Effect of Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction among Government Huduma Centers in Rift Valley Region, Kenya

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I. INTRODUCTION

Researchers Have Argued That There Is A New Tendency To Regain Control Or Otherwise Seek To Mitigate Coordination Deficits Generated By New Public Management (Christensen & Laegreid 2011). This Tendency Has Been Identified As A Shift Towards “Post-New Public Management” (Post-NPM). Researches Define Post-NPM As An Attempt By Political Actors To Reaffirm Control Over Administrators To Address Concerns Related To The Fragmented Public Organization And Lack Of Cross Agency Cooperation. Renewed Control Has Most Successfully Been Used To Encourage And Coordinate Public Service Delivery And To Meet Public Demands For The Effective Delivery Of Public Services. The One-Stop-Shop (OSS) Public Service Delivery Model Is A Modern Example Of Government Driven Centralization And Coordination. OSS Offers The Possibility To Bring Public Services Under One Public Space, Perhaps In A Single Organization, Which Often Takes The Form Of A Large Central Government Agency Directly Overseen By The Executive Branch Of Government.

Administrators See Citizens Not Only As Voters, Clients Or Customers But Also As Citizens With Whom They Share Authority. They Reduce Control And Trust In The Efficacy Of Collaboration (Osborn 2010). Concentration On Public Service Delivery Is A Direct Response To The Ineffectiveness Of A Fragmented Public Sector In Which Various Public Services Are Provided By Different State Agencies, The Concentrated Public Service Delivery Model Has Become An Important Mechanism For Teaming Up And Solidifying Governance Relations (Christensen, 2012). The Effective Delivery Of Public Services Under The One-Stop-Shop (Huduma Centers) Model Heavily Depends On The Structure Of Government And The Allocation Of Responsibilities And Duties Across Government Agencies (Wimmer, 2002).

One Stop Shops Were Initially Adopted In Australia But Was Too Unconventional To The Traditional Administrative Hierarchical Culture Thus Was Closed Down In 1908 (Wettenhall & Kimber, 1997). However, The Idea Survived And Returned To The Agenda Of Public Administration As A Sub-Element Of New Public Management Reform And Its Customer Orientation Concepts. Currently The Model Has Been Adopted In Other Countries Including New Zealand (Service Centers), In Germany (Buergerburo Or Citizens’ Offices), In Canada,
In France (Maison Services Publique), In The Slovak Republic (Integrated Service Points), In Azerbaijan (ASAN Xidmat Or Easy Service), In Kazakhstan (Stateowned Corporation, Government For Citizens) And In Georgia In The Form Of Public Service Hall (PSH) Also Known As Justice Houses And The Community Centers (CC).

The Government Of Kenya Has Established Huduma Centers In All The 47 Counties: Each Of These Centers Offers Between 38-44 Different Government Services Customized To Meet The Needs Of The Local Community (Waiguru, 2015). The Results Of This Has Been Transformative, Streamlining Of Service Delivery By The Government, Eliminating Corruption That Has Hindered The Delivery Of Such Services For Long, Improving Of Efficiency In Service Delivery And Ensuring That Citizens Are Treated In A Respectful And Humane Manner When Seeking Vital Government Services.


Huduma Centres Enables Citizens To Obtain Their Passports, Land Title Deeds, Identity Cards, Kenya Revenue Authority Personal Identification Numbers And Driving Licenses Without Having To Travel To Nairobi To Get The Services. It Is Expected That Every Civil Servant Whose Role Is To Provide Services Such As Education, Healthcare, Housing And Other Public Services, Will Do So Efficiently And Integrated Channel Of Huduma Payment Gateway To Facilitate Ease Of Payment For Government Services (Gok, 2013). Among Other Changes To Be Introduced In The Public Service Include Introduction Of One Stop Huduma Service Centres To Provide Customer Services To Citizens From A Single Location, Online E-Huduma Web Portal To Provide Integrated Services Offered By Various Government Ministries, Departments And Agencies And A Unified And Integrated Channel Huduma Payment Gateway To Facilitate Ease Of Payment For Government Services. Others Are Introduction Of M-“Huduma” Platform To Offer M-Government Services To Citizens From Their Mobile Phones And A Huduma Call Centre To Provide Customer Service Using A Single Dialing Prefix. Through The Huduma Kenya Platform, The Government Aims At Enabling Citizens To Access Integrated Public Services Via Their Phones, Computers And Personal Digital Assistants (PDA). The New Portal Is Also Expected To Enhance Service Delivery And Eradicate Graft Loopholes (Gok, 2013).

