



## Effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery in the county government of Kakamega, Kenya

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### Abstract

In Kenya, county governments and their agencies are mandated to provide public essential services and manage basic social and physical infrastructure without compromising quality. A gap exists between services provided by government agencies and the public expectations. In view of the foregoing, it was necessary for this study to investigate the effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery in the county government of Kakamega. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of this study consisted of 9,788 registered traders in Kakamega Municipality, Mumias Township and Khayega Market where outsourced market cleaning services were provided. This study used a sample population of 367 respondents for data collection. Before administering the questionnaire, a pilot testing of the questionnaire on 5% of the sample population was conducted and the instrument was found to be suitable. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicated that outsourced cleaning service empathy is a significant predictor of service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. The study recommends that the county Government of Kakamega engages outsourced cleaning service companies that show empathy to the public. It is also recommended that the County Government should establish a policy for outsourcing public cleaning services.

**Keywords:** outsourced services, service empathy, service delivery

### 1. Introduction: Background of the Study

The concept of outsourcing traces its origins to ancient Roman Empire where tax collection was subcontracted (Ronoh, 2005) [34]. Outsourcing involves the arrangement with an external entity for the provision of goods and services to complement or supplant internal efforts (Lolkidiane, 2012) [24]. In the early years of United States of America, the wagon construction was outsourced to Scotland where they were constructed using raw materials imported from India (Kahindi, 2010) [18]. Outsourcing is a common practice among many companies in the USA. It began in the 1970s and increased notably during the next two decades with the rise of neoliberalism (Fernandez & Valencia, 2013) [10]. Most European countries tend to outsource labor (Grimshaw, Anxo, Rubery & Bacache-Beauvallet, 2015) [12]. The top outsourcing destinations in Asia include China, Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand because of positive government policies, improvement in infrastructure and improvement in human resources (Chen, Pham & Chen, 2016) [4]. Latin America and Africa are now the third-largest destinations for outsourcing facilities in the world, after Asia (With India and China leading) and central and Eastern Europe (Fernandez & Valencia, 2013) [10].

The Central and Eastern European region is becoming an increasingly popular destination for business service offshoring and outsourcing (Sass & Fifekova, 2011). European Countries such as Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland have in the recent past been contracting private companies to provide services such as education and waste management. In Sweden for instance, the school vouchers are offered by outsourced companies. In

Portugal, public outsourcing is a fairly new phenomenon (Marques, 2016) [27]. Most European countries tend to outsource labor (Grimshaw, Anxo, & Bacache-Beauvallet, 2015) [12].

Foreign investors perceive investing in Africa as very risky to their operations in terms of stability, security and infrastructure (Karthik & Rajpal, 2010) [20]. Egypt, Morocco, Mauritius and South Africa are leading countries in the offshore destination in Africa (Jorek *et al.*, 2009) [17]. South Africa is attractive as BPO for insurance and finance because of its pool of qualified actuaries and claims processing accreditation and its well-developed telecommunication and IT infrastructure (Farrel, 2006) [9]. South Africa is an attractive BPO location and its future looks bright because the country has a low business risk profile compared to locations like Egypt. The South African intellectual property frameworks are good (Alkali, Dasuki, Abbott & Quaye, 2016) [1].

In Kenya strategic outsourcing of public services by county governments and other government agencies is becoming common. In Nairobi county, the Kenya Refuse Handlers Limited (KRHL), Domestic Refuse Disposal Services Limited (DRDSL), and Bins (Kenya) Limited were contracted to provide solid waste management services in the Central Business District (CBD) and some residential areas in order to improve efficiency (Ingari, 2018) [22]. A survey of residents of Nairobi has shown that 47% of those paying US\$1.25/month or less would be prepared to pay more than US\$2.5/month for good waste management services (Rotich *et al.*, 2005). Most Kenyan cities and municipalities have outsourced IT services, general

consultancy services, public car parking management and general cleaning and solid waste management (Ingari, 2018)<sup>[22]</sup>.

