STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify the causes of poor service delivery and the strategies to improve service delivery in local authorities using the case of Kajiado Local Authority. Two self-administered questionnaires were designed i.e. one for the employees and the other for service users so as to capture the views of both the employees and service users. Questionnaires were conveniently distributed to 150 service users and 100 were returned usable. Questionnaires were also conveniently distributed to 20 employees of Kajiado Local Authority and 20 were returned usable. A mixed approach i.e. a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was taken to analyse data. The findings showed that the major causes of poor service delivery are councilor interference and political manipulation, corruption and lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate citizen participation, poor human resource policy, failure to manage change, lack of employee capacity, poor planning, and poor monitoring and evaluation. The main strategies to improve service delivery were found to be increasing citizen participation in the affairs of the local authority and partnership with the community in service delivery, flexible response to service user complaints, offering value for money and ensuring that service users pay their bills on time, strategic public service planning, sound human resource policy that includes capacity building and employee motivation, managing change, dealing with corruption and improving accountability, segregation of duties between councilors and management of the local authorities, and partnering with other players and outsourcing services.

Key words: strategy, service delivery, public service delivery, town council, local authority

1. INTRODUCTION

Municipal Research and Services Centre (MRSC, 1993) defines service delivery as the actual producing of a service such as collecting refuse and disposing it or lighting the streets. Stauss (2005) supports this view and suggests that in economic transactions, it is specialized skills and knowledge that are exchanged for money rather than the physical resources. Whitaker (1980) observes that depending on the kind of service being offered, each service has a primary intervention of transforming the customer and that the client himself/herself is the principal beneficiary.

As a crucial responsibility of government and government institutions, the public service should deliver services that a society requires to maintain and improve its welfare. To do this, government institutions require organizational structures and suitably qualified people who must be supported to deliver the services they are responsible for (Whitaker, 1980). Besley and
Ghatak (2007) argue that public services are a key determinant of quality of life that is not measured in per capita income. The authors stress that service delivery is an important feature of the poverty reduction strategy. Hernandez (2006) concurs that services are vital to poverty alleviation and key to realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) both directly and indirectly, i.e. enhancing the availability and affordability of education, health, energy, and information and communication technology services; and alleviating poverty and empowering women through entrepreneurial and employment creation opportunities in services enterprises respectively.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010), throughout the world cities face the most acute challenges of service delivery because of fast growing populations. In many countries, developing countries in particular, the issue of service delivery is a challenge that needs to be addressed given the low quality of service provision and the pressing needs of the poor (Besley and Ghatak, 2007). Khalid (2010) supports this view when he states that local councils in Malaysia continue face pressure to improve their service delivery. The increased level of education of the population has led to a more vocal and more discerning citizenry that expects better services and accountability from its local government. Moreover, rapid industrialization and urbanization of countries have created a challenging environment for the local government (Khalid, 2010). Tamrakar (2010) affirms that in Nepal, public service delivery has remained lower than what was targeted when Nepal announced delivery of public services to its people through a planned development effort. The fact that people still suffer from many hurdles when they have to get any government services (Tamrakar, 2020) is an indication of poor service delivery that needs to be addressed. Similarly, the argument by Gwayi (2010) that municipalities in South Africa face serious challenges in implementing service delivery options that will enhance existing structures in the sphere of local government points towards the need for strategies to improve service delivery. Thus, the problem of service delivery is not unique to Kenyan towns alone; it is a problem that is faced by many towns in the world, especially in Africa and other developing countries. Humphreys (1998) alluded to the fact that, delivery of services has a direct and immediate effect on the quality of the lives of the people in a given community. Poor services can make it difficult to attract business or industry to an area and it will also limit job opportunities for residents. Hence, as Besley and Ghatak (2007) indicate, improving public service delivery is one of the biggest challenges worldwide. To date, there are limited studies that have formally investigated the causes of poor service delivery and the strategies that can be implemented to improve the service delivery in local authorities. Although the Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) in 2010 reported on the factors affecting service delivery in local governments, it did not empirically examine the strategies that can be adopted to improve service delivery in local authorities. Therefore, this study sought to empirically identify the causes of poor service delivery and the strategies that can be adopted to improve service delivery in local authorities using Kijiado town in Kenya as point of reference; taking into account the views of both service users and service providers (employees). The need to consider the views of the service providers is substantiated by Tamrakar (2010) who argued that public services should be concerned with what the customers want rather than with what providers are prepared to give. The specific objectives were:

