

## MULTIPLE DELIVERY CHANNELS AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN HUDUMA CENTERS IN KENYA

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### **Abstract**

*Most public service institutions are generally different in design and operation compared to several years back. The advances in technology and consumer demand have resulted to public institutions adjusting periodically (Banham, 2010). New technological development and innovations has pushed most governments to modernize their systems in order to address their citizens ' demands for reliable and efficient services. As such, the Huduma Program of Kenya was launched in 2013 as a framework through which, a variety of channels which advance citizen-centric public services are supported through the use of digital technology and one stop centres throughout the country. The purpose of the study was to establish the effect of Multiple Delivery Channels in Huduma centers in Kenya. The Researcher used quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate the effect of Multiple Delivery Channels in Huduma centers in Kenya. A researcher administered questionnaires was used as a data collection tool to study a target population of 51 Huduma Centres and a sample of 153 respondents working at the management level in all operational Huduma centres in Kenya. The study revealed that the Huduma centers employ the use of multiple delivery channels that affects the delivery of public*

*Services they offer. The key purpose of this study is to establish the significance and core use of multiple delivery channels and how it affects service delivery in public institutions in relation to Huduma centres. The goal of the study therefore is to enable public institutions enhance adoption and application of multiple delivery channels in delivery of their services to the public to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.*

Key words: *Multiple Delivery Channel*

## **Introduction**

The public sector is the world's largest service provider. The government's primary duty is to provide various public goods and services and has a critical role to play in providing basic public goods and services that guarantee a minimum level of well-being to everyone who requires them. In general, such services would be required in large numbers but there are still limited financial and other resources available. There is thus the need to ensure that services are delivered effectively and efficiently for attaining desired outcome and within a short time span (Ramakrishnan Ramachandran, 2013). The public sector reforms aimed at facilitating and improving service delivery to its citizens have received tremendous focus over the previous decade. The global trends in public sector reforms and changing demographics have strongly influenced the atmosphere under which the public service delivery works and the rising customer expectations, budget constraints, and global investment competition (Hansen & Jacobsen, 2016).

The conservative paradigm of the management and delivery of public services is supplemented by a market-oriented public sector or corporate system centered on the concepts of bureaucratic governance, strategy and centralization, central regulation and self-reliability (ECA, 2010). Taking account of these growing demands, the public sector is continuously required on to redefine its position, improve its consumer emphasis and create integrated models of service delivery. Unless such models are to gain the desired benefits, they must be more robust and reliable in addressing consumer needs (Bhatti, Olsen & Pedersen, 2011). This ensures that all choices, from policy development, architecture, to execution, are focused on consumer requirements.

Many countries have undertaken public sector reforms to improve the quality of public service delivery. Increasingly powerful and user-friendly technology creates opportunities for governments to offer new ways of interacting with citizens to more effectively respond to their needs and participate in them fully. The private sector has long utilized multiple channels through

the introduction of devices such as smartphones, interactive voice response system and digital television. Such programs inspire people to devise new means of engagement with the desire that public and private service providers be as affordable and flexible as digital technology permits. While many policymakers know the pattern, few developed countries use the full capacity of a multi-channel service delivery strategy as a means of serving their people.

The distribution of public services in an interconnected and organized form through different means is a multi-channel service delivery. Citizens will pick their preferences and situations and access consistent information and resources through platforms that maximize their Government loyalty and confidence. Multi-platforms can make it possible for consumers to benefit from improved emerging technology and networks like wireless connectivity. Huduma Kenya is a multichannel public service delivery initiative for the government of Kenya that aims to improve the quality of services delivered through one-stop service centres. It is built with the concept of an integrated public service system and with the goal of creating integrated public services that change the delivery of services (Magara & Muturi, 2019).

