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Perceived Influence of Performance Standards on Quality Public Service Delivery in National Government Administration in Elgeyo Marakwet County.

*Kibet Rodgers Sirkoi^{*1}, Prof. Peter Omboto, PhD¹ & Prof. Richard Musebe, PhD¹*

¹ Moi University, P. O. Box 1948 30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

^{*} ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8622-9476>; Author for Correspondence Email: kibetsirkoi@gmail.com

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The provision of high-quality public service has for a long time been a challenge, especially in developing nations. There is an outcry of poor service provision in the public sector. This necessitated the government to implement performance appraisal which is an integral component of performance management strategy for the achievement of high quality of service delivery. The paper determined the perceived influence of performance standards on quality public service delivery in the National Government Administration in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. This study was anchored on Goal setting theory. An Explanatory research design was used. The study targeted a population of 219 National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs) which yielded a sample of 141 respondents. The research utilised a stratified sampling technique while closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect data. The validity and reliability of questionnaires were realised through conducting a pilot study, Cronbach Alpha tests and guidance from research study supervisors. Mean and standard deviation was calculated, while multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used for inferential statistics. The t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses of the study at a 5% significant level, while the f-test was applied to test the relationship between performance appraisal and quality public service delivery at a 5% significant level. The study finding revealed that performance standards had significant influence on quality of service deliver ($\beta_2 = .161$; $p = .046 < .05$). The study concluded that performance standards influenced quality public service delivery in National Government Administration in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study recommends that National Government Administration should fully implement all the stages and stick to requirements of performance appraisal to achieve the provision of

high-quality public service delivery. The study suggests further studies be done on performance-based compensation.

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INTRODUCTION

Performance contracting and performance appraisal management strategies are being implemented by the Kenyan public sector to manage service quality through improved performance of public servants. Kobia and Mohammed (2006) alluded that performance contracting is part of a major public reform tool for the government to achieve high quality of service delivery in the public sector. The goal was meant to realise and solve some of the challenges in the public sector, which includes; outright mismanagement, poor management, political interference, multiplicity of principles and excessive control.

According to Korir, Rotich, & Bengat (2015), performance contracting was introduced in Kenya to remedy issues that had negatively affected performance in the public sector and had resulted in the decline of economic development. Some of the issues included degeneration and dilapidation of infrastructure, poor service delivery and declining public

performance. The public expects the best service delivery and hence was important to further investigate the concepts of performance appraisal and service delivery.

Public service delivery is a cardinal obligation for all governments. The public service sectors have endeavoured to streamline the service delivery to be efficient, effective, of acceptable quality, and within a short time possible (Mutiso, 2013). Korir et al. (2015) addressed the efforts the Kenya government had undertaken in the improvement of performance management practices geared at improving quality of performance in public service delivery. This involved introduction of a better performance appraisal system for public service that would curb conflict of interest and poor delivery of service. Performance contracting was introduced despite resistance from various trade unions in the public sector, especially the health and education sectors. The challenges included lack of focus in measurements, lack of standards, among other issues when measuring the performance of different government

organisations. All along, performance measurement discrepancy in service delivery has been a major challenge in Kenyan public service.

The State Department responsible for National Government Administration adopted performance contracting and performance appraisal in curbing the challenges that affect the workforce in the public sector (Kobia & Mohammed, 2006). Other challenges include lack of capacity, guidelines and expertise in human capital (Korir et al., 2015). National Government Administrative Officers are the Regional Coordinators (RCs), County Commissioners (CCs), Deputy County Commissioners (DCCs), Assistant County Commissioners (ACCs), Chiefs, and Assistant Chiefs. The role and mandate of NGAOs are to coordinate the execution of National Government programs and represent the presidency in their respective areas of jurisdiction (Nyanjom, 2011).

Even with this strategy, complaints of poor services from the citizens who are consumers of services from NGAOs still arise and abounds. This raises questions about whether service delivery by NGAOs meets the expectations of both the employer and the clients. Are the National Government Administrative Officers responsive and accountable? The question of efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery where the clients should get value for their money to arise (Mutua, 2011). This is contrary to the commitment and promises of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination National Government to delivering high quality, responsive, effective and efficient public service outlined in its core values, mandate and service charter. This promise is premised on the performance contracts signed between each of the National Government Administration Officer and their respective immediate supervisors (Ndambuki, 2006). This situation points to the existence of a contradictory scenario that calls for a thorough investigation

to determine the extent to which performance appraisal is emphasised during service delivery by the respective cadre of NGAOs.

