

**STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY KPLC TO IMPROVE SERVICE
DELIVERY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SCHOOL
OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

NOVEMBER, 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my immediate family without whose inspiration and encouragement, I would not have come this far. To my extended family, thank you for the moral support. Last but not least to all my lecturers who have greatly contributed to shaping my future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God almighty who gave me the strength to start and finish this course.

I thank my sweetheart Mr. Mwirigi who has really supported me all through both financially and emotionally.

I thank my mum and dad who have stood by me through the thick and thin to see that I go through this program.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Aosa and Dr. Yabsfor their guidance, availability, input, and support in reviewing my work enabling me to write this project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAP&L	-	East African Power & Lighting Company
FLE	-	Front Line Employees
KPLC	-	Kenya Power and Lighting Company
NPM	-	New Public Management
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SERVQUAL	-	Service Quality Model

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ABSTRACT

Innovation and transformation in service delivery are taking place around the world as governments recognize the value that can be achieved by this — both in terms of desired policy outcomes and increased citizen trust in government. Some of the strategies being used to improve service delivery in the public sector include the use of citizen centred service delivery, the use of lean Six Sigma and the use of private sector management practices. In Kenya, various organisations in the public sector have been seeking to improve service delivery through different strategies. This study sought to establish the strategies adopted by KPLC to improve service delivery and to identify the challenges the company has faced in the process of implementing the strategies. Public services are a key determinant of quality of life that is not measured in per capita income. It is a particular challenge in Africa, given the low quality of service provision and the pressing needs of the poor. This study adopted a case study design where KPLC was the main focus of the study. For the purposes of this study, only primary data was used. Primary data was collected through the use of an interview guide structured based on the objectives of the study. The study sought to interview 10 individuals in senior management positions in the company. The collected data was analysed through the use of content analysis. The results reveal that some of the strategies adopted by the company include: the adoption of new public management practices, performance management, customer oriented practices, use of technology, social media as well as use of mobile technology. The study also reveals that employee resistance, corruption, poor technology and management reluctance are some of the main challenges facing implementation of these strategies. Innovation and transformation in service delivery are taking place around the world as governments recognize the value that can be achieved by this — both in terms of desired policy outcomes and increased citizen trust in government. Different organisations adopt different strategies to improve service delivery. The study also recommends that firms should implement the new public management principles which focus on implementing private sector practices in the public sector in order to compete favourably with their counterparts in the private sector. The study concludes that firms in the public sector are adopting strategies popular in the private sector in order to improve service delivery and survive in the dynamic and competitive business environment. The study also concludes that the implementation process is faced by challenges that need to be mitigated. The study recommends that there is need for Kenya Power and Lighting Company to adopt new public management principles for improved efficiency and service delivery to the customers. There is stillroom for further studies on strategies to improve service delivery in the public sector.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Improving public service delivery is one of the biggest challenges worldwide. Public services are a key determinant of quality of life that is not measured in per capita income. It is a particular challenge in Africa, given the low quality of service provision and the pressing needs of the poor. Global trends such as rising customer expectations, budgetary constraints, global competition for investment, and changing demographics have transformed the environment in which the public sector operates. This, in turn, has broken down old constraints and created new opportunities. Fundamental to the demand for better public services are the heightened expectations of citizens (Khalid, 2010).

Transformation in government service delivery is taking place around the world, as the public sector adopts citizen-centric service ideals and strategies. Leading governments are shifting from a programmatic model of service delivery to a citizen-focused model where service delivery is focused on people, not programs. Governments are realizing that more efficient service delivery can dramatically improve public sector value. There are common service delivery trends emerging around the world. Leading governments are not only using technology as a new platform to deliver programs and services; they are using technology as an enabler to make services available, integrated and accessible to citizens. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that companies can match their resources to the market requirements and to meet stakeholder expectations (Makayenza, Kwadayi & Ikobe, 2013).

In Kenya, the public sector has over the years been associated with poor service delivery as a result of practices such as corruption, nepotism and tribalism. The last decade has seen a lot of efforts to improve the nature of the public sector in terms of the services offered to the citizens. The government has introduced performance contracting in the public sector for example in the Judiciary and in the civil service which is expected to improve the service quality to citizens. In the case of KPLC, the adoption of private sector practices has been one of the main strategies that have helped to improve service delivery. The company has adopted the use of technology to make the purchase of tokens and the payment of electricity bills easier and convenient for consumers. Further the company is today using social media networks such as Face book and Twitter to address customer complaints and enquiries in a move to make the process easier (KPLC, 2015).

1.1.1 The Concept of Strategy

Strategy is concerned with the long-term direction and scope of an organization. It is also crucially concerned with how the organization positions itself with regard to the environment and in particular to its competitor. It is concerned with establishing competitive advantage, ideally sustainable over time, not by technical manoeuvring, but by taking an overall long-term perspective (Faulkner and Johnson, 1992). Strategy is also defined as the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which matches its resources to its changing environment, and in particular, to its markets, customers and clients to meet stakeholder expectations.

The concept of strategy is based on a number of associated concepts: competitive advantage, resource-based strategy, distinctive capabilities, strategic intent, strategic capability, strategic management, strategic goals and strategic plans. The adoption and implementation of these

concepts in the public sector and in any organisation ensure that the organisation can improve the delivery of services and achieve long term success and strategic fit. The current business environment requires that firms integrate the use of strategy in their daily operations particularly in planning in order to ensure they compete favourably(Sarshar&Moores, 2006).

1.1.2 The Concept of Service Delivery

Public sector organizations worldwide are under pressure to increase efficiency while delivering improved and integrated services. The public remains a central vehicle for development for both developed and developing countries. This is achieved within a framework to realize economic and allocative efficiency; equity, justice, fairness; security; competitiveness and contestability; guaranteed sustainability of service where public interest criteria prevails, even in competitive market; mitigate against -potential failure of privatised services; reducing transaction costs among others (Chemengich, 2013).

