effect on service delivery in Kakamega County. The findings of the study showed that among the human resource management practices and which affected the service delivery in the County included employee training and development, compensation management program, a well-formulated performance management policy and provision of favourable working environment with a mean of 3.81, 4.13, 4.10, and 4.09 respectively.

The correlation results revealed that there is a positive and significant relation between human resource management practices and the service delivery at Kakamega County at 1% significance level. From the regression analysis results, the study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that at 5% significant level, human resource practices have effects on service delivery in Kakamega County.

The study recommended that Kakamega County should invest more resources on improving its human capital since the study has found out that human resource management techniques are crucial in the service delivery processes. Furthermore, it is the human beings that are directly involved in offering the services to the citizenry.

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