The Kenyan Vision 2030 highlights BPO as one of the six key sectors necessary to spur economic development in Kenya. BPO contributed 0.01% to the nation's GDP before the advent of the fiber-optics. It was estimated that BPO would eventually create 20,000 direct jobs and contribute 10 billion Kenyan shillings (USD 120 million) from local firms and multinational corporations (Government of Kenya, 2007). In Africa, Kenya is ranked third as a BPO center mainly because the country has made English the official language of communication, a factor that enhances business interactions with other English-speaking nations (Gatheru, 2017). The public sector in Kenya has taken up outsourcing as a business strategy. Parastatal organizations in Kenya outsource services and goods from the private sector through tenders and therefore provide business to many Kenyans from various sectors (Mwai, 2017)<sup>[30]</sup>. Originally the Kenyan vision of BPO sector was export oriented. It was intended to attract foreign investors who could transform the economy from dependence on primary products to manufactured and tertiary services (Graham, Anderson & Mann, 2015)<sup>[11]</sup>.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The services provided by the county government of Kakamega include basic education, housing, health, water and sewerage, refuse and garbage collection, planning and development control, fire services among others (County Government of Kakamega, 2018). In Kenya, government agencies have not prioritized the needs of the public hence the necessity to adjust and improve the way such needs are met (Pearce & Robinson, 2013). A study carried out by Ireri, (2008) on the extent to which restaurants and hotels operating within the Nairobi Central Business District (NCBD) are satisfied with services of the City Council of Nairobi, established that a gap exists between services provided and the customers' expectations and on average most customers were not satisfied with the services. Related studies carried out (Kalava, 2016; Wangari, 2014, Ingari, 2018)<sup>[22]</sup> on outsourced services all showed that on average customers were dissatisfied with the service quality levels provided. However, none of these studies has specifically examined the causal relationship between outsourced cleaning service empathy and service delivery in Kakamega County. This study therefore sought to establish whether similar findings would be realized in Kakamega County.

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega

### 1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

The null hypothesis of this study was that there is no relationship between outsourced cleaning service empathy and service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega

### 1.5 Research Question

What is the effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory was originally detailed by Edward Freeman (1984). Stakeholder theory focuses explicitly on equilibrium of stakeholder interests as the main determinant of corporate policy. Stakeholders' theory challenges the primacy assumption of shareholder interests and advocates that a company should be managed in the interests of all its stakeholders (Freeman, 1994). The theory is based on the assumption that values are necessarily and explicitly a part of efficient service delivery and that contractors need to articulate the shared sense of value they create to bring its key stakeholders together. When citizens get what they want from the government, they develop confidence and trust in the government (Freeman & McVea, 2001). Ulrich *et al.* (2008) argues that the public can be instrumental to efficient service delivery and therefore, government leaders have to consider the claims of the public and other stakeholders when making decisions and conduct business responsibly towards the interests of all stakeholders. The stakeholder theory argues that contractors should make decisions so as to take account of the interests of all stakeholders in an organization including not only financial claimants, but also employees, customers, communities and governmental officials (White, 2009)<sup>[41]</sup>.

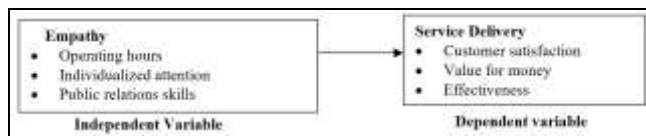
Mallin (2004)<sup>[25]</sup> argues that compared to agency theory, enlightened stakeholders' theory which utilizes much of the structure of shareholders theory advocates that, a government's top management cares more about long term success and accepts maximization of the long run value as the criterion for making the requisite trade-offs among its stakeholders. Cassano, Gandini and Gennari (2015)<sup>[3]</sup> argue that to improve relations with stakeholders there is need to have voluntary formal publication of documents and communication of organization's strategy about service delivery to have a mature corporate culture where transparency in the communication reflects fairness and respect to all stakeholders' expectations behaviors. Weighing the costs and benefits of enhanced stakeholder reporting and engagement, as well as creating and monitoring specific methodologies with which to engage these stakeholders are both clear areas in which governments are posed to lead (Smith, 2014)<sup>[39]</sup>.