Due to public outcry over the low quality of service rendered in public service, there have been several attempts to improve service delivery through policy reforms in performance contracting. However, the National Government Administrative Officers are among those who have failed in meeting the public expectation in service delivery, regardless of the execution of performance contracting in Kenya (Ang'anyo, 2019). Performance appraisal is a management strategy tool that organisations use to assess levels of productivity and achievement of their employees against expected set performance targets at the beginning of the contract period. There is a need to investigate reasons accounting for low and unsatisfactory public service delivery despite the execution of performance contracting.

This research study, therefore, sought to fill this empirical gap by establishing the perceived influence of performance standard in performance contracting on quality public delivery of services by the National Government Administration in Elgeyo Marakwet County. To determine the perceived influence of performance standards on quality public service delivery in the National Government Administration in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance appraisal is termed as the procedures in which the organisation design and measure individual worker performance based on the agreed set goals, best practices, strategies and firms' objectives (Korir et al., 2015). Performance appraisal is also termed the measurement instrument for gauging performance against agreed or negotiated performance target (GoK, 2010). Maila (2006)

argued that performance management is a back-office operation of the South Africa government in ensuring that the best practice and performance is embraced in service delivery. There are numerous research studies focusing on the public sector based on challenges facing government-run organisations (Chegenye, Mbithi, & Musiega, 2015). Public Employees, government and management agency would freely negotiate the target of performance. It specifies common performance obligation, responsibilities and intentions of the agencies (GoK, 2010).

Quality of service delivery is the fundamental measure of performance appraisal. In performance appraisal, customer feedback is normally used as indicators of quality-of-service delivery (Eneanya, 2017). It is then seen as a complex concept used in measuring performance management. This is because it would be limited to the perception of customers that receive the services. However, performance appraisal adopted by National Government Administration emanated from the performance contract.

According to Chegeny, Mbithi and Musiega (2015), service delivery is dependent on the availability and quality of specific service offered. Quality of service is the degree to which the needs of the customer are met. Quality has been linked with the loyalty and satisfaction of customers. Service delivery is considered successfully rendered once the customer is satisfied with the scope and expectation. However, service is affected by time, costs, scope and quality, which is dictated by the human resource.

Korir et al. (2015) alluded that in public service delivery, the focus is on public involvement, accountability and transparency. Due to the country's economic development impediment arising from poor quality of service delivery, the Kenyan government has introduced management practices aimed at improving the

quality-of-service delivery. Therefore, numerous reforms have been instituted in the public sector, which included rapid results initiative, performance contracting and service charters. The current study would use effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness and quality as indicators of service delivery.

Conventionally, the public sector has been mired by political influence as well as the will of the political class to effect changes in society. Personal interest has always overshadowed the public interest influenced the delivery of services as well as economic development in the public sector. This hindrance, especially in public resource management has led to the downfall of and low economic development in the majority of the nations. The public sector is ailing from bloated human resource, mismanagement, unrealistic low funding of the field services, poor management, political interference, and bureaucracy in the management of resource and decision-making process. This has led to numerous reforms in performance management in the public sector that assisted the government to improve service delivery (GoK, 2010).

The standards of performance are related to target setting and employee's performance level measuring process. Setting an appropriate goal to assist in gauging individual, departmental or organisational level of performance (Mauya, 2015). It is an important practice in performance management that enables management to set objectives, monitor and assess employee performance, involve employees in setting targets and create strategies for obtaining the set targets.

According to Mauyu (2015), target setting enables improvement of employee performance and service delivery. It was also found that there was a high positive significant relationship between performance targets setting and service delivery. Target setting is based on the concept of Goal setting theory

(Lock & Latham, 2013). According to Teo and Low (2016), Goal setting theory indicates that organisational effectiveness is associated with individual employee effectiveness. It is therefore important to note that effective service delivery by the organisation involves individual employee goal setting.

Theoretical Review

This study was guided by the goal setting theory of motivation developed by Edwin Locke in the 1960s. Goal setting theory states that the setting of performance goals by employees is essentially linked to task performance. It emphasises on stating of specific and challenging performance goals along with appropriate feedback mechanism contributes to higher and better task performance. It indicates and gives direction to employees on what needs to be done and how much efforts are required from them to be put into the specific tasks. The goal setting theory of motivation gave the blueprint for modern workplace motivation by making the direct relationship between goals, performance and employee engagement both clear and actionable.

