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Performance Contracting and Service Delivery in County Governments in Kenya: A Case of Kakamega County

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Abstract

County governments have implemented a variety of strategies, including performance contracting, to improve service delivery. However, they have been shown to perform poorly. This is despite receiving a significant portion of the national budget to carry out their mandates. This means that the effects of a performance contracting strategy in counties must be thoroughly examined in order to understand the exact situation on the ground and its true value. Based on these arguments, the study looked into how performance contracting affected service delivery in Kakamega County Government. The study was founded on three theories: expectancy theory, goal setting theory, and the dynamics of service delivery. The study was guided by four specific objectives: determining the impact of target setting on service delivery; establishing the effect of vetting and negotiation on service delivery; determining the effect of execution on service delivery; and determining the impact of monitoring and evaluation on service delivery. The research used a descriptive research design. The study included 142 respondents from Kakamega's Executive and County Assembly. Each respondent was given a questionnaire that they could fill out themselves. The collected data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data underwent descriptive analysis and was presented in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. To test the hypotheses, we used regression analysis. The findings resulted in the rejection of three null hypotheses: a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables was identified. As a result, the study concluded that target setting, execution, monitoring, and evaluation all have a positive impact on service delivery. The findings would help policymakers at both levels of government make decisions about how to strengthen performance contracts. The study findings will help the incoming governor of the County Government of Kakamega identify areas for improvement in service delivery, and the task force on performance contracting policy will benefit from the findings.

Keywords: *Performance, Contracting, Service Delivery, County Governments, Kakamega County*

1.0 Background of the Study

Countries worldwide have seen an increased demand for quality service delivery due to rising populations (World Bank, 2019). Performance contracting has gained traction in the public sector as a technique to improve service delivery (Domberger, 2018). According to Domberger (2018), performance contracting enhances productivity and effectiveness while reducing costs. Countries like Norway, Australia, France, New Zealand, and Spain, which have utilized performance contracting for over four decades, have seen enhanced public service delivery (OECD, 2019). For example, an analysis in Norway for 2017/2018 found that financial regulations supporting performance contracts led to improved performance across civil service agencies. African countries have also adopted performance contracting in public sector reforms, including Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Humphrey, 2015). A comparative study by Yaw and Hadija (2019) in Ghana found that the State Enterprises Commission evaluated outcomes of performance contracting, such as financial and operational targets. Larbi (2017) determined that performance contracting ensured effective, high-standard delivery across Ghana's public agencies. Despite initial resistance from 1999-2003, performance contracting led to a 23% increase in service delivery, with goods processing becoming 80% more effective (State Enterprises Commission, 2018). Ghana's strong modern economy partly stems from the well-integrated adoption of performance contracting (Humphrey, 2015).

Tanzania has experienced rapid growth, partly credited to the widespread adoption of performance contracting and the use of measurement information by civil servants, leading to improved service delivery (Shillingi, 2017). For instance, the National Housing Corporation saw a 36% increase in service delivery from 2016-2019 by implementing performance contracting with clear objectives (Sulle, 2019). However, implementing these systems remains challenging (Sulle, 2019). The East African Community (EAC) used performance contracting in its 2008-2009 Strategic Plan to clarify contributions and target key initiatives for member states (Ndung'u, 2019). While performance contracting has a history in Tanzania's public sector, increased integration and accountability for poor performance have advanced more in the last five years (Sulle, 2019). In Kenya, public sector performance has been lacking since independence, hindering development (Omondi, 2019). Factors include political interference, inadequate management, unclear expectations, and the absence of performance assessment (Muthaura, 2017). Thus, performance contracting was adopted in 2003 to address these gaps (Omondi, 2019). A case study in Mandera County found clear ties between performance contracting and public service delivery, through aspects like target-setting, feedback, and ongoing training (Hassan, 2019). However, no known academic studies have examined the specific impacts on service delivery in Kakamega County. Studies confirm that performance contracting improves public sector outcomes in OECD countries as an effective management tool, though debate continues on its precise conceptualization (Obong'o, 2019). In Kenya, it is seen as a binding agreement between government entities and individuals on targets over set periods (GoK, 2004).

Performance contracting aims to impact service delivery through employee involvement, performance incentives, capacity building, and more (Mbua & Ole Sarisar, 2019). The UK implemented Public Service Agreements in 1998 with departmental targets (Moy, 2017), while performance contracts in Denmark increased productivity and policy influence (Binderkrantz, 2011). The US pursued greater efficiency and public trust through the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act. Kenya adopted performance contracting in 2003 to enhance service

quality through specific ministry goals, customer charters, and world-standard benchmarking (GoK, 2019). Since 2003, performance contracting has increased accountability, though challenges remain in devolved units (Omondi, 2019). By 2007/2008, it had cushioned Kenya's economy against the global crisis (Tonui, 2018). Employees require clear priorities and feedback to stay on track in delivering services that ultimately fulfill institutional objectives (Shivachi, 2017; UNDP, 2019; World Bank, 2017). International evidence shows that performance contracting improves government service delivery, though adoption varies. England set agency metrics under reforms like Next Steps and the Financial Management Program (Dooren et al., 2019). Germany stressed efficiency under the New Steering Model, while Sweden and Norway use performance objectives, adapted to suit agencies (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2020; Dooren et al., 2019). African adopters include Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Togo, Tunisia, and the D.R. Congo (Muriuki, 2019). In Kenya, reforms since 2003, including performance contracting, aimed to address procurement and corruption issues (Hassan, 2019). Weak public sector performance and expectations have strained Kenya's budget without yielding results (Muthaura, 2017). Broader Kenyan reforms since the 1990s have focused on containing the wage bill, aligning agencies, disciplining personnel, and building capacity around service quality (GoK, 2019; Mbuia & Ole Sarisar, 2019). A customer service orientation became a priority in line with Vision 2030 planning (Obongo, 2019). Performance contracting fits Kenya's emphasis on assessment, training, and development to enhance public sector performance.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