According to Miles (2012)<sup>[28]</sup> stakeholder theory argues that there are other parties which are important and the government has a binding duty to put their requirements first and to increase value for them besides the public. These other parties include employees, customers, suppliers, financiers, governmental bodies, political groups, trade associations, trade unions, and competitors. Therefore, governments should give due regard to the interests of these groups which the stakeholder theory lists and describes as being affected by or affect the government's actions. If a bad turn of events creates uncertainty about government's continuing ability to provide services, customers, suppliers, employees and debt holders may become reluctant to keep dealing with the government as they cannot be ensured that their unsettled claims will be honored (Monda, Giorgino, & Modolin, 2013)<sup>[29]</sup>. The government will need to find means of assuring potential claimholders that their claims will be respected. Stakeholders' theory is therefore adopted in this study to help the researcher analyze and understand how county governments adopts a proactive approach to integrate all stakeholders' concerns into their decision-

making processes and to lay the necessary governance structures to enhance service delivery in the long- term.

### 2.1.1 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a thinking schema through which different aspects of research project are organized and their presumed relationships are constructed with the aim of guiding a researcher throughout the process and position him in relationship to the research in terms of theoretical and ideological inclination (Holliday, 2007). A conceptual framework is structured from a set of wide-ranging ideas and theories that help a researcher to properly identify the problem they are looking at, frame their questions and find suitable literature (Smith, 2004) [40]. The conceptual framework for this study is shown in Figure 2.1.



Source: Author (2020)

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

### 2.2.1 Outsourced Cleaning Service Empathy and Service Delivery

Empathy is defined as a person's ability to sense another's thoughts, feelings, and experiences, to share other's emotional experience, and to react to the observed experiences of another person (Wieseke, Geigenmüller & Kraus, 2012) [42]. Research confirms that empathy involves cognitive as well as emotional dimensions (Jones & Shandiz, 2015) [16]. From a cognitive perspective, empathy is the service employee's potential to take the customer's view through understanding their mind, thoughts, and intentions (Daniels, Glover & Mellor, 2014) [6]. Regarding the emotional viewpoint, empathy relates to employees' capability to involve in helpful actions toward customers, such as interpersonal concern and emotional contagion (Mayshak, Sharman, Zinkiewicz, & Hayley, 2017) [26]. Ananth, Ramesh and Prabakaran (2011) [2] demonstrated empathy in their research of private sector banks; arguing that empathy provides individual attention and easy operation time; gives personal attention, and understand the specific needs of customers.

Ennew, Waite and Waite (2013) [8] point out that the empathy dimension of service quality means being attentive in communicative situations, understanding customer needs, showing friendly behavior, and taking care of a customer's needs individually. Navaratnaseel and Periyathampy (2014) [31] defined empathy as the ability to take care of customers and pay attention to them individually, especially while providing services. Ananth, Ramesh and Prabakaran (2011) [2] revealed that a positive impact on customer satisfaction is brought about by convenient working hours, individualized attention, a better understanding of customer's specific needs in the banking sector and the empathy dimension, all of which play a crucial role in customer satisfaction.

According to Wieseke *et al.* (2012) [42], customers treated emphatically are more often visitors and prone to forgive any mistakes that may occur. Service empathy creates an emotional relationship with customer, providing customer a touch of importance for business. The aspects that are critical in-service empathy include employees' knowledge

to respond to customer needs. Strategic public service providers need to invest heavily on staff training so as to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with their customers. Further, service providers that provide individualized attention to their customers increase their level of perceived service quality. This is due to the high intangibility of the service and the heterogeneity of it results in an increased focus on the interaction process (Karatepe, 2011) [19].

As a well-thought-out notion in the relationship marketing literature, empathy is considered as a significant variable for individual consideration among persons (Jones & Shandiz, 2015) [16]. Particularly in the literature concerning service, empathy is regarded as an essential element for fruitful employee and customer communications that commonly lead to altruistic motivation and pro-social and altruistic behavior (Itani & Inyang, 2015) [14]. As a form of social or mutual perspective, empathy relates to the gaining of particular insight into the experience of others, while distinguishing it as another person's experience instead of one's own (Itani & Inyang, 2015) [14]. For better service quality (SQ), it is crucial for employees to recognize and deal with customer needs (Puccinelli, Andrzejewski, Markos, Noga, & Motyka, 2013) [33].

