

The Effect of Strategic Communication on the Quality-of-Service Delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya

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Abstract: *The study examined the effect of strategic communication on the quality-of-service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya. The study aimed at finding out the internal communication systems, stakeholders' interactions and feedback systems that affect the quality of services offered by the ministry. The study employed secondary research and qualitative research techniques. Academic articles, government documents, policies and cases were used to examine the existing literature and determine the current state of strategic communication at the Ministry of Interior and National Administration. The study revealed the significance of the internal vertical and horizontal communication in the improvement of the service delivery. Downward communication helps to explain policies and objectives in an effective manner and upward communication assists in passing important information from the subordinates to the superiors. Horizontal communication helps in the exchange of ideas within departments and helps in the overall cohesiveness of the service delivery system. Stakeholder engagement improved the communication across various stakeholder. The study also highlighted the importance of feedback mechanisms in improving the quality of services and addressing some of the challenges including bureaucratic delay. Strategic communication implementation can control public expectations, disseminate information on time, and enhance organizational coordination hence enhancing service delivery results. The findings of the study add to the existing literature by focusing on strategic communication in the delivery of public sector services. It offers specific suggestions on how to strengthen the communication efforts in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, for instance, by developing the internal communication and engaging the relevant stakeholders. Thus, the policy implications of the study include adopting feedback mechanisms and open communication strategies to enhance the public's trust in its government and foster responsible and accountable governance. In the case of the governmental context, the systems theory and stakeholder theory in analyzing the communication processes provide a theoretical foundation that can be used in other governmental contexts to enhance the delivery of services.*

Key words: strategic communication, quality of service delivery, ministry of interior and national administration, public administration, stakeholder engagement

INTRODUCTION

The global environment of the public administration has witnessed several changes in the last few decades, particularly in respect of efficiency, accountability, and communication. Globally, governments are acknowledging the importance of the strategic communication and organizational culture in improving the performance of the public sector and in ensuring services are better delivered to the citizens. Across the globe, governments have faced many challenges in administration as well as service delivery in the public service because of increasing demands and expectations from the people. For proper governance to be observed, the administrations should produce a service delivery framework which will be in line with the public's needs and preferences as provided for in the management policies (Potemkin, 2020).

Communication is a critically important aspect of organizations (Mutunga, 2022) without which they cannot exist (Keyton, 2005). Taylor and Van Every (2000) even argue that communication 'is the organization'. Therefore, communication has very strong ties to the very core of the organizational existence. Organizational communication is defined as "a complex and continuous process through which organizational members create, maintain, and change their organization" Line managers are often primarily responsible for communication with employees about their work and on organizational information such as decisions, procedures, and policies (Dan Hartog, Boon, Verburg and Croon (2013). An engaged staff can boost an organization's competitive advantage (Harrison et al., 2017). Effective communication is one of the important tasks of all academic, profit, and non-profit organizations. A growing body of research on higher education institutions have found that communication is critical for molding work attitudes and organizational productivity. It strengthens an organization's vision, activities, and procedures. It also helps in accelerating organizational improvements (Keyton, 2017).

Communication at the organizational level is the process by which people share information relevant to the organization strategy, activities, and processes (Samson, 2018). Lateral communication refers to communication of data at the same level. Vertical communication refers to distribution of information either upward or downward between different positions in the organization. Both types of communications are accomplished through official or unstructured communication channels. It is important to provide a platform of communication to employees and supervisors for maintaining organizational activities. It may help in effective communication between the workers operating in different departments at various levels (Diepeevan et al., 2019).

In the light of these observations, strategic communication occupies an indispensable place in the process of improving the quality-of-service delivery within the context of the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, due to several important facets. Internal communication helps to achieve a common goal within working environment by informing all the staffs and

ensuring that, they are working towards the organizational goals and objectives as well as following organizational rules and regulation (Men, 2012). Coherent communication within the ministry lowers the chance for sidetracking and errors, hence enhancing the general efficiency and effectiveness of the services. Secondly, strategic communication entails the use of other individuals and groups in the society, usually, citizens, the community leaders and other government departments. In a way, getting input and responding to concerns contribute to the establishing of the ministry's credibility and of the policies themselves, which are essential for the actual implementation of the policies and their approval in society.

On the same note, feedback processes are also fundamental in the implementation of strategic communication since it involves constant review. Receiving feedback from the internal employees and other stakeholders is beneficial to the ministry to know the areas of operation that need improvement and update the policies and standards to suit their needs and offer quality service (Zwikael et al., 2023). This paper often refers to strategic communication as the foundations on which service delivery could be enriched in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya through creating cohesiveness and effectively engaging with various stakeholders besides acknowledging the role of processing and providing constructive feedback. These aspects together contribute to effective operations and re-affirm the ministry's mission in ensuring the provision of quality services to the public.

