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Service Delivery as an Outcome of Political Environment: A Perspective of State Corporations in the Energy Sector in Kenya

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Abstract:

State corporations in the energy sector are a major foundation upon which economic, social, and political development strategies are anchored. All over the world, these institutions perform a complementary infrastructural role in facilitating economic sectors to deliver on their mandate and consequently contribute to the general welfare of societies. Extant literature presents strong empirical evidence that speedy, efficient, and responsive service delivery is imperative for the success of state enterprises and other organizations in a dynamic environment. However, despite the various government-initiated reforms and interventions and the vast commitment of resources, there are unending public concerns over the delivery of services in state corporations in Kenya. This study, therefore, sought to examine the effect of the political environment on service delivery in state corporations in the energy sector in Kenya. The target population was 124 suppliers, 5,107 end-user consumers, 1,817 employees in KPLC plus 480 employees in REREC, and 30 employees in the Energy regulator (EPRA). A sample of 380 individuals/households was selected using a two-stage random sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Empirical data for this analysis were gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire. The validity and reliability of the data collection tool were assessed to confirm the suitability of the tool for use in the study. Descriptive analysis and inferential analysis were conducted on the data set that had been gathered from the field. The findings of the study demonstrated that the political environment positively contributes to service delivery among the surveyed state corporations. It is recommended that the policy framework be developed to promote activities relating to actors' participation, decision-making, and efficient flow of information in state corporations. It is apparent that the level of participation of actors in advisory boards, project initiation, and project execution is not optimal. These aspects should form the basis for policy review and development seeking to enhance the extent of actors' engagement in the affairs of state enterprises. Deliberate effort should be made to align decisions with the consensual perspectives of actors.

Keywords: State-owned enterprises, political environment, and service delivery

1. Introduction

Globally, private and public strive to remain competitive by focusing on service delivery which essentially entails providing the diverse clientele drawn from the general public with facilitative services towards the realization of socio-economic development (Puolokainen & Jansoo, 2019). The public service sector is highly instrumental in the determination and promotion of the quality of life of citizens at the family and community level and consequently significantly contributes to the well-being of the nation. Political environment has, however, been identified to have implications on service delivery, especially in the context of state corporations (Agboola, 2016; Usang & Salim, 2016). The political environment is primarily manifested in terms of how politicians manipulate the selection process, administrative activities, and operations of state corporations, in a way that bureaucratic principles governing the institutions fully or partially follow in the interest of the politician (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008).

Globally, government institutions are mandated not only to provide services but also to be accountable for delivering services to the end-user consumers both effectively and efficiently (Alemseged & Hailay, 2019). In Ukraine, for instance, the inefficiency in government bureaucracy has been characterized by high levels of corruption, manipulated business interests, a depressed economy, and an absence of interest in the government (Fedosov & Paientko, 2017).

Further, Fedosov and Paientko report that the decisions made by the Ukrainian government were aimed at fulfilling the selfish interests of the minority at the expense of the majority. Fedosov and Paientko (2017) assert that the public has limited access to services and resources, which has triggered dissatisfaction with service delivery.

In Nigeria, Ukeje, Ogbulu, Onyema, Obi, and Obasi (2019) argued that bureaucrats usually work for the minister who is in office at any given time and not for the interest of the people, which has led to poor service delivery. Further, Ukeji et al. (2019) asserted that Corruption, bribery, and nepotism, which are brought about by poor leadership, rigid rules, and regulations, have led to high rates of dissatisfaction in service delivery, more so in developing countries. As pointed out by Soffu *et al.* (2018), the essence of government bureaucracy is to be for the people and by the people. However, the benefits are enjoyed by the privileged few at the expense of the majority.

Even though public entities are mandated to provide services to their customers' satisfaction, as argued by Chan, Thong, Venkatesh, Brown, Hu, and Tam (2010), issues relating to poor delivery of services have been reported. This is majorly due to the lack of competitors who offer the same services to the customers (Syapsan, 2019). Alemseged and Hailay (2019) noted that government institutions have a constant demand to deliver the best services as compared to previous times. The increasing pressure on bureaucracy is because of the growth in the scale of economic and social processes, together with the mounting power in competencies and tasks (Puolokainen & Jaansoo, 2018).

In Kenya, Mwaura (2007) alludes that poor services from state corporations have negatively affected the economy. Notably, the causes of the poor services were largely due to:

- The overlapping regulations governing SOEs that crippled the State-owned enterprises' autonomy,
- Politically inclined appointment of directors not based on competence that voids accountability, and
- State/Ministerial control that leads to liquidity problems (Mwaura, 2007)

There has been uproar among the citizens on the provision of services in State-owned enterprises. A growing number of end-user consumers and institutions have defected from the national grid to other sources of power, such as solar panels (Fares & Webber, 2017). The switch has been majorly due to the unreliability of KPLC in service provision, poor services, expensive connections, and corruption and facilitation fee to get the services. According to the KNBS (2019) Census, the use of solar panels showed the uptake was 19.3% and is expected to rise even more this year. The reduced demand on the national grid would adversely affect KPLC and, by extension, other sectors of the Energy Ministry. Therefore, it is essential to establish how government bureaucracies have influenced service delivery in state-owned enterprises to ensure that corrective measures are adopted.

2. Statement of the Problem

State corporations in the energy sector are a major foundation upon which economic, social, and political development strategies are anchored (Kekez *et al.*, 2019). The world over, these institutions perform a complementary infrastructural role in facilitating economic sectors to deliver on their mandate and consequently contribute to the general welfare of societies. Extant literature presents strong empirical evidence that speedy, efficient, and responsive service delivery is imperative for the success of state enterprises and other organizations in a dynamic environment (Agboola, 2016; Usang & Salim, 2016). Structural and administrative reforms from governments have been developed to restrain public expenditure, lighten the bureaucratic burden and turn the perceived negative image to improve public service delivery (Cameron, 2009).