Modern technology advancements and their ubiquity have provided a number of resources for users to access these facilities. Digital technologies such as self-service terminals, interactive answer platforms, laptops, social networking, e-mails, video telephoning, online applications and many more are used as networks for service delivery throughout the private sector. These initiatives encourage end-users to envision new forms of interaction with the desire that service providers be as accessible and responsive as modern technology allows (UN DESA, 2012). Although governments are conscious that they can provide services through a wide variety of networks, many do not completely exploit the capacity of these multi-channel delivery schemes to support residents and people. In developed economies this is particularly true (UN DESA, 2012). Some citizens want public services and information through their personal devices, but many governments are not equipped to meet the need of the citizens (Microsoft, 2013). The citizens' services using mobile technologies are not yet a common practice (UN, 2016). Some Countries are proving public services using different channels, whereas other Countries have done relatively little beyond enabling basic Internet self-service (Kenneth Kernaghan, 2012).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Public institutions in developing countries face significant challenges as they respond to the pressures of providing more customer-focused services. Public sector organisations' need for effective and efficient strategic management tools has seen the Multiple Channel Delivery derived from their requirement to make decisions on how government services may be delivered and accessed by customers. These decisions include deciding on the communication type, channels of communication, media used and access devices, and whether to serve customers directly or through an intermediary. Multiple Delivery Channel strategy decisions are also influenced by customer preferences, content type, media and device capability (Andrew Pinder, 2002). Globally, governments have opened One Stop Shops that act as service delivery points for citizens (Howard, 2015). In 2013, the Kenyan government started the Huduma Kenya program to facilitate the establishment of Huduma centers throughout the country in all the 47 counties. The centers are designed to offer citizens efficient services through multiple delivery channels model using integrated technology platforms (GoK, 2016). Though government services have been integrated in Huduma centers, there lacks a coordinative multichannel system through which services can be efficiently delivered, and also a systematic innovation culture, which can drive massive innovative service delivery. A number of challenges have been reported that hamper effective service delivery in Huduma centers. The problems range from poor relationships between departments of government and Huduma centers which cause delays, long queues and internet breakdowns. These problems raise questions as to why service delivery at Kenya is facing hiccups, even with the efforts that the government has made in order to meet citizen demands efficiently (Ng'aru & Wafula, 2015).

Several studies have been conducted focusing on public service delivery in one stop shops, as well as in strategic innovation management in public institutions. Prof. Ken Opalo (2018) in his article 'Huduma Centers working, but do more to improve service delivery' alludes that it is fair to say that the delivery of government services through Huduma Centers has markedly increased public service efficiency. However, gaps still exist in the system that contributes to an incredible wastage of people-hours as Kenyans queue for days to get basic services. Amir Ghalib Abdalla *et al* (2015) in their study found out that majority of the customers were pleased with the level of transparency and reliability of public services offered, however, there were low levels of service awareness and clarity of procedures of accessing the relevant service coupled by the issue of adequacy of staffing

levels. Mutia Mamu Mutinda (2017) in her study strategic role of Huduma centre suggests that the role of the Huduma centre staff training to be examined in relations to its influence on public service delivery. Janenova and Kim (2016) in their study found that one-stop shops are significantly increasing service provision, but countries must adopt suitable service models to ensure that shops serve the citizens' interests, which demonstrated the need for innovative management strategies to serve effectively. In their study Rachel Sohn Firestone and Berenike Schott (2016) identified the primary challenges encountered in the rollout of the Huduma Centers to concern the coordination among the various institutions involved in their management, staffing, and oversight; and the deployment of staff incentives related to compensation and professional development. They also allude that, researches done do not necessarily reflect on the holistic problems faced by innovative management strategies at the One Stop model Huduma centers across the country. This is because each Huduma center in the 47 counties in Kenya experiences diverse and unique challenges and successes. From the problems herein recorded, the scarcity of agile model research recommendations for the multiple channel strategy and public service delivery expresses a cause for novelty. As such, this study aims at establishing the effect of innovative strategic management tool; Multiple Delivery Channel, on public service delivery in the Huduma centers in Kenya.

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of the literature review was to investigate the outcomes of other researchers on Multiple Delivery Channels and how this can be related to our study on Huduma Centers in Kenya. For instance Tarveres et al (2016) argue that the delivery channel needs to be looked at when examining public services. The delivery channels of services encompass a number of points of contact and interaction through which a citizen or company can request a public service. A study carried out by the Aberdeen Group shows that a multi-channel customer care strategy can increase customer satisfaction by more than twice (9.7 percent versus 3.9 percent) year-on-year compared to its peers using a single channel. Though this justifies the need to migrate towards multichannel contact centres for delivering enhanced customer delight, it does not mean that simply adding a channel can improve performance results. Driving the incremental performance gains through the add-on channels requires a well-defined strategy (PWC, 2013).

PWC (2013) in their survey study Multichannel strategy conclude that the three dimensions of service, channel and customer results in optimization strategy for service, thus, redefining channel strategy. Ensuring that the redefined strategy is successful depends on how the organization can encourage its customers to move to more effective and efficient service delivery channels. Not only do re-engineering and technology need to be implemented, but also convincing tactics to encourage people to move in where effective management of training and change is evident. Technology is the key to equipping staff with multi-channel customer interactions, but contact center analytics also help businesses to analyze the effective nature of each channel, while reducing costs for contacts.