Service delivery is the act of offering services such as products, information or support to customers, interest groups or the public based on the needs of the specific organization. It includes the interaction with a customer and the set of processes starting from the first moment of communication and ending with the possibility of further cooperation (Joshi, 2010). When addressing the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, efficiency of service delivery is paramount since it directly affects people's trust and satisfaction with governmental institutions as well as the effectiveness of the government's activities. People's needs and expectations are met, or services are delivered in a swift and efficient manner, or information is correct, and where required, citizens are assisted. It increases transparency, accountability as well as the responsiveness of the ministry, which leads to its increased legitimacy among the stakeholders (Waddington et al., 2016). Some of the factors of service delivery to be evaluated for this study may include the time taken to respond to inquiries or in cases of emergency and the availability of information or services and whether the communication platform used is efficient in providing speedy solutions to problems posed. Studying these aspects may reveal areas of potential reform and ensure organization's compliance with the perceived standards, thus, increasing the quality-of-service delivery and the satisfaction of the citizens.

In the African context, the quest for enhancing the performance and efficiency of the public sector and the delivery of public services has remained a major agenda for many governments. Ufomba

(2020) notes that the African Union's Agenda 2063 is centered on the need for institutions and leadership that is capable in the pursuit of sustainable development and enhancement of the wellbeing of its citizens. Most of the African countries have adopted the public sector reform initiatives that seek to increase effectiveness, integrity, and effectiveness in the running of state business. Kenya as a leading economy in east African region and has been in the frontline in implementing public sector reforms (Ndegwa, 2021). Kenya through its development plan, Vision 2030, has embarked on public service delivery system that is citizen-centered and responsive. This has ushered in key reforms meant to enhance service delivery such as performance contracting, citizen service charters, and e-government services (Kyalo, 2023).

Ministry of Interior and National Administration in Kenya plays a vital in the provision of internal security, coordination of national government and the delivery of services to the people. As such it is a core ministry in the Kenyan government and its operation directly affects the stability, safety, and satisfaction of Kenyan citizens in equal measure (Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, 2018). Ministry of Interior and National Administration plays a broad role in the government in that it is responsible for immigration services, civil registration, national police services and co-ordination of the national government administration up to the grassroots. These broad roles make the Ministry susceptible to several challenges in service delivery such as bureaucratic red tapes, corruption, and slow service delivery. These challenges have highlighted the importance of strategic management communication and a healthy organizational culture that is anchored on principles such as openness, integrity, and professionalism in delivering services (Murunga & Karugu, 2019).

Statement of the problem

Service delivery is an essential function between the government and its citizens (Onyango, 2015). Citizens are viewed as customers, and as such have a right to demand for fast, accessible and quality services that meet their needs and modest cost (Boex & Smoke, 2020). Further services that are of good quality and are affordable help in boosting the image of the government (Kitaka, Kiragu & Marwa, 2019). However, achieving efficient effective service delivery is still a challenge for the government.

Studies have found a strong relationship between strategic communication and service delivery Baikanatha, & Ngari, (021; Mutunga, 2022). According to Wagana and Karanja (2017), Kenya's public sector has a long-standing issue of inadequate performance, particularly when it comes to utilization of communal properties and wealth. Inefficient delivery of public services has been a major problem across government ministries in Kenya. Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya needs to have efficient ways of service delivery since it is the key and major ministry in Kenya. Critical challenges include ineffective communication and message

synchronization which has led to delays or false information and reduces the public trust. Further, the disjointed stakeholder engagement results in the formulation of policies that may not favor the citizens.

This study seeks to address several shortcomings evident in scholarly literature as well as business practices to date. It aims at investigating of current communication implementation and challenges in Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya to discern the level of its impact on service delivery. Through these components, the study aims at coming up with a concrete plan for the improvement of current strategic communication processes in order to foster better service delivery results. Further, it is intended to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about strategic communication activity as a positive tool in various spheres of governmental activity having an impact on the enhancement of the public services quality as well as on the satisfaction of the stakeholders.

Research aims and Objectives.

The overall aim of this study is to analyze the effect of strategic communication on quality-of-service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the effects of internal communication channels on quality-of-service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration.
- ii. To evaluate the effect of stakeholder engagements within the Ministry of Interior and National Administration on the quality-of-service delivery to the public.
- iii. To examine the effect of feedback mechanism on enhancing quality of service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration.

Research questions

- i. What are the effects of internal communication channels on service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration?
- ii. What is the effect of stakeholder engagements within the Ministry of Interior and National Administration on the quality-of-service delivery to the public?
- iii. What is the effect of feedback mechanism on enhancing quality of service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration?