Nevertheless, despite the various government-initiated reforms and interventions, alongside the vast commitment of resources, there are unending public concerns over the delivery of services in state corporations in Kenya (Mutua, Ngui, Osiolo, Aligula & Gachanja, 2012). A study by Mitulla (2016) indicates that a majority of Kenyans (53%) are not satisfied with service delivery, not overshadowing state-owned enterprises. Mwongozo (2015) cited political affiliation and insufficient competence in Boards of state-owned enterprises from opaque appointment processes as the key challenges affecting service delivery. Despite the reforms and recommendations, hurdles in terms of accessing government services still persist, an indication that the delivery of services begs for deliberate and focused mitigation measures (Tamrakar, 2020). Therefore, to enhance the delivery of services, factors that derail delivery must be investigated. A study by Ireri (2016) on the major challenges facing SOEs in Kenya depicts that irregular appointment of the Board of Directors, poor legal framework, indebtedness, and politicization of the appointment process are among the challenges SOEs face in service delivery. However, the study was concerned with the general state-owned enterprises in Kenya and not in the Energy sector.

Aspects of the political environment have been studied by Dlamini (2017) as antecedents of Service delivery among local municipalities in the South African context. The study adopted a purposive sampling method on 71 study participants. The findings of this inquiry established that intra-political infighting affected service delivery at the municipal significantly. The study highlighted that political infighting had bred corruption and poor administration of resources. The study recommended that the political environment in municipal administrations be limited in power and clear demarcations enacted. Challenges always arise in creating boundaries between the government of the day, politicians, and public sector officials. The study by Dlamini suffers from contextual weaknesses as it was carried out in South Africa and, as such, cannot be generalised in the Kenyan setting. This study, thus, sought to bridge the knowledge gap by analyzing the effect of the political environment on service delivery in state corporations in the Energy sector in Kenya.

3. Literature Review

3.1. *New Public Management Theory*

The rise of New Public Management Theory (NPM) can be traced to the period between 1980 and 1990 during the ascendancy of neo-liberal ideas in the United States and United Kingdom (UK) and the ascent to power of the 'new right intellectuals' (Simonet, 2014, p.167).

It was proposed by Hood (1991) as described by Barzelay (2002), who posits that in restructuring the state towards a more cost-effective and efficient path, the public sector should incorporate the private sector's input to lower the influence of public service trade unions, promoting regulatory accountability and transparency and addressing perceived inefficiencies of state-owned enterprises (Rahman, Liberman, Giedraitis & Akhter, 2013).

New public management theory often links doctrines of economic rationalism meant to upgrade public service quality, minimize public expenditure, boost efficiency, effective accountability, transparency of operations, decision-making towards effectiveness, and facilitate a more effective policy implementation (Mongkol, 2011). The notion that public bureaucracies' monopolies propagate and consistently become inefficient motivated the development of a New Public Management Theory (Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013). It symbolizes a set of ideas, practices, and values focusing on mimicking private sector concepts and techniques, breaking away from the traditional model of public administration (Hood, 1991 as cited by Barzelay, 2002; Basheka, 2012; Baguma, 2017; Wagana, 2017).

The New Public Management Theory encompasses a wide range of areas of governance in the public sector. These areas include: creating autonomous agencies, restructuring and setting up of overall strategy, showing value for taxpayers' money, introducing competition in public service, client responsiveness and bolstering transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, productivity, and improved service delivery (Baguma, 2017; Zungura, 2014). Gumede and Dipholo (2014), cited by Wagana (2017), demonstrated that the New Management Theory took the trajectory of viewing the public sector as a market for productivity and managerialism as a governance approach that realized productivity gains. This theory tries to resolve issues of equity, participation and inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, the rule of law, efficiency and effectiveness, value for taxpayers' money, and public service responsiveness (Ekundayo, 2017). Provisional incentives encourage increased output from each employee and revenue surge incentives for organizations. Ethical codes of conduct within organizations are also emphasized (Dunleavy, Gamble, Holiday & Peele, 1997).

New Public Management Theory is relevant to this study, as it relates directly to Government bureaucracy in general and service delivery variables. The theory advocated for accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and efficient responsiveness in public service processes. The wider perspective of New Public Management Theory was the use of market mechanisms practices in the public sector to compel administrators and service providers to be more accountable and responsive (Mongkol, 2011; Hughes, 2012). Matei and Antonie (2013) posit that New Public Management Theory culminates in a sharp focus on results. The outputs require monitoring for the success of a State-owned enterprise and, as such, are suitable for underpinning the construct of service delivery.

3.2. *Stakeholder Theory*

The stakeholder theory was posited by Edward Freeman in 1984. The theory suggested that stakeholders were all persons who were influenced in one way or another by the organizational environment. Freeman laid emphasis on bringing together relationships between an organization, its employees, the clients, the investors, and every person with a stake in the organization (Freeman, 2010). Simply, an organization was obligated to create value for all the stakeholders by looking into their overall needs for improved service delivery (Kinyua, 2016).

Stakeholders in state-owned enterprises include the consumers, the government, the investors, and the employees. Thus, the stakeholders can either be internal or external (Chege, 2019). The stakeholders are the key determinants of service provision and delivery. This, therefore, requires a cross-examination of all the stakeholders to identify their level of power, their perspectives on matters concerning service delivery, and their input on the same. The success of an organization in service delivery was pinned on understanding the needs of the stakeholders and incorporating their ideas in policy formulation to achieve effectiveness and efficiency.