The traditional model of organization and delivery of public services, based on the principles of bureaucratic hierarchy, planning and centralization, direct control and self-sufficiency, is being replaced by a market-based public service management or enterprise culture (ECA, 2003). The NPM reforms of 21st century focus on restructuring institutional structures to mirror the private sector delivery mechanisms, of cost/profit centres; in which performance indicators form the basis of enforcement. Concurrently, global commitments- Millennium Development goals (MDGs), HIV/AIDS, environment, Human rights) and the need for internationalization of development prospects through facilitation of the private sector underscored the need for strategic changes in public sector for the majority of African governments. Public sector reforms in developed economies address a different spectrum from those of the developing countries on

account of the differences in levels of development. However others are cross cutting (Sarshar&Moores, 2006).

Driven by these changing expectations, the public sector is increasingly required to redefine its role, strengthen its customer focus and build integrated service delivery models. If they are to realise the desired benefits, these models must be based on meeting customer needs more efficiently and more effectively. This means keeping the customer's needs at the core of every decision, from strategy formulation and design through to execution. Government process re-engineering is often needed to put in place improved, value-for-money processes that will reduce waste and duplication, producing an effective 'customer journey' (the experiences a customer has when interacting with service providers) (Makayenza, *et al.*,2013).

There are many initiatives already underway which demonstrate how, in the right circumstances, effective public service delivery models can be developed by combining the complementary capabilities and cultures of the public and private sectors. Technology can also be a key enabler. The development of customer-centric models calls for customer insight, looking at customers' wants and needs (both demographic and attitudinal), in a holistic manner – distinguishing means and ends, focusing on improved customer journeys and measurable benefits, and understanding the strategic risks associated with various service delivery models (Khalid, 2010).

As a crucial responsibility of government and government institutions, the public service should deliver services that a society requires to maintain and improve its welfare. To do this, government institutions require organizational structures and suitably qualified people who must be supported to deliver the services they are responsible for (Whitaker, 1980). Besley and Ghatak

(2007) argue that public services are delivered by a nexus of relationships between beneficiaries, politicians and service providers (such as bureaucrats, doctors, and teachers).

Besley and Ghatak (2007) further insist that it is necessary to analyse the incentives that govern the behaviour of politicians and service providers, if services are to match the best interest of the beneficiaries. The authors further argue that the main concern in public service provision is how the obligations of the different parties is defined and enforced. The same view is held by Tamrakar (2010) who states that public service delivery is characterized by compliance with rules and it is determined by inputs. This is evident given the fact that the role of formal contractual relationships is often quite limited or typically absent in public service delivery, when compared to the market (Besley and Ghatak 2007).

World over, the public service plays a central role in any country's socio-economic development. The service has however, been affected by globalization, public sector reforms, regional and international partnerships, climate change, Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and Human Resource Development (HRM), among other factors. In an increasingly changing global environment, the mandate, structure and operations of public service must be reshaped and productivity enhanced to make it more focused, efficient and responsive to the needs of those it serves as shown herein (Khalid, 2010).

The public sector in the developing countries in particular is the framework for implementation of development goals and objectives (World Bank, 2006). The business of development is about change. Consequently, the quests for public sector strategic changes in the developing countries are anchored on economic, social, political and technological factors whose impact is assumed to be positive on development. Given the ever changing environment within which public services

are provided, public sector management is in continuous motion to cope with the changes (Lufunyo, 2013).

The strategic adaptations to the changing environment are done through organizational transformations: initiatives involving large-scale, planned, strategic, and administrative change (Abramson & Lawrence 2001). Substantive public sector reforms (PSR) of the African public sector architectures carried out since the 80s with the hope transforming the economies of the nations. The African countries took special loans to carry out reforms on public financial management, administrative and civil service, revenue administration, and anticorruption and transparency

The developing countries public sector architectures have evolved over time (ECA, 2003) starting with the structures inherited from colonial masters at independence, in which the public sector dimensions were wider and deeper taking into account national capacities and capabilities for the delivery of development. The post-colonial public sector then engaged in production, commerce, and service delivery with the hope of dispensing social justice (ECA, 2003). The intent was to distribute wealth under autocratic one-party political systems. The net result was personification of the state in the presidency with the eventual mortgaging of the state resources at the expense of crippled legislature and judiciary services (ECA, 2003). Citizenry disenchantment resulted in conflicts with military dictatorships takeovers that performed worse than autocratic dictators. This created the need for regime change, preferably democratic and market based, consistent with the anticipated delivery of development (ECA, 2003).

1.1.3 The Public Sector in Kenya

The endeavour to improve service delivery in Kenya saw a number of performance improvement initiatives being put in place. These included emphasis on the adoption of private sector business management ethos in the lines of New Public Management principles. The reform programme in Kenya as in many countries, promised a lot both to the citizens and the public servants, promises which were not being fulfilled fast enough. With very little results to show after about five years of implementing reforms, the Government through a World Bank sponsored programme and policy hired a team of private sector 'experts' into the public sector through short term contracts to inject the sense of urgency in improving service delivery which was thought to be lacking in career public servants (Makayenza, Kwadayi, & Ikobe, 2013).

It is also apparent that whereas, the objective(s) of the civil service reforms in Kenya were broad and covered different aspects, the central theme running throughout was transformation of service delivery systems and processes in order to improve productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. It was felt that whereas it would take time to increase the financial resources to the levels required, improvements to management could have an immediate impact and enhance service performance through making better use of the resources that were available (Hope, 2012).

Reforming and transforming the public sector for improved delivery of public services means redressing the imbalances of the past by focusing on meeting the needs of all Kenyans. Improving service delivery also calls for a shift away from inward-looking, over-centralized, hierarchical and rule-bound bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes, that currently permeate the Kenya public service, and a search for new ways of working which put the needs of

the public first, is better, faster, and more responsive to the citizens' needs. It also means a complete change in the manner that services are delivered. The objectives of service delivery must therefore include not only equity but also efficiency (Makayenza, Kwadayi, &Ikobe, 2013).

It must also be noted here that the introduction of a public sector reform and transformation program cannot be achieved in isolation from other fundamental management changes within the public sector. It must therefore be part of a fundamental shift of culture whereby public servants see themselves first and foremost as servants of the people of Kenya and where the public service is managed with service to the public as its primary goal. Public sector reform and transformation is also a dynamic process out of which a completely new relationship is developed between the public service institutions and the public. To successfully implement a public sector reform and transformation program also requires the use of new management tools such as performance contracting, for example (Hope, 2012).