Service Delivery Integration, Quality And Satisfaction Are Key Concepts That Need Not Only Be Understood By Companies, But By Government Too. For Customers Or Consumers To Stay Loyal To A Brand Or Company, They Need To Be Satisfied With The Product Or Service. Similarly To Most Citizens In Any Country Their Party Loyalty Is Derived From The Services Rendered By The Ruling Party At That Time. The Performance Of The Government Is Continuously Assessed By Citizens And Dissatisfaction Leads To Unintended Strikes. Since The Introduction Of Huduma Centers And Platform In Kenya, There Has Not Been Any Study Seeking To Establish How The Development Influenced Customer Satisfaction With Government.
Services. Therefore This Study Will Be Focusing On Establishing The Influence Of Huduma Centers On Customer Satisfaction In Rift Valley Region, Kenya.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Over The Years, Government Services Have Been Marred With Delays And Frustrations In Acquiring These Services By Their Customers. The Services Have Been Exacerbated By The Difficulty In Measuring The Outcomes, Considerable Surveillance Of The Press And The Public, The Lack Of Freedom To Impose Freely And The Need For Decisions To Be Based On The Law. In Addition, The Services Have Been Rooted In Excessive Bureaucracy, Political Interference, Corruption, Nepotism, Unattractive Working Conditions And Poor Work Ethics. Therefore Public Sector Is Under Increasing Pressure To Demonstrate That Their Services Are Customer-Focused And That Continuous Performance Improvement Is Being Delivered. The Government Of Kenya Has Been Working On Enhancing Service Delivery To The Public Through Increasing Efficiency And Effectiveness In Service Delivery. Over The Last Four Years The Government Has Put In Place Huduma Centers Otherwise Known As One Stop Shop For Government Services. These Centers Have Been Structured In A Way That They Can Offer Multiple Government Services In One Station. With Government Now More Open Than Ever, And Awareness At Its Highest Due To Round-The-Clock Press Coverage And Social Media, It Should Be In Every Administration’s Interests To Follow The Aspirations Of Citizen-Users And Business-Users And How These Translate Into Better Services. With The Introduction Of Huduma Centers Focused On Improving Service Delivery, Many Questions Still Linger On Whether The Centers Have Raised Any Value To Service Delivery. This Study Therefore Sought To Examine The Effect Of Service Quality Dimensions On Customer Satisfaction Among Government Huduma Centres In Rift Valley Region, Kenya.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW
Servqual Model

The SERVQUAL Scale Has Two Sections: One To Measure Customer Expectations In Relation To A Service Quality And The Other To Measure Perception Regarding The Organization Whose Service Is Being Assessed. SERVQUAL Comprises A 22 Items (Likert-Type) With Five Dimensions Of Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy And Tangibles. From The 5 Dimensions, 22 Statements Are Derived, Each Measuring Both The Expectations And Perceptions Of Customers Towards The Quality Of Services Of The Organization Being Assessed. The Customers Are Required To Rate, On A 5-Point Likert Scale, The Degree To Which They Feel The Service Provider Should Deliver For An Excellent Service. Another Identical Scale Is Provided Adjacent To The First One In Which The Respondents Rate The Actual Quality Of Service Delivered To Them By An Organization Based On Their Perceptions. For Each Statement, The Difference Between Perception And Expectation Is Calculated; The Averages Of The Obtained Score Being The SERVQUAL Score (Parasuraman, 2008).

Conceptual Framework
SERVICE EFFICIENCY


The Effect Of Service Performance On Relationship Quality In Situations Characterized By High Relative Dependence Of The Buyers On The Service Provider Is Governed By The Efficiency In The Delivery Of Service Which Developed Customer Satisfaction. The Buyer Dealer Relationship May Have Significant Effects On The Focal Firms In Reference To The Flexibility, Responsiveness And Customer Relationship Management Which Would Help Building Capacity Of Supplier Firms Towards Increasing Competitive Advantage And Gaining High Customer Value (Squire Et.Al, 2005).

Lucas (2005) Views Customer Service As The Ability Of Knowledgeable, Capable And Enthusiastic Employees To Deliver Products And Services To Their Internal And External Customers In Such A Way That It Satisfies Identified And Unidentified Needs Of Customers, And, Ultimately, Results In Positive Word Of Mouth Advertising And Repeat Business. It Is The Interaction That Takes Place Between Somebody From The Company And The Customer And That It Is Not Limited To Sales, For Example, But Links To All Tasks And Functions In A Company (Fogli, 2006).

