

EFFECT OF INTEGRATED SERVICE APPROACH ON SERVICE DELIVERY AT HUDUMA CENTRES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Governments adopted e-government to improve public service delivery. Kenya embraced the strategy and advanced it further with the establishment of Huduma centres, key electronic e-government instruments to reform service delivery. This study investigated the effects of integrated service approach on service delivery in the public service of Kenya. The study was underpinned by new public management and coherent service delivery theories. Cross-sectional survey research design was used. The target population comprised the Huduma centre employees. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling was applied. The sample size was 335. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data and pilot test undertaken at the Eldoret Huduma centre. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The results were positive ($\beta=.248$, $p=.000$) and therefore integrated service approach significantly affects service delivery in the public service. It is recommended that integrated service approach be used to improve public service delivery

Key Words: Integrated Approach, Service Delivery, Huduma Centre, Information Communication Technology, E-Government New Public Management Coherent Service Delivery Theory

Introduction

Following e-commerce's evolution in the private sector governments around the world have yielded to pressure from their citizens to reform their public services to render efficient and cost effective services (OECD, 2007) and not only change the old fashioned, bureaucratic, change-resistant, incompetent, unresponsive and corrupt ways of working in public service but also eliminate inefficient processes and reduce bottlenecks and red tape in the service delivery process as much as possible (Mutula, 2008)

In addition citizens are not used to official procedure having to manage and process loads of information that espouse inward-looking culture, delayed decision-making and information dissemination (Schellong, 2007) of the old bureaucratic model that seem to be ill-suited to improved flows of information, trust, efficiency and efficacy. Because of this, citizens have therefore demanded effective services similar to the private sector devoid of the processes involved or where or by whom the service is delivered (Ebrahim & Irani 2005).

As a result of the citizens demands and expectations there has been a growing realization among governments across the world of the need to transform service delivery to enhance customer centered, cost-efficient, and user-friendly delivery (Gnan, Hinna, Monteduro, & Scarozza, 2013). In the hope to respond to meet these new demands governments embraced e-government and revitalize service delivery in the public service.

Governments were thus motivated to apply e-government to improve public sector performance, increase citizens participation and democracy. A total of 179 out of 192 countries have implemented e-government and identified it as a top priority for governments across the world (UN, 2008). Based on the E-Government Development Index (EGDI), South Korea has remained number one in 2014, followed by Australia and Singapore (3rd). France and The Netherlands were 4th and 5th place respectively. Europe continued to lead with the highest overall regional E-Government Development Index followed by the Americas.

The general acceptance and embracing of e-government is thus an acknowledgment that it is a valuable mechanism for public service delivery (Matavire et al., 2010) with potential to combat corruption, red tape, bureaucratic inefficiency and ineffectiveness, nepotism, cronyism, lack of accountability, and transparency. Today, all African governments have implemented some form of e-government services to improve free flow of information flow, public participation, promote productivity among the civil servants, and improve delivery of services (Njuru, 2011). Countries such as South Africa, Mauritius, Senegal and Mozambique have shown serious commitment, by setting up institutional and regulatory policy frameworks for e-government development (Maumbe et al., 2008; Bwalya and Healy, 2010).

Kenya introduced e-government in 2014 to improve service delivery, enhance communication and information within government, within the citizenry and business community (GOK, 2006). To bolster this strategy, Kenya formulated ICT Policy in 2006 to implement e-government as a tool to improve internal efficiency and quality of public service delivery and help in the fight against corruption; to make government more result oriented, efficient and citizen centred (GOK ICT, 2006).

Further, in 2013 the Kenya government introduced and established Huduma centres. The centres are instruments of e-government meant to create transparent, accountable, ethical and results-oriented government institutions through Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) or One Stop Shop focusing on customer service excellence in the delivery of a wide ranging of services to the public from a single point (Mutuku, 2015). Huduma centres are key aspects and instruments seen as a transformation model in terms of how government operate and a new way of doing business via one-stop web portals that are an integral part of

modern public service provision (Liu, Chen, and Wang 2010) which are organized by bundling relevant information for citizen-government, business-government, employee-government, or government to government interaction.