1.1.4 The Kenya Power and Lighting Company

The Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) Ltd is a limited liability company which transmits, distributes and retails electricity throughout Kenya. KPLC is a public company and was incorporated in 1922 as the East African Power & Lighting Company (EAP&L). It changed its name to the Kenya Power and Lighting Company Ltd. (KPLC) in 1983. In the last three years Kenya Power was rebranded to Kenya Power with a view to improve on service delivery (KPLC, 2015).

The majority shareholder in KPLC is the Government of Kenya and its institutions, while the rest is owned by private shareholders. In the last fifteen years Kenya Power was unbundled to form new companies namely: Kenya Power (transmission and Distribution) Kengen (Generation

only), Rural Electrification Company (Distribution for Rural customers supported by the Government of Kenya) KETRACO (Transmission only). With the current trend in liberalization, all these Companies will be distributing electricity to the end consumers in future creating stiff competition within the energy sector (KPLC, 2015).

The past decade has seen several efforts by the company to improve service delivery. Some of the efforts include the use of ICT customer needs; plan on expansion strategies and to build values into services offered. Systems like Integrated Customer Systems (ICS), Design Customer Systems (DCS), have been designed to enable quick and easy access to and follow-up of customer job flow and to increase efficiency in delivery of customer oriented services. The company has also introduced the e-bill system where customers are able to easily access and pay their bills using mobile phones as well as contact the customer care for any queries and service support (KPLC, 2015).

1.2 Research Problem

Innovation and transformation in service delivery are taking place around the world as governments recognize the value that can be achieved by this — both in terms of desired policy outcomes and increased citizen trust in government. Citizens have come to expect the same level of service from government that they experience in the commercial sector. Research shows there is a strong link between service and the trust and confidence citizens have in government. While governments have often been perceived to lag behind the private sector in service, this perception is shifting. Some governments are adopting truly innovative practices to effect change in service delivery to their citizens (Jackson, 1997). Some of the strategies being used to improve service delivery in the public sector include the use of citizen centred service delivery, the use of

lean Six Sigma and the use of private sector management practices. This means putting a focus on exceptional service delivery and making the receipt of services as easy as possible for the citizen. One approach to allow for this ease of access is to provide a single point of contact with government services. Many governments, particularly at the provincial, state or local level, are beginning to establish separate service integrator organizations, to connect citizens to the services they need from multiple separate agencies, and also to manage the integration of those services over time. For citizens, one single access point makes transacting with government simple and straightforward (Shinde, 2013).

KPLC has over the years been associated poor service delivery as a result of practices such as corruption, nepotism and tribalism. Further, the employees at KPLC have been accused of rudeness, practice inherent absenteeism and are incompetent therefore unable to deliver high quality services to the citizens. The last decade has seen a lot of efforts by KPLC to improve the services offered to the citizens. The company, like other companies in the Kenyan public sector, introduced performance contracting, customer centric service as well as improving ease of access of services through the use of technology. It is however important to note that these strategies are yet to have any significant impact on the nature of the services delivered to the customers since in some cases, these strategies are adopted without any strategic planning. It is also important to note that there are other strategies adopted by other companies in the private sector that can be adapted to the public sector by companies like KPLC to improve service delivery (Makayenza, *et al.*, 2013).

A search for empirical literature on the strategies adopted to improve service delivery in the public sector revealed that very few studies have been carried out on the same. Pretorius & Schurink, (2007), carried out a study on enhancing service delivery in local government in

South Africa. It offers a leadership model for enhancing service delivery within local government. Tshukudu (2014) evaluated decentralization as a Strategy for improving Service delivery in the Botswana Public Service Sector. Lufunyo (2013) studied the impact of public sector reforms on service delivery in Tanzania. The study found that reforms are relevant and necessary for improved service delivery. Makayenza, et al (2013), sought to identify the causes of poor service delivery and the strategies to improve service delivery in local authorities using the case of Kajiado Local Authority in Kenya. It is evident that few studies have studied the problem in Kenya. Different organisations use different strategies to improve service delivery. What are the strategies adopted to improve service delivery in the Kenya Power and Lighting Company?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study had two objectives:

- (i) To determine the strategies that are being adopted by the Kenya Power and Lighting Company to improve service delivery in Kenya
- (ii) To establish the challenges faced by KPLC in implementing the strategies to improve service delivery.

1.4 Value of Study

The findings of this study will be of value in the sense that there is an increasing need to provide better services to the citizens through the adoption of reforms in the public sector. The study will therefore provide information on the strategies that the players in the public sector can adopt to improve service delivery to the citizens.

The findings of this study will be significant to academicians in that it will add to the knowledge of the researchers in this field of study. Researchers will also be able to borrow from this study when carrying out similar studies.

The study will also be valuable to the policymakers in government as it will serve as a guide in their tasks of making policies that help to develop frameworks for improved service delivery in the Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review on issues related to strategies to improve service delivery in the Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

This section will present a review of the theories related to strategies to improve service delivery in the Kenya Power and Lighting Company. This study is based on two main theories of Strategic Management; the Stakeholder theory and the Resource Dependence Theory. A review of the two theories is presented below.

2.2.1 Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory has been in the management agenda for about thirty years. Since Richard E. Freeman published his landmark book in 1984, several essays have been published aiming to compose the mosaic of this theory. Despite such effort, it is still vague (Jones & Wicks, 1999) to explain the nature of the relationships between a given organization and the people, groups and other organizations able to participate in its decision-making. The stakeholder view of strategy integrates both a resource-based view and a market-based view, and adds a socio-political level. One common version of stakeholder theory seeks to define the specific stakeholders of a company (the normative theory of stakeholder identification) and then examine the conditions under which managers treat these parties as stakeholders (the descriptive theory of stakeholder salience).

The term stakeholder first “appeared in the management literature in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute, in 1963” (Freeman, 1984). The word means “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Bryson (1995, p. 27) proposed a more comprehensive definition for the term: “A stakeholder is defined as any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization's attention, resources, or output or is affected by that output”.