OECD countries use various metrics for performance contracting, emphasizing the need to understand its specific impacts on public sector service delivery (OECD, 2019). Recent adopters in Africa, such as Benin, Cameroon, Togo, Tunisia, and the D.R. Congo, have seen performance contracting improve delivery by 32.5% in Ghana from 2010 to 2017. However, public sector gains still lag behind the 76.2% improvement in the private sector, as challenges like corruption persist (AU, 2018; Oliver & Nakamura, 2018; Yaw & Hadija, 2019). In Kenya, studies from 2000 onwards confirm that the adoption of performance contracting has boosted accountability and consumer orientation in the public sector (GoK, 2019; Hassan, 2019; Ndung'u, 2019). Nonetheless, service gaps due to corruption and misuse of funds remain, highlighting the need for county-level research (Shivachi, 2017). Performance contracting aims to shift the public sector culture from being inward-looking to emphasizing performance (Ndung'u, 2019; Omondi, 2019). A report by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) from 2011 to 2017 indicates that while Kenya's current performance contracting system rates public sector performance well, it falls short in cascading to lower individual levels (Kinanga & Partoip, 2019). With unclear outputs, efficiently calculating impacts remains a challenge, necessitating further research on the potential service delivery improvements from performance contracting in counties. The exploratory, qualitative study by Kinanga and Partoip (2019) left specific effects unclear, unlike the current quantitative, descriptive investigation into the relationships between variables.

Existing research has often overlooked the contributions of performance contracting to service delivery in devolved contexts (Walker, 2015; Wiseman, 2017). Walker (2015) focused on organizational strategy, planning, and networking in devolved governments without addressing performance contracting. Wiseman (2017) identified top management as crucial for the success of performance contracting but did not connect this to service delivery. Hassan (2019) linked performance contracting to goal-setting, skills, and training impacts on county delivery in Mandera, although its adoption was not comprehensive across departments and administrative

levels, limiting its generalizability. Most studies have concentrated on state corporations rather than county governments (Hassan, 2019). Given that Mandera County is an arid region with minimal population density (KNBS, 2019), its findings cannot represent other counties like Kakamega, which have different methodologies and respondents. The current study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the impacts of performance contracting stages on service charters, technologies, and complaint handling in relation to goal-setting, vetting, execution, and evaluation, to determine specific effects on service delivery in Kakamega County.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine the effect of performance contracting on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by four specific objectives:

- i. To determine the effect of target-setting on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega
- ii. To establish the effect of vetting and negotiation on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega
- iii. To find out the effect of execution on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega
- iv. To determine the effect of monitoring and evaluation on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega

2.0 Literature Review

The section present the theoretical framework, empirical literature and conceptual framework.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research was anchored on three theoretical frameworks that can be applied for implementing and managing performance management namely: expectancy theory, goal setting theory and dynamic theory of service delivery.

2.1.1 Expectancy Theory

Expectancy Theory, introduced by Locke in 1968, may be applied to performance contracting. The theory comprises components such as performance-outcome, expectancy, valence, and effort. Performance-outcome refers to the expectation that remuneration is directly linked to one's level of success (Sloof & Praag, 2005). Expectancy theory suggests that an individual's effort to succeed in a certain task is influenced by the belief that such success will be rewarded and the value of that reward to the individual (Robbins & Judge, 2007). This principle holds true in the County Government of Kakamega, motivating employees to exceed their usual responsibilities. Specifically, employees are driven by the anticipation that their contributions, leading to positive performance appraisals, will result in incentives such as bonuses, promotions, or pay raises, aligning with their personal goals. Consequently, an individual who consistently exceeds expectations can significantly impact service quality.

The theory is based on the premise that individuals join organizations with specific expectations, desires, motives, and past experiences (Locke & Latham, 2013). These factors influence how they

interact with the organization. Secondly, individual actions result from conscious choices, with people free to pursue behaviors suggested by their own expectancy equations. Thirdly, different individuals seek different outcomes from their organization (e.g., fair pay, job security, advancement opportunities, and challenges), and they choose among alternatives to maximize their personal benefits. When presented with multiple options, individuals are likely to select the most appealing one (Bandura, 2000). Moreover, the more desirable a particular outcome is, the more motivated an individual will be to pursue it. This process is supported by our inherent tendency towards pleasure-seeking, aiming to maximize positive outcomes (such as a raise in pay) while minimizing negative ones (such as a pay cut or disciplinary action). According to Expectancy Theory, individuals are rational in their decision-making, considering the "pros and cons" of each option and choosing the one that offers the greatest benefits with the fewest disadvantages.

2.1.2 Goal Setting Theory

Edwin Locke argued in the 1960s, according to Arnberg (2017), that plans to work toward a goal are a significant source of work motivation. Three basic assumptions are often made through goal-setting philosophy. First, goal-setting theory claims that high-level, concrete expectations produce more results than low-level, abstract goals like "do your best." Second, it claims that when people commit to a task, there is a strong, linear relationship between goal complexity and success. To put it another way, the bigger the target, the better. Third, it asserts that a variety of other mechanisms known to affect behaviour and success, such as feedback and cash rewards, do so only to the degree that they encourage the setting of particular, strong targets. Goal setting, in other words, attributes to the impact of these additional influences on results (Latham, 2007). According to Latham (2007), studies have found that self-efficacy, or an individual's confidence in their potential to excel, is linked to higher expectations and a greater contribution to those goals. Many kinds of input courses are more beneficial than others, and the impact of feedback varies based on the individual's characteristics. According to one analysis, positive feedback improved motivation when given in relation to individually valued goals, whereas negative feedback increased motivation when given in relation to mandatory goals (Kim & Kim, 2016).