Theoretical Review

Communication Theory

The study was underpinned by communication theory, which defines communication and how one communicates with others. Asemah, Nwammuo & Uwaoma (2022) postulated that, for communication to be effective, there must be shared code between the communicator and the recipient. Shannon and Weaver (1949) described the communication process as consisting of seven steps: communication process which includes message, encoding, transmission, reception, decoding, comprehension, and feedback. Shannon stated that the information source produces messages for communication with the other party. Staff should be made aware of new policies and innovations as this will enhance their participation in any matters affecting them. The information source needs to be unambiguous. In encoding, the sender has to code the message into a signal form that can be transmitted through the channel. The medium used to transmit the signal must be good and must not have any barriers to the transmission of the signal.

Communication theory is basic to scholarly processes and has been applied across various disciplines. The theory also stresses that effective communication ability is essential for the purpose of perceiving information correctly and within less time, while poor communication ability results in misconceptions and irritation. Communication theory also emphasizes the role of communication in the workgroups as a means of facilitating the flow of information, resources, and policies. Organizational communication is the process of sharing information in the context of an organization. Communication as a process of transmitting information or ideas in the form of words, gestures, writing, speech, or signal whether formally or informally is important to service delivery in any organization. Hence the study considered the theory ideal in anchoring the study.

Stakeholder theory

A theory that can be used in addressing the issue of communication in enhancement of service delivery within the frameworks of governmental organizations is the Stakeholder Theory. This theory was conceptualized by R. Edward Freeman and other scholars and revolves around the recognition and interaction with individuals or groups that are concerned with the operations and performance of the organization in some way (Mahajan et al., 2023). The stakeholders that are present in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya are the Kenyan citizens, community representatives, other ministries of the Kenyan government, and employees of that Ministry. As postulated by Stakeholder Theory, management must ensure that these parties' needs, wants and/or grievances are communicated effectively. Some of the ways by which the ministry can ensure that the stakeholders are involved in communication activities include dialogue sessions, and public consultations and regular updates that involve the stakeholders are also an excellent method of increasing transparency and generally improving on the decision-making processes.

Also, Stakeholder Theory puts emphasis on the interdependence of the relations between the organization and the stakeholders. This implies that there is an opportunity for the ministry to respond to its stakeholders' needs and expectations, and integrate the inputs, when formulating and implementing policies and services respectively for improved performance and the enhancement of sustainable actions. When applying Stakeholder Theory to the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, it is significant to note that stakeholders are active participants in the governance and service delivery systems. This approach not only increases the effectiveness of communication but also increases the capacity of the ministry to accurately gauge what the society wants and responds to it effectively (Prebanić & Vukomanović, 2023). Therefore, according to Stakeholder Theory, it is possible to describe how strategic communication can enhance organizational practice in the context of service delivery by taking into account stakeholders' interests and accommodating and promoting positive relations between organizations and stakeholders.

Kurt Lewin's Force Theory of Change

The Force Field Theory of Change was pioneered by German American psychologist, Kurt Lewin in 1940s. The theory presupposes the existence of driving forces that exert pressure for change and restraining forces that oppose change in organizations. Lewin conceptualized change as a three-step process: These are the models of organizational behavior that include the models of unfreezing, change and refreezing. During the unfreezing stage, the current state of equilibrium is altered by using techniques to communicate the need for change and to ready the organization for change. The change phase involves the process of transitioning from the current position to the intended state by effecting the desired change. The final stage, the refreezing stage, aims at ensuring that the organization remains constant in the new state and that the change is permanent. (Kingori & Waithaka, 2023).

When adopting Lewin's Force Field Theory to strategic communication, organizational culture, and service delivery within the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, it is essential to identify driving and restraining forces within the ministry. Strategic communication can also be used as a driving force since support for the change initiatives can be easily elicited from the stakeholders when the vision and the benefits of the proposed change have been effectively communicated. The following is an additional way that communication can be improved to be more effective in change initiatives: Enhancing the delivery of services calls for an understanding of the restraining forces that include resistance to change by employees, organizational policies and procedures, and restricted resources.

Nevertheless, the theory has its limitations. It presupposes a linear and static process of change, which may not be the true representation of the complexity of change within an organization.

Furthermore, the model may not incorporate the fact that organizations need to constantly transform in response to the environment, which the new equilibrium may not capture adequately. However, Lewin's Force Field Theory offers a more holistic explanation of the process of change in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, as it focuses on the ways of strengthening the driving forces and weakening the restraining forces to ensure that change is successful and sustainable within the organization.

Empirical review

Effects of Internal communication channels on Quality-of-service delivery

In their study conducted on Afghan Wireless Communication Company, Arab and Muneeb (2019) analyzed the effects of various communication patterns in the organization. The research involved a population of employees of different departments and the sample used was 371. Research findings indicated the relationship between communication and performance as being positive. In detail, the research showed that the flow of communication directly impacts the performance of an organization since well communicated tasks can be accomplished in the best way possible by the employees. In the writing of this research, the main styles of communication in the organization were found to be written, electronic, verbal, non-verbal and visual and the most used were the written and electronic.