- To establish the causes of poor service delivery in local authorities.
- To identify strategies for improving service delivery in local authorities.

Although this study is a case of Kijiado town in Kenya, the researchers believe that this research may also be insightful to other local authorities in terms of understanding the practical causes of poor service delivery and the ways in which service delivery can be improved by taking into consideration the views of both service users and service providers. The services sector has gained a lot of importance in the world economy. Singh and Babrah (2009) emphasize that most developing countries are earning millions from the service sector alone. According to Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2010), public service providers are responsible and accountable to citizens or their customers. Similarly, Hoogwout (2010) emphasizes that, generally citizens are demanding increased convenience in their interaction with the government. The interaction between citizens and the government is through service delivery. Therefore, as Hoogwout (2010) concludes, improving service delivery to individual citizens raises trust in the government.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Public Services

Stauss (2005) argues that services are not physical resources but economic transactions exchanged for money, comprising of the exchange of specialized skills and knowledge. He further insists that goods constitute tangible materializations of knowledge and activities, and thus are nothing more than distributional mechanisms for services. Rao (2005) seems to be of the same opinion when he defines services as intangible activities performed by machines or persons or both for the purposes of creating value perceptions among customers. He further stresses that since services are intangible activities, or benefits produced by the service provider and in association with the consumer, their quality results in perception and value assessment by the consumer. Goldstein, Johnston, Duffy and Rao (2002) state that the service concept is a frequently used term in the service design literature and that there are several definitions of the service concept. They define service concept as the way in which an organization would like to have its services perceived by its customers, employees, shareholders and lenders, i.e. the organization’s business proposition. Edwardsson and Olsson (1996) refer to the service concept as the prototype for service and define it as the detailed description of what is to be done for the customer, i.e. what needs and wishes are to be satisfied, and how this is to be achieved. This involves understanding the needs of customers in the target market and aligning this with the organization’s strategy and competitive intentions. OECD (2010) indicates that services can be categorised in a number of ways including, the type of entity providing them, the type of user and the nature of the services provided. The categories of services according to OECD (2010) include private services, public services and collective or joint services.

According to OECD (2010), public services include all services provided by the government as well as all services where the government has a significant influence. OECD further states that public services can be provided directly by the government or indirectly – where the government is not the direct provider but still plays a role in their provision through regulation or a financial contribution. The most obvious public services are those directly provided by some level of government, such as police protection or building inspection. Humphreys (1998), concurs that public services are those services which are mainly, or completely, funded by taxation and that typically, public services would include the following areas of public management: central and local government, the health, authorities, education, defense, justice/home affairs and non-commercial semi-state organisations. OECD (2010) observes that public services can also be provided by private firms, for example, solid waste collection and disposal, or by voluntary organisations, for example, community volunteers of a fire brigade. In such cases, while the government does not provide the service it is involved in the process, perhaps by providing funds, establishing regulations or some other means. Examples of this type of arrangement would include the contracting out of local government services, such as refuse collection and local transport, to private companies, as well as the privatisation of certain central government functions, such as the prison service.

Public services have been presented with a view that, under normal circumstances, public services providers do not operate for financial profit or require immediate payment for goods or services prior to delivery. If public services are charged for, then they are not usually sold to customers at commercial prices set to produce profits (Humphreys, 1998). In addition to their primarily non-commercial character, public services are often distinguished by an absolute, or at least comparative, lack of competition in the normal market sense of seeking to entice customers away from their competitors or rival service providers. Indeed, public services are often monopolistic or oligopolistic (Humphreys, 1998).