The Huduma integrated service delivery provide a one stop point of access to a wide range of services that include National Hospital Insurance Fund Registration and Claims, Issuance of Police Abstracts, Student Loan Application and Repayment amongst others with the most sort after services being Replacement of Duplicate Identity Cards, Payment of land rates and rent as well as Search and Registration of Business Name (Ministry of Devolution & Planning Newsletter, 2014).

The program also seeks to avoid the inefficiencies inherent in earlier efforts to reduce the legacy of bureaucratic procedures and centralized processing of public services that have historically been cumbersome for Kenyan citizens. Applying for standard public services often requires citizens to travel to Nairobi and visit a number of different institutions in the public service delivery process, due to a lack of government service decentralization across the country (Dalberg, 2015)

Thus, the adoption and use of the e-government strategy has significant benefits for government in the delivery of more effective and efficient services to the customers of the Kenyan Government (Rep of Kenya, 2010). However, despite these stated benefits in the public service delivery there is no evidence that any of the Kenyan e-government's objectives (Njuru, 2011), i.e. enhancing delivery of public services, improving information flow to citizens, promoting productivity among public servants, and encouraging citizens' participation has been achieved. Therefore, it is not known to what extent the Kenyan e-government initiative has had an impact on service delivery hence need to fill this knowledge gap by determining the effects of e-government on service delivery in the public service of Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Governments around the world are faced with mounting demands to modernize service delivery in order to provide efficient and cost effective services (OEC, 2007). The rapid technological advancements has prompted demands for increased efficiency by the citizen and as a result, governments adopted e-government to transform service delivery to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

Like other countries, Kenya is faced with lack of accountability, transparency and public participation in the public sector (Njuru, 2011). In response, the Kenya Government launched the e-government to improve service delivery and enhance communication and information provision within government, with the citizenry and the business community. (GOK ICT, 2006). It further bolstered this with an ICT policy and establishment of huduma centres along the one stop shop model to provide integrated services under a single roof. (Mutuku,2015). Thus, these centres have been established across the country and in each facility 35 services are offered to the public.

However, despite the said advantages for implementing e-government, there is no evidence that any of the Kenyan e-government's objectives (Njuru, 2011), i.e. enhancing delivery of public services, improving information flow to citizens, promoting productivity among public servants, and encouraging citizens' participation has been achieved. Consequently, it is not known to what extent the Kenyan e-government initiative, more so the integrated approach has had an impact on public service delivery. Hence need to fill this knowledge gap by determining the effects of integrated approach on service delivery in the public service of Kenya.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

For purposes of this study the researcher reviewed the following theories: Coherent service delivery theory, systems theory, new public management theory, structuration theory. New Public Management (NPM) is an approach adopted to manage decay and inefficiencies of the old institutions especially those that were rigid and bureaucratic that cause inefficiency and ineffectiveness in service delivery including lack of accountability and rampant corruption (Gumede and Dipholo, 2014) in order to enhance fairness, equity, due process and public participation. The theory compliments the objectives of e- which is to improve the overall performance of the public sector.

NPM gained popularity as governments sought to lower costs, provide better service, contain deficits, and incorporate new technologies (Lindquist, 2006), objectives that e-government can help achieve e-Government and NPM are thus seen as complementary, with the former offering a means to enforce the latter. Thus, e-government can be interpreted as a reform element that supports the idea behind the NPM to promote customer orientation, a culture of trust, collaboration and openness.

In Kenya, reforms have been undertaken to overhaul administrative system to better serve the needs of both government and the citizenry with improved delivery of public services to reduce poverty, improve livelihoods, and sustain good governance. The reforms evolved and culminated in the notion of re-engineering of the public sector in the context of public sector transformation, drawing on elements of the New Public Management to increase efficiency, effectiveness and encompass client-oriented, mission-driven, and quality-enhanced management intended to better serve the needs of both government and the citizenry with improved delivery of public services to reduce poverty, improve livelihoods, and sustain good governance (Hope, 2012).