Bhatnagar, Subhash (2014) in their research paper Public Service Delivery: Role of Information and Communication Technology in Improving Governance and Development Impact allude that Governments provide the largest information and services for the poor. The governments' service delivery models have not changed for decades, making them inefficient and corrupt. Thus, well-designed e-government projects with process reforms to improve transparency and accountability have to reduce discretion, increase efficiency and reduce corruption. However, very few such projects have had their full potential implemented. There is a necessity to accelerate the pace of implementation of Multiple Delivery Channels and build capacity to reform the process of service delivery.

Verhoef, Kannan, and Inman (2015) in their study to understanding of omni-channel marketing found out that Whilst new channels (mobile, tablet, and social media) have been integrated in business day to day by organisations due to the latest and significant advances in technology, managers are still facing a challenge to develop an multi-channel strategy. Verhoef, Kannan and Inman (2015) point out that adequate studies on the effects of multi-channel strategies and additional channels on performance are now underway, but more research on the effects of channel elimination is needed.

Most multi-channel companies traditionally have silo structures with independent operation by each channel division. Managing isolated channels often causes confusion and frustration for the customer, diluting the value offered to the customer e.g. prices, offers, sales, etc (Herhausen et al. 2015). By coordinating and integrating their marketing channels, companies can improve their customer experience in an omni-channel environment. Integrating channels makes it possible for companies to offer customers what they want every time they buy. Customers may thus collect as

much information as they want, decrease their uncertainty in the purchase process and expose them to more marketing stimuli that can strengthen the relationship further and improve sales (Cao and Li 2015). As a result, customer satisfaction and loyalty have increased and sales have greater opportunities.

Thomas and Sullivan (2005) reported that while brick and mortar customers tend to show a larger purchases number than only catalog and internet customers, catalog-only customers seem to spend more than either group. Neslin et al. (2006) indicate that channels such as the Internet, ATM and call centers involve little human contact and reduced switching costs, which may lead to missing cross selling opportunities and lower customer loyalty. Shankar, Smith, and Rangaswamy (2003) show that fidelity to the service provider is superior when the service is purchased through the Internet than through an offline channel. In contrast, Ansari, Mela, and Neslin (2005) find that Internet usage is associated with less loyal customers in the long run. They also argue that the explanation of this outcome is that online buyers have lower search costs and are therefore more likely to buy elsewhere.

According to Andrew Pinder (2002) in his paper Channels framework Delivering government services in the new economy he notes that there are a number of competing government priorities and customer needs that impact the channel decision-making process. A public sector organization's business strategy should, for example, reconcile different objectives such as customer access, customer satisfaction, social inclusion and cost. The effects of one goal on another should therefore be evaluated. This strategic view of organisational activity is essential if the delivery channel strategy is not to be developed in isolation. In order to provide integrated services effectively for public sector organizations, developing multiple channel delivery strategies to coordinate the delivery of services among public sector organizations is essential. It also concludes that the development of delivery channel strategies is an important part of the broader existing processes in business planning – not a separate exercise resulting in a stand-alone, one-off document divorced from the overall business strategy.

### **Research Methodology**

Locharoenrat (2017) states that; analysis model explores the decision: what methods for data collection have been used? Which styles of testing techniques and tools have been used? How time and budget constraints have been tackled. Thomas (2013) asserts that cross sectional studies

involve the study of a group or groups of people with the similar traits at matching time. The researcher adopted a descriptive research study design in order to establish how business process re-engineering affects service delivery in Huduma centers in Kenya. The management of Huduma centers is made up of the center manager, deputy center manager and the ICT manager.

The study population was 51 Huduma centers in all the 47 counties with a sample size of 153 respondents working at management level. The researcher believes that by looking at the whole population as the sample size the study will give a more conclusive result given that each center has its own dynamic range of success and challenges.

A researcher administered questionnaire was used as the primary tool to collect data from the sample so as to achieve a higher feedback rate. The questionnaire contained both open and closed questions set prior to the study using nominal and ordinal scales of measurement. Questions included topics on innovative culture, leveraging ICT, integration of services, multiple delivery channels, citizen participation and business process reengineering. The researcher also clarified orally the intent and questions of the study to help the respondents comprehend the questions presented to them in order to obtain accurate input. Statistical software SPSS was used to analyze data for quantitative data research and then frequency tables, mean scores, charts used to interpret the data. To determine relationship between dependent variables and independent variable and how they relate, statistically based inferential tools such as correlation and regression were used.

## **Findings and discussion**

### **Descriptive Results**

The goal of the research study was to find out the extent to which multiple delivery channels affect service delivery in Huduma centers in Kenya. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the fact that multiple delivery channels have affected service delivery in their organization. The responses are shown in table 1.

<b>Table 1: Multiple Delivery Channels Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Disagree	2	1.4
Disagree	7	5.0
Moderately Agree	15	10.6
Agree	39	27.7
Strongly Agree	78	55.3
Total	141	100.0