In 1968, Edwin Locke published his ground breaking goal setting theory in “Towards a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentive”. Therein he demonstrated that employees are motivated by clear, well-defined goals, feedback and that a little workplace challenge is good in catalysing staff in achieving the Set Performance Targets.

Goal setting theory is also linked with strategic management since it is part of the planning process. Though Goal setting theory does not explain competitive strategies in place but has a wide view strategy where realistic and challenging goals are encouraged to increase the output or organisation performance (Yurtkoru et al., 2017).

Goal setting theory supports performance standard and performance appraisal since these

practices involve setting targets which employees should achieve. This explains the need to set goals to be achieved while conducting performance appraisal so as to ascertain if the expected performance levels were achieved. According to Yurtkoru *et al.* (2017), goal setting theory supports personal competency, which is linked with performance appraisal.

National Government Administration should be managed with more emphasis guided by staff Performance Target Setting in which Administrative programmes are encouraged to realise the potential of each National Government Administrative Officer in service delivery. There has been an increase in age disparities, extremity in education levels, sourcing of National Government Administrative Officers from both Public and Private sectors compounded with diversified extend of work experience and exposure of Government Administrative Officers both in the same cadre or stratified cadres together with the ever-increasing cross-ministerial additional duties and responsibilities. These interactions necessitate the studying of performance of National Government Administrative Officers under the guidance of Goal setting theory (Korir, Rotich & Bengat, 2015).

Goal setting theory postulates that National Government Administrative Officers, like many other organisations is a client-centred service provider. Through practice, it has been confirmed that there is a considerably significant link between National Government Administration task performance and performance targets setting (Locke and Latham, 1990). Goal setting theory is mainly concerned with task performance making it a key manual for employee engagement (Locke & Latham, 1991). It is therefore worth understanding that the extent of both strength and limitations of the Goal setting theory before it is applied in the workplace so that through the motivation efforts of the employees, the organisation gets

the desired performance and the employees, in turn, attain the set performance goals and satisfaction from the job.

Empirical Review

Performance standards are targets and methods of setting standards including performance contracting. Performance contracting has found favour in public sector service delivery since it is a contract that binds the public agency and government through setting goals, targets for the goals, strategies to achieve the goals and measure the performance for the set targets as well as a reward (GoK, 2010). Nganyi, Shigogodi and Owano (2014) argued that most institutions including universities have not fully adopted performance contracting. Based on this, the achieved performance indicators are moderate. They recommended that there is a need to improve monitoring and evaluation of performance appraisal system for and in measuring the performance of the organisation. The current study will focus on performance standards since the majority of researches has indicated challenges in standardising performance targets in the public sector.

Teo and Low (2016) established the impact of goal setting and its effectiveness in employee to improve an organisation's performance. The research was based on High-tech companies in Singapore. Goal setting ensures organisation and employee effectiveness based on the empirical data of Singapore Hi-Tech companies. However, the study was done in Singapore and did not focus on the public sector. The private sector has a better performance management system and therefore, the current research was done to evaluate the public sector.

Mauya (2015) investigated the importance of the setting of performance targets in performance contracting on service delivery which was done in Kenya's Ministry of Tourism. Research objectives were to

investigate career prospects, bonuses, and promotion that were aimed at improving employee retention and service delivery. A survey was conducted on 164 employees working in the ministry headquarters using semi-structured questionnaires. It found that based on the target setting in performance contracting, there was an improvement in employee performance, job satisfaction, professionalism, accountability, employee innovativeness, reporting and service delivery. On the other hand, there was a reduction of non-performers, instances of buck-passing and corruption in the organisation. The correlation analysis indicated a high correlation between performance targeting and delivery of service. The current study utilised multiple linear regression correlation on performance appraisal on service delivery.

Korir et al. (2015) did an investigation of performance management on delivery of services in the Kenyan public sector. There have been various strategies of improving the performance of employee through change management, re-engineering, benchmarking, total quality management, management tools and techniques, among others. Lack of clarity in most public entities has led to disjointed and an inharmonious expectation from the public sector; however, performance management in the public sector has significantly reformed over the years. The study found that the reforms, which included the introduction of performance contracting, improved the performance of public service. But a lot of critics based on its weakness of unstandardized method of measuring performance and rampant lack of focus in the measuring indicators. However, the current study focused on performance appraisal rather than performance management and contracting.