Nevertheless, the theory posed a challenge, especially in the stakeholder's involvement in all clients of an organization, since it did not place a measure on whether the level of stakeholders' involvement was passive or active. Large companies, especially KPLC, have a wide range of stakeholders who are many. Therefore, it would take time and money to engage all of them. To make better and more informed decisions in state-owned enterprises, it was fundamental to include all the Actors in all stages for the effectiveness of service delivery (Omweri, 2018). However, there was a need to establish democracy and legitimacy in identifying the persons (Kornberger et al., 2017). This was to ensure that all the needs of the clients were well-represented and were not biased on the representation of the privileged few. Freeman's view on stakeholders' involvement was essential in this study in highlighting Actors' interest in the Energy sector. Therefore, stakeholder theory interrogated the influence of the Actor's interest on service delivery in the SOEs in the energy sector in Kenya.

3.3. *Political Environment and Service Delivery*

Political environment refers to the domain having sway over government administration from the higher tier of government or politicians (Usang & Salim, 2016). The political environment is in terms of how politicians manipulate the selection process, administrative activities, and operations of the SOEs in a way that bureaucratic principles governing the institutions fully or partially follow in the interest of the politician (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). Government bureaucracy

plays a critical function in formulating, implementing, and reviewing government policies. However, it is hugely influenced by the politics in the country (Agboola, 2016). The interventions by the government highly determine if service delivery is efficient or not. The government can either control or influence the trajectory of services, the leadership, or the policy compliancy of SOEs through powers and authority. Ferguson (2019) asserted that governments across the globe are failing their communities by becoming self-serving custodians instead of solving problems faced by the people and yet rewarding themselves handsomely for the failure. The delivery of services among enterprises in the public sector is mainly influenced by the ideologies and intended legacies of the dominant political parties at the time (Ferguson, 2019). The control or influence of the leading party influenced the delivery of service.

In a study on SOEs as hybrid organizations around the world, Bruton, Peng, Ahlstrom, Stan, and Xu (2015) targeted 23 SOEs drawn from different countries like China, the USA, Japan, Russia, Switzerland, France, Brazil, and Spain. Bruton et al. (2015) highlighted that SOEs currently should be regarded as hybrid organizations that possess aspects of private participation in control and ownership and state control and ownership. According to Bruton et al. (2015), this hybrid nature requires additional attention due to its adaptive and enduring form of organization that accounts for about 10% of the GDP globally, representing some of the largest firms worldwide. In tandem with the views of Bruton et al. (2015), this study intended to avail empirical evidence on the influence of the political environment on the delivery of service in state corporations in Kenya.

Aspects of the political environment have been studied by Dlamini (2017) as antecedents of Service delivery among local municipalities in the South African context. The study adopted a purposive sampling method on 71 study participants. The findings of this inquiry established that intra-political infighting affected service delivery at the municipal significantly. The study highlighted that political infighting had bred corruption and poor administration of resources. The study recommended that the political environment in municipal administrations be limited in power and clear demarcations enacted. Challenges always arise in creating boundaries between the government of the day, politicians, and public sector officials. The study by Dlamini suffers from contextual weaknesses as it was carried out in South Africa and, as such, cannot be generalised in the Kenyan setting.

Again, from Ileri's (2016) study on the effectiveness of appointments to the board of directors (BOD) in SOEs based on the Legal and Regulatory Framework in place, the study established that the employees of the SOEs serve the president's interests, and, therefore, do not enjoy their tenure. The study further established that the interference by the president was extensive, and the board of directors was directed on what to do to him. Further, the appointment of unskilled employees with no technical background skills in an agency resulted in poor service delivery due to mismanagement and fulfilling the interests of the privileged few to the detriment of the majority. The day's government, at times, engages in services that are not informed by the needs of the people, thus affecting service delivery. The interference can strain the SOEs financially and cause them to become incapacitated in delivering services (Usang & Salim, 2016).

3.4. Conceptual Framework

A thorough and critical review of the extant literature on key constructs of the study facilitated the formulation of the displayed hypothesized relationship between political environment and service delivery.

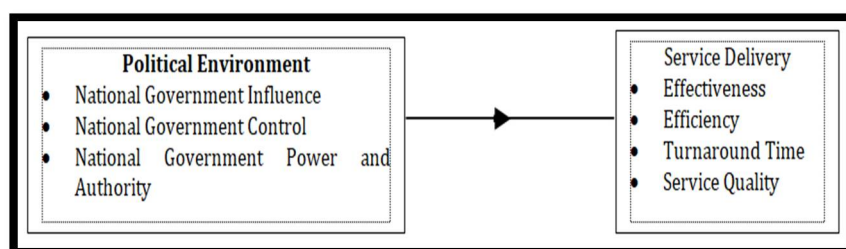


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Author (2022)

4. Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses of this study were:

- H₀: Political environment has no significant effect on service delivery in state corporations in the Energy sector in Kenya
- H₁: Political environment has a significant effect on service delivery in state corporations in the Energy sector in Kenya

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Research Design

Kothari (2014) describes research design as a framework that provides the appropriate solutions to the questions under research. The study utilized both descriptive and explanatory research designs using cross-sectional survey data that allowed for data triangulation and thus increased the validity of the findings. A descriptive research design is not experimental but objective. Hence, the data collected does not change the environment and is guarded against bias that

may result from manipulation (Gliner, Morgan & Leech, 2011). The data collected using descriptive research design aids in describing persons, organizations, settings, or phenomena (Ritchie & Ormston, 2003). These features were appropriate in providing statistical information, which enabled the researcher to achieve a good balance in presenting the state of affairs of the phenomena that were observed in state-owned enterprises in the energy sector, as well as making generalizations (Wanjau *et al.*, 2012; Berg, 2008). On the other hand, explanatory research design as a quasi-experimental research design with wide application in social science inquiries was suitable for establishing causal links between the set of research variables chosen in this study and, as such, aided in hypotheses testing (Kothari, 2014). The research design adopted has had wider application by other social scientists. The adopted research design has been used in past quantitative research studies (Njoroge, 2015; Kinyua, Njoroge, Wanyoike & Kiiru, 2015; Njoroge & Kinyua, 2020; Thangaru & Kinyua, 2020; Muthimi, Kilika & Kinyua, 2021).