Thus, by making government more accountable and transparent through New Public Management, public services can be enhanced through e-government to achieve the same standards envisaged (Cordella, 2007). New Public Management proposes reforms to redefine managerial and governance practices in the public sector while e-government improves the internal and external performance of the public sector. Therefore, e-government is based on the changes which were initiated by the New Public Management. Thus the theory will underpin this study for its cardinal postulate that modern government should be customer oriented, competitive and result oriented.

The Cohesive Service Delivery Theory proposed by (Mbecke, 2014) defines how the combination of factors explains more effectively a service delivery system. The theory is an information, communication and technologies (ICTs)-based theory which facilitates the understanding, improvement and sustaining of service delivery system. It stated that a 70% service delivery can be achieved if there is public participation, e-government system and adequate resources. However, if there is less synergy of the three factors less than 20% of service delivery will be realized (Mbecke, 2014).

Like South Africa, Kenya introduced reforms in the public service to make the government more results oriented, efficient, and citizen centered. This was driven primarily by the fact that the state bureaucracy in the country has been underperforming and public service delivery has not been serving the public interest within its most optimal capability (Hope, 2012). Kenya embraced e-government to re-engineer the public service to bring about greater efficiency, improved public services and enhanced engagements with citizens of a nation (Republic of Kenya, 2004) and further established huduma centres, one stop shop facilities that espoused the objectives of e-government. In this regard, the government aimed to reform the service delivery through investment, public participation and introduction of e-government. Thus Cohesive Service

Delivery Theory being information, communication and technologies (ICTs)-based, underpinned this study by facilitating the understanding of how ICT improves service delivery system through public participation. Being theory-based, it supports the hypothesis that service delivery is the consequence of different factors. The study therefore tested the following hypothesis

H₀₁: Integrated service approach does not significantly affect service delivery in the public service in Kenya.

Literature Review

E-government became widely used in the 1990s defined variously. It is seen as a radical transformation tool to improve service delivery, to cut costs, simplify administrative procedures (Fountain 2005), enhance public participation transparency and accountability of government activities (Bhatnagar 2003). E-government includes all applications of ICTs that improve efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of daily administration of government (Moon, 2002; Sharma, 2007). The broader concept of e-Government stands for a more citizen-friendly government that provides enhanced public services and improves productivity of the governments. The main purpose of e-government would be making the public sector's activity more efficient and save public resources, achieving better governance. It encompasses numerous concepts such as digital government, online government and, in certain contexts, transformational government, each of which reflects different priorities in government strategies.

The many definitions have been used to give the meaning that e-government is the service offered by government to citizens via electronic means while others identify it as service with paperless and easiest and fastest service ever using technologies. In this context e-government is the use of information technology, especially telecommunications, to enable and improve the efficiency with which government services and information are provided to citizens, employees, business and government agencies (John et.al 2008)

Governments are under pressure to reform their service delivery to better access to government services from all levels of government and from one place, whether at a physical location or electronically. This stems from the fact that traditionally public services are delivered through diverse government offices with no seamless service delivery system that responds to the needs of citizens. Instead, service is compartmentalized and fragmented across different agencies in which citizens are sent back and forth with numerous procedures and delays (Integrated Settlement Planning Consortium, 2000).

Thus, governments felt the need to revitalize public services to facilitate customer -centered, cost-efficient, and user-friendly delivery of services to citizens and businesses, thereby improving the quality of governmental functions (Bhuiyan, 2011) and create more responsive and flexible public service that go beyond traditional structures and 'silos', to consider integrated service delivery approach.

One such initiative is the use of one-stop-shops which according to Contiades is a location where 'many different transactional services, which satisfy the needs of many different categories of citizens are located in a single office' (Contiades, 2007). In Kenya, the government introduced and implemented the Huduma Kenya Programme to transform the public service into a professional customer-focused entity through an Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) approach that targets the delivery of services in a "One Stop Shop" Model with strong emphasis in customer service excellence to deliver a wide range of services to the public from a single point (Mutuku, 2015) based on the fact that integration of services is about getting away from the silo mentality because coordination across departments is where the greatest opportunities lie to create efficiency, drive change and incorporate sustainability.