Ndubai (2016) did an investigation on performance contracting, measurement and public service delivery within Kenya. The study utilised resource-based view theory, theory of

change, theory of organisational performance management and theory of performance. Secondary data were analysed in the study. The findings indicated that performance measure affected customer satisfaction. Political stability affected the relationship between performance measurement and customer satisfaction. This research study investigated standards used in measuring performance appraisal. The current study focused on goal setting theory rather than resource-based view theory, theory of change, theory of organisational performance management and theory of performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research study was anchored on an explanatory research design. This research study was conducted in Elgeyo Marakwet County in Kenya. The target population involved all the 219 National Government Administrative Officers in Elgeyo Marakwet County. The research utilised stratified and

simple random sample techniques. Stratified sampling was carried out purposively to group NGAOs into five homogenous sub-groups that shared similar characteristics. A sample of 141 NGAOs in Elgeyo Marakwet County was drawn from the target population. The research instruments for the study were questionnaires for National Government Administrative Officers. Before starting the analysis process, the researcher processed the data by scanning and editing, coding, categorising and tabulating it appropriately. Inferential statistics were also adopted where the study utilised the Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) models.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation. The regression analysis was also used to analyse the relationship between performance standards on quality service delivery.

Table 1: Performance Standards

	N	MinMax	Mean Std. Devi
Internal service quality and procedure of work facilitates service delivery	121	3.005.00	4.0744.69720
The performance contract is in place and it is utilised in enhancing efficiency at work	121	3.005.00	4.0661.73864
Performance indicators are set for goal setting and performance standards	121	3.005.00	4.0083.72452
Policies in place are implemented to meet the required performance standards	121	3.005.00	3.9752.75788
Performance standards through performance contracting and targets setting enabled timely service delivery	121	3.005.00	4.1074.72803

Table 1 investigated performance standards where internal service quality and procedure of work facilitated service delivery to a greater extent ($M = 4.0744$). The variance on facilitated service delivery was low ($SD = 0.69720$). Internal service quality and procedure entail internal controls that were found to play a

significant role in quality public service delivery.

The findings revealed that performance contracts were in place and it was utilised in enhancing efficiency at work to a greater extent ($M = 4.0661$). The results also showed a low

variation on enhancing efficiency at work ($SD = 0.73864$). Performance contracting was introduced to enable the National Government Administrative Officers to have a mechanism that would check their work performance. The result reveals that since its inception, it has affected the efficiency at work significantly. The work done by Korir et al. (2015) in performance management found the same result with this research study that reforms made on performance contracting improve the performance of public service.

According to the findings, performance indicators were set and put in place for goal setting and performance standards as indicated by $M = 4.0083$. Its variation was low on goal setting and performance standards ($SD = 0.72452$). It is an important concept to set the goals and performance standard based on performance indicators. Mauya (2015) also agreed with the need for target setting in performance contracting since it improves employee performance, job satisfaction,

professionalism, accountability, employee innovativeness, reporting and service delivery

Policies in place were implemented to meet the required performance standards to some extent ($M = 3.9752$). The variation was low on the implementation of policies ($SD = 0.75788$). The policies that guide implementation is crucial in ensuring that the requirements of performance standards are met.

Performance standards through performance contracting and targets setting enabled timely service delivery to a greater extent ($M = 4.1074$). The variation on performance contracting and targets setting was low ($SD = 0.72803$). Hence performance standards have shown to assist significantly in ensuring timely service delivery. Ndubai (2016) also found that performance measures affected customer satisfaction. Teo & Low (2016) also investigated goal setting and found that it affected employee effectiveness.