2.2. Public Service Delivery

Municipal Research and Services Centre (1993) defines service delivery as the actual producing of a service such as collecting refuse and disposing it or lighting the streets. Whitaker (1980) concurs with this argument and observes that depending on the kind of service being offered, each service has a primary intervention of transforming the customer and that the client himself or herself is the principle beneficiary. Whether it is learning new ideas or new skills (education), acquiring healthier habits (health), or changing one’s outlook on family or society (social services), only the individual served can accomplish the change. He or she is a vital co-producer of any personal transformation that occurs (Whitaker, 1980). The service provider or agent can only use his or her skills and conduct activities to facilitate the process. Whitaker further insists that in delivering services, the agent helps the person being served to make the desired sorts of
changes by supplying encouragements, suggesting options, illustrating techniques, and providing guidance and advice; but the agent alone cannot bring about the change. Both the citizen and the agent together produce the desired transformation (Whitaker, 1980).

As a crucial responsibility of government and government institutions, the public service should deliver services that a society requires to maintain and improve its welfare. To do this, government institutions require organizational structures and suitably qualified people who must be supported to deliver the services they are responsible for (Whitaker, 1980). Besley and Ghatak (2007) argue that public services are delivered by a nexus of relationships between beneficiaries, politicians and service providers (such as bureaucrats, doctors, and teachers). They insist that it is necessary to analyze the incentives that govern the behavior of politicians and service providers, if services are to match the best interest of the beneficiaries. The authors further argue that the main concern in public service provision is how the obligations of the different parties is defined and enforced. The same view is held by Tamrakar (2010) who states that public service delivery is characterized by compliance with rules and it is determined by inputs. This is evident given the fact that the role of formal contractual relationships is often quite limited or typically absent in public service delivery, when compared to the market (Besley and Ghatak 2007). These authors concluded that public service delivery is based on four key issues:

- Public service provision is often mission-oriented and that the mission of the organization displaces the conventional notion of profit maximization used in the case of private sector organizations.
- Accountability in public service delivery applies to the political, bureaucratic as well as market spheres. It refers to the system of punishment and reward consequent on actions taken by agents, and to the process of putting in place specific individuals to make decisions although it does not have to be governed by formal relationships.
- Competition from private organizations can induce public organizations to get their act together to hold on to funding and to their clientele.
- Utilization of resources on the evaluation of policies is a crucial part of effective public service provision where missions are either too weak or not aligned and front line actors cannot be made directly accountable by the beneficiaries (Besley and Ghatak, 2007).

According to Tamrakar (2010), public services should be concerned with what customers want rather than what providers are prepared to give. Yet in most of the developing countries public service delivery is characteristic of ineffective, cumbersome, too procedural, costly, red taped and not transparent systems. Tamrakar (2010) further argues that generally, public servants have acted as masters without any sense of accountability and transparency instead of acting as servants of people (Tamrakar, 2010). However, the citizens have become familiarized to the enhanced service delivery from the private sector and thus, they now view the public sector as another provider of services for which they pay taxes.

2.3. Causes of Poor Service Delivery

Aminuzzaman (2010) argues that although local authorities are the frontline local government organization closest to people, the scope and quality of service delivery is one of the most critical areas that have significantly tinted their credibility and institutional image. According to Gwayi (2010), some of the causes of poor service delivery in town councils include: councilor interference in administration, inadequate public participation; inadequate alignment of budget with the requirements of the central government; lack of political and administrative leadership; inadequate infrastructure and shortages of skills. The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) of Western Australia in 1999 also cited several impediments to service delivery as: inadequate resources, land tenure and consequential non-rateability of land, a history of central government agencies circumventing local authorities approvals and involvement, the substandard nature of infrastructure, the limited powers of local authorities to enforce health and education services control and management, exemption of some areas from building controls and the polarized views of the parties.