Service empathy is related to the employee's aptitude in understanding customer perspective and feelings during service interactions resulting in positive customer emotions toward the service brand (Hwang & Kim, 2016) [13]. Committed customers attach less significance to price variations relative to competitors due to the relational aspect of the brand and attribute service failures to extrinsic reasons instead to brand deficiency (Drollinger & Comer, 2013) [7]. Employee ability to understand customer emotions, sense their expectations, and react accordingly affect the improvement and coordination of appropriate interactive behaviors upon which customers value such developments and increase overall satisfaction (Jones & Shandiz, 2015) [16]. Empathic employees with general recognition of customer requirements adjust their behaviors toward specific customers, rendering to each customer personalized assistance (Wieseke *et al.*, 2012) [42] resulting in higher customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the empathic behavior of employees increases satisfaction and develops a long-lasting relationship with the service brand (Itani & Inyang, 2015) [14].

A study by Wieseke, Geigenmüller and Kraus (2012) [42] on the role of empathy in customer-employee interactions reveals that customer empathy strengthens the positive effect of employee empathy on customer satisfaction, leading to more symbiotic interactions. The findings also indicate that empathic customers are more likely to respond to a dissatisfying encounter with forgiveness, in the sense that customer empathy is able to mitigate negative effects of customer dissatisfaction on customer loyalty.

Smadi and Al-Jawazneh (2016) explored the benefits gained from the outsourcing strategy implemented by industrial companies in Jordan in terms of cost reduction, focus on core competencies, and access to specialized resources, quality improvement, and the perceived benefits. The study findings revealed that manufacturing companies in Jordan are adopting the outsourcing strategy and are gaining the expected benefits out of it, and outsourcing strategy is, in fact, highly perceived by the manufacturing companies in Jordan. In a research conducted in Qatar to investigate the

impact of service quality on business performance in hospitality industries, Nair (2016), using a sample of 243 respondents who were hotel guests and focusing on the five SERVQUAL quality dimensions, found out that tangibles, reliability and empathy had a significant impact on business performance. The impact of responsiveness and assurance was found to be insignificant.

Arisi-Nwugballa (2016) investigated the effect of outsourcing security, cleaning, and laundry services on the quality of the outsourced services and, by implication, the quality of healthcare services delivered by federal healthcare institutions in South-East Nigeria. From the data analysis 66.9 per cent of the respondents perceived improvement in the quality of security services; 69.1 per cent of the respondents perceived improvements in the quality of cleaning services; and 65.8 per cent of the respondents perceived improvements in the quality of laundry services since the services were outsourced in the institutions. The study recommended that public organizations should outsource non-core activities as a strategy towards improving the quality of their service delivery.

**3. Research Methodology**

**3.1 Research Design**

Research design refers to the arrangement of conditions or plans and procedures for research including methods of collection and analysis in order to connect relevance to the research objective (Creswell, 2014) [5]. A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. This design is relevant in identifying characteristics of an observed phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) [23].

**3.1.1 Target Population**

Target population refers to the total items about which information is desired (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [21]. From the list of businesses licensed in 2019, Kakamega Municipality had a total of 7,215 licensed traders, Mumias Township had a total of 1,999 licensed traders while Khayega market had a total of 574 licensed traders making a grand total of 9,788 traders that formed the target population for this study.

**3.1.2 Sampling Frame**

A sampling frame is the ordered list of individuals in the population of interest to the researcher from which a sample is drawn (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [21]. In this study, the sampling frame consisted of the list of all business enterprises licensed in Kakamega Municipality, Mumias

Township and Khayega market in 2019 as shown in Table 3.1

**Table 1: Sampling Frame**

Category	Target Population			Total
	Kakamega Municipality	Mumias Township	Khayega Market	
Retail shops	2060	570	78	3,208
Fresh produce	1368	334	105	1,907
Cereals	1237	312	94	1,743
Carpentry, welding	1049	287	29	1,465
Salon, barber shops	525	126	32	683
Transport	612	254	174	1,040
Information and communication	175	48	17	240
Entertainment and recreation	131	42	29	202
Other Services	58	26	16	101
Total	7,215	1,999	574	9,788

Source: County Government of Kakamega (2019)