The application of the stakeholder theory in the public sector literature seems to be in accordance with the wave of “New Public Management” (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993). This body of theory aims to introduce business-based ideas to the public sector. In this vein, the stakeholder theory can be seen as an approach by which public decision-makers scan their environments in search of opportunities and threats. Looking at the concepts presented above, one can infer that the stakeholder theory embeds two distinct approaches: the organization focusing on its stakeholders in order to propose suitable managerial techniques, and the manner a stakeholder approaches the organization claiming his/her rights. Whilst one side of the coin seems to be related to how an organization behaves when dealing with its stakeholders, the other side seems to be related to how a stakeholder holds the organization accountable to himself/herself. It is clearly a bilateral type of relationship.

Stakeholders’ importance for the public organizations decision-making process stems also from the fact that public organizations operate in a highly politicized environment. Political involvement of public organizations forces the managers to take decisions in accordance with the logic of the political game, where the traditionally understood rationality is displaced by political rationality (Bryson 2004). The choice of specific policy options is dictated not the actual assessment, but the bargaining power of the most influential stakeholders.

The organization, as already underlined, should aim in its actions to meet the expectations of its stakeholders at least at a minimum level. Public organizations are characterized by a variety of stakeholders, whose interests may be consistent but usually there is a conflict of interest of particular groups of stakeholders (Mainardes, Alves, and Raposo 2011). The concern for stakeholders is the most important element in the process of strategic management as a success in public organizations depends on the satisfaction of key stakeholders. At the same time satisfying means to meet these requirements that in the individual stakeholder hierarchy are seen as valuable. Such ascertainment means that these expectations may (and often do) oppose to economic goals of organization (Bryson 2004).

2.2.2 Resource Dependence Theory

The basic assumptions of the theory were presented by Pfeffer and Salancik in 1978 in their book 'External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective'. The authors point out that in the literature and management practice a lot more attention is paid to the problem of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use, ignoring the same the major problem of obtaining resources from the environment. None of the organizations, whether public, private or non-profit is self-sufficient and acting as an open system. They are continuously entering various types of exchange transactions with the environment. In the opinion of the authors the necessity of obtaining resources from the environment is not a problem for organizations - the problem is the instability of the environment from which resources are obtained, e.g. the emergence of competition, which can restrict access to resources (Pfeffer&Salancik, 2003).

Resource dependence theory is based on the belief that resource providers may influence the activities of the organization in order to implement their own expectations. The manager's task is

to identify the interests groups and resources which the organization has to gain from the particular group. The manager has to also assess the importance of interests group and its resources for organizational activity. The organization should create coalitions with particular interest groups which aim is to satisfy the partner who support the organization by streams of its resources. Because different groups may have conflicting expectations towards the organization, manager must ultimately define whose expectations takes into account and whose ignores (Pfeffer&Salancik 2003).

Organizations depend on multidimensional resources: labour, capital, raw material, etc. Organizations may not be able to come out with countervailing initiatives for all these multiple resources. Hence organization should move through the principle of criticality and principle of scarcity. Critical resources are those the organization must have to function. For example, a burger outlet can't function without bread. An organization may adopt various countervailing strategies; it may associate with more suppliers, or integrate vertically or horizontally (Pajunen, 2006).

Resource dependence concerns more than the external organizations that provide, distribute, finance, and compete with a firm. Although executive decisions have more individual weight than non-executive decisions, in aggregate the latter have greater organizational impact. Managers throughout the organization understand their success is tied to customer demand. Managers' careers thrive when customer demand expands. Thus customers are the ultimate resource on which companies depend. Although this seems obvious in terms of revenue, it is actually organizational incentives that make management see customers as a resource (Hendry 2005).

2.3 Strategy in Organisations

Strategies are defined as a set of activities or interventions that together are designed to achieve a pre-specified objective. Organisations continually seek new ways to acquire, retain and increase business, because the cost of losing customers is rising. Outpatient medical centres therefore need to employ competitive positioning strategies such as differentiation, cost leadership and efficient outpatient referral scheduling systems to ensure that they attract and retain new customers leading to increased market share. Service is an important factor in retaining clients. The role of service is more important than ever, and is expected to become even more critical with time (Choi & Chu, 2001). Kurtz and Clow (1998) are of the opinion that, irrespective of the efforts of service organisations to introduce competitive strategies to attract customers and efficiently manage the supply of services they offer, customers do not always purchase from the same organisation – nor do they always remain loyal.

Organisations are increasingly making use of strategy in the face of increasing competition in the modern business environment. In the public sector, firms are using strategy in order to compete with the more efficient private sector in the provision of services to the public. In this regard, the public sector has been adopting strategies that are more common in the private sector such as the focus on customer satisfaction and the delivery of quality services. These strategies are critical as they ensure that the organisations remain competitive and also achieve sustainability over the long-term (Hendry 2005).

2.4 Service Delivery in Organisations

In today's global competitive environment, the service industry plays an increasingly important role in the economy of many countries, therefore, delivering quality service is considered as an

essential strategy for success and survival (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Improving service delivery is primarily about improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which services are delivered. A report by the World Bank, (2009) stated that the current cities are faced with many urgent challenges which have necessitated the implementation of new intelligent service delivery systems to tackle those problems. The reason for this strategy is that, in the developed world, cities are increasingly becoming the driving forces of their national economies, for example Tokyo, Paris, Zurich, Prague and Oslo all produce about a third of their countries' GDPs (World Bank, 2009).

Jooste (2008) indicates that the use of public values, institutions, and service market in contracting can actually improve service delivery. They insist that stakeholder preferences and democratic processes establish the values to be optimized in service delivery. Furthermore, public law and organizational arrangements determine the contracting tools available for balancing competing values; and the characteristics of service markets influence which contracting tools and vendors are best suited to achieve stakeholder values (Jooste, 2008). More so, a complex combination of strategies is needed to ensure that service employees are willing and able to deliver quality services and that they stay motivated to perform in customer-oriented, service-minded ways. Continuous motivation of employees to be customer-oriented will enhance service quality. In order to build a customer-oriented, service-minded workforce, organizations must hire the right people, develop people to deliver service quality, provide the needed support systems, and retain the best people (Jooste, 2008).