A study conducted by Aminuzzaman (2010) in Bangladesh revealed that some of the critical institutional challenges facing service delivery at the level of local authorities include limited manpower and resources. Considering the work load and responsibilities, local authorities are understaffed. The author further clarifies that local authorities also lack logistic supports like computers and transport and that they also lack managerial capability and resources to design and run innovative service delivery in areas like employment generation, health and education.
Aminuzzaman (2010) further found out that there is a problem of lack of coordination between local authorities and extension service delivery workers of the government at the field level. The author noted that there are no formal links even between the standing committees of the local authorities with the extension workers of the corresponding line ministries of the government. Such isolation makes lots of the services of local authorities dysfunctional and ineffective. This also deprives the local authorities of getting technical assistance and other professional support from the government line agencies. Other challenges noted in Aminuzzaman’s (2010) study were: lack of appropriate rules and regulation, ineffective monitoring, lack of accountability and transparency, political manipulation, non-cooperation from central-government based bureaucracy, limited community understanding, exclusion of women, limited and insecure revenue base, highly centralized project and programme design, poor relationship between administration and elected representatives.

A similar study was conducted in UK by Sarshar and Moores (2006) on improving service delivery in facilities management. The major challenges that hindered service delivery were identified as:

- **Lack of strategic awareness**: Despite their being an important national plan of directives and processes, the study revealed that many staff at a supervisory and practitioner level was unaware of the issues raised within it and the impact it should have been having on their day-to-day operations.
- **Lack of capacity**: The study assessment demonstrated that many of the operational staff was unaware of both national controls assurance standards requirements and their respective responsibilities. The underlying cause of the awareness deficit was found to be a lack of training, or specific systems to involve staff, at this level in the organisation. As a result, the staff were performing its roles without essential training and therefore exposing themselves and their customers to potential risk.
- **Poor performance monitoring**: Another issue applicable to all services was performance monitoring, because although each of the services had monitoring systems in place, there was an overall lack of consistency and integration between the various systems in place.

- **Poor coordination processes**: Although each of the services had its own capable processes for determining service requirements, planning delivery and managing suppliers, the Directorate's co-ordination was still based on informal mechanisms, including face to face communication and meetings, and the different service groups lacked clear and enforceable performance standards. This led to long standing disagreements between some of the service delivery teams which led to reducing the quality of service. High staff turnover: It was also noted that there was a high turnover of operational staff and inadequate level of management resource which in turn affected service delivery.

### 2.4. Strategies to Improve Service Delivery

In today’s global competitive environment, the service industry plays an increasingly important role in the economy of many countries, therefore, delivering quality service is considered as an essential strategy for success and survival (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Improving service delivery is primarily about improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which services are delivered. A report by the World Bank (2009) stated that the current cities are faced with many urgent challenges which have necessitated the implementation of new intelligent service delivery systems to tackle those problems. The reason for this strategy is that, in the developed world, cities are increasingly becoming the driving forces of their national economies, for example Tokyo, Paris, Zurich, Prague and Oslo all produce about a third of their countries’ GDPs (World Bank, 2009).

In Jooste (2008) it is indicated that the use of public values, institutions, and service market in contracting can actually improve service delivery. They insist that stakeholder preferences and democratic processes establish the values to be optimized in service delivery. Furthermore, public law and organizational arrangements determine the contracting tools available for balancing competing values; and the characteristics of service markets influence which contracting tools and vendors are best suited to achieve stakeholder values (Jooste, 2008). Moreso, a complex combination of strategies is needed to ensure that service employees are willing and able to deliver quality services and that they stay motivated to perform in customer-oriented, service-minded ways. Continuous motivation of employees to
be customer-oriented will enhance service quality. In order to build a customer-oriented, service-minded workforce, organizations must hire the right people, develop people to deliver service quality, provide the needed support systems, and retain the best people (Jooste, 2008).