**3.1.3 Sample Size**

According to Kothari (2008) [21], a sample is a section of a population that is selected for examination and analyses and used to make inferences to the population from which it is obtained. In deriving the sample from the sample frame, Yamane (1967) [43] statistical formula was employed as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where;

n: Sample size

N: Population under study (9,788)

e: Margin error (0.05)

1: Constant

Substituting in the formula we have;

$$N = 9,788 \div (1 + 9,788 \times 0.05 \times 0.05)$$

$$= 9,788 \div 25.47$$

$$= 384.3$$

A margin error of 0.05 is used to compute the sample size, which according to Yamane (1967) [43] gives the largest sample size at a given confidence level. Substituting the margin error and the target population in the formula above gives a sample size of 385 as shown in Table 3.2. The proportionate sample sizes for each stratum are computed on the basis of the size of the stratum and the target population using the formula:

$$\text{Stratum sample size} = (\text{stratum target pop.} \div 9,788) \times 385.$$

**Table 2: Sample Size**

Category	Kakamega Municipality		Mumias Township		Khayega Market		Total
	Target Pop.	Sample Size	Target Pop.	Sample Size	Target Pop.	Sample Size	
Retail shops	2060	81	570	22	78	3	385
Fresh produce	1368	54	334	13	105	4	
Cereals	1237	49	312	12	94	4	
Carpentry, welding	1049	41	287	11	29	1	
Salon/barber shops	525	21	126	5	32	1	
Transport	612	24	254	10	174	7	
Information and communication	175	7	48	2	17	1	
Entertainment and recreation	131	5	42	2	29	1	
Other Services	58	2	26	1	16	1	
Total		284		78		23	

Source: Author (2020)

**3.1.4 Sampling Technique**

Sampling technique is the process of selecting respondents that constitute a sample (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [21]. Simple random sampling was used to select the number of respondents in each stratum. Respondents were randomly picked from the sampling frame using random numbers to ensure that there was equal chance for each of the respondents to be included in the study (Kothari, 2008) [21]. This random sampling is useful in obtaining a representative sample and allows generalization to a larger population with a margin of error that is statistically determinable and the usage of inferential statistics.

**3.1.5 Data Collection Instruments**

In this study, a structured questionnaire was the main research instrument. A questionnaire is a tool that consists of a number of questions arranged in a definite order on a set of forms, for administration to respondents (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [21]. A 5-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)) type of questionnaire was adopted for this study.

**3.1.6 Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring data on specific variables in an established systematic manner that enables one to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and analyze outcomes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010) [38]. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) [23] people are more truthful when responding to questionnaires since their responses are anonymous. Respondents were introduced to the questionnaires and a period of a week given to allow respondents to answer questions.

**3.1.7 Pilot Test**

According to Hulley (2007), a pilot study is a small-scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, adverse events, and effect size in an attempt to predict an appropriate sample size and improve upon the study design before a full-scale research. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 5% of the sample size, thus, 5/100(385). On this basis, twenty questionnaires were pilot tested within Kakamega Municipality. This was necessary to ensure that the questionnaire was manageable, relevant and effective. Creswell (2014) [5] reiterates that the size of a sample to be used for pilot testing varies depending on the time, cost and practicability, but would tend to be between 5-10 percent of that of the main survey. In order to minimize the possible instrumentations error and hence increase the reliability of the data collected, the reliability of the pre-test observation schedule was tested using scores obtained from a single test administered to individuals from within the sampling frame and hence saved time (Kothari, 2008) [21].

**3.1.8 Test of Reliability**

Reliability refers to the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure (Kothari and Garg, 2014) [21]. Sekaran (2003) [37] observes that reliability is established by testing for both consistency and stability. To test the reliability of the instruments, a test-retest method was used. Test-retest estimates of reliability were obtained by correlating data collected with those from the same questionnaire collected under as near equivalent conditions as possible (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007) [36]. The results obtained were coded and entered into a computer

program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences - version 25) after which a reliability index was calculated using the Cronchbach’s alpha.

$$KR_{20} = \frac{(K)(S^2 - \sum S^2)}{(S^2)(K-1)}$$

Where;

*KR<sub>20</sub>* is reliability coefficient of internal consistency  
*K* is the number of items used to measure the concept  
*S<sup>2</sup>* is the variance of all scores

A Cronchbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.7 and above is considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable. A high Cronchbach’s alpha coefficient implies that the items correlate highly among themselves that is there is consistency among the items in measuring the concept of interest (Pallant, 2007) [32].