5.2. Unit of Analysis and Observation

The unit of analysis for the empirical investigation was state enterprises in the energy sector operating in Kenya. Since the study respondents were drawn from different cadres, the unit of observation was senior-level management, junior-level management, and operations personnel working in KPLC, REREC, and EPRA head offices in Nairobi City County. Similarly, suppliers and end-users of KPLC and REREC also constituted important units of observation in this study. In addition, senior personnel in the Ministry of Energy, including the Cabinet Secretary, Chief Administrative Secretary, and Principal Secretary, were observed in this inquiry.

5.3. Site of the Study

The locale for this investigation was Nairobi City County, which serves as the host for the head offices for the majority of state-owned enterprises and all ministries in Kenya. Notably, the head offices of KPLC, REREC, EPRA and the Ministry of Energy are all domiciled in Nairobi City County. This locale is unique since the policy direction that establishes the practices of state-owned enterprises in the energy sector is formulated at the head offices of KPLC, REREC, and EPRA in close consultation with senior Ministry of Energy officials.

5.4. Target Population

The population may be viewed as the entirety of events, groups of people, objects, cases, or subjects of interest that a researcher intends to investigate (Kyalo *et al.*, 2015). This inquiry precisely focused on the two-state corporations within the energy sector and the regulator of the corporations. Precisely, the survey was confined to operational personnel, junior-level managers, and senior-level managers working in the head offices of KPLC, REREC, and EPRA. Furthermore, suppliers and end-user consumers of KPLC and REREC served at the head offices of KPLC, and REREC also constituted part of the population of the study. The study surveyed senior managers who reported to the chief executive officer as they discharged their duties in the various functional units and were there sufficiently knowledgeable and conversant with relevant practices relating to government bureaucracy, working environment, and service delivery in the respective state-owned enterprises. An aggregation of subjects comprising the population of this study was 7,558, distributed in the manner depicted in the tabulated data.

SOEs/Ministry	Section/Level	Target Population	Cumulative Percentage
KPLC	Senior Level Management	20	68
	Junior level Management	86	
	Operations Personnel	1711	
	Suppliers	76	
	End-User Consumers	3245	
Sub-Total		5138	
REREC	Senior Level Management	19	31
	Junior level Management	83	
	Operations Personnel	378	
	Suppliers	48	
	End-User Consumers	1862	
Sub-Total		2390	
EPRA	Senior Level Management	5	1
	Junior level Management	9	
	Operations Personnel	16	
Sub-Total		30	
Total		7558	100

Table 1: Target Population

Source: Ministry of Energy (2019), KPLC Annual Report, (F/Y 2019/20)

Table 1 provides information on the distribution of subjects across the identified categories. Generally, the population of the study was distributed into 5138, 2390, and 30 subjects translating to 67.98 percent, 31.62 percent, and 0.40 percent for KPLC, REREC, and EPRA, respectively. In particular, most subjects in the population are associated with KPLC, comprising 20 senior management, 86 junior management, 1711 operation personnel, 76 suppliers, and 3245 end-users. The least number of subjects in the population were attributed to EPRA, with 5 senior managers, 9 junior

managers, and 16 operational personnel. The rest of the subjects in the population were associated with REREC and comprised 19 senior management, 83 junior management, 378 operation personnel, 48 suppliers, and 1862 end-users.

5.5. Sampling Frame

According to Rahi (2017), a sampling frame is a listing of all cases that are deemed to possess information pertinent to a given inquiry. The Ministry of Energy has 6 Semi-Autonomous Agencies, 5 SOEs, and an Energy tribunal, from which this study chose KPLC and REREC as the two state-owned enterprises are utility institutions offering similar services to end-users. The characteristic profiles of the end-users are similar, in addition to the Energy and Petroleum regulator (EPRA) as an Actor with interest. The sampling frame for this study encompassed 7,558 subjects comprising senior management, junior management, operation personnel of the two state-owned enterprises and EPRA, and suppliers and end-users of KPLC and REREC.

5.6. Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling is considered the process of identifying and including a portion of the entire population in a study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Rahi, 2017). Sampling technique involves selecting a representative, as a subset of the population, from which the findings can be inferred to the population characteristics of interests (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Taherdoost, 2016).

The sample size for the survey was determined by using Yamane's (1967) formula for the computation of sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

- n = Size of the sample
- N = Size of population
- e = error term (For this study was 0.05)

Hence,

$$n = 7558 / \{1 + 7558(0.05)^2\} = 379.89$$

n = 380

Further,

$$\text{Sampling Factor (p)} = 380/7558 = 0.05$$

Based on the formula above, at a level of confidence of 95 percent, 380 participants constitute a suitable sample size for the inquiry. The actual selection of subjects was implemented using a two-stage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling. The first stage, involving proportionate stratified sampling, was instituted to ensure that the subjects drawn from each category were representative of the population. The results of the distribution of the sample attained in the first stage are tabulated as displayed.