In 2003 the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) states that the public sector plays a crucial role in national development. To remain viable, efficient and effective in responding to the dynamic needs of the citizen, it has to embrace strategies that can enhance improved productivity and the quality of services delivered. It outlined a number of strategies that can be adopted by African governments to enhance public sector performance. These strategies that touch on key requirements for improving the public sector in general and service delivery in particular, are based on the concept of a ‘lean’ government. This means a government that is run in partnership with all stakeholders, and one that focuses on promoting the advancement of the private sector and citizens through a well-managed policy and regulatory environment. The major strategies for improving service delivery as outlined by ECA (2003) are total quality management, organizational strategic management, training and development, and the Lean Six Sigma strategy.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
A case study design was used because the researchers could only access respondents from Kijiado Local Authority. The study considered the views of both the employees (service providers) and service users (customers) of Kijiado Local Authority. Questionnaires were conveniently distributed to 150 service users and 100 were returned usable. Questionnaires were also conveniently distributed to 20 employees of Kijiado Local Authority and 20 were returned usable. Two self-administered questionnaires were designed i.e. one for the employees and the other for service users so as to capture the views of both the Kijiado Local Authority and its customers. The main questions that the study sought to answer were:

- What are the causes of poor service delivery in Kijiado Local Authority?
- Which strategies can be implemented in order to improve service delivery in Kijiado Local Authority?

The two questionnaires both had close-ended Likert type questions and open-ended questions. This made it possible to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The development of the research instruments, especially the items on Likert type questions was based on similar studies (Aminuzzaman, 2010; Gwayi, 2010; Khalid, 2010; Tamrakar, 2010; DIA, 1999). Data were subjected to qualitative analysis and also to quantitative analysis using SPSS Version 21.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Profile of the Respondents
The profile of the employees included gender, age, department and position held within the department while the profile of the service users included gender, age and occupation. Table 1 below shows a summary of the profile of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Response Profile of the Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMPLOYEES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of the respondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk’s Office</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Planning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Works</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of interest to note about employee respondents from Table 1 is that there are more female respondents (60%) than males; the majority (70%) of the respondents are aged between 26 and 45; most respondents (45%) are from the Clerk’s Office and Town Planning departments while, in terms of the position held, the majority (40%) of the respondents are clerks. For service users, there are slightly more males (55%) than females; the majority (87%) of the respondents are less than 46 years of age while most of the respondents (45%) are formally employed.

### 4.2. Causes of Poor Service Delivery

The objective in this section was to determine the causes of poor service delivery. Possible causes of poor service delivery identified from literature (see methodology section) were suggested to the respondents (employees) and they were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed based on a scale that ranged from: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The mean and standard deviations (SD) are summarized in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does councilor interference cause poor service delivery?</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does corruption cause poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is inadequate citizen participation causing poor service delivery?</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does lack of administrative leadership cause poor service delivery?</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is poor documentation a cause of poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does lack of accountability and transparency cause poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is poor utilization of collected revenue causing poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does lack of finance or poor revenue base cause poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is understaffing causing poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is lack of skilled workers causing poor service delivery?</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the lack of modern facilities cause poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is political manipulation a cause of poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is lack of coordination between the local and central government causing poor service delivery?</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does lack of capacity of workers cause poor service delivery?</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary: Mean = 3.675; SD = 1.244; Items = 18; N = 20
The results show that all factors (mean > 3.00) except lack of administrative leadership (mean = 2.61) are causes of poor service delivery. Councilor interference in the affairs of the local authority, lack of skilled workers and lack of capacity of employees are ranked highly (mean = 4.11) as the determinants of poor service delivery while poor documentation and lack of coordination the local government and central government were rated lowly (mean = 3.22).