**3.1.9 Test of Validity**

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomena under study (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [21]. Content related validity will be used to determine the validity of the questionnaire (Kothari, 2008) [21]. Before the questionnaire was used to collect data, two experts evaluated it in terms of the percentage of questions that they considered relevant and the average score from the two experts was calculated. The average congruency percentage above the lower limit of 90% is considered sufficient for the content validity of the questionnaire to be confirmed (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [21]. Validity test was necessary to determine the appropriateness, clarity and relevance of the instruments for the final study. Vague and inadequate items were reviewed in order to improve the quality of the instruments.

**4. Data Analysis**

**4.1 Questionnaire Return Rate**

The researcher distributed 385 questionnaires. The study received responses from 367 (95.3%) out of the targeted 385 respondents. The response rate of 95.3% was achieved through support of two research assistants. According to Bell (2005), a response rate of 60% is adequate to permit data analysis. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) posits that a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good and above 70% is very good. Going by this, the response rate in this study was adequate for carrying out study analysis.

**4.1.2 Reliability Test**

The findings in Table 4.1 indicate that the questionnaire items were suitable for data collection and thus they measured the constructs which they were supposed to measure.

**Table 3: Reliability Statistics**

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Conclusion
Outsourced Cleaning Service Empathy	9	.953	Reliable
Service Delivery	8	.916	Reliable

Source: Author (2020)

**4.1.3 Service Delivery**

The study sought to investigate the effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery in the county

government of Kakamega, Kenya. The dependent variable in this study was service delivery. There were three measures of service delivery namely customer satisfaction, value for money and effectiveness. These measures were explored through descriptive analysis. In the conceptual framework, it was postulated that service delivery is influenced by outsourced cleaning service empathy. 4.1.3.1

**4.1.3.1 Descriptive Statistics for Service Delivery**

Service delivery was assessed by three measures namely customer satisfaction, value for money and effectiveness. A

five-point rating scale was used to collect the views of traders. Respondents were presented with eight constructs as indicators of service delivery where they responded to the statements on a five Likert scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1), where 5 was translated to indicate very high level of service delivery and 1 to represent very low level of service delivery. Further, this data was rigorously interrogated on the basis of percentage frequencies of responses. The interrogation was done thematically and the results were summarized as shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4:** Service Delivery

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Services provided by the contractor are satisfactory	68.4%	22.1%	0%	3.5%	6.0%
The contracted public cleaning company should have its contract extended	28.3%	36.2%	20.7%	10.9%	3.8%
The performance of the staff of the company contracted to provide public cleaning is satisfactory	45.8%	34.1%	8.2%	6.5%	5.4%
Engaging a contracted public cleaning company saves the county government the cost of provision of public cleaning	37.3%	38.1%	16.1%	6.5%	1.9%
Engaging the public cleaning contractor enables the County Government to save time	21.0%	33.5%	19.9%	18.8%	6.8%
Quality service is provided when the County Government contracts a public cleaning company	12.0%	30.5%	21.8%	26.2%	9.5%
There is improved efficiency in public cleaning since the public cleaning company was contracted	20.2%	41.7%	24.3%	9.8%	4.1%
The staff of the company contracted to provide public cleaning services are more efficient	30.8%	34.6%	18.0%	10.1%	6.5%

N=367

Source: Author (2020)

From Table 4.2, there is evidence that many of the respondents strongly agreed that there was good service delivery. For instance, more than half of the respondents strongly agreed that services provided by the contracted public cleaning company were satisfactory, while the least number strongly agreed that quality service is provided when the County government contracts a public cleaning company. From this finding, it was evident that there was quality service delivery by the company that was contracted and that the traders were satisfied with the quality of services offered by the company. These findings correlate with the findings of other scholars like Wael (2015) who found that service quality attributes were very important in overall customer satisfaction. Bachiller (2013) and Lane (2008) also observed that service providers performing excellently on the quality efficiency dimension perform well in regard to service quality and performance transformation.