Individual-level influences tend to affect feedback usage as well, as shown by a survey of industrial goods salespeople. Brown (2001) discovered that those with high self-efficacy used suggestions productively, while those with poor self-efficacy did not. Some research also show that the original motivation for seeking input may influence its usefulness. People want feedback for a variety of purposes, including improving performance, boosting their egos, or managing the impressions they produce on others. However, only feedback solicited with the goal of using it productively enhances performance (Ashford & Black, 1996). The basic trend from the workplace feedback study is that feedback is an integral part of the target-setting process. Still, its exact function varies based on feedback characteristics and contextual and individual-level considerations (Anderson, 2017). The following principle pertains to the management of efficiency contracts for service delivery in government agencies. Goal-setting and performance contracting are inextricably linked. The deal is tailored to meet particular objectives. The report would dig at the whole method of setting targets/goals that are consistent with the agencies' and departments' mandates. Throughout the procedure, it is necessary to explain how the organisation and the customer can use technologies for service delivery. Before signing a performance contract or a performance assessment, individual expectations must speak to the larger organization's mandate. Government agencies can only show value for money by service delivery technologies that are clever and attainable.

2.1.3 Dynamic Theory of Service Delivery

The theory was brought to the fore by Lovelock in 1992. The theory states that service quality cannot be measured and tested in as straightforward a manner as quality can be measured and tested in manufacturing. The theory provides insights that inform the operations that lead to service delivery. System dynamics permit an individual to develop explicit theories or models of sufficient size and complexity to encompass the rich and unwieldy phenomena encountered in psychology and other social and behavioral science disciplines. Kahneman and Lovallo (1993) suggest that in in-service or intangible areas, managers often tend to set aggressive objectives. Whereas this in some cases does help to create a bit of initial push or awareness, in the long run, it drives towards the achievement of the organisation goals and contribute to the undermining of individual employee development (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). Von Rosenstiel (2011) agree that in making the judgment on service improvement works that, workers compare the improvement results they observe to their expectations. The expectation is influenced by the objectives or targets sets and monitored over a set period. The commitment raises if progress is high relatively to aspirations and falls whenever progress is disappointing. This in turn directly influences service delivery. The study while looking at service delivery, productivity, time of service and flexibility are critical indicators. Osborne and Hammoud (2017) indicate that work is on-going to synthesize a holistic framework to facilitate an understanding of value co-creation in public services . Recent studies report that ‘service logic’, explores the interactive and dynamic relationship between service delivery and their consumers in the co-creation for value for all parties (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2015). This the customer satisfaction and public participation which are indicators under the independent variables are deemed contributors to service delivery. Wanjohi (2014), indicated that failure to refer important decisions to the local people, communities, and the general public through participation would amount to usurping the sovereign rights of those citizens who are the rightful owners of the services offered by the governments. Campbell et al. (2016) while supporting the theory describes it as one that seeks to identify the important variables, specifying how they are interrelated, and identifying under what conditions they contribute to service delivery.

2.2 Empirical Review

The section presents the empirical review of the documented literature on performance contracting and services delivery from a global, continental, regional, and local contexts.

2.2.1 Performance Contracting

Even though performance contracting has been described differently by various organizations, scholars, management experts, and researcher, the Performance Management Guideline (2016) and the OECD (1993; 2009; 2019) are the most preferred for this study. According to the OECD (2009; 1999), a performance contract is a set of supervision tools utilized to determine responsibility and objectives among parties to realise mutually acceptable outcomes. A performance contract, according to the Performance Management Guideline (2016), is a written contract between the government and a government agency for the delivery of public services in which relevant outputs are identified for the agency to produce/deliver. Quantifiable targets that explicitly set to be achieved within a prescribed timeframe and performance is measured against the targets.

Outside the definition of performance contracting, there exists a model framework developed by several management experts to explain its effective and efficient implementation. According to the

Performance Management Guideline (2016), the Performance Management Framework outlines how to go about everything related to performance contracting, from goal-setting to determining how to quantify milestones, to delivering daily evaluations. For effective implementation of the performance contract, the need to pay attention to all the stages within the performance contracting cycle cannot be overemphasized. Success is pegged on how the county undertakes the whole process. Figure 1 below presents the performance contracting cycle, according to the Performance Management Guideline (2016).