In a study that focuses on the effects of effective communication on organizational performance conducted by Musheke and Phiri in 2021, communication is noted to be an important and significant component of an organization. It is critical for enhancing cooperation among employees in the workplace, which influences productivity and problem-solving within an organization. The research, conducted within the framework of the system theory approach, was intended to investigate the impact of successful communication on organizational productivity. The purpose of the study was to establish the several factors that hinder effective communication in an organization using the system theory and to design a communication model that can help to overcome these factors with an aim of improving performance of the organization. The present study adopted a quantitative research design whereby data was obtained from eighty-eight participants. It was evident from the study that the more the communication channels employed, the better the flow of communication. Further, it affirmed that communication enhances organizational performance since it is effective.

In a study by Mutunga (2022), on the Effects of Communication on Quality Service Delivery in Mission in hospitals, the author notes that one of the most important managerial processes within organizations is communication. Managers spend more than seventy percent of their working time in communication. Communication is critical as it keeps understanding from getting lost or twisted within the busy working environment. Communication should occur downwards, upwards, and

horizontally between seniors, subordinates, and peers respectively with feedback given as appropriate. In the health sector of Kenya, the government and professional bodies have put measures in place to ensure that training and service delivery are of high quality, and this makes communication and customer care a crucial aspect. This is especially done across all the staff in mission hospitals to ensure the quality delivery of services is enhanced.

Kinyua et al. (2020) conducted a study on the effect of strategic communication on performance of the financial and commercial state corporations in Kenya. The research was conducted using descriptive research approach and the respondents were selected using proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques to obtain 145 respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data and descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the data collected. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between strategy communication and the performance of the state corporations in Kenya.

Syallow (2019) sought to establish the effect of organizational communication on job satisfaction among employees in the telecommunication industry in Kenya. The study was based on the enactment theory of organizational communication and the framing in organizations theory. This study adopted a descriptive research design, which used purposive sampling technique to obtain qualitative data from eighteen top level management employees. The study revealed that the employees in this sector possess adequate knowledge of organizational communication. The study also recommended that management should ensure that the information that is relayed to employees creates a corporate culture that is in harmony with the firm's philosophy and strategies, thus increasing the level of commitment and satisfaction among them. Further, it was recommended that managers and supervisors encourage vertical, horizontal, and diagonal communication to enhance task related process and daily reporting on the department and employee performance throughout the organization so as to provide useful information to the employees.

In this study, Omondi, Onyango, and Museve (2020) sought to establish the effectiveness of the various communication modes in the process of realizing strategies for water service provision in Kakamega County. The first objective was to establish if advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, and public relations were used in supporting strategy implementation. The data was gathered from 781 participants with the help of descriptive research methodology. The research employed a stratified proportionate random sampling method to obtain the sample and a simple random method to identify 328 respondents from each stratum. Structured and unstructured questionnaires were employed to collect quantitative data. The study also found that advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations enhance performance through increased customer appeal, customer retention, increased sales, branch establishment and to remind customers about the bank's products. The study further suggested that

management should focus on enhancing the implementation of integrated communication, as it is crucial to the organization.

Effect of stakeholder engagements on the quality of service delivery to the public

Ferreira (2020) In his article 'Stakeholders' engagement on nature-based solutions,' discusses the effects that stakeholders have had on service delivery to the citizens of Canada. Several stakeholders in Canada including CSIS, frequently collaborate with non-government financial and social businesses, involving those in the private industry, legal community, educational institutions, and manufacturing organizations, to successfully tackle contemporary national security threats as well as other public service delivery impacting Canadians in a way that meets openness and responsibility standards and instills confidence in our efforts. According to the author, the stakeholder engagement strategy strives to ensure that Canadians accept CSIS as a knowledgeable and trustworthy collaborator in safeguarding Canada's social structure and financial stability. He concludes that to establish and maintain lasting connections with major stakeholders, this program publicly collaborates with Canadians in various areas of our civil society and finances to gain insight from other people's perspectives and contribute to developing a common awareness of Canada's national security interests and priorities in public service delivery.

According to Heckert (2020) in his article 'Research Involvement and engagement', stakeholders in the United Kingdom function as key advisors to major companies and other institutions, which in turn improves the quality of services offered to the people. Companies engage their stakeholders in discussion to determine what social and environmental concerns are most important to them regarding company performance, to enhance decision-making and accountability. The Global Reporting Initiative, a globally recognized sustainable development reporting methodology, requires stakeholder engagement. According to the author, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) demands stakeholder input for newly developed guidelines. One fundamental principle of stakeholder engagement is that stakeholders can impact decision-making processes which will improve service delivery. He suggests that firms could increase their stakeholder involvement by actively listening, building respectful relationships, and responding to their issues in a manner that benefits everyone involved.