SOEs/Ministry	Section/Level	Population Size (N _i)	Sampling Factor (p)	Sample Size (n _i =P*N _i)	Percentage
KPLC	Senior Level Management	20	0.05	1	68
	Junior level Management	86	0.05	4	
	Operations Personnel	1711	0.05	86	
	Suppliers	76	0.05	4	
	End-User Consumers	3245	0.05	163	
Sub-Total		5138		258	
REREC	Senior Level Management	19	0.05	1	31
	Junior level Management	83	0.05	4	
	Operations Personnel	378	0.05	19	
	Suppliers	48	0.05	2	
	End-User Consumers	1862	0.05	93	
Sub-Total		2390		119	
EPRA	Senior Level Management	5	0.05	1	1
	Junior level Management	9	0.05	1	
	Operations Personnel	16	0.05	1	
Sub-Total		30		3	
Total		7558		380	100

Table 2: Sample Distribution

Source: Author (2021)

Upon determination of the sample size for the various population categories in stage one, simple random sampling was used in the second stage. This sampling technique was instituted to accord each subject of the population the same probability of being drawn into the sample. Ultimately, a sample of 380 subjects was randomly selected to gather the field data.

5.7. Instrument for Collecting Data

The survey consisted of primary data that was essentially gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire, a widely applied tool for collecting empirical information required to test hypotheses and draw conclusions (Kothari, 2014). The questionnaire was structured into two broad sections for general and specific information. The general information section comprised five questions that sought information on the essential attributes of respondents involved in this study. The specific information section was intended to elicit information and responses on the observable aspects of the research variables necessary for responding to the research objectives of this study. Moreover, the general information section was structured into sub-sections for the political environment and service delivery. The majority of questions in the questionnaire was closed-ended in nature and constructed on a five-point Likert rating scale to aid in the collection of quantitative data to facilitate the testing of the formulated hypotheses. A smaller proportion of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions intended to gather qualitative responses that could enrich the data gathered through the closed-ended questions.

5.7.1. Validity for Research Instruments

Validity is essentially concerned with how accurately a test or a set of test items measures what was intended for measurement (Drost, 2011). Validity, therefore, entails how accurate the research instrument is in providing meaningful inferences based on the research findings (Drost, 2011). Validity of a test is primarily concerned with assessing the extent to which the research instrument can measure what ought to be measured (Field, 2005), where key validity dimensions include face, content, and construct validity (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Before making observations using a questionnaire, the researcher must confirm that the research instrument meets the criteria for validity.

Face validity evaluates the appearance of the test instrument based on feasibility, readability, consistency of style and formatting, and language clarity. Content validity essentially refers to the degree to which a given set of items encompasses the content of a construct that ought to be measured (Taherdoost, 2016; Yusoff, 2019). Construct validity relates to the extent to which a theoretical concept or construct is translated and thus signifies a functioning and operating reality in a given context. Face validity was essentially confirmed through the expert opinion that included input from the supervisors and other faculty members. In addition, the researcher undertook a thorough review of relevant conceptual and contextual literature guided by the chosen research variables to ensure content and construct validity.

5.7.2. Reliability

Reliability encompasses the degree of internal consistency that the instrument demonstrates on repeat trials (Wambugu *et al.*, 2015). Reliability is focused on how consistent an instrument is with its measurement across variables (Drost, 2011). In order to confirm the internal consistency of the set of items in the data collection tool, a pilot study of 10 percent of the selected sample selected was carried out on employees, suppliers, and end-users. According to Cooper and Schindler (2010), a value of 0.70 for Cronbach's alpha index is a suitable threshold for determining the reliability of a research tool. The internal consistency of the set of items designed for each research variable was quantitatively assessed using Cronbach's alpha Coefficient as tabulated.

Research Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Index	Decision
Political Environment	15	0.712	Reliable
Service Delivery	15	0.924	Reliable
Aggregate Score		0.818	Reliable

Table 3: Statistics for Reliability Test
Source: Pilot Data (2021)

The outcome of the reliability analysis demonstrates that the set of items for service delivery had the highest level of Cronbach's alpha index of 0.924. In contrast, the political environment had the least at 0.712. It can be observed that the reliability index for the research variable exceeds the threshold of 0.7 adopted by the research as has been recommended for questionnaires (Cooper & Schindler, 2010). These findings are corroborated by an aggregate Cronbach's alpha index of 0.818 with a corresponding statistical implication that the research variables are indeed reliable.

5.8. Data Collection Procedure

Authority to collect data was sought from the management of Kenyatta University through the Graduate school. The research license to collect data from state-owned enterprises in the energy sector was also sought from the National Council of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The authority to interact with the sampled respondents was sought through the relevant functional heads in the three target institutions of KPLC, REREC, and EPRA. Subsequently, the self-administered questionnaire was physically distributed. Respondents were provided with a period of two weeks to fill in the required information as per the guidelines of the instrument. The administration of the research tool facilitated the gathering of the quantitative and qualitative data needed for addressing the research objectives.

5.9. Data Analysis

Data analysis is crucial for evaluating the information gathered to make sense and aid in deciding on the set of objectives in an empirical inquiry (Taylor & Cihon, 2004). This study carried out four fundamental stages of quantitative data analysis, including data preparation, summarization of sample characteristics, and population measures estimation.

The collected data was carefully examined for completeness, quality, and consistency. These data were coded and transcribed, thus providing for computerized consistency checks and cleaning of data. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distribution, the sample mean, and sample standard deviation, were generated to aid in developing a concise summary of the defining observable features of the surveyed sample. The summary measures of the observed sample were presented in figures and tables. These summary measures were instrumental for carrying out further statistical analysis and testing of the hypothesized relationships between the research variables.