2.5 Strategy and Service Delivery

Public sector services are responsible and accountable to citizens and communities as well as to its customers. Several researchers have dealt with service quality in public services (Wisniewski, 2001 and Brysland and Curry, 2001). Brysland and Curry (2001) stated that the literature clearly supported the use of SERVQUAL in the public sector. According to Gowan et al. (2001), service provision is more complex in the public sector because it is not simply a matter of meeting expressed needs, but of finding out unexpressed needs, setting priorities, allocating resources and publicly justifying and accounting for what has been done. In addition, Caron and Giaque (2006) pointed out that public sector employees are currently confronted with new professional challenges arising from the introduction of new principles and tools inspired by the shift to new public management.

Anderson (1995) also measured the quality of service provided by a public university health clinic. Using 15 statements representing the five-dimensions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), she assessed the quality of service provided by the clinic at the University of Houston Health Centre. Patients were found to be generally dissatisfied with the five dimensions of SERVQUAL. The highest dissatisfaction was felt with assurance. On the other hand, tangibles and empathy exhibited the lowest level of dissatisfaction. Using the SERVQUAL approach, Wisniewski (2001) carried out a study to assess customer satisfaction within the public sector across a range of Scottish Councils services. In the library service, the analysis of gap scores revealed that tangibles and reliability had negative gaps which indicate that customer expectations were not met.

Donnelly et al. (2006) carried out a study to explore the application of SERVQUAL approach to assess the quality of service of Strathclyde Police in Scotland. The survey captures customers' expectations of an excellent police service and compares these with their perceptions of the service delivered by Strathclyde Police. The paper also reports on a parallel SERVQUAL survey of police officers in Strathclyde to examine how well the force understands its customers' expectations and how well its internal processes support the delivery of quality services in the police department. It was found that Strathclyde Police appears to have a good understanding of the service quality expectations of their customers as represented by the responses of elected councillors in the area covered by the force. There is room for improvement in service quality performance both from the viewpoint of the customer and through police force attention to the definition of, and compliance with, service quality standards.

Agus et al. (2007) carried out a research to identify management and customer perceptions of service quality practices in the Malaysian Public sector. It is important to note that whereas the SERVQUAL model focused on identifying "gaps" between expectations and actual delivery, their model focused only on perceptions of actual service delivery. They used nine of the ten service dimensions identified by Parasuraman et al. (1985). Their study looked at the perceptions of management and customers, thereby excluding the views of FLE. It is thus observed that most of the studies to date, have concentrated on service quality in US and European public service sector, while some more recent studies have looked at service quality in developing countries (Agus et al., 2007).

Pretorius & Schurink, (2007), carried out a study on enhancing service delivery in local government in South Africa. It offers a leadership model for enhancing service delivery within local government. Applying modernist qualitative methodology, particularly a combination of

casing and grounded theory, and the study offers the Retro Advanced Leadership Model which comprises (1) management of leadership performance, (2) legislative imperatives, (3) the achievement of realistic goals, and (4) continuous maintenance and monitoring of achievements. Key implications and recommendations are provided.

Besley&Ghatak (2007) reviews some issues relevant to the delivery of public services. It reviews some of the debates and flags some issues that are significant worldwide, especially in Africa. It emphasises how the debate has moved along in terms of defining the relative responsibilities of the public and private sectors for delivering public services. It also discusses the role of incentives among politicians and bureaucrats in service delivery. In a broader context, there is a need to understand the role of mission-driven delivery and the role of competition in public services. The paper argues for a focus on accountability in part through rigorous evaluation of service delivery and basing policy on sound first-principles.

Makayenza, et al (2013), sought to identify the causes of poor service delivery and the strategies to improve service delivery in local authorities using the case of Kajiado Local Authority in Kenya. A mixed approach i.e. a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was taken to analyse data. The findings showed that the major causes of poor service delivery are councillor interference and political manipulation, corruption and lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate citizen participation, poor human resource policy, failure to manage change, lack of employee capacity, poor planning, and poor monitoring and evaluation. The main strategies to improve service delivery were found to be increasing citizen participation in the affairs of the local authority and partnership with the community in service delivery, flexible response to service user complaints, offering value for money and ensuring that service users pay their bills on time, strategic public service planning, sound human resource policy that includes

capacity building and employee motivation, managing change, dealing with corruption and improving accountability, segregation of duties between councillors and management of the local authorities, and partnering with other players and outsourcing services

Lufunyo (2013) studied the impact of public sector reforms on service delivery in Tanzania. The study found that reforms are relevant and necessary for improved service delivery. The focus was on the public sector reforms that have been adopted and implemented in Local Authorities and their impact on service delivery to the citizenry. The main question that called for an in-depth investigation was to what extent the public sector reforms that have been adopted and implemented in Local Authorities have improved or inhibited service delivery. The findings of this paper justifies that, currently the contribution of public sector reforms in Local Authorities has had significant positive impact in service delivery. The findings of the paper were in agreement with the literature that reforms are relevant and necessary for improved service delivery. However; the implementation came with challenges that needed to be addressed if the fruition and benefits of the reforms are to be enjoyed and celebrated by the public.

Tshukudu (2014) evaluated decentralization as a Strategy for improving Service delivery in the Botswana Public Service Sector. Many strategies and initiatives were introduced by the Botswana government over a long period of time to mitigate poor service delivery across the public service sector. One of these initiatives was the decentralization of certain functions from central to local government. However, the implementation of this initiative was not without problems.

Ramseook-Munhurrun, Lukea-Bhiwajee&Naidoo (2010) carried out a study that sought to obtain a better understanding of the extent to which service quality is delivered within the Mauritian public service by drawing on front-line employees (FLE) and customer perceptions of service

quality. The paper investigates how closely customer expectations of service and FLE perceptions of customer expectations match. SERVQUAL is used to measure service quality amongst FLE and customers in a major public sector department in Mauritius. The findings reveal that while there is a significant shortfall in meeting customer expectations, the FLE appears to have a good understanding of what these expectations actually are. The FLE should focus on those dimensions which receive lowest ratings and attributes with high gap scores. This research adds to the body of knowledge relating to public service quality management. It will also be of interest to strategic and operational public service managers and to academics investigating the reliability and value of service quality assessment tools. It addresses key relationships between service dimensions and service quality within the Mauritian public service.