In addition it will also offer opportunities to reshape public service to reduce bureaucracy; eliminate waste; increase efficiency; create easy and free access to government information; and reduces the cost of service delivery. Thus, integrated service through one stop shop can also improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service as well as linkages between government agencies and represents a transformational shift in how government operates. Further, it may improve the quality of life of citizens through better service delivery at low cost. It may eventually transform the processes and structure of the government, empower civil servant to serve citizen better (Satuanarayan, 2004)

A number of studies have explored e-government as a strategy to mitigate corruption, improve governance, service delivery, and enhance democracy and poverty reduction in a number of countries. (Williams, 2012). Studies by Moon (2012) indicate that e-government is a new form of governance that improves the relationship between citizens and government with a 'citizen-centered' approach by increasing the efficiency of information and service delivery through the use of ICTs by being independent from time and physical distance.

Mphidi (2012) discussed the problems facing governments and public sector organizations all over the world to perform their administration and to making it efficient and cost effective. They considered the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) for e-government to provide proper services to citizen. In their findings, they considered e-government as a high priority agenda in India and that e-government is the best way to make the business of governance inexpensive, qualitatively responsive, and truly encompassing.

Mutula (2010) states that e-government is a move from the long-established method in public system described as electronic service delivery. In his study in India, he found that this electronic system has brought about a revolution in the quality of service delivery to the citizens by improving transparency in the administrative process, saving time due to single window service provisions, simplifying procedures, reducing corruption, improving office and record management, and improving attitude and behavior of civil servants. He also proposed the electronic records management to help and support the public to efficiently access government information.

Niamh Kinchin (2010) agreed with the above assertions that e-government is useful to government institutions because it helps to achieve better governance by reducing cost, better dissemination of information, promoting better involvement and interaction, and efficient delivery of services. He further examined, and evaluated various aspects of the adoption and usage of ICT in the public sector with emphasis on the technical, user, and organizational aspects of e-government have explaining the quality, rigor and relevance of e-government in Africa..

From the related contents analyzed there is evidence concerning e-government being a new paradigm shift in the delivery of service in the public service. There is consensus that governments should use most innovative information and communication technologies (ICTs), to provide public and businesses with convenient access to government information and services, to improve the quality of the services and to provide greater opportunities to participate in government activities. The studies ascertained facts, knowledge, trend, practices, elements in society and government. Some of the studies looked at the efficacy of e-government in practicing good governance, restoration of public trust by enhancing transparency, cost efficiency and policy participation. In general, it is acknowledged that e-government is a multi-dimensional but a critical tool in the enhancement of social and economic development of various segments of the society.

Thus, the potential of e-government is seemingly remarkable. The advantages associated with the adoption of e-government would result in increased efficiency, better services through reduction of cost and time in service delivery that will lead to public convenience and satisfaction. The benefits will also enhance public participation and thus improve policy making and decision making process. New ways of collaboration and partnership will develop between government and the public and therefore improve the image of the government in terms of good governance and democracy.

However, there is a considerable gap between what can be done by using e-government and what has been achieved in reality. Its whole spectrum especially in public service and its attendant effects on effective delivery of service have not been extensively discussed in the literature. Therefore, there is need to examine the implementation of e-government and its consequent effects service delivery.

Methodology

The research was based on the philosophical and methodological foundations of logical positivism. A logical positivist researcher deduces and formulates variables and hypotheses and operationalizes definitions based on existing theory. (Malhotra, 2007). The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design so as to investigate the relationships between variables.

The 2600 employees of Huduma Centers formed the target population for the study. Huduma centres are instruments of e-government in which integrated services are delivered under a single roof modeled along one stop shop (Mutuku, 2015). The sample size of this study was based on Krejcie, *et al.* (1998) statistical table for determining sample size from a population. The sample size was 335. The sample was proportionately distributed among the Huduma centers and then simple random sampling applied to select the respondents from each Huduma centers.