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Employee Satisfaction Increases Enthusiasm And Engagement In Customer Service Encounters, Which In Turn Improves Customer Satisfaction (Burke Et Al., 2005). High Involvement Strategies That Encourage Job Autonomy And Employee Engagement May Also Contribute To A Greater Service-Orientation, And By Focusing On Customer Service, May Also Contribute To Higher Customer Satisfaction By Engaging In Behaviors That Are Helpful To Customers (Chebat And Kollias, 2000; Batt, 2002). Employees Who Are Satisfied In Their Jobs Also Tend To Have More Positive Perceptions About The Organization’s Products And Services, And Therefore Deliver A Better Service. Satisfied Employees Are More Likely To Perceive Their Work More Positively Which Also Increases The Customer Focus By Empowering Employees To Use Their Own Discretion In Responding To Customer Needs (Hui Et Al., 2004).


Lawrence (2006) Studied Customer Satisfaction Among Four Star Hotels In Spain, Germany And England. The Results Revealed That Many Customers Were Satisfied With The Ability Of Staff To Speak A Foreign Language, Friendliness Of Staff, And Condition Of Premise, Room Comfort And The Ease Of Obtaining Information. Areas Of Dissatisfaction Included Respect Shown By Staff, Ease Of Contacting A Staff
Member, Extra Personal Attention, Multilingual Magazines, International Newspaper And TV Programs In Own Language. On Overall, Customer Satisfaction Was High In All The Hotels.


III. Research Methodology

Descriptive Survey Research Design Was Adopted. As Kothari (2008) Asserted, Descriptive Survey Enables The Researcher To Respond To The “What” Question Which Was The Case In This Study. The Aspect Of Survey Was Based On The Fact That, The Study Was Conducted At A Specific Point In Time, And The Respondents Cut Across Different Groups. The Current Study Was Limited To The Customers In Government Huduma Centres In Rift Valley Region, Kenya. There Are Eleven Functional Huduma Centres In The Rift Valley Region. The Study Was Targeting The Customers Being Served In The Centres. The Centres Serve Up To An Estimate Of 7,405 Customers Every Day. Thus, The Study Was Targeting The 7155 Customers Served By The Eleven Huduma Centres In The Rift Valley Region. According To Mugenda And Mugenda (2009), Questionnaires Are Very Suitable In Survey Research. In Tandem With This Assertion, A Structured Questionnaire Was Used To Collect Data From The Respondents. The Questionnaire Captured Data Relative To Respondents’ Background. Most Importantly, It Captured Data Regarding Both The Independent And Dependent Variables. The Collected Data Was Analyzed By Both Descriptive And Inferential Statistics With The Aid Of The Statistical Package For Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24. Descriptive Analysis Involved Frequencies And Percentages For Demographic Data Of Respondents. In Addition, Means And Standard Deviations Were Employed Across All Variables (Independent And Dependent Variables). Inferential Statistics In Form Of Correlation And Multiple Regression Analyses Were Employed. The Study Used The F-Test To Test The Hypotheses At 95% Level Of Confidence (Α=0.05). In Addition Coefficient Of Determination (R²) Was Used To Test The Contribution Of Each Independent Variable On The Dependent Variable. The Findings Of The Study Were Presented In Form Of Statistical Tables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Service Efficiency

Respondent’s Views Were Sought In Relation To Huduma Centres Service Efficiency. The Percentages, Means And Standard Deviation Were Computed And The Findings Presented In Table 4.3.

| Table 4.1: Service Efficiency Descriptive Statistics
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<td></td>
<td>SA (%)</td>
<td>A (%)</td>
<td>U (%)</td>
<td>D (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Time Spent Before Being Served Is Very Short</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Am Able To Accomplish My Needs In The Huduma Centre Within Few Hours In A Day</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Staff At Huduma Centre Are Very Fast In Serving Customers</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Have Had To Queue For Long Hours Before I Can Be Served</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Staff In The Huduma Centre Are Very Knowledgeable In Their Work Making Them Effective</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Removal Of Bureaucratic Procedures Have The Service Delivery To Be Very Efficient</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Can Get Different Services Under One Roof</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Valid N (Listwise)</td>
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From The Table Majority Of The Respondents Agreed That A Very Short Time Is Spent Before Being Served With A Mean Response Of 4.41 (Strongly Agree) And A Standard Deviation Of .749. 51.1% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed With The Assertion While 42.1% Agreed. 57.9% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed While 33.8% Agreed That They Can Accomplish Needs In Huduma Centre Within Few Hours With A Mean Of 4.41 And Standard Deviation Of .889. On The Other Hand 52.6% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed While 39.1% Of The Respondents Agreed That Staffs At Huduma Centre Are Very Fast In Serving The Customers (M=4.41, SA=769). Further, 39.1% Of The Respondents Strongly Disagreed That They Had To Queue For Long Hours Before Being Served Which Was Presented By A Mean Of 2.38 And A Standard Deviation Of 1.428. Additionally, Majority Of The Respondents (94.7%) Agreed That Huduma Centre Staffs Are Knowledgeable In Their Work With A Mean Response Of 4.50 (Strongly Agree) And A Standard Deviation Of 0.623. 54.9% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed That Removal Of Bureaucratic Procedures Have Made Service Delivery To Be Efficient While 30.8% Agreed. Finally A Mean Of 4.69 And A Standard

