



## **EFFECT OF E-HUMAN RESOURCE ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN KENYA**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research study was to identify the effect of e-government on adoption of E-government in the Kenya's public sector. The study was guided by two research questions that are as follows: To what extent does e-procurement and e-communication in Kenya. The study used descriptive research design. The target population comprised all the 70 officers in all relevant government departments. Stratified random sampling method was used to select the population. The respondents included senior management officers, and technicians in the Ministries. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Collecting and analyzing data from respondents to measure its level of reliability and relevance first piloted the questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and interpreted in frequencies and percentages. The study findings led to the conclusion that e-government strategy had a positive impact on service delivery as it ensured timely delivery of service, credibility, and dependability. Through immediate feedback, the county government was able to improve on its services.*

*Keywords: e-government, e-Human Resource Management, Service Delivery, Kenya*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology has provided means for faster and better communication, efficient storage, retrieval and processing of data and exchange and utilization of information to its users, be they individuals, groups, businesses, organizations or governments. ICTs have to be used in order to create and deliver a service, which is useful and



has an effective impact for the businesses and for the citizens. Information and communications technology (ICT) is an integral component of government operations and service delivery. ICT is increasingly used as a strategic tool to more efficiently support any Government's priorities and program delivery. In order to have a successful e-Government, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions, which are at the very core of the e-Government infrastructure, have to be reachable by all citizens (Reffat, 2016).

E-government strategy is an important aspect for developing countries such as Kenya. As noted by Waema (2012), the government of Kenya has recognized e-government as key driver to the provision of effective and accessible services to citizens, business organizations and public agencies. For instance, the Kenya Vision 2030 recognizes ICT as a key pillar to development and success of government service provision. As a result of this, commendable efforts have been made on e-applications, capacity building and infrastructural growth by government agencies. Moreover, the foundation for e-government legal framework for devolved units is premised in the new constitution of Kenya of 2010, which rebuilt the nation's political and managerial structure by devolving a great deal of power to the new county government entities, and which sets out some core principles of administration.

### **E-government**

The World Bank (2014) defines e-governance as the utilization of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) by government agencies in order to transform relationships with citizens, and delivery of businesses, services and other forms of governance to the public. E-governance is defined as the means through which rendering of government services and information to the public is done using electronic means (Nkwe, 2011); or e-governance as mechanisms through which ICT is utilized to deliver government services to the people (Monga, 2008). Information technologies in governance can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management resulting in greater transparency, and accountability (World Bank, 2014).

The global information technology report (2015) cites a positive correlation between a country's ICTs usage and its economic and social growth (Dutta, Geiger and Lanvin, 2015). To this end, governments are making investments ICTs in the public sector so as to improve the delivery of services online and enhance e-participation of citizens. Consequently, electronic government (e-government) initiatives have increased in developing countries such as Ghana,

Senegal, Brazil, India, Chile, Argentina, the Philippines, and Malaysia, among others, where they are reaping the benefits of using ICTs in the delivery of public sector services (UN, 2014).

E-government has several meanings. One narrow definition focuses only on Internet applications inside government. However, narrow definition sometimes is expanded to include the use of the Internet in restructuring government-citizen interactions and related political relationships (Farelo & Morris, 2016).

A broader definition looks at e-government as the use of ICT to strengthen government performance in areas such as more effective and more efficient provision of services, opening new channels for people to access government and official information, and making government more accountable to its citizens. Kumar and Best (2016) defined e-Government as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the public sector to improve its operations and delivery of services.

### **Statement of the Problem Statement**

Globally, the focus on service delivery is becoming intertwined with an emphasis on achieving cost savings and enhancing efficiency in service delivery. The role of e governance in public service delivery has accordingly been revisited to enable effective inter-organizational linkages and consolidation of government systems through e-government services. Initially the political and managerial focus was on developing e-services within each public institution, with limited consideration being given to cross-organizational coherence, the focus today has clearly shifted towards coordinated services offering one-stop shops to citizens and businesses. Now citizens and businesses around the world are increasingly demanding that their governments follow suit. While e-government has resulted in efficiency gains in some instances, much of the research reports that cost savings have been sporadic, uneven and often overshadowed by both upfront and escalating investments.