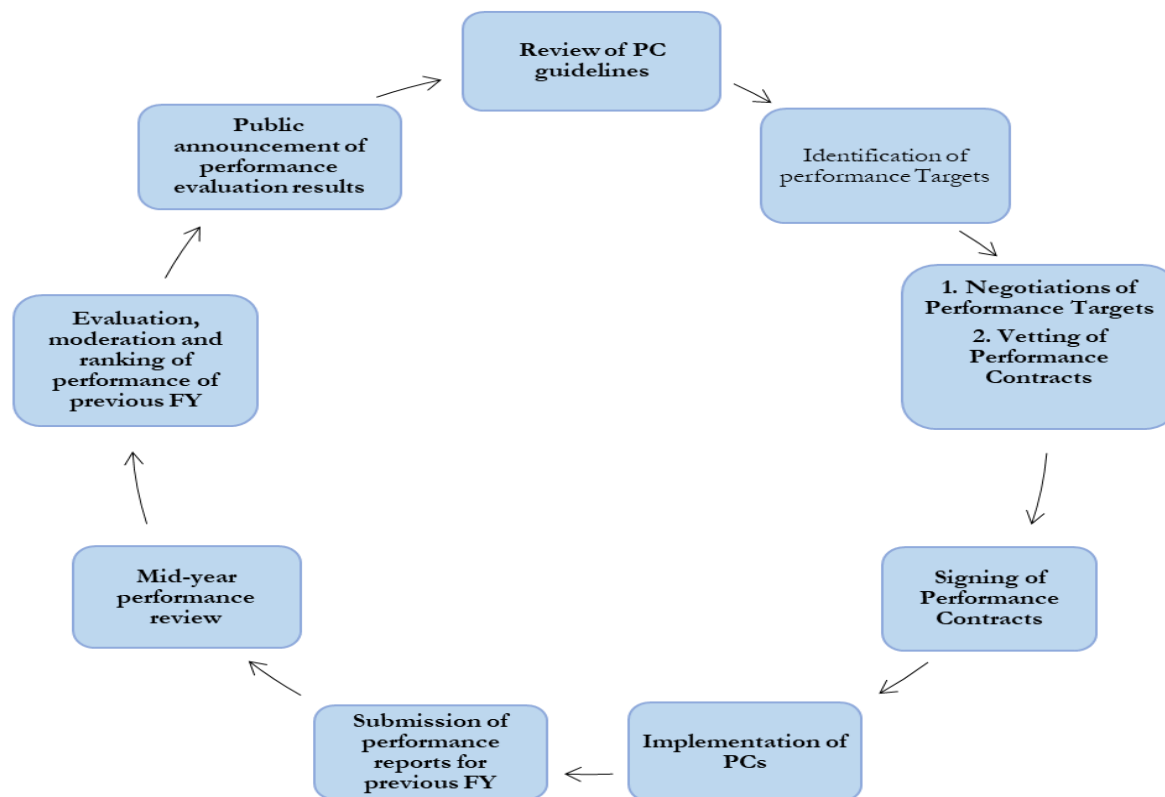


Figure 1: The Performance Contracting Cycle

Performance contracting aims to enhance public sector performance, addressing the perception of consistently failing to meet expectations (RBM Guide, 2018). Factors such as excessive controls, a diversity of values, political interference, and mismanagement have contributed to poor performance, positioning contracts as a tool for improvement (Salome et al., 2019). The objectives encompass promoting accountability at both senior and lower levels, prioritizing financial stewardship, clarifying workforce roles in achieving agreed objectives, and improving overall public service delivery (Arif et al., 2018). Since its inception in France during the 1980s, performance contracting has been adopted in regions including Asia, Africa, Latin America, the UK, Malaysia, and the USA (Bouckaert & van Dooren, 2003; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2020). In England, significant agency metrics were established through reforms such as Next Steps and the Financial Management Initiative (Dooren et al., 2019).

In Africa, performance contracting has been implemented to enhance services, increase outputs, strengthen accountability, and diminish the overreliance on government revenue sharing (ECA, 2019). The outcomes have been mixed, with countries like Ghana and South Africa witnessing changes, while others have seen limited progress due to unclear, conflicting goals and issues with

transparency (CAPAM, 2018; Sulle 2019; TI, 2019). Kenya introduced performance contracting in 2003 to address issues related to an oversized workforce and stagnant economic growth, aiming to enhance the achievement of mutually agreed targets by public corporations (GoK, 2017; Mbua & Ole Sarisar, 2019). Research indicates that managers perceive contracts as a control mechanism that aids Kenyan state corporations in fulfilling their objectives and promoting efficiency improvements (Choke, 2006; Salome et al., 2019). Previous studies in Kenya have explored various aspects of performance contracting, such as monitoring, assessment, implementation, and goal setting (Hassan, 2019; Mburugu, 2018; Opondo, 2019). A study in Mandera County linked factors like planning and competency to improvements in county-level service delivery (Hassan, 2019).

2.2.2 Target Setting and Service Delivery

Literature shows target setting often occurs as part of broader performance management structures across public sectors aimed at efficient service delivery rather than independently (United Nations Development Programme, 2019; Verhoest, 2015). Quality improvement methods like benchmarking and balanced scorecards align with management theory (Oliver & Nakamura, 2018; Schang & Morton, 2016). Goals constitute the core pillar of performance contracting (Karl et al., 2019). The Goal principle states that specific, challenging yet achievable targets enhance motivation and performance, especially when viewed as fair and set participatively with managerial support (Fisher et al., 2015). International evidence links target setting to service delivery improvements. US performance contracting incorporating stakeholder input and communication boosted innovation and customer service as manager attitudes changed (Sloof & Praag, 2017; World Bank, 2019). Clear priorities and accountability from output-based contracts were found to increase government accountability and link administrator results to varied priorities in developing nations (Therkildsen, 2001). However, developing countries still face challenges fully realizing performance contracting potential. A Rwandan study affirmed target setting's role improving accountability, participation and efficiency, though further clarification can enhance delivery and reduce ambiguity (Ndagijimana, 2020). In Kenya, analysis reinforces target setting's positive performance contracting impacts but lacks statistical testing of influence strength. At the Tourism Board, factors like rewards, capacity and management affected contracting beyond goals that promoted service delivery (Chol, 2017). Explicit, participative Ministry of Tourism targets increased prioritization and performance (Mauya, 2015). A Garissa County study linked types of goal setting resources, precise targets, reasonable timeframes and achievability to county delivery, offering metrics despite disadvantages as an arid region (Hassan, 2019). The present study addresses gaps through statistical examination of target setting's service delivery effects.