It is clear from the review of past studies above that few studies have attempted to evaluate the strategies adopted to improve service delivery in the public sector. In the Kenyan context for example, there are inadequate studies that have evaluated the issue particularly in the light of the new developments in the Kenyan public sector. The government of Kenya has introduced various initiatives to ensure improved service delivery such as the introduction of Huduma centres, integration of IT in public service delivery, performance contracting and use of innovation and strategic human resources. It is therefore this gap that this study seeks to bridge through an evaluation of the strategies adopted by the Kenyan public sector to improve service delivery

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology. First, a presentation of the research design is provided. This is followed by an explanation on the target population, sampling design, description of research instruments, a description of data collection procedures and a description of data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design

A case study design was used in this study and the study design is therefore appropriately named a descriptive design. In this manner, the study was able to describe the relationship between the variables in the study. This study was a case study of the Kenya Power and Lighting Company. This was therefore considered the appropriate research design in this study. This study design was named based on the classification by method of analysis as espoused in Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

A research design is a very critical and essential tool for an efficient researcher. Consequently it very important for any researcher to have a research design before embarking on the task that involves collecting data and analysis. A research design is the comprehensive and all-embracing strategy that a researcher makes use of to bring together the different parts of the study in a logical and flowing manner such that the readers whom the research is intended for are able to follow and understand (Kothari, 2006).

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process is considered to be one of the most important processes in the research process as it helps the researcher to get the data required to carry out the process of analysis and arrive at the appropriate conclusions. It is noted the quality of the data that is collected and its appropriateness will determine the reliability of the results of the data analysis process. It is therefore important that a researcher identifies the right data collection procedures which will ensure that they get the right data for the study which will play an important role in determining the quality of the entire research study (Flick et al., 2004).

For the purposes of this study, only primary data was used. Primary data was collected through the use of an interview guide structured based on the objectives of the study. The open ended questions helped in eliciting responses that were qualitatively analysed and helped capture the issues that are relevant to the study but cannot be captured by structured questions. In order to collect the relevant data, the senior management of KPLC was interviewed. The study sought to interview 10 individuals in senior management positions in the company. The interviews were conducted by the researcher in order to ensure that they were thorough and all the important data was collected

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviewees was checked for completeness and correctness followed by coding, tabulation and organizing. The data was then analysed using content analysis. This is a technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages using the same approach to relate to trends. Content analysis is a form of qualitative analysis of data that is no empirical in nature and where researchers

obtain detailed information about a phenomenon being studied and try to establish trends and relationship from information gathered (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

After the qualitative data was analysed, it was presented in form of tables and charts. Other data from the interviews was presented in the form of discussions in order to present the various views of the interviewees on the various strategies used by KPLC to improve their service delivery. These discussions were aimed at identifying the common concepts in relation to the literature review presented in the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of results and findings obtained from field responses and data, broken into two parts. The first section deals with the background information of the respondents, while the other sections present findings of the analysis, based on the objectives of the study where both descriptive and inferential statistics have been employed.

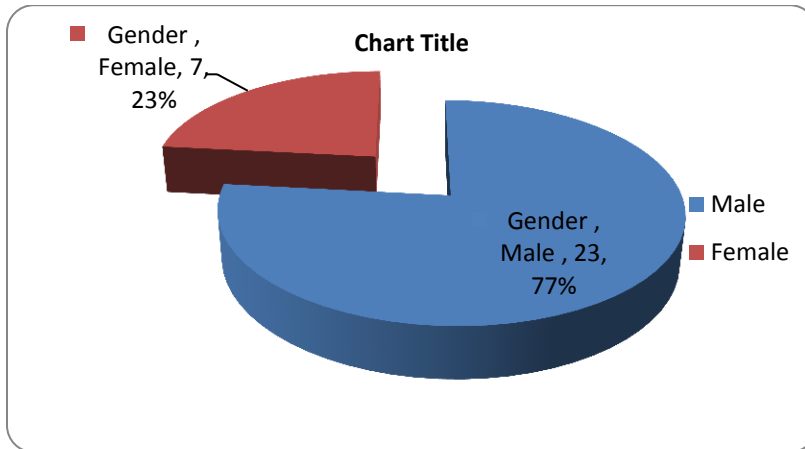
4.2 Demographics

The study sought to establish the characteristics of the interviewees in order to establish their credibility in answering the interview questions.

4.2.1 Gender of Interviewee

The study sought to establish the gender of the interviewees in order to ensure fair representation of both genders. The results of the study showed that a majority (77%) of the respondents were male.

Figure 1: Gender

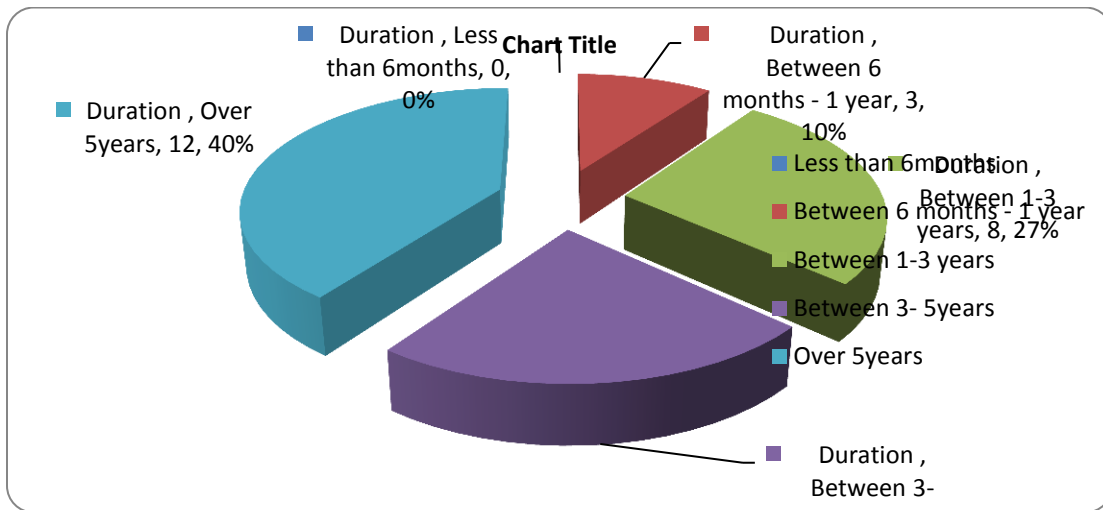


Source: Field work (2015)

4.2.2 Duration of Work

The researcher also wanted to establish how long the interviewees had worked at KPLC in order to establish the reliability of their responses to the questions in the interview guide. The results show that 40% of the interviewees had worked in the company for a period of more than 5 years, 27% for a period of between 1-3 years, 23% for a period of between 3-5 years and the rest 10% for a period of between 6 months - 1 year.