Furthermore, studies have indicated that service provision among several government agencies is still poor. Moreover, no specific studies have addressed the effect of e-government strategy on service provision in devolved units. Therefore, this study assessed the effect of e-government strategy on service delivery in devolved units using Tharaka-Nithi county as a case in study.

### **Objective of the Study**

To investigate the effect of e-Human Resource Management on service delivery in Tharaka Nithi County.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Disruptive Innovation Theory

Barahona and Elizondo (2012) discussed the theory of disruptive innovation. This theory points out that e-procurement is an innovation. As such it requires continual improvement. Because of such improvements, it disrupts the normal procurement operations and processes. The theory of disruptive innovation is characterized by: small and costly client base and non-attractiveness at the initial stages of implementation, some level of acceptance as the system is implemented, new competition as innovation continues and continuous quality improvement to improve adaptability to user and stakeholders needs.

The disruptive innovation is probably one of the most important innovation theories of the last decade (Bird, 2009). The core concepts behind it circulated so fast that one year after the publication of the theory, people were using the term without making reference to Harvard professor Clayton Christensen or to his book *The Innovator's Dilemma* (Harvard Business School Press). The term disruptive innovation as we know it today first appeared in the best-seller *The Innovator's Dilemma* (Dai & Kauffman, 2010). Disruptive innovations require critical resources, processes and values. Critical resources include resources supporting the normal business activities such as; People, technologies, product designs, brands, customer and supplier relationships, relationship management with its clients and suppliers and marketing activities. Critical processes include decision making protocols and coordination patterns that supports operations of an existing business operations.

In addition, organizational cultural values, belief system and assumptions Enterprise resource planning Procurement performance (Barahona & Elizondo, 2012). The theory of disruptive innovation recognizes the fact that public organizations and systems are less flexible. Therefore, the adoption of e-procurement strategies requires a strategic and proactive approach so as to build the system within the existing structures rather than adoption of completely new systems. Adequate preparation in terms of the right technology, leadership to foster change process, training of the employees and awareness campaign among users is critical. It is important to note that sometimes disruptive innovations may only work in the short run.

### E-Human Resource Management and Service delivery

Electronic human resource management has been defined as “a way of implementing human resource strategies, policies and practices in organizations through a conscious and directed support of and/or with the full use of web-technology-based channels” (Noe and Gerhard, 2012) or the most recent and broad definition “the (planning, implementation, and) application of information systems for both correspondence and collateral officers in their mutual performance

of human resource routine practices” (Strohmeier, 2014). Electronic human resource management can be employed in business activities such as those that involve daily duties, keeping of records, conventional human resource management roles such as recruitment, selection, training, reward and performance management; and transformative activities that increase financial worth of the organization (Thite and Kavanagh, 2011), and may be employed in managing human resources for the entire period that the employee works for an organization. According to World Bank (2014), e-governance can be made viable through expansion of e-governance infrastructure so as to enable people both in the urban and rural areas access government services. Secondly, e-governance requires simplifications and modifications that will necessitate easy access, and use by citizens to the government and governance processes. In Africa, for instance, lack of adequate e-governance networks and high levels of illiteracy exacerbate the difficulties of communications between citizens and government. About 70% of rural African population finds it difficult to access, and use e-governance services to the technical nature of information technology. Therefore, government agencies should endeavor to have web translators into local indigenous languages that rural communities can understand and comprehend (Tomasz, Elsa & Irshad, 2007). To this end, Carter and Belanger (2012) argue that there exists a significant relationship between ease of use, and adoption of e-governance services.