Table 2: Quality of Service Delivery

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
There is effective service delivery based on number of citizens served as results of expected job by the National Government Administrative Officers	121	2.00	5.00	4.2810	0.75524
The citizen and clients are served on time based on performance standards set by the National Government Administration to it Administrative Officers	121	3.00	5.00	4.3306	0.65049
Quality of service delivery has improved as a result of performance appraisal training undertaken by Nation Government Administration to its Administrative Officers	121	3.00	5.00	4.2479	0.66183
There is efficient service delivery because government implements performance-based compensation	121	3.00	5.00	4.3719	0.65995
Quality of public service delivery has improved as a result of performance appraisal exercised on National Government Administrative Officers job	121	3.00	5.00	4.4628	0.63300

Table 2 reveals that Service Delivery where it was found that there was effective service delivery based on the number of citizens served as results of expected job by the National

Government Administrative Officers to a greater extent ($M = 4.2810$). The results indicated a low variation in the number of citizens served as results of the expected job

($SD = 0.75524$). The number of citizens served by National Government Administrative Officers had increased, indicating that the quality of public service delivery had improved. Maila (2006) argued that best practice in performance management would ensure better quality public service delivery. One of the practices that ensure better service delivery is job expectation for employees, as suggested by Prabha, Perunjodi and Soolakshna (2010), which concurs with this research study.

It was also revealed that citizen and clients were served on time based on performance standards set by the National Government Administration to its Administrative Officers to a greater extent ($M = 4.3306$). Its variation on quality public service delivery on time was low ($SD = 0.65049$). Mauya (2015) agreed that it is important to set performance target to aid in achieving quality service delivery. Performance standards assist in setting target and performance contracting, which has a significant effect on performance.

According to the results, quality-of-service delivery had improved as a result of performance appraisal training undertaken by the National Government Administration to its Administrative Officers to a greater extent ($M = 4.2479$). The variation of quality public service delivery on performance appraisal training done was low ($SD = 0.66183$). Hence quality public service delivery has improved as results of training in performance appraisal. Training was identified as a major concern in Adepoju, Opafunso, & Lawal (2017) study on performance appraisal and service delivery. There is an indirect link between performance training with service delivery from Mokaya (2013) study which play a major role in the implementation of performance appraisal.

The findings also indicated that there was efficient service delivery because government implements performance-based compensation to a greater extent ($M = 4.3719$). Its variance on efficient service delivery was low ($SD = 0.65995$). Performance-based compensation would assist in ensuring that there is efficient service delivery to citizens by National Government Administrative Officers. A compensation plan was also found to be crucial in the motivation of employees and teamwork, which has enhanced service delivery. Mwangi (2011) opined that fair pay for commensurate work done resonates well and concurs with this research study.

Quality public service delivery improved as a result of performance appraisal exercised on National Government Administrative Officers job to a greater extent ($M = 4.4628$). Its variation on performance appraisal is low ($SD = 0.63300$). Therefore, for quality public service delivery to be achieved, there is a need to improve on performance appraisal done to National Government Administrative Officers. The majority of reforms in performance appraisal is to ensure that there is a high quality of service delivery (Rhys, 2014). There is room for further improvement in public sector service delivery.

Regression Analysis

Performance standards were found to have a significant positive influence on the quality of public service, where a unit increase of performance standard lead to a 0.161-unit increase in quality of public service delivery ($Beta = 0.166$). The results concur with Rhys (2014), where performance appraisal affected the quality of public service delivery significantly.

Table 3: Regression analysis

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised t Coefficients	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta		Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.196	.485		2.465	.015	
Performance Standards	.161	.080	.166	2.017	.046	.888 1.126

a. Dependent Variable: Quality public service delivery

Therefore, there existed a significant positive relationship between performance standards and quality of service delivery ($p = 0.046 < 0.05$). The results concur with Mauya (2015) that performance standards are significant in-service delivery.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings discussions are centred on performance standards and service delivery in National Government Administration. Internal service quality and procedure of work facilitated service delivery. Performance contract was utilised which improve efficiency at work. The performance indicators utilised goal setting and performance standards in the evaluation process. Policies in place were well implemented to meet the performance standards. Performance standards through contracting and target setting assisted in ensuring timely service delivery. The regression result indicated that performance standards had a significant positive influence on quality public service delivery ($p = 0.046 < 0.05$). Hence, performance standards play a significant influence on the timeliness of service delivery.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Performance standards were found to play a crucial role in the entire process of performance appraisal. It was found that internal service quality and procedure facilitated quality public service delivery. Performance contract in place also assisted in ensuring efficiency at work. The performance standards assisted in setting goals and policies in place ensured timely quality public service delivery. Therefore, performance standards had a significant positive influence on service delivery.

The recommendation was that performance standard through internal service quality and procedures, policies, and goal setting should be practice by the National Government Administrative Officers. This will assist performance indicators are set for goal setting and performance standards. It is important for government officials to enhance the quality of public delivery of services which is anchored on performance goal setting.

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