Figure 2: Duration of Work



Source: Field work (2015)

4.3 Strategies to Improve Service Delivery at KPLC

This study sought to identify the various strategies adopted by KPLC in order to improve service delivery. This was done in order to achieve the first objective of the study. Several questions were posed to the interviewees and the responses are presented below

4.3.1 Service Delivery at KPLC

The interviewees were requested to share information about service delivery on their organisation. The interview results reveal that the company values service delivery to their customers and thus they have given major focus to the improvement of their customer service.

The interviewees noted that the management of the company has invested in training their customer care representatives to handle their customers better.

According to the interviews, this involves customer relations where service is directed towards ensuring customer oriented service. The interviewees also noted that management of KPLC is promoting the adoption of private sector service delivery strategies in order to upgrade service to customer satisfactory levels. This is in line with the argument by other researchers such as Chemengich (2013) who notes that public sector companies seek efficiency through adoption of private sector strategies.

4.3.2 Strategies adopted by KPLC to Improve Service Delivery

The study also sought to establish the strategies adopted by KPLC in order to improve service delivery. The results from the interviews reveal that the company has in the past decade adopted various strategies in order to improve service delivery. This was adopted in line with the firm's strategic direction of achieving its core values, of which the first one is to put the customer first. The quality policy of the company says that "We are committed to providing high quality customer service".

The interviewees noted that in order to achieve the core values and the quality policy, the company has adopted various strategies to improve service delivery to the consumers. It is revealed that the company has adopted various strategies such as the adoption of new public management practices, performance management, customer oriented practices, use of technology, social media as well as use of mobile technology to establish a beneficial relationship with customers. These strategies are similar to those assessed by Shinde (2013).

4.3.3 Reasons for the Adoption of Service Delivery Strategies

The study also sought to establish the reasons that have driven the company to seek and adopt strategies to improve service delivery. The interviews revealed that some of the main reasons are the need to deliver customer oriented service, the need to compete favourably with other private sector firms, customer requirements for improved service delivery and the strategic need to steer the company towards future sustainability and competitiveness.

Khalid (2010) notes that global trends such as rising customer expectations, budgetary constraints, global competition for investment, and changing demographics have transformed the environment in which the public sector operates. The requirement by the government for public sector firms to adopt new public management practices, get ISO certified are also some of the policies that have necessitated the need for the adoption of service delivery strategies.

4.3.4 Effect of the Strategies on Service Delivery

The study also sought to establish the effects of the adoption of the strategies on service delivery by the KPLC staff. The interviews reveal that the adoption of these strategies, for example the customer focused service delivery and use of mobile technology has improved the service delivered to the company's customers. The interviewees noted that employees are currently required to treat customers with utmost respect and in an efficient manner.

The interviews also note that they are required to implement private sector practices such as "Know Your Customer" (KYC) and 360 Degree turnaround practice to ensure customer complaints and enquiries are handled in the most effective and efficient manner. This view is

also seen from the study by Donnelly et al. (2006) who note that the compliance with service quality standards results in improvement in service delivery.

4.4 Challenges in the Implementation of Service Delivery Strategies in KPLC

The study also sought to establish the various challenges that KPLC has faced in the process of adopting and implementing service delivery strategies. This was done in order to meet the second objective of the study. The results reveal that some of the main challenges include employee resistance to change, issues of corruption, poor technology and reluctance by management to adopt some strategies. In the public sector, it is highly common found that employees have over the years adopted a culture of corruption where service is not delivered until the citizen bribes the employees. Such employees are therefore at the forefront of challenging the change process in the public sector since the adoption of NPM practices and other service delivery strategies borrowed from the private sector will result in the elimination of their chances to get the extra money derived from corruption. Interviewees noted that most of the challenges are related to the reluctance by employees to change (Shinde, 2013).

The adoption of service delivery strategies in the public sector is derailed by employees since they have over the years adopted a culture of laziness and rudeness which focuses on the employee rather than the customer. Other studies have also noted that the implementation of service delivery strategies in the public sector is faced by various challenges which must be addressed if the benefits of these strategies are to be enjoyed by the public (Lufunyo, 2013). Studies reveal that since employees have been used to a culture of laziness and corruption, they find it difficult to adopt service delivery strategies and other private sector practices such as

performance management since this will mean they have to work hard, which is a change they are not willing to undergo (Pretorius & Schurink, 2007).

4.5 Discussion

The study sought to establish the various strategies adopted by KPLC to improve service delivery. The results reveal that over the past decade, the company has adopted several strategies in order to improve the quality of services delivered to their clients. This has been necessitated by the public sector reform which has swept over the country with public sector companies being required to adopt private sector prices in order to improve their services. Today, the public sector has adopted the New public Management practices which is focused on ensuring that the service delivered by firms in the public sector is at par with that delivered by the private sector firms (Chemengich, 2013).

In order to comply with these regulations and in order to build a positive reputation and brand image in the country, the interviews reveal that the company has adopted the use of a modern customer care response department complete with mobile and social media integration. Customers are able to engage with the company representatives and get instant responses to their queries as well as get instant service. Further, the company has adopted the use of mobile money services where for example, customers can pay for their electricity bills or purchase electricity tokens on their mobile phones without having to visit the company's offices. This is geared towards the achievement of efficient and quality service delivery to the customers (KPLC, 2015).