In their study in Canada, Hausdorf & Duncan (2014) discovered no substantial variations between small and medium enterprises and bigger firms in applying websites as an instrument for recruiting. Their research is established on experimental observation from an audit carried out in 175 firms in Canada of different sizes. Despite the fact that divergent observations concerning the sizes of organizations have been arrived at, it is not justifiable to abandon the debate that bigger organizations are generally well endowed resource wise in comparison to small firms. Because of this we can still make an assumption that organizational capacity affects the electronic human resource management adoption decision in the emerging market setup.

As such, public sector institutions should endeavor to have information technology simplified to be usable, otherwise e-governance initiatives will remain the preserve of urban populations versed in information technology, and e-governance. Citizen’s preparedness to use e-governance means that they need to be equipped with IT skills that will enable them explore different attributes and components of e-governance (Matavire et al., 2010). To effectively adopt e-governance initiatives in communities, there are three skills that are essential: one information technology skills; secondly, Information Management skills, and thirdly Information Society (Maranga, 2012). Information technology skills refers to the hard technical skills, information management skills refer to technical skills required to deploy and manage ICT infrastructure,

while information society skills refer to the soft skills that are required to do basic operations using ICT infrastructures (Padomichelaki & Mentzas, 2012).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlation research design. Quantitative approach was used. A research design functions as the research blue print for measurement and analysis of data. Kothari (2004) describe a research design as a plan and a structure of investigation conceived to find answers to research questions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), correlational research design is connected with providing solutions to the problems. The design also allowed the researcher to come up with descriptive statistics that can assist in explaining the relationship that exists among variables. Rowley (2002) indicates that a case study research is good for contemporary events when the relevant behaviour cannot be manipulated.

A population is defined as a complete set of individual cases or objects with some common observable characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). A particular population has some characteristics that differentiate it from other populations. The study focused on Tharaka Nithi county government. The study targeted the procurement department and communication department and human resources department respectively taking a census as the departments were considered small hence possible to involve all the officers working in the said department.

Data collection instrument is a tool or tools used by a researcher to collect data for a study. This study was expected to collect primary data from the respondents through questionnaires. According to Kothari (2004) questionnaires give a detailed answer to complex problems. Additionally, questionnaires are also a popular method for data collection in deduction because of the relative ease and cost-effectiveness with which they are constructed and administered. Questionnaires give a relatively objective data and therefore, are most effective. The research used closed ended questionnaires to collect data from those concerned

A pilot test enables a researcher to pretest the instrument to be used to collect data prior a data collection exercise. This study subjected the questionnaire to content validity measure, where 12 individuals from County Government of Tharaka Nithi who were not included in the sample size. They were requested to assess the instrument to be used to measure the response of the study from the sample population. They were to alternately determine whether the set objectives represented the concept of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The data collected was sorted and entered into the statistical packages for social sciences for analysis. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze demographic data, establish the effect of e-governance on service delivery in the county government. The findings were presented in tables, pie charts and histograms. In order to establish the effect of e-

governance on service delivery e, regression analysis was employed. The following regression equation was used:  $SD = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + e$  Where  $SD$  = Service delivery (Better service delivery);  $X_1$  = E-procurement;  $X_2$ ,

## FINDINGS

### Profile of Respondents

The study sought to find general information about its sample population, which could help determine their fitness to respond to this study. Further, this data could indicate that the data collected from them can be dependable for analysis and drawing of conclusions.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	38	54.3	54.3	54.3
	Female	32	45.7	45.7	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

From table 1 above, most of the respondents were male who were 38, which was 54.3%. The female respondents were 32, which represented 45.7%. The inclusion of males and females in the study served to create a gender balanced view of the e-governance platforms.

### Access to E-governance platform

Table 2: Access to E-governance platform

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Office Computer	30	42.9	42.9	42.9
	Mobile Phone	23	32.9	32.9	75.7
	Home Computer	7	10.0	10.0	85.7
	Tablet	8	11.4	11.4	97.1
	Computer at Cyber Café	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 indicates how the respondents accessed the e-governance platform. Most respondents, 42.9% used office computers, which was an indication that the county government has made effort to provide computers to its staff. 32.9% of the respondents used their phones, 11.4% used tablets, 10% used their computers and only 2.9% used cyber café computers.