2.2.3 Vetting and Negotiations and Services Delivery

A study across 24 countries found that vetting and negotiations aid in setting practical, observable goals that are anchored in available resources and comparable performance (Aguinis, 2017). This process facilitates the determination of feasibility, development focus, and benchmarking. However, the study placed more emphasis on negotiations than vetting. In Gambia, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), research highlighted the importance of stakeholder participation through vetting and negotiations but noted the absence of a standard timeframe, leading to varied effects of performance contracts across states (Martin, 2019). Tanzanian reforms, under President Magufuli, utilized factors such as capacity building, goal setting, and vetting/negotiations—including aspects like timing, training, resources, and attitudes—to improve public sector delivery (Rugumyambeto, 2019). In Kenya, research has linked vetting and

negotiations to improvements in delivery, although there has been less focus on the devolved contexts since 2013. A study on public universities revealed limited employee engagement in contracting and modest progress in achieving metrics. Barriers, such as poor cooperation during the vetting and negotiation processes, were perceived as impositions by senior management on resistant junior staff (Nganyi et al., 2019). Some organizations achieved only 27% effectiveness in vetting, indicating significant potential for improvement (Kinyulusi et al., 2018). The literature confirms that properly conducted vetting ensures alignment with standards, linkage of priorities, and participation of stakeholders, which in turn enhances institutional performance (Kobia & Mohammed, 2006; Mbuu & Ole Sarisar, 2019; Ogudha, 2017). However, challenges in integrating vetting and negotiations have negatively impacted delivery in various agencies (Mose, 2017; Shivachi, 2017). The negotiation consultation phase is crucial for conducting organizational SWOT analyses, determining the adequacy of resources, and setting SMART goals that are comparable to sector benchmarks in an ideal model (Kinyulusi et al., 2018). Draft contracts then incorporate issues agreed upon in phase one before undergoing independent vetting to ensure consistency with standards and priorities (Ogudha, 2017). Stakeholder participation is key to establishing suitable, comprehensive targets and budgets (Kobia & Mohammed, 2006; Mbuu & Ole Sarisar, 2019).

2.2.4 Execution and Services Delivery

2.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation and Service Delivery

Studies show monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is crucial for performance contracting to track progress, identify gaps, and guide improvements (Metawie & Gilman, 2019; Lienert, 2018). According to Grapinet (2018), effective monitoring provides early indications of success or lack thereof in achieving performance targets. Monitoring helps determine the gap between planned and actual performance and identify potential successes and problems. Metawie and Gilman (2019) found that government organizations in the UK with effective M&E were ranked highly globally for service delivery. Lienert (2018) showed that businesses determine appraisal process effectiveness regularly in addition to continuous employee evaluation. M&E helps verify target achievement, calculate scores, and boost service delivery through regular review and aligned HR roles (SEC, 2019). However, many African countries lack M&E mechanisms, relying on secondary data with limitations (Lin & Lee, 2017). Lin and Lee (2017) state that M&E informs stakeholders on implementation status and effects on service delivery, though studies using secondary data may not accurately reflect events, especially where corruption alters results. In Kenya's public sector, officials use outdated M&E strategies rather than evidence-based assessments, with no standardized practices (Muriuki, 2019; Shivachi, 2017). Kobia (2006) found officials rely on old, perceived tried and true strategies rather than critical, evidence-based M&E. Shivachi (2017) showed workers had no set patterns or standards, including part-time staff. Mbuu and Sarisar (2018) found negative perceptions of M&E as witch-hunting hinder performance contracting success. Shivachi (2017) also showed weak M&E policies and systems persist at universities, with issues like lack of defined M&E procedures, inappropriate M&E systems, manual tracking, and unclear reporting priorities. Addressing views of M&E as punitive and strengthening policies/systems could improve performance contracting outcomes.

2.2.6 Service Delivery

According to Aguinis (2018), effective service delivery requires the government to recognize the importance of fostering a citizen-centered administration. It should strive for coherent policy

implementation through various regulatory and other frameworks to ensure quality public service delivery and ensure that public services are accessible. It's crucial to redefine programs with a clear focus on meeting customer demands. Sijbom (2013) emphasizes that service delivery innovation is vital in the global economy, given the constantly changing preferences and the emergence of diverse customer/client communities with varied tastes, beliefs, and trends. Government organizations leverage innovation to deliver cost-effective services and products, enhance customer/client value, and refine service delivery mechanisms to boost efficiency and reduce costs. Ja-Shen and Hung-Tai (2009) argue that service innovation is a key business strategy for improving performance and profitability, especially when products or services become homogeneous, or an original competitive edge is lost. While many private-sector reports on service delivery improvement exist, Jin & Wang (2019) highlight the obligation of public sector employees to engage in service delivery innovation, as they are accountable to the public or citizens. This commitment ensures that government departments must provide modern and innovative services and products, leveraging their technical competencies in knowledge and expertise, to maintain a competitive service role.

Fox et al. (2016) suggest that social responsibility initiatives are more likely to succeed when clinicians can understand and navigate their local context, including politics, procedures, laws, oversight bodies, and stakeholder groups in service delivery. These factors vary by public service sector and country. In nations where decentralization of public service delivery is in its early stages, devolved units might face challenges due to inadequate jurisdiction, capability, or planning capacity. Westhorp et al. (2016) emphasize the significance of democratic or political decentralization for effective community accountability in education, where municipal councils have sufficient power, jurisdiction, funding, and accountability. The role of information, the perspectives of citizens, service providers, the media, and the government's trust in information sources are all critical. Supporting local leaders through trusted mediaries is also essential. Björkman et al. (2017) found that locally-based monitoring in Uganda's health sector had significant long-term effects on health outcomes when health services and community associations collaborated on actions or sanctions beyond their authority. Westhorp et al. (2016) indicate that locally-based monitoring shows promise when community partners are ready to take meaningful action to improve service quality and outcomes in health and education.

