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INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF BUSIA, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

In an Info track survey of August (2018), 76.7% of interviewed citizens of Busia County said that they are only surprised to see un-prioritized projects coming up. The County Government of Busia was also faulted for poor absorption of development and recurrent funds at a rate of 48.3% and 58.2% respectively. These disparities could be accredited to poor leadership in the County Government of Busia. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery in the County Government of Busia, Kenya. The study was guided by Trait Leadership Theory and Strategic Leadership Theory. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software version 24. The study was anchored on the explanatory research design.



Target population consisted of 2,977 employees from the ten (10) Departments of the County Government of Busia from which a sample size of 353 respondents was arrived at. Study results were presented in the form of frequency distribution tables, graphs and pie charts that facilitate description and explanation of the study findings. From the results, strategic leadership had a significant positive influence on service delivery with $p < 0.01$ and it significantly accounted for 57.9% variance in service delivery ($R^2 = 0.579$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that visionary leadership had significant influence on the service delivery in the County Government of Busia. The study recommends that employees in management positions in Busia county government to embrace visionary leadership by developing relevant sustainable development plans, setting clear performance targets and rewards as well as ensure that services meet all residents' needs and expectations. These study findings are helpful in policy formulation in Busia County governments and industry.

Keywords: *Visionary Leadership, Service Delivery, County Government of Busia*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As Gaster and Squires (2003) state, public service delivery is the most important element in the public sector. Public service is a term often used to mean services provided by the government to the citizens, either directly (through the public sector) or indirectly by financing the private provision of the service. Service delivery (SD) is defined as the definite creation of a service such as lighting the streets or collecting waste and disposing it (Municipal Research and Services Center, 2015). Service delivery is operationalized through organizations profitability, customer satisfaction rates, effectiveness and efficiency. According to Whitaker (2014), depending on the type of service that is on offer, every service has a principal purpose of changing client as well as the customer is the main beneficiary. The client determines the quality-of-service delivery by looking at customer satisfaction levels, number of clients served and timely service.

There are numerous examples of users' lack of knowledge about key aspects of service provision; for example, in Uttar Pradesh, only 7% of those polled were aware of their village education committee, and less than 15% of parents had complained about their school (Ringold *et al.*, 2012). Studies have found that there is a lack of awareness of funds received for local service provision, for example in Uganda and Tanzania, where tracking of school capitation grants revealed that significant levels of funds had not found their way to intended schools, something not previously known to local communities (Sundet, 2008). Other studies for example, have found that marginalized groups can be particularly disadvantaged when it comes to service delivery. People living in the slums of Indonesia's, the Philippines', and Kenya's capital cities may pay five to ten times more per unit of water than those living in high-income areas of their own cities (and more than consumers pay in London or New York) (UNDP, 2006).

Furthermore, the poorest 20% of households in El Salvador, Jamaica, and Nicaragua can spend more than 10% of their household income on water, whereas in the United Kingdom, a 3% threshold is considered a sign of hardship (UNDP, 2006). Leadership is a major research topic in the corporate and academic sectors, and tremendous progress has been made in unraveling some of the enduring mysteries associated with leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009). Leadership research will be more prevalent in the coming decades than at any other time in human history (Kumar, 2018). Over time, researchers and practitioners have come to believe that leadership is a malleable developmental process, and with constant advancement in the field of research, it has rarely disagreed with what came before it (Kumar, 2018). These include the question of whether leaders are born or made.