The interviews also reveal that the company also communicates with its customers on social media which is also another strategy to improve service delivery. For example, the company posts the daily power interruption schedule on popular social media sites such as Twitter and

Facebook in order to ensure that customers are aware of the power interruption schedule in their areas and therefore avoid inconveniences. In case of any interruptions that were not scheduled or as a result of breakdown in the distribution lines, customers can post the occurrences on these sites and get response within a short while. This necessitates the company to identify problematic areas and thus speed up the dispatch of technicians to address the problems. The use of social media and mobile platforms is a common strategy to improve service delivery both in the public and private sectors (Shinde, 2013).

In terms of the challenges the company has been facing in their quest to implement strategies to improve service delivery, the results reveal that corruption, lack of funds and employee resistance are the main challenges. Khalid (2010) noted that some of the challenges faced by public sector organisations when it comes to the adoption and implementation of service delivery strategies include the lack of willingness by employees and budgetary constraints from the government. These issues have been experienced across different countries particularly emerging economies such as Kenya.

In the case of KPLC, corruption can be cited as the largest challenge facing the implementation of service deliver strategies. There have been cases of people masquerading as KPLC staff and they steal from unsuspecting customers through fraudulent dealings related to power installation and repairs. It is also common to find various middle men and subcontractors who deliver poor service to KPLC customers and overcharge them particularly in the area of power installation. These challenges have impaired the journey towards efficient service delivery for the company although efforts are still being put to see the strategies succeed (KPLC).

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for further research. This study was guided by two main objectives and these are to determine the strategies that are being adopted by the Kenya Power and Lighting Company to improve service delivery in Kenya and to establish the challenges faced by KPLC in implementing the strategies to improve service delivery.

5.2 Summary of Findings.

5.2.1 Strategies to Improve Service Delivery

The study sought to establish the situation on service delivery at KPLC. The results reveal that the company values service delivery to their customers and thus they have given major focus to the improvement of their customer service. The study also sought to establish the strategies that KPLC has adopted to improve service delivery. The results reveal that some of the strategies adopted by the company include: the adoption of new public management practices, performance management, customer oriented practices, use of technology, social media as well as use of mobile technology to establish a beneficial relationship with customers.

The study also sought to establish the reasons that have driven the company to seek and adopt strategies to improve service delivery. The results show that the main reasons include: the need to deliver customer oriented service, the need to compete favourably with other private sector firms, customer requirements and the strategic need for future sustainability and competitiveness. The study also sought to establish the effects of the adoption of the strategies on

service delivery by the KPLC staff. The results reveal that the adoption of these strategies has resulted in improved customer service, better treatment of customers and improved efficiency.

5.2.2 Challenges Faced in the Implementation of Strategies

The study also sought to establish the various challenges that KPLC has faced in the process of adopting and implementing service delivery strategies. The results show that employee resistance, corruption, poor technology and management reluctance are some of the main challenges facing implementation of service delivery strategies at KPLC.

5.3 Conclusion

The study reveals that there are various strategies adopted by KPLC in order to improve service delivery. The study therefore concludes that firms in the public sector are adopting strategies popular in the private sector in order to improve service delivery. This is attributed to the fact that there is need for firms in the public sector to adopt competitive practices in order to compete favourably with their counterparts in the private sector. The study also concludes that the adoption of service delivery strategies is aimed at ensuring that customer needs are met in the most efficient manner for sustainability of the firm. The study also concludes that improved service delivery in the public sector is desirable in that it will result in companies offer services in a manner that is aimed at meeting consumer needs by addressing their specific needs in an efficient manner.

The study also revealed that the adoption and implementation of service delivery strategies in the public sector is faced by issues such as corruption and employee resistance. The study therefore concludes that for the implementation of these strategies to succeed, identification and

management of these challenges is critical. The study also concludes that most organisations in the public sector have failed to improve the delivery of services to their customers as a result of the failure to deal with the above challenges.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study results and the conclusions drawn, the study recommends that it is important for all public sector organisations in the country to adopt strategies to improve service delivery so as to remain competitive. The study also recommends that firms should implement the new public management principles which focus on implementing private sector practices in the public sector in order to compete favourably with their counterparts in the private sector. The study also recommends that government policies be developed to ensure that public sector firms are obliged to provide satisfactory service delivery.

The study also recommends that there is need to adopt change management practices as a way of preparing both employees and management for the implementation of the service delivery strategies. It is also recommended that measures to curb corruption should be implemented in order to eliminate chances of the strategies not being implemented. The study also recommends that firms in the public sector need to adopt current technology in order to support the various service delivery strategies increasing chances for efficiency.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The researcher faced several limitations in the course of the study. First, the study was limited in terms of scope as it only focused on the strategies adopted by KPLC to improve service delivery and not the entire public sector.

The study was also limited in terms of the data analysis methods used since data was analysed using content analysis only. The results would have been more conclusive if other methods of analysis such as regression analysis were used. The researcher however believes that the method helped identify the common issues surrounding improvement of service delivery at KPLC and therefore the study objectives were achieved.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

It is recommended that there is need for a more comprehensive study in the entire public sector in Kenya in order to identify the main strategies adopted by public sector firms. This is due to the fact that this study only focused on KPLC and therefore the results may not be applicable in other industries.

It is also recommended that a quantitative study using regression analysis techniques should be used in order to identify the relationship between service delivery strategies and improved service delivery at KPLC and other public sector companies in Kenya. This will help to identify the main strategies that are effective in improving service delivery and which ones are not. This is important for management of KPLC and the entire public sector as it will help them to identify the strategies to invest in so as to improve service delivery.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Interview Guide

1. What is your position in the company?

.....

2. How long have you been working for the company?

.....

3. What can you say about service delivery in your company?

.....

4. Which strategies has the company adopted in order to improve service delivery?

.....

5. What are some of the reasons that have resulted in the need for the adoption of strategies to improve service delivery?

.....

6. Are there policies from the national government that have necessitated the need for improved service delivery?

.....

7. Do you think the adoption of these strategies has improved service delivery in your company?

.....

8. What can you say about the adoption of such strategies by other public sector organisations in Kenya?

.....

9. Has the improvement of service delivery been included in your company's long term strategic plan?

.....

10. Please suggest other strategies and efforts that can be put in place to ensure efficient service delivery in the public sector as a whole

.....