The effect of leadership hierarchy, actors' interest, policy compliance, and political environment on the delivery of services in state enterprises involved in the survey was statistically analysed using simple linear regression as thus depicted in equation 3.1.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PE + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 3.1$$

Where:

- Y= Service delivered
- β_0 and β_1 = Regression coefficients
- PE= Political Environment
- ε = Error term

Political environment as the input construct was regressed on service delivery to aid in estimating corresponding parameters and statistical equations, testing corresponding hypotheses, and estimating. Decisions for making a conclusion on the hypothesized relationships as depicted by research hypotheses and relating to β_0 and β_1 were made at a 95 percent confidence level.

5.10. Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data gathered in this inquiry was analysed using thematic analysis. This analysis entailed identifying, analyzing, and making meaningful interpretations of patterns within qualitative data, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested. The distinct patterns deriving from this analysis formed the basis for presenting a qualitative report in terms of common themes.

6. Research Findings and Discussion

6.1. Response Rate

The researcher administered 380 copies of questionnaires to subjects in KPLC, REREC, and EPRA. However, 305 dully filled questionnaires were gathered at the end of the period that had been agreed upon. Analysis of participation of the subjects sampled in this study indicated a response rate of 80%. It has been contended that high participation in a sample survey can increase the external validity of a study and the robustness of the resulting estimates (Dillman, 2000; Massey & Tourangeau, 2013; Kinyua, 2015).

6.2. Characteristics of the Participants

In the general section of the research instrument, the researcher intended to discern the essential attributes of surveyed respondents. In view of these, participants were required to provide information pertaining to gender, nature of the relationship, level of education, category of institution, level in the organization, and length of employment. The results of analyses of these attributes are provided in tabular form.

Attributes	Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Female	145	48%	48%
	Male	160	52%	100%
Education Level	Postgraduate Degree	46	15%	15%
	Bachelor Degree	120	39%	54%
	College Diploma	88	29%	83%
	Others	51	17%	100%
Nature of Relationship	Operations Personnel	54	18%	18%
	Junior Management	29	10%	28%
	Senior Management	9	3%	31%
	Suppliers	7	2%	33%
	End-User Consumers	206	67%	100%
Length of Interaction	Not more than 5 years	91	30%	30%
	6 – 10 years	97	32%	62%
	11 – 15 years	73	24%	86%
	More than 15 years	44	14%	100%

Table 4: Characteristics of Participants

Source: Survey Data (2021)

The tabulated results show that participation by gender was 48 percent and 52 percent for females and males, respectively. Evidently, there was a marginal variation between the two genders, with the majority of participants being

male. These findings manifest a fair representation of both male and female participants in the study. The presence of male and female participants in this survey was considered critical for facilitating the making of balanced observations concerning the phenomena of interest in the purview of the surveyed state enterprises.

In terms of the level of education, the findings revealed that participants with a bachelor's degree level of education accounted for the highest proportion of respondents at 39 percent. Notably, participants who had attained postgraduate degrees represented the minority proportion of 15 percent. The proportion of participants with a college diploma level education was 29 percent, whereas the rest, accounting for 17 percent, had attained other education levels below the college diploma. The spread of participants in terms of educational attainment clearly underscores the diversity of experience and perspectives amongst the actors sampled in state entities within the energy sector. In addition, the observed educational attainment implied that the research participants conversed with the aspects of the phenomena of interest in this study.

On the attribute of the nature of the relationship that subsisted among the state enterprises and actors observed in this inquiry, the findings manifested end-user consumers as the majority participants with a proportion of 67 percent. On the other extreme, suppliers accounted for the smallest proportion of 2 percent of the participants that were involved in the survey. Actors in the category of junior management and senior management accounted for proportions of 10 percent and 3 percent, respectively, of the observed participants. These findings demonstrated a fair representation of the target categories of the actors reflected in the target population. The vast participation of actors in the category of end-use consumers was particularly critical in providing, among others, insights into the aspects of service delivery adopted in this survey.

Furthermore, a majority of actors had between 6 and 10 years of interaction with the surveyed state-owned enterprises in the energy sector. On the other extreme, a proportion of 14 percent of the participants had interacted with the surveyed institutions for a period exceeding 15 years. The rest of the participants, accounting for 24 percent and 30 percent, had interacted with the observed state-owned enterprises for a period of 11 to 15 years and, at most, 5 years, respectively. Evidently, the significant proportion accounting for 70 percent of the proportion of actors participating in this inquiry had interacted with the state-owned enterprises in the energy sector for at least 6 years, demonstrating that they were conversant with aspects, activities, and practices that were reflective of the institutional phenomena adopted in this survey.

6.3. Summary Measures of the Research Variables

The researcher sought to gather empirical evidence on leadership hierarchy and service delivery as the input and output variables, respectively. The summary measures of central tendency and their attendant dispersion for the sample data gathered in this survey are presented and discussed in this section.

6.3.1. Political Environment

In empirical inquiry, the political environment was operationalized using national government influence, national government control, and national government power and authority as key indicators. In particular, contextual activities and aspects construed as the political environment in the operational practices of state entities in the energy sector were surveyed. The results of the analysis of measures of central tendency for the political environment and corresponding measures of variation are tabulated.