The Citizen Service Delivery Charters (CSDCs) are clearly defined public documents that provide essential information about the services a public office offers to citizens/customers and relevant stakeholders. Despite the existence of many public institutions to serve citizens, public perceptions and experiences with the quality and delivery methods of these services have often been less than satisfactory. Recognizing consumers as crucial to their existence, public institutions must see people not merely as customers but as citizens, contributing to the nation's daily life and development. The World Bank (2017) stresses this perspective for encouraging interaction among the nation's key actors, including the private sector and civil society. In the context of government health facilities, despite the introduction of the MOH citizen charter in 2006 to enhance service delivery, challenges such as inefficiency, insensitivity, ineffectiveness, and hostility persist. These challenges hinder access to quality care, impacting health outcomes and economic growth negatively. The Performance Management Coordination Unit suggests that CSDCs holistically address the challenges faced by the public in accessing services, enhancing transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and combating corruption. CSDCs serve as a tool for providing citizens and stakeholders with information about available services, access methods, service standards, expected service delivery times, customer obligations, and complaint redress

mechanisms. Bouckaert and Peters (2017) consider CSDCs vital for continuously improving the quality of public services, ensuring value for money, and enhancing accountability. They also facilitate direct feedback between service providers and users, fostering public trust.

Xavier (2019) defines customer satisfaction as the degree to which the delivery of county public services meets or exceeds customer expectations. It encompasses the utility customers derive from the products or services provided by various county departments, in line with the County Integrated Development Plan and Annual Development Plans. County Departments and Boards are required to conduct independent baseline customer satisfaction surveys, coordinated by the Head of County Public Service. According to the United Nations Development Group (2019), customer satisfaction reflects a collective assessment of a company's product or service quality, influencing customer loyalty, retention, and productivity, which in turn enhances service delivery. The World Bank (2017) notes that participatory mechanisms of service delivery governance are often manipulated by elites, making meaningful engagement by disadvantaged individuals challenging. Turner and Hulme (2017) advocate for facilitated and organized processes to ensure equitable representation and lower barriers to participation, making it easier to gauge satisfaction with service delivery.

Complaints serve as a crucial feedback mechanism for assessing an institution's performance and the conduct of its staff. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding an organization's products, services, staff, or complaint handling, with an expectation of a response or resolution. Effective management of public sector complaints and safeguarding the right to remedy are essential for good governance and efficient service delivery. Appeals and redress mechanisms embody the principles of democratic transparency, promoting good governance by integrating grievances, transparency, engagement, and evaluation into organizational policies and practices. In Kenya, public service reforms aim to enhance operational efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of public organizations, with County Governments documenting and reporting on the resolution of public grievances to assess service delivery performance.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The research made use of a conceptual framework as indicated in Figure 2 which shows the relationship that exists between independent and dependent variable.