A service user perspective was also taken into account to determine the causes of poor service delivery. Based on literature (see methodology section), a number of statements were suggested to the service users and they were asked to respond on a scale that ranged from: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The mean and SD are summarized in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KTC management is committed to continuous improvement</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership in KTC takes special interest in citizen complaints</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer complaints are addressed on time once reported</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen participation would improve service delivery</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees do demand for bribes in order to give good service</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of modern technology would improve services</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees treat all customers equally</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers consider suggestions from users</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees have knowledge and skills to deliver services</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership with community would improve service delivery</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsourcing for effective and efficient service delivery</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on services is available and accessible</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTC takes measures to improve service delivery</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee charged matches service delivered</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>4.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens take responsibility caring for council facilities</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service users pay their bills when they are due</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary: mean = 3.164; SD = 0.075; Items = 16; N = 100

The results show that failure to address customer complaints on time, lack of citizen participation, demand of bribes by employees of the local authority, failure to use modern technology, and failure by service users to pay their bills on time (mean < 3.00).

The employees and service users were also asked to give their opinions regarding other factors they felt contributed to poor service delivery. The major factors identified were:

- **Poor planning** - lack of sound plans that specify the direction the local authority is supposed to take and the resources to be used to achieve the objectives.
- **Poor monitoring and evaluation** - lack institutional arrangements to monitor and evaluate progress from time to time so as to be able to take corrective action if there are deviations from the plan.
- **Ethnicity** - the tendency by council management to employ locals or relatives regardless of the qualifications or ability to carry out the intended tasks.
- **Resistance to change** - failure of the local authority to adapt to the changing environment so as to meet the objectives of the entity. There is organisational inertia and lack of management will to challenge the status quo.

### 4.3. Strategies to Improve Service Delivery

The objective in this section was to determine the strategies that can be adopted to improve service delivery in Kijiado Local Authority. The study considered the views of the employees and service users in section 4.2 above. The strategies identified sought to address the major causes of poor service delivery already identified by employees and service users. The respondents were also asked to give their opinions regarding the strategies that can be adopted to improve
service delivery. Listed below are the main strategies to improve service delivery in Kijiado Local Authority:

- Citizen participation in the affairs of the local authority- the service users identify themselves as key stakeholders in the local authority. They are of the view that their views are to be respected if defective service delivery is to be achieved by the local authority.
- Partnership with the community in service delivery
- The local authority should ensure that the community acts responsibility towards the council assets
- The local authority should attend to citizen complaints on time
- Service users to pay their bills on time
- Strategic public service planning
- Sound human resource policy that includes capacity building and employee motivation
- Adoption of modern technologies and continuous improvement.
- Dealing with corruption and improving accountability
- Segregation of duties between councilors and management of the local authorities
- Outsourcing services and partnering with the private sector
- Offering value for money- the service fee charged by the local authority should reflect the quality of service delivered

The results of this study are in line with previous studies. Aminnuzaman (2010), Gwayi (2010) and ECA (2003) identified the major causes of poor service delivery as: councilor interference and political manipulation, corruption and lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate citizen participation, poor human resource policy, failure to manage change, lack of employee capacity, poor planning, and poor monitoring and evaluation. The major strategies that can be adopted to improve service delivery in local authorities include:

- Increasing citizen participation in the affairs of the local authority and partnership with the community
- Flexible response to service user complaints
- Offering value for money and ensuring that service users pay their bills on time
- Strategic public service planning
- Sound human resource policy that includes capacity building and employee motivation
- Managing change
- Dealing with corruption and improving accountability
- Segregation of duties between councilors and management of the local authorities.
- Partnering with other players and outsourcing services

Finally, the researchers recommend that further studies be conducted on several local authorities in other

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the major causes of poor service delivery are in local authorities are: councilor interference and political manipulation, corruption and lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate citizen participation, poor human resource policy, failure to manage change, lack of employee capacity, poor planning, and poor monitoring and evaluation. The major strategies that can be adopted to improve service delivery in local authorities include:

- Increasing citizen participation in the affairs of the local authority and partnership with the community
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- Segregation of duties between councilors and management of the local authorities.
- Partnering with other players and outsourcing services

Finally, the researchers recommend that further studies be conducted on several local authorities in other
parts of the world, especially in developing countries, to validate the findings of this study.

6. REFERENCES