National Government Influence	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
The national government closely follows the institutional operations	305	1.00	5.00	3.44	0.91
Support by the national government ensures service delivery	305	1.00	5.00	3.43	0.77
The organization is successful because politicians support it	305	1.00	5.00	2.78	1.26
I am impressed by the intervention of the government	305	1.00	5.00	3.57	0.82
Political processes, such as general elections, affect service delivery	305	1.00	5.00	3.40	0.89
Aggregate Scores for National Government Influence				3.32	0.93
The national government determines how the institution operates	305	1.00	5.00	3.34	0.63
Politicians are key determinants of service delivery	305	1.00	5.00	2.85	1.05
Politicians have a say in the hiring selection process	305	1.00	5.00	2.68	1.20
Promotion at work is based on political favors	305	1.00	5.00	3.02	0.96
The leaders do what the politicians want in the organization	305	1.00	5.00	2.74	1.22
Aggregate Scores for National Government Control				2.93	1.01

National Government Power and Authority	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
The national government promotes institutional autonomy	305	1.00	5.00	2.93	1.18
The national government supports the operations of the organization by developing timely policies	305	1.00	5.00	3.18	0.84
Policy changes initiated by the national government to state-owned enterprises promote the operations of the organization	305	1.00	5.00	3.22	1.00
Political diversity on matters concerning the organization enhances the delivery of services	305	1.00	5.00	3.28	0.99
The national government cushions the organization from inflation and tax escalation	305	1.00	5.00	2.99	1.11
Aggregate Scores for National Government Power and Authority				3.12	1.02
Aggregate Scores for Political Environment				3.13	0.98

Table 5: Political Environment

Source: Survey Data (2021)

The tabulated results illustrate that the largest and the smallest values of the sample mean for national government influence are 3.57 for the aspect of intervention of the national government and 2.78 for the aspect of institutional success attributed to politicians' support, respectively. Even though responses were close together for the aspect intervention of national government as demonstrated by a relatively low standard deviation of 0.82, there was evidence of high variability of responses for the contribution of politician support to the institutional success as depicted by a relatively high sample standard deviation of 1.26. However, considering the aggregated scores of the sample mean response and sample standard deviation at 3.32 and 0.93, respectively, for national government influence, it is evident that the aspects and activities that were under observation are moderately practiced in state enterprises.

Analysis of the contextual activities and aspects measured for national government control revealed that the observed sample means response ranged from 2.74 for the aspect that managers do what the politicians want in the institution to 3.34 for the aspect that the national government determines how the institution operates. Notably, the lowest sample mean recorded for this construct is associated with a relatively high standard deviation of 1.22, suggesting that individual responses widely varied across the measurement scale. However, the general behavior of the sample means response and sample standard deviation, as denoted by 2.93 and 1.01, respectively, implied that the activities measured were moderately manifested in the practices of the surveyed state enterprises.

Regarding national government power and authority, the summary measures of the observed data set demonstrated a typical mean response of 3.12 with a corresponding sample standard deviation of 1.02.

Examination of the trend of mean response of the set activities measured indicated a narrow range from a mean of 2.93 to a mean of 3.28. The corresponding standard deviation behavior demonstrates narrow general variability for all the aspects construed as national government power and authority. These descriptive statistics imply that the institutional activities comprising national government power and authority were moderately indicated in the context of surveyed state entities. The aggregated values of the political environment at 3.13 and 0.98 for the sample mean and standard deviation confirmed that the variability of responses was narrow. As such, the sample measures observed could be used to generalize findings to the study population.

6.3.2. Service Delivery

Service delivery was hypothesized as the outcome variable in this study. The indicators that were adopted to measure service delivery included efficiency, effectiveness, turnaround time, and quality of service. The summary measures of central tendency and dispersion for the set of data gathered on the delivery of services in state enterprises in the energy sector are in table 6.

Service Delivery	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
The organization is keen to perform the promised service	305	1.00	5.00	3.32	0.68
There is good accessibility to organizational services	305	1.00	5.00	3.10	0.76
Needs of actors are attended to on a timely basis	305	1.00	5.00	2.95	1.19
There are delays in the performance of services in the organization	305	1.00	5.00	2.74	0.95
Actors are satisfied with the levels of accuracy in the performance of services in the organization	305	1.00	5.00	2.92	1.21
Actors' convenience in the performance of service is valued in the organization	305	1.00	5.00	3.09	0.75
Service performance meets the expectation of actors	305	1.00	5.00	3.31	0.83
Operating hours of the organization are convenient for actors	305	1.00	5.00	3.42	0.77

Service Delivery	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
Performance of service in the organization is characterized by thoroughness	305	1.00	5.00	3.38	0.82
Actors are given individual attention in the organization	305	1.00	5.00	2.92	1.20
Actors are satisfied with the level of service performance in the organization.	305	1.00	5.00	3.00	0.69
Actors are informed about when the service will be performed	305	1.00	5.00	2.85	1.24
Actors feeling are considered in the performance of service	305	1.00	5.00	2.96	1.08
Actors feel safe during the performance of service in the organization	305	1.00	5.00	3.09	0.72
Organization's documents are free of errors	305	1.00	5.00	2.42	1.21
Aggregate Scores for Service Delivery				3.03	0.94

Table 6: Service Delivery
Source: Survey Data (2021)

The results displayed in table 6 revealed that the sample mean response for the observations made regarding service delivery ranged between 2.42 for the aspect that the organization's documents are free of errors and 3.42 for the aspect that the operating hours of the organization are convenient to actors. On the former aspect, the corresponding standard deviation is relatively high at 1.21, implying that the responses gathered on this aspect were not close together on the measurement scale used. The general behavior of the sample mean response of the data set gathered implies that the practices typified by the activities and aspects measured are moderately manifested in the surveyed state-owned enterprises in the energy sector.

It is evident that:

- Operational hours are convenient for actors,
- There is thoroughness in-service performance,
- There is safety during service performance,
- Service performance meets the expectation of actors, and
- Keen interest is manifested in executing the promised services

It was also noted that there are moderate delays in the performance of services, and institutional documents are moderately free of errors. The aggregated sample mean response for all aspects of service delivery observed in this study was 3.03, and the corresponding standard deviation was 0.94. This overall behavior of observations gathered implies that the attendant aggregate variability is low, and thus, the summary measures of the sample are suitable for making generalizations about the population of the study.