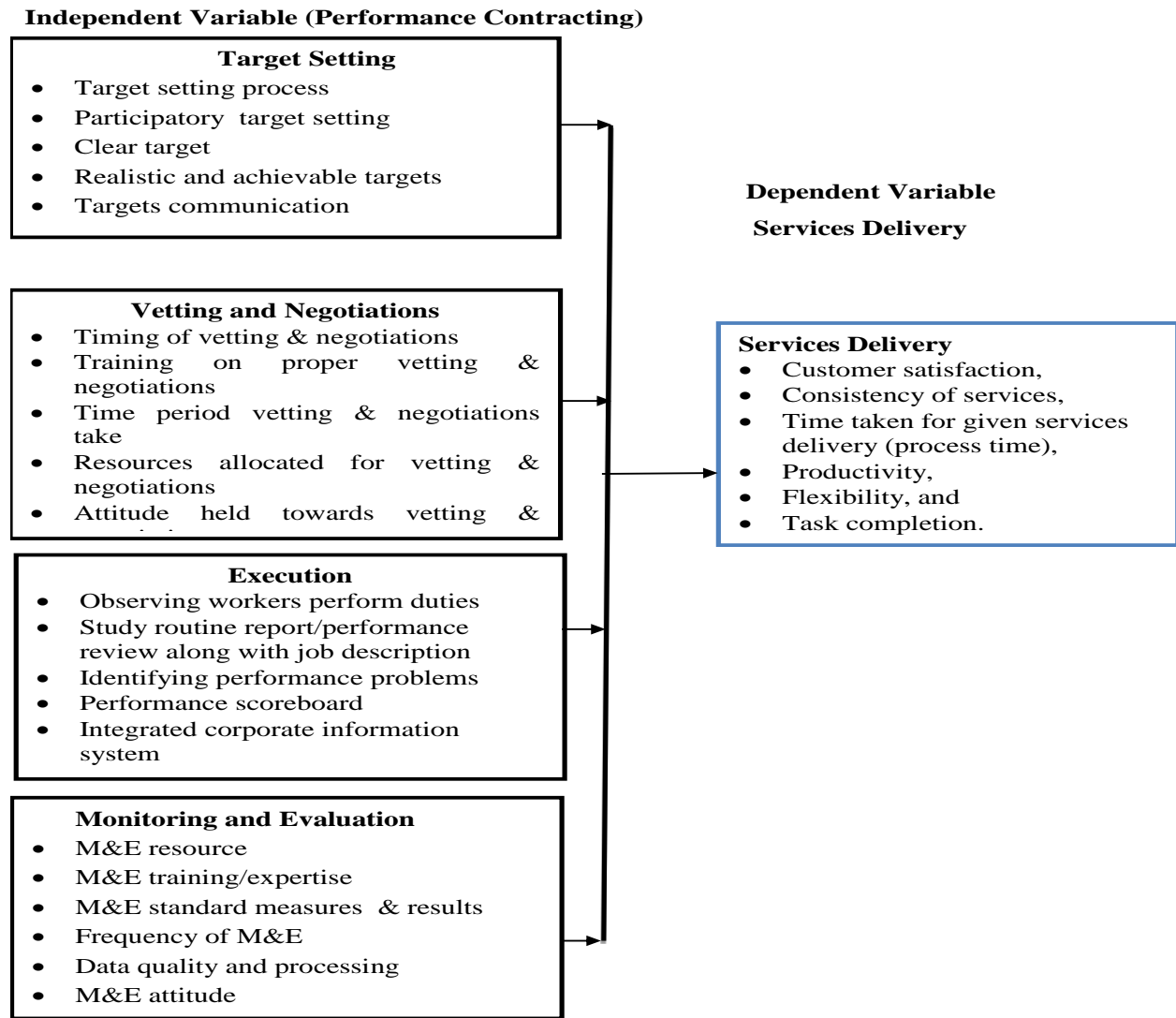


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Research Methodology

The study used a descriptive case study design with 142 county staff as the target population, which included the governor, deputy governor, county secretary, county executive committee members, county chief officers, directors, heads of departments, county assembly members, and the county service delivery unit. A census was preferred to ensure that the sample accurately represented the target population. Data was gathered using questionnaires and an interview guide, and primary quantitative data was analysed in SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistics such as correlation analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis. To ensure reliability, the instruments were validated using an expert review and a pilot test.

4.0 Results and Discussions

The respondent demographics showed a majority were male, over 45 years old, highly educated with at least an undergraduate degree, and had 5 or more years of experience working in the county government. While 57% indicated having signed performance contracts, 66% expressed a

generally negative attitude, though awareness on aspects like target setting (88.2%), vetting (76.4%), execution (90.6%) and M&E (85.8%) was high. Further findings showed unanimous agreement that target setting supports service delivery in line with statutory planning requirements.

4.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation describes the degree and direction of relationship between two variables. This study utilized correlation to test hypotheses. The table below summarizes the correlation results as obtained from SPSS.

Table 1: Correlation Results

Independent variables	Dependent variable	Pearson Correlation Coefficient(<i>r</i>)	Coefficient of Determination (<i>R</i> ²)	Significance (<i>p</i> value)
Target setting	Service Delivery	.328	0.108	<.001
Vetting and Negotiation	Service Delivery	.206	0.042	.020
Execution	Service Delivery	.227	0.052	.001
Monitoring and evaluation	Service Delivery	.303	0.092	.001

There was a weak positive linear relationship between target setting and service delivery ($r = 0.328$). The association is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), thus we conclude that target setting has a significant relationship with service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is 0.108, this means that 10.8% of the variation in service delivery is explained by target setting. There is a weak positive linear relationship between vetting and negotiation and service delivery ($r = 0.206$). The relationship is not statistically significant ($p = .020$), thus we conclude that vetting and negotiation had no significant relationship with service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is 0.042, 4.2% of the variation in Service delivery is explained by vetting and negotiation. There was a weak, positive linear relationship between execution and service delivery ($r = 0.227$). The relationship is statistically significant ($p = .001$), thus we conclude that execution has a significant relationship with service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is 0.052, 5.2% of the variation in service delivery is explained by execution. There is a weak positive linear relationship between monitoring and evaluation and Service delivery ($r = 0.303$). The relationship is statistically significant ($p = .001$), thus we conclude that monitoring and evaluation has a significant relationship with service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is 0.092, 9.2% of the variation in service delivery is explained by monitoring and evaluation.

4.2 Regression Analysis Results

The section present the ANOVA results, coefficients regression results and the hypothesis

Table 2: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.756	4	.439	7.746	.000 ^b
Residual	6.913	122	.057		
Total	8.669	126			

From the ANOVA Table, $F(4,122) = 7.746, p < .0001$, the regression model is thus significant as at least one of the independent variables; target setting, vetting and negotiation, monitoring and evaluation and execution is significant.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	2.024	.390		5.195	.000
Target setting	.163	.056	.246	2.924	.004
Vetting and negotiation	.062	.062	.089	1.002	.318
Execution on services delivery	.151	.062	.197	2.421	.017
Monitoring and evaluation	.149	.069	.194	2.152	.033

The resulting regression equation is;

$$\text{Service Delivery} = 2.024 + 0.163 * \text{Target Setting} + 0.062 * \text{Vetting and Negotiation} + 0.151 * \text{Execution} + 0.149 * \text{Monitoring and Evaluation}.$$

The constant, 2.024 means that, if the other variables are equal to zero, service delivery was equal to 2.024. The coefficient of target setting, 0.163 means that, holding the other variables constant, a unit increase in target setting increased service delivery by 0.0163. The coefficient of vetting and negotiation, 0.062 means that, holding the other variables constant, a unit increase in vetting and negotiation increases service delivery by 0.062. The coefficient of execution, 0.151 means that, holding the other variables constant, a unit increase in execution increases service delivery by 0.151. The coefficient of monitoring and evaluation, 0.149 means that, holding the other variables constant, a unit increase in monitoring and evaluation increases service delivery by 0.149.

Target setting ($t = 2.924, p = 0.04$), Execution ($t = 2,421, p = 0.017$) and monitoring and evaluation ($t = 2.152, p = 0.033$) are significant predictors of service delivery. Vetting and negotiation ($t = 1.002, p = .318$) is not a significant predictor.

$H_{0:1}$ Target setting has no effect on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega.