### E-human resource strategy and service delivery in Tharaka Nithi

Further, the study sought to find out how the e-human resource management system has simplified the roles of human resource and improved service delivery in the county offices. Different aspects were looked into to help determine this factor. The results are shown in the following tables.

Table 3: E-HR enhances user-friendly environment for working and career development process

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
	2	10	14.3	14.3	15.7
	3	32	45.7	45.7	61.4
	4	20	28.6	28.6	90.0
	5	7	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

In table 3, the study looked at establishing whether e-human resource had resulted in the creation of a friendly working environment and career development for the county workers. The findings from the data collected indicated that the majority of the respondents, 45.7%, were indifferent to this statement, 28.6% agreed to the statement, 14.3% disagreed, 10% strongly agreed and only 1.4% strongly disagreed. This shows that to some extent, e-human resource has contributed to the betterment of the work place environment.

Table 4: E-HR increases efficiency of operation in different departments in the organization through the availability of ready data

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	5	7.1	7.1	7.1
	3	23	32.9	32.9	40.0
	4	28	40.0	40.0	80.0
	5	14	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 presents the results obtained from the study concerning responses to the statement, E-HR increases efficiency of operation in different departments in the organization through the availability of ready data. The majority of the respondents, 40% agreed to the statement, these were followed by those that were neutral, 32.9%, 20% of the respondents strongly agreed to the



statement and only 7.1% disagreed. There was no respondent strongly disagreeing to the statement.

Table 5: E-HR ensures minimal wastage of time in sorting employee and applicant data

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	4.3	4.3	4.3
	2	4	5.7	5.7	10.0
	3	25	35.7	41.4	51.4
	4	29	41.4	35.7	87.1
	5	9	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 indicates that the majority of the respondents, 41.4% agreed to the statement, E-HR ensures minimal wastage of time in sorting employee and applicant data. 35.7% were neutral to the statement, 12.9% strongly agreed, 5.7% disagreed and only 4.3% strongly disagreed. This shows that e-human resource system have led to improved process of handling employee and applicant data.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	2.943	.547		5.377	.000
	E-human resource	.206	.101	.275	2.029	.047

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

The established regression equation becomes;

$$Y = 2.943 + 0.206X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y= Service Delivery

X<sub>1</sub>= E-human resource

$\varepsilon$  = Error Term

Overall, e-human resource had the greatest influence on service delivery in Tharaka Nithi county, Kenya, which was followed by e-procurement, followed by e-health and lastly the e-communication strategy. All the variables were significant as the p-values were less than 0.05 an indication that all the factors were statistically significant. However, the findings show that

Tharaka Nithi County needs to invest more on their e-communication strategy, e-procurement and e-health to impact more on service delivery.

## CONCLUSION

In regards to e-human resource management, the average responses of the study ranged from 3.3 to 3.8. This average response indicates that most of the respondent were between moderate that e-human resource management platforms has led to improved service delivery within the county. This improvement has been attributed to the fact that the county has adopted the use of online platforms to recruit and select new employees to the county. Further, the platform helps in personnel management in the county, in that, employees can apply for leaves and get approved online, as well as making schedules to ensure that all roles in the county are catered for.

These findings agree with those of Mbuvi (2017) who conducted a research on the effect of e-governance in Nairobi county and concluded that the incorporation of e-governance platforms in service delivery has a positive impact on the delivery of services in the county. Similarly, another study by Makena (2012) found out that e-governance system has had a great impact on work conditions at Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) offices, which in return boosted service delivery. The study also concluded that information technology improves the quality of service deliver by government offices to the citizenry.

The researcher proposes further studies on related variables among county government like e-health and service delivery besides the relationship of e human resource management and service delivery among county governments as possible areas of further study.

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