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**Customer Satisfaction Descriptive Statistical Results**

Regarding Customer Satisfaction, The Percentages, Means And Standard Deviations Were Analysed And Presented In Table 4.7.

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<th>Table 4.2: Customer Satisfaction Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<tr>
<td>I Feel That Huduma Centre Have Met My Service Delivery Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Have No Problem Seeking For Services At Huduma Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Huduma Centre Has Ensured The Comfort Of The Customers By Providing Seats In The Waiting Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Huduma Centre Has Met My Service Delivery Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Have Always Recommended To My Colleagues To Seek The Huduma Centre Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huduma Centre Has An Excellent Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Huduma Centre Staff Give Extra Personal Attention To The Customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Accuracy And Timeliness Of Service Delivery At Huduma Centers Is Highly Commendable</td>
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<td>Valid N (Listwise)</td>
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The Findings From The Table Indicated That Respondents Agreed That Huduma Centre Has Met Their Service Delivery Expectations. 49.6% And 46.6% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed And Agreed Respectively. The Findings Had A Mean Of 4.44 And Standard Deviation Of 0.621. 59.4% Of The Respondents Strongly Ascribed To Have Problem Seeking Services At Huduma Centre With A Mean Of 4.53 And A Standard Deviation Of 0.634. Further The Findings Illustrated (M=4.63, SD=.668) That Respondents Agreed Huduma Centre Has Assured Customer Comfort. 69.2% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed While 27.8% Of The Respondents Agreed. Further The Findings Demonstrated That Respondents Agreed They Recommend Their Colleagues To Seek Huduma Centre Services. 60.9% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed While 33.1% Of The Respondents Agreed.

A Mean Of 4.55 And Standard Deviation Of .712 Were Registered Which Indicated That Respondents Agreed Huduma Centre Has Excellent Customer Service. 63.9% And 30.1% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed And Agreed Respectively. 53.6% And 35.3% Of The Respondents Strongly Agreed And Agreed Respectively Felt That Staffs Pay Attention To Customers With A Mean Of 4.35 And A Standard Deviation Of 0.837. Respondents Further Indicated (M=4.41, SD=.780) Which Was An Indication That They Agreed Accuracy And Timeliness Of Service Delivery At Huduma Is Highly Commendable With 54.1% Of Respondents Strongly Agreeing And 37.6% Of The Respondents Agreeing. The Findings Agree With Findings Of Other Researchers That For Many Firms To Survive Customer Satisfaction Have To Be Enhanced. Lawrence (2006) On His Study On Customer Satisfaction Among Four Star Hotels In Spain, Germany And England Revealed That Many Customers Were Satisfied With The Ability Of Staff To Speak A Foreign Language, Friendliness Of Staff, And Condition Of Premise, Room Comfort And The Ease Of Obtaining Information.

**Effect Of Service Efficiency On Customer Satisfaction**

The Data Was Transformed Into Composite Mean Of The Variable Scores To Enable Inferential Analysis. In This Case Composite Mean Scores For Service Efficiency Were Correlated With Composite Mean Scores Of Customer Satisfaction. The Findings From The Analysis Were As Shown In Table 4.8

<table>
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<th>Table 4.3: Correlation Between Service Efficiency And Customer Satisfaction</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Service Efficiency</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-Tailed)</td>
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</table>

| **Customer Satisfaction** | **Service Efficiency** |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pearson Correlation | .604* |
| Sig. (2-Tailed) | .000 |

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**Correlation Is Significant At The 0.01 Level (2-Tailed).**


V. Conclusions


REFERENCES