This data was collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on a 7-point Likert-type scale which is an ordered scale from which respondents choose one option that best aligned with their views. The questions were constructed to generate data in answer to specific research objective and facilitate hypotheses testing. A total of 335 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the participants in the entire study. The pilot tests were carried out at the Eldoret Huduma centre. Pilot study used 10% (34) of the sample size.

Although the study intended to collect data from 335 respondents, data was successfully collected from 278 respondents. This represents a response rate of 83% and falls within the confines of a large sample size ($n \geq 30$) that provides a smaller margin of error and good precision (Anderson, Sweeney and Williams, 2003).

Results

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Descriptive statistics of means, standard errors, and standard deviation were obtained for the integrated approach and service delivery variables. The descriptive statistics for the items of integrated approach indicated that the means were in the range 3.651 to 3.932 and gave an overall mean of 3.846. On a 7-point Likert scale, the scores were above average. The standard deviations were in the range 1.531 to 1.852. The standard errors of the mean for the items measuring integrated approach were low indicating that the mean values for the items were reliable. The respondents scored highest in the aspect of 'Has enhanced service standards' (IA6). 'Has enhanced service standards (IA7) item had the lowest mean. Integrated approach descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Integrated approach

Code	Item	Mean		SD
		Stat.	SE	
AI1	Services are offered under one roof	3.666	.111	1.852
IA2	Has not enhanced the image of the government.	3.709	.107	1.778
IA3	The services are not clearly marked	3.763	.100	1.672
IA4	Has increased accountability of public officials.	3.860	.092	1.531
IA5	Has not reduced costs of obtaining multiple services	3.845	.096	1.608
IA6	Has enhanced service standards	3.932	.095	1.587
IA7	Does not give value for money/time	3.651	.107	1.786
IA8	Related services are linked	3.791	.103	1.712
IA9	Has not increased efficiency of staff	3.784	.097	1.615
Overall Mean		3.846	.058	.960

The descriptive statistics for the items of service delivery indicated that the means were in the range 2.788 to 3.730 with an overall mean of 3.126. On a 7-point Likert scale, the mean score were above average. The standard deviations were in the range 1.783 to 2.134. The Huduma Centers scored highest in the aspect of ‘The staff is helpful’ (SD1). While ‘There is no complaint feedback mechanism (SD12) item had the lowest mean. Service delivery descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Service Delivery

Code	Item	Mean		SD
		Stat.	SE	Stat.
SD1	Services have no broker cartels	3.730	.110	1.835
SD2	Services are convenient	2.835	.107	1.783
SD3	Services are not reliable	3.579	.125	2.078
SD4	The services offered are seamless	3.216	.126	2.100
SD5	Has reduced distances to access services	3.090	.127	2.125
SD6	There is no complaint feedback mechanism	2.791	.117	1.943
SD7	There is improved speed of service delivery	2.914	.122	2.037
SD8	There is ease of access to information	3.130	.111	1.857
SD9	There is reduced corrupt tendencies	3.471	.111	1.859
SD10	Cost of availing services is low	2.989	.128	2.134
SD11	The services are not customer friendly	2.975	.120	2.008
SD12	There is no complaint feedback mechanism	2.788	.116	1.941
Overall Mean		3.126	.087	1.455

Correlation and Regression Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables (Wong and Hiew, 2005). Service delivery and integrated approach had a positive significant relationship ($r=.275$, $p < 0.01$)

Regression Results

The hypothesis (H_{01}) stated that integrated approach has no significant effect on service delivery. The results of the regression analysis suggested that integrated approach had a positive significant effect on service

delivery ($\beta = .248, p < 0.05$). Hence the hypothesis is not supported. The value of the F-statistic showed that the model was robust enough to be used to explain the relationship between the variables ($F = 30.991, p < 0.05$). The findings suggest that as the level of integration of the services offered at the Huduma centre increases, so does the level of service delivery. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Results

Model	1
	Service Delivery
Constant	.291(.346)*
Integrated Approach	.248(.123)*
F-Statistic	30.991
r	.559
r ²	.312
Adj. r ²	.302
Durbin-Watson	2.241

Values of standardized registration coefficients, with standard errors in parenthesis while *p < 0.05 indicates the value is significant at 95%.