**4.1.1 Influence of Outsourced Cleaning Service Empathy on Service Delivery**

The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. To achieve this objective, outsourced cleaning service empathy was assessed through three main measures namely operating hours, individualized attention and public relations skills. Nine constructs that underlie the three measures were subjected to analysis. Overall, effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery was analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

**4.1.1.2 Descriptive Statistics for Outsourced Cleaning Service Empathy**

To find out the effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery, a nine opinion statements on outsourced cleaning service empathy on a five-points scale spanning from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) was used and the results summarized in Table 4.3

**Table 5:** Outsourced Cleaning Service Empathy

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Working hours of the company contracted to provide public cleaning services are convenient to the traders	40.9%	39.8%	8.7%	6.8%	3.8%
The working hours of the contracted public cleaning company are considerate to the trader’s expectations	44.7%	41.7%	3.5%	3.9%	6.3%
The staff of the contracted public cleaning company finish their work within the allocated time	35.7%	40.1%	5.4%	10.9%	7.9%
The staff of the company contracted to provide public cleaning services listen to concerns and opinions of traders	32.7%	35.1%	16.9%	7.1%	8.2%
The services provided by the contracted public cleaning company meet the expectations of traders	44.1%	35.7%	12.0%	2.7%	5.4%

The staff of the contracted public cleaning company adjust their service provision to suit the needs of traders	50.4%	31.1%	9.0%	4.1%	5.4%
The staff of the company contracted to provide public cleaning services pay attention to particular concerns of traders	50.7%	33.2%	7.0%	2.7%	5.4%
The staff of the contracted public cleaning company resolve particular concerns by traders	41.1%	35.1%	12.0%	4.9%	6.8%
The staff of the contracted public cleaning company adjust their service provision to suit traders' expectations	48.8%	31.8%	7.6%	5.4%	6.5%

N=367

Source: Author (2020)

From Table 4.3 it was observed that outsourced cleaning service empathy has an influence on service delivery in Kakamega County. For instance, almost half of the respondents agreed that staff of the contracted public cleaning company adjust their service provision to suit the needs of traders and that the staff of the company contracted to provide public cleaning services pay attention to particular concerns of traders. Another nearly a half of the respondents agreed that the working hours of the contracted public cleaning company are considerate to the trader's expectations. However, some of the respondents disagreed that the staff of the contracted public cleaning company finish their work within the allocated time. This finding concurs with that by Izogo and Ogba (2015) [15] who emphasized the importance of empathy in service delivery. These researchers observed that managers need to train their employees to develop a strong empathy towards their guests. The researchers noted that individual attention to the customers will add immense value to the customer service. The researchers also found out that the employees need to sense the best interest of the customers and deliver their services and they further observed that flexible operating hours are also indicators of better customer service quality.

**4.1.1.2 Correlation Analysis Results**

Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to

calculate the scores for outsourced cleaning service empathy as an independent variable and service delivery as a dependent variable. Table 4.4 shows this relationship.

**Table 6: Correlation Results**

		<b>Service Delivery</b>
Outsourced cleaning service empathy	Pearson Correlation	.834**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	367

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). r = 0.834, N = 367, P<.01

Source: Author (2020)

From Table 4.4 the results showed that there was a strong positive association (r=.834 n=367 p<.01) between influence of outsourced cleaning service empathy and service delivery. These findings are in tandem with findings of Nair (2016) who interestingly noted that empathy had a strong relationship on performance.

**4.1.1.3 Regression Analysis Results**

To establish the level of influence of outsourced cleaning service empathy and service delivery, the study used a coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) using regression analysis as shown in Table 4.5

**Table 7: Regression Analysis**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.834 <sup>a</sup>	.696	.696	.49382

Predictors: (Constant), Empathy, Dependent variable: Service Delivery

Source: Author (2020)

From Table 4.5 the R value is at .834 which shows that there exists a strong influence of empathy on service delivery in Kakamega County. R<sup>2</sup> shows .696 on variation on service delivery caused by empathy. However, to

determine whether outsourced cleaning service empathy was a significant predictor of service delivery among traders in Kakamega County, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed as shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 8: ANOVA of Outsourced Cleaning Service Empathy and Service Delivery**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	204.129	1	204.129	837.085	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	89.008	365	.244		
	Total	293.137	366			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

b. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy

Source: Author (2020)