6.4. Linear Regression

The researcher conducted a simple linear regression analysis to facilitate the testing of the research hypotheses. Towards this end, the political environment was regressed on service delivery. The resulting statistical output is shown in table 7.

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.855 ^a	0.732	0.728	0.39749	1.856
Dependent Variable: Service Delivery Predictors: (constant), Leadership Hierarchy					

Table 7: Simple Regression Analysis
Source: Survey Data (2021)

The statistics for the model summary demonstrate that the correlation coefficient for the model is 0.855, whereas the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) is 0.732. The coefficient of determination implies that the political environment accounts for 72.8 percent of the variation of service delivery in the surveyed state enterprises. The outstanding 27.2 percent of the variation in outcome variable is attributable to other factors that were not investigated in this study.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	129.151	4	32.288	204.357	.000 ^b
Residual	47.399	300	0.158		
Total	176.550	304			

Table 8: Analysis of Variance
Source: Survey Data (2021)

The F-test for the overall model fitness is manifested by the output of Analysis of Variance, indicating a value of 204.357 for the F-statistics with a level of significance (p-value) of 0.000. These results provide a statistical confirmation

that the estimated model is the most appropriate for fitting the empirical data set gathered in this study. In particular, the estimated model has statistical significance at a level of confidence of 95 percent and a 0.05 level of significance.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.185	.129		1.436	.152
Political Environment	.135	.048	.110	2.820	.005

Dependent Variable: Service Delivery
Predictors: (constant), Political Environment

Table 9: Coefficients of Regression Analysis
Source: Survey Data (2021)

The regression coefficients tabulated in table 9 aided in the estimation of a respective statistical model, as illustrated in equation 5.1.

$$\text{Service Delivery} = 0.185 + 0.135 \text{ Political Environment} \dots\dots\dots 5.1$$

Statistical evidence in the output of regression coefficients demonstrates that in the case where all the explanatory variables are maintained at a constant value of zero, the level of service delivery would be at 0.185. Apparently, the p-value corresponding to the constant coefficient is 0.152, which in reality, exceeds the value of 0.05 chosen as a criterion for making a decision. Therefore, the population parameter for the intercept (constant coefficient) is not statistically significant at a 95 percent confidence level.

As regards the research hypothesis, the researcher postulated that the political environment does not affect the delivery of services in state enterprises in the energy sector in Kenya. Statistical evidence estimates a beta coefficient of 0.135 for the political environment as a critical dimension of government bureaucracy. Further, the corresponding p-value for the political environment is 0.005, which does not exceed the benchmark value of 0.05 chosen for making decisions in this study. These findings imply that an increase in the political environment by a value of 1 is responsible for an increase of 0.135 in the level of service delivery. As such, the researcher concludes that at a level of significance of 0.05 percent, there is a relationship between the political environment and service delivery in state-owned enterprises in the energy sector in Kenya.

The conclusion of this study supports the findings of Agboola (2016), which indicates that the political environment has a bearing on operational practices and the delivery of services. Notably, service delivery in the public sector is mainly influenced by the ideologies and intended legacies of the dominant political parties at the time (Ferguson, 2019). Furthermore, the findings verify the argument of new public management theory that creating autonomous agencies, restructuring, and setting up overall strategy, showing the value for taxpayers' money, introducing competition in public service, client responsiveness, and bolstering transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness enhances productivity and service delivery (Zungura, 2014; Baguma, 2017).

6.5. Qualitative Data

The views of actors were sought on the relevance of the political environment. It was observed that the political environment can favor or hinder the efficient functioning of state enterprises in the energy sector. It was noted that public institutions in the utility sector attract immense attention from the political class as their core business is to provide essential services that play a facilitative role in so far as social-economic development at the community and national level is concerned. Political influence interferes with operational practices in state enterprises in the energy sector and promotes inefficiency in the delivery of services. It is necessary to cultivate a considerable degree of autonomy to promote operational efficiency, objectivity, consistency, and fairness in the delivery of services.

7. Conclusion

The study examined the effect of the political environment on service delivery. Descriptive and explanatory research designs were used as a blueprint for making observations and analyzing data. Simple linear regression analysis was chosen as an empirical model as a basis for carrying out statistical analysis. Random sampling was used to select a representative sample from the target population. The researcher gathered requisite field data using a semi-structured questionnaire.

As a construct, the political environment was measured in terms of national government influence, national government control, and national government power and authority. Resulting measures of central tendency and dispersion confirmed that the political environment moderately manifested in the practices of state entities surveyed in the energy sector and that there was a narrow variability implying that the estimator was stable and reliable. Similarly, service delivery was conceptualized as an outcome variable and measured using efficiency, effectiveness, turnaround time, and quality of service. Measures of central tendency and respective measures of dispersion deriving from the observed data signified the presence of pertinent aspects of service delivery in surveyed state-owned enterprises. Accordingly, inferential analysis verified the political environment to be statistically significant. As such, the researcher concluded that the political environment positively affects service delivery.

8. Recommendations with Practical Implications

The empirical findings of this study have valuable implications for policy and practice in state corporations in the energy sector. The board of management of state corporations in the energy sector should put in place mechanisms for cushioning from disruptive interference of interest groups with the potential to erode operational efficiency and ability to actualize service delivery outcomes. The national government's role in promoting service delivery has not only been appreciated but is also considered pivotal. However, there is a need to deliberately insulate the running of state-owned enterprises from interference by politicians for actors' to reap commensurate benefits. Politicians' influence in service delivery, selection process, promotion of employees, and management decisions and actions should be put under check. The promotion of institutional autonomy should be a central concern for the national government to enhance fairness, objectivity, and efficient delivery of services in state-owned enterprises.

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