Discussion of Results

The study examined the effect of integrated approach on service delivery in the public service of Kenya. The hypothesis (H_{01}) stated that there is no significant effect of integrated approach on service delivery. The study found a positive and significant effect and the hypothesis was therefore rejected. The results support findings by Zuhoor *et al.* (2014) that the ability of diverse computing systems owned and managed by different government ministries and interact together across all ministerial boundaries also known as e-government interoperability enhances service delivery. As per Tamara and Amer (2010) e-government is a virtual world of the government physical world which actually has a dynamic mixture of goals, structures and functions that are working together seamlessly in agreed upon fashion.

Therefore, success of service delivery by the Huduma centers is not only based on the existence of computing systems but is strictly based on the ability of these diverse computing systems owned and managed by different government ministries to interact together across all ministerial boundaries seamlessly. The shift of activities from traditional face-to-face counter interactions to online transactions have become a vital factor for public service provision and user relationship management and geared towards achieving seamless e-government interoperability. Previously, customers were obliged to visit a number of different institutions in processing various public services.

Zuhoor *et al.* (2014) states that interoperability which in this study is labeled as integrated approach reduces or eliminates the problems of islands of automation and enables business processes to flow from one application to another. Integrated approach enables one system to work with another, in near real-time fashion, to share critical business information. So from these facts all together, this study can draw a conceptual rule of e-government: that e-government succeeds in giving better service delivery if and only if existing computing systems are integrated.

As more and more complex information systems are put into operation every day in the Huduma centers, the management of the centres need to be alive to the assertion by Charalabidis *et al.* (2007) that the lack of interoperability or integrated approach appears as the most long lasting and challenging problem for

governmental ministries which emerge from proprietary development of applications, unavailability of standards, or heterogeneous hardware and software platforms.

It is worth nothing that as per Zuhoor *et al.* (2014) findings, a key determinant of success in e-government initiative is based on the ability of these isolated, independent, heterogeneous computing systems to cooperate and work together. They need to share information and integrate processes across all boundaries surrounding their isolated computing systems. This is in line with the integrated service delivery approach through the huduma centres in which the incorporated method provides the platform to combine and organize service delivery systems under one umbrella. In short, the facility aims to integrate processes and deliver seamless services across the boundaries of their agencies.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of integrated service approach on service delivery. The result indicated that the approach positively and significantly affect service delivery. The integrated approach at the Huduma centres has the net effect of giving the clients the opportunity to get several interrelated services in one place saving on cost and time. It is cost- effective and it can provide speedy services. Corruption can be minimized to a large extent. Most importantly, can solve the accessibility issue and inconveniences faced in obtaining services from different departments can be eliminated with the application of electronic governance.

Thus, integrated service approach enhances access of public services through a single point even if these services are provided by different public authorities. In addition, the customer is able to access these services in a well structured and well understandable manner meeting his/her perspectives and needs. These form the bright side of electronic governance in which electronic government provides greater opportunity to the people to participate effectively in the governance process.

Recommendations

The results suggest a series of practice and policy recommendations implications that need to be considered. On the basis of the study findings, and reviewed literature, the following recommendations are pertinent to the improvement of service delivery in the public service of Kenya. To enhance service delivery, the public service of Kenya needs to embrace the use of e-government, as this study has indicated its positive influence on service delivery. Need to look into frequent low internet services that adversely impact on services at Huduma centres, need for standby generators to contain power outages, among others for the implementation of e-government to be successful. This implies that the effective success of e-government implementation in the Kenyan public service is tied to dealing with the current challenges, among others. In addition, the government should engender a learning culture in respect of e-government through capacity building across government.

Future Research

This study could be seen as one of the pioneering research on the impact of e-government constructs on service delivery in the public service of Kenya through huduma centres, i.e. Kenya's one stop shop service. Hence, it could be a resource for future research in the area of e-government services. Since the study was carried out at Huduma centres in which not all public services are offered it would be enlightening if other governmental organizations are studied, which will present different appraisal to the subject matter.

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