The null hypothesis was rejected as target setting had a significant effect on service delivery; as it was a significant predictor of service delivery. In view of the regression analysis findings and the hypothesis testing, the study is in agreement with Karl et al. (2019) who observed that the objective setting or goal setting or target setting is the core pillar of performance contracting of any given organization that adds up general public sector performance in any given country. The study resonates with the World Bank (2019) report that indicated that performance-contracting elements like smart objectives/target/goal setting in the USA have been crucial in ensuring improved services delivery. Further the study agrees with Hassan (2019) who found that target/goal setting has a major impact on service delivery in devolved units in a study in Garissa County Government.

H_{0.2} Vetting and negotiation has no significant effect on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega.

The null hypothesis was not rejected as vetting and negotiation had no significant effect on service delivery. It was not a significant predictor of service delivery. Mose (2017) further reckons that negotiations and vetting is a very complex phase in the process of performance contracting and at times requires a very experienced expert or a consulting firm to undertake the process. This is attributed to the non rejection of the hypothesis. He further outlined that majority of the organizations fail to clearly link vetting and negotiations which later on lead to failed performance contracts. Aguinis (2017) urged that the negotiating process aids the parties in determining if the developed goals are: practical, feasible, observable, development driven, and are benchmarked against previous success or comparable organizations' performance globally, regionally, and internationally. However, the study found out that vetting and negotiation did not directly affect service delivery, thus providing room for further research.

H_{0.3} Execution has no significant effect on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega

The null hypothesis is rejected as execution has a significant effect on service delivery; as it is a significant predictor of service delivery. The study found that execution has a direct relation with service delivery. With the rejection of the null hypothesis, the research agrees with Grapinnet (2018), who notes that execution has a continuous role that mainly serves to provide early signs of success, or lack thereof, in the attainment of intervention of performance. Effective monitoring is not a one-off activity but a continuous one. This results in a direct relation with service delivery. Tonui (2018) investigated the effect of performance targets on workers' performance in Kenyan public institutions and found out that observing employee undertake their responsibilities contributed to high productivity and that task execution contributed to performance scoreboard that enabled customer satisfaction.

H_{0.4} Monitoring and Evaluation has no significant effect on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega.

The null hypothesis is rejected as monitoring and evaluation has a significant effect on service delivery; as it is a significant predictor of service delivery. The study concurs with Mauya (2015) who outlined various indicators that can be used to measure effective and efficient implementation of various performance-contracting targets/goals/objectives which include the ability of the various stakeholders in ensuring that employees perform duties; ability to stack repetitive report/performance review in line with the job description; identifying performance gaps and challenges. The increased economic growth witnessed in Rwanda over a long period since the country recovered from the civil war was attributed to the adoption of performance contracting

with effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting (World Bank, 2017; UNDP, 2018); this is in agrees with the study results on Monitoring and Evaluation.

5.0 Conclusions

Performance contracting was elucidated by four variables: target setting, vetting and negotiations, execution, and monitoring and evaluation. These relationships were hypothesized within a conceptual framework, leading to the collection, decoding, cleaning, and examination of primary data. The data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, and appropriate graphical representations were employed for visualization. Additionally, inferential statistical methods, including correlation analysis, ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis, were utilized. The results indicated that target setting, execution, and monitoring and evaluation were all weakly and positively correlated with service delivery, albeit insignificantly. Conversely, vetting and negotiations showed no significant correlation with service delivery. In terms of explained variance, target setting, vetting and negotiations, execution, and monitoring and evaluation accounted for 10.8%, 4.2%, 5.5%, and 9.2% of the variations in service delivery, respectively. Hypothesis testing led to the conclusion that vetting, negotiations, and service delivery were not significantly related. However, a statistically significant relationship was found between target setting, execution and monitoring and evaluation, and service delivery. Service delivery remains a pivotal element in fostering satisfied citizens within the public sector. While the government's existence is predicated on service provision, the methodology of such provision often becomes a point of debate. Stakeholder participation in project and program selection, the establishment of annual targets aligned with County Integrated Development Plans, and the emphasis on execution and monitoring and evaluation are imperative for efficacious service delivery. Many counties have yet to recognize the significance of performance contracting, resulting in continued deficiencies in citizen satisfaction. With performance management frameworks in place, endorsed by the Council of Governors for county adoption, strides towards adherence to performance contracting as a statutory obligation would significantly enhance accountability of duty bearers to service recipients through performance contracting. County Governments must ensure that performance indicators are directly connected to service delivery in the execution of their mandates.

6.0 Recommendations

County Governments can adopt either expectancy or goal-setting theories while seeking to enhance service delivery. The research points to a positive relationship between target setting, execution and monitoring and evaluation with service delivery. County governments exist to deliver services to the citizenry. They can achieve their objective by adopting performance management, and by undertaking the critical steps of the inclusive setting of smart targets, supporting staff during execution and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, the State Department of Public Service and the Council of Governors have provided guidance through frameworks to support performance contracting in county governments. The steps of target setting at the onset, which is linked to the planning frameworks of the government, are critical. Given that budgetary provisions guide performance contracting, it is deemed that for every performance contract, the services should be provided as envisaged. The county governments should therefore commit to undertake performance contracting for service delivery not as a choice but as a duty conferred by the service users. The study revealed that county governments could eliminate ghost projects that remain incomplete following a transition or at the end of a financial year through proper target setting and ensuring project completion, which is an indicator in performance contracting. The study recommends that the office of the County Secretary as the Head of Public

Service together with the CECMs for Public Service jointly drive the PC agenda. This done with political support of the governor, will see to it that the promises made through planning and manifestos are realized. Rewarding and sanctioning which is the role of the County Public Service Boards will be easier to institute with keen investment in target setting, monitoring and evaluation and execution.

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