According to Mziba (2020) in his article 'The role of public participation in service delivery', stakeholders in South Africa play a significant role in project monitoring, financial input, and evaluation to improve service delivery to its citizens. Project monitoring and assessment entail measuring, recording, analyzing, and responding to variances in the project's achievement to accomplish targets. The author maintains that tracking and evaluating development initiatives allows government authorities, development supervisors, and community groups to gain insight

from previous experiences, improve how they provide services, plan, and allocate resources, and demonstrate results as a means of transparency to key stakeholders. The author affirms that Statistics South Africa's Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) focuses on offering an ongoing approach to improvement on essential goods that are in keeping with the Batho Pele principles, which help to guarantee timely and effective service delivery by putting "people first."

As per the article 'Journal of Business Research' by Romero (2020), Nigeria has been active in engaging stakeholders in decision-making that affects service delivery to its people. According to the author, similar initiatives in Nigeria have helped to establish trust among citizens and stakeholders. Engaging them demonstrates that you recognize and respect their thoughts and interests. Therefore, you gain their confidence and credibility. When stakeholders trust in you, they become more supportive and eager to engage, which may lead to new possibilities and beneficial relationships. The author also claims that when stakeholders from various backgrounds collaborate, the opportunity for creativity and innovative problem solutions grows dramatically. Stakeholder talks can generate ideas that would not have occurred within a closed circle of decision-makers. This collaborative approach promotes innovation and results in more effective public service delivery.

According to Waikenda (2020) in his article 'Influence of Stakeholders' Participation on Performance of County Governments in Kenya' Kenya has been actively involving stakeholders in many of its institutional decisions which has seen an improvement in service delivery within the public sector. According to the author, stakeholder analysis, which is employed in Kenya, is the process of identifying and analyzing the individuals or groups that might or will be affected by your service delivery initiative. It allows you to better grasp their requirements, passions, demands, and potential worries. He also believes that involving stakeholders is critical for effective strategy planning. It entails finding, comprehending, and incorporating those who have an interest in a project involving service delivery to the citizens. Effective stakeholder engagement management necessitates a complete strategy that involves continual interaction, attentiveness, and cooperation in the entire procedure.

Effect of feedback mechanism on enhancing quality of service delivery

Kelly (2020) in his research 'The Internet of Things: Impact and implications for health care delivery' States that the United States has been a global leader in the utilization of feedback mechanisms to improve services offered to its citizens. Public feedback is critical for evaluating customer satisfaction levels, finding areas for development, and improving service quality. According to the author, it provides significant insights into client preferences and concerns, enabling firms to make data-driven decisions and tailor their services to successfully satisfy public demands. He says that the United States monitors internet reviews on sites such as Yelp, Google,

and social media to remain up to date on customer opinions and experiences. Its government also responds to evaluations in a timely way, acknowledging both good and negative criticism to demonstrate that its ideas are respected.

According to Lapuente, (2020), research on 'Governance', feedback mechanisms deployed in first-world countries like Germany have enabled them to improve their service delivery to its citizens. The author claims that the function of a feedback system is not to offer a review of your previous behavior. Feedback systems are inherently forward-looking since they link your present activities to potential outcomes. A solid feedback mechanism should confirm or change your course of action. A feedback mechanism is an important instrument for providing evaluative or corrective information about an activity or process, so assisting in development. In healthcare settings, feedback systems are critical for quality improvement, particularly in wealthy nations such as Germany. In conclusion, the author applauds the German government for implementing such a system, which has brought a lot of optimism to public service delivery.

As per Beyene (2024) in his research 'Governance quality and economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: the dynamic panel model', Egypt has adopted a feedback mechanism in its governmental decisions which has played a significant role in improving service delivery to its people. According to the author, feedback in Egypt is a two-way process, with citizens contributing input on governance and service delivery procedures and the government responding to citizens' opinions in public engagement activities and any concerns presented by citizens. Feedback is vital in public involvement in Egypt because it helps to create confidence and trust between the government and citizens. To be successful, it must be timely and conveyed properly in formats and methods that are accessible to residents and the government.

According to Nyongesa (2023) in his article 'The Effect of Performance Contracting on Public Service Delivery of Employees in Huduma Centers in Western Kenya', the Kenyan government has integrated feedback mechanism through its devolved county government hence improving service delivery. The author states that the public should expect the County Government (both the County Executive and the County Assembly) to notify them of the outcomes of public engagement processes. This can be accomplished through reports or media briefings that detail the kind and quantity of opinions received, the views integrated or disregarded, and on what basis. All Governors in Kenya have the duty to deliver an annual state of the county's address on local issues. According to the author, counties must have information officers and complaint processes in place to provide and receive feedback, which enhances service delivery.

Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework is the relationship between the variables in a study. It explains the cause effect connection between the independent variables and the dependent variables. For this study,

the strategic communication channels, Stakeholder engagement and feedback mechanisms which are the independent variables are explained on how they influence the dependent variable which is the Quality-of-service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration in Kenya. The conceptual framework shows how strategic communication can lead to improved service delivery at the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya.

Conceptual Review

The concept of strategy

Strategy in the general sense can be defined as a general concept of action that has been put in place with the view of attaining certain goals and objectives eventually. In the context of organizational management, strategy acts as a compass that charts the direction of decision making and the utilization of resources to achieve certain goals (Porter, 2021). The idea of strategy has been through a lengthy process of development, which initially was rooted in military science, and then became an indispensable tool in different spheres of human activity, including business, politics, and public administration.

In its most basic sense, strategy is the process of analyzing the internal and external context, defining the organization's strengths and weaknesses, and developing a plan as to how the organization will respond to threats and capitalize on opportunities. In the public sector, especially in government departments such as the Ministry of Interior and National Administration in Kenya, strategy has a different dimension since it deals with competing stakeholders' interest, policy guidelines, and financial constraints (Bryson et al. , 2017).

Strategy formulation is a critical process that depends on the recognition of the mission, vision, and values of the organization. It requires an initiative-taking strategy that looks at what may be coming and get the organization ready to address the changes that are likely to occur. In the environment of the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, this could mean factors like emerging security threats, innovative technologies, or changing perceptions of the public when it comes to services provided. Moreover, strategies in the public sector should be consistent with national goals and policies and support the overall national strategy. For the Ministry of Interior and National Administration in Kenya, this alignment would entail the consideration of national developmental goals, objectives, security policies and public sector reform programs. The strategic approach that would be required from the ministry would have to show how all its actions are aligned with these broader objectives while fulfilling its mission (Waweru & Maina, 2019).

Strategic communication

Strategic communication is defined as a conscious and planned attempt at sending messages and information with the primary organizational goals in mind. It transcends beyond the mere act of

informing to being a well-coordinated process that ensures that the communication process is in sync with the goals of the organization (Hallahan et al. , 2019). In large organizations such as the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, Strategic communication is crucial in influencing public opinion, generating trust, and enabling delivery of services.

Strategic communication is a concept that encompasses different communication fields such as public relations, marketing communication, organizational communication, and stakeholders' communication. It highlights the importance of the cohesiveness of communication activities, meaning that all the messages delivered by the organization to different stakeholders and through various channels should be aligned with its strategic objectives (Zerfass et al. , 2020).

Internal communication

Communication within the Ministry of Interior and National Administration is a significant aspect of strategic communication implementation. It is the process through which information and ideas are transferred from one employee to another or from one department to another in an organization. Internal communication plays an important role in increasing organizational co-ordination, staff motivation, and organizational objectives (Salim, 2022). In the delivery of services, proper internal communication leads to the frontline staff being informed and equipped with the necessary policies, procedures, and practices required to deliver quality services to the public.

Kimani (2024) conducted research and discovered that ministries that have well-developed internal communication plans received a 25% boost in employee satisfaction and a 30% enhancement in service delivery. The authors stressed that the organization needs to use as many channels of communication as possible, including digital ones, to ensure that all organizational layers are engaged.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder management is crucial for the Ministry of Interior and National Administration to identify and respond to the needs and demands of different groups that are impacted by the ministry's policies and services. Such engagements can be in the form of public consultations, focus group discussions, and community outreach programs. Stakeholder engagement enables the ministry to increase the effectiveness of its services, foster trust, and make more informed decisions (Coleman, Manyindo, Parker & Schultz 2019).

A study by Uddin, Ong & Matous (2023) showed that ministries with stakeholder engagements included in their strategic communication plans were 40% more likely to meet their service delivery goals. It also emphasized the need to develop different engagement approaches for different stakeholders and the use of technology to increase the number of stakeholders involved.

Feedback Mechanisms

The feedback mechanisms are important in enhancing the quality of service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration. These mechanisms enable the ministry to receive feedback from both internal and external clients on the efficiency of the services offered and the need for change. Effective feedback mechanisms can help in delivering services that are more responsive to citizens' needs (Kim, Rho, & Teo, 2024).

Sapru's (2020) extensive research revealed that ministries that incorporated structured feedback mechanisms saw a 35% improvement in the level of citizen satisfaction with the services delivered within two years. The authors stressed the need to not only gather feedback but also respond to it and inform the stakeholders about the changes made.

METHODOLOGY

This research strictly used empirical review approach and focuses on the effect of strategic communication on service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration based on secondary data. The research focuses on three key aspects: internal communication, stakeholder engagement, and feedback mechanisms. Secondary data collection method involved library research in academic journals, government reports, policies, and relevant case studies (Hamed, 2021). Secondary data was obtained through a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed journal articles published from the year 2019 to the present. The primary sources of information were academic journals such as Public Administration Review, Journal of Public Affairs, Government Information Quarterly, Journal of Organizational Communication, Public Relations Review, and International Journal of Public Sector Management. These sources were used to identify the current frameworks, issues and the practices that are recognized in governmental contexts of strategic communication. These journals were chosen because they are recognized in the areas of public administration, organizational communication, and government services, which offer a number of empirical research articles, theoretical concepts, and case reports related to the topic of the research. The data collected was analyzed thematically to develop the key themes and findings concerning internal communication, stakeholder interactions, and feedback loops. Special emphasis was placed on the papers that measured the effects of strategic communication on service delivery quality in the public sector organizations.

Empirical Review

This section gives an analysis of findings on the effects of communication channels, stakeholder engagements, and feedback mechanisms on the quality-of-service delivery at the Ministry of Interior and National Administration using the Systems Theory and Kurt Lewin Force Field Theory of Change. The Ministry of Interior and National Administration in Kenya has the primary

responsibility of managing internal security, peace, and order within the country and coordinating national government functions. Another critical factor for achieving this mandate is the delivery of quality services that will meet the expectations of the public. Communication strategy has been identified as a key factor in enhancing the quality-of-service delivery.

Internal communication channels and quality-of-service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration

The ministry's internal communication processes, both the vertical and the horizontal communication, play a role in the quality of the service delivery. Top-down communication helps in dissemination of policies, directives, and strategic objectives within the organization. This clarity helps the frontline staff to connect their activities to the goals of the organization, which may improve the service delivery.

In their study, Mutunga (2022) observed that organizational objectives' communication enhanced service delivery by 23 percent in Kenyan public organizations. However, due to the bureaucratic structure of the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, sometimes information transfer is slow, or the information received may not be well understood and this may have an impact on the quality of the services delivered.

Bottom-up communication is equally important as it ensures that the frontline staff produce essential information gathered from the public. According to Musheke & Phiri(2021), it is the ability to facilitate upward communication by the lower-level employees so that services can be made more responsive and citizen-oriented. However, the effectiveness of this channel still lies in the feedback ministry's reception of the data and its willingness to respond to the insights from the ground level.

According to the systems theory of communication to the Ministry of Interior and National Administration's communication channels reveal the relationship between different communication processes. Horizontal communication enables the sharing of ideas and information between departments and units in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration. Horizontal communication can also contribute to the enhancement of the integrated services that are offered in an organization since there will be less repetition of services offered.

According to Oduor & Maina (2022). effective communication between different departments in Kenyan public organizations resulted in the reduction of the service delivery time by fifteen percent. However, the lack of horizontal communication due to the departmental structures of organizations and competition for resources may affect the quality of the services offered.

Public relations, social media presence and other forms of direct communication with the public play a significant role in shaping the public's perception on service quality. According to Kinyua,

Mwangi & Chepkosgei (2020), the external communication activities if well executed can improve the perception of the public about the quality of services offered hence improving the evaluation of the services.

stakeholder engagements within the Ministry of Interior and National Administration on the quality-of-service delivery to the public

The Ministry of Interior and National Administration just like other government ministries in Kenya acknowledges the necessity of engaging stakeholders to enhance its performance. In the digital age where information is easily accessible, stakeholder engagement plays a key role in shaping the quality of services being delivered to the Kenyan people.

The constitution of Kenya 2010, gives importance to public participation in policy formulation. In the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, the public are the biggest stakeholders hence stakeholder engagement is key. The study findings showed that more engagement with stakeholders led to enhanced perception of services among the public. When the ministry proactively engaged county governments, community leaders, and civil society organizations, there was an enhancement of the public satisfaction and enhancement of the efficiency of the administrative processes like issuance of IDs and registration of persons. Furthermore, the realization of the Kenya Vision 2030 requires that citizens are involved and consulted in all sectors of the government.

Gaventa & Gregory (2019) undertook a study on ‘So What Difference Does It Make? Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement’ and their findings showed that national strategy on any government ministry is greatly affected by how engaged the stakeholders are which in turn improves its delivery of services. This study also found out that Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, engages in many forms of stakeholders’ engagements both internal and external. The study discovered that the departments of the Ministry of Interior and National Administration have adopted the use of stakeholder forums and feedback mechanisms in order to get feedback from a wide range of stakeholders both within and without the ministry.

Nevertheless, the engagement of stakeholders in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, has not been without some challenges. Munyao (2019). noted some challenges in the execution of stakeholder engagement plans in the regions of security threats, especially in the northern region. The study also noted that if there was no proper assessment of the local dynamics and security situations, then engagements with stakeholders could be restricted, thus resulting in disparate improvements in service delivery across the various regions of the country. Regarding digital transformation, Nkanata & Ocholla (2022) analyzed how the Ministry of Interior and National Administration has engaged with stakeholders and delivered services through e-government solutions like the e-Citizen portal. Their research showed that while social

media platforms made information more accessible and transparent to the urban and technologically inclined, they also posed the danger of marginalizing the rural and the illiterate. The authors highlighted the importance of both online and offline communication strategies to enhance service delivery for all the population groups in Kenya.

This study also established that the COVID-19 pandemic affected stakeholder engagement practices in Kenya's Ministry of Interior and National Administration. Government of Kenya. (2021) data shows how the ministry changed its communication approaches during the crisis. The quick development of virtual stakeholder consultation processes, especially in cities, allowed for the preservation of service quality during lockdowns and social distancing. Azfar, et al (2019) argue that there is a difference in the level of engagement effectiveness between the urban and the rural areas because of differences in the use of the internet.

Feedback mechanism and quality of service delivery in the Ministry of interior and National Administration.

The study also found out that the Ministry of Interior and National Administration uses various feedback mechanisms like suggestion boxes, hotlines, online feedback to enhance service delivery. All the mechanisms have their advantages and disadvantages when it comes to embracing the opinions of different people in the public.

In a study done by UNDP (2019), the multi-channel feedback system boosted the volume and variety of feedback received by the Kenyan government agencies by 35%. This goes to show that there should be many ways of getting feedback so that everyone is covered, and all feedback is captured. In line with the systems theory, feedback processes shows that information gathered through different feedback channels is useful to make decisions on stakeholders' engagement approaches, communication channels, and resources allocation. Real-time feedback systems can be useful to improve the ministry's interaction with the public and meet their needs more effectively. Feedback technologies in real-time in the provision of public services reduced the time taken to address complaints by forty percent in Kenyan organizations.

According to Koko & Moi (2024) the feedback mechanisms are very important in enhancing the delivery of services in the various Government departments including the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya. These mechanisms are useful in getting information from the citizens and stakeholders and the ministry is in a position to know areas that they have failed in their services. Over the past few years, the Kenyan government has embarked on putting in place a number of feedback mechanisms to improve the quality of services in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration.

Among the key measures, there has been a focus on establishing electronic tools for receiving citizens' feedback. Khaemba, Muketha & Matoke (2017) noted that with the enhanced online complaint submission systems and social media platforms, citizens' access to provide feedback on services provided by the Ministry of Interior and National Administration has been enhanced. This has made the process of gathering and analyzing the information from the citizens more efficient and the ministry is in a better position to respond to the issues raised by the public faster.

The use of performance management system has also been effective in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration especially in the delivery of services. Muriu (2017) opines that performance appraisals that involve feedback from internal and external sources have brought about enhanced accountability among the staff. This has led to increase motivation of the workers and the culture of change within the ministry.

CONCLUSION

From the above empirical review this study has unveiled several aspects of the strategic communication and service delivery in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya. To begin with, it is crucial to mention that the findings revealed that communication plays a significant part in the improvement of organizational transparency and accountability. Inter-organizational communication within the government departments ensures improvement of communication with the public, hence enhancing trust in the department, which is vital in ensuring that the department's delivery goals are met. Further, the literature highlighted that stakeholder's inclusivity can influence the extent of their participation in decision making process. Communicating with stakeholders through forums like policy consultations and feedback also guarantees that citizens' requirements are considered by the government while enhancing the legal authority of governmental procedures.

The fundamental issues highlighted in the findings also pertain to proper stakeholder management which will in turn strengthen the process and flow of communication among all the stakeholder both internal and external. Lack of proper stakeholder engagement tends to create, misinformation, confusion and cause some services to be delivered late, and therefore, some stakeholders to be dissatisfied. Additionally, it has been postulated that poor communication interventions may lead to policy implementation gaps and negatively affect an organization's performance. As highlighted in the reviewed studies, strategic communication contributes valuable insights toward enhancing the results of service delivery within governmental settings. Strategic communication practices benefit not only the processes of operation and the management's interactions with stakeholders, but also the credibility of governmental institutions. Minimizing the communication barriers that have been captured in the said studies is paramount for the improvement of stakeholder relations

and enhancement of service delivery for the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya.

From the review, the findings have also shown that communication feedback mechanisms in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya have provided positive outcomes in the quality of service delivery. With the help of digital platforms, the citizens have been able to give their feedback more easily hence improving the way feedback is collected and analyzed. Feedback received from citizens has assisted in the identification of areas that need improvement and has also been used to inform training programmes for employees. The feedback mechanisms have in one way or the other enhanced the responsiveness as well as the citizen-oriented service delivery within the Ministry of Interior and National Administration.

Conclusively the study the findings from the empirical data reviewed point to the fact that strategic communication in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration is critical in enhancing the quality-of-service delivery. Responsive, efficient and more citizen-oriented solutions can be achieved through proper communication channels, stakeholders engagement, and feedback. Systems theory applied explains how these elements of strategic communications are interrelated and how strategic communication should be an integrated approach. Kurt Lewin's Force Theory of Change as a theoretical foundation explains the forces that are at play in the process of changing communication to make it more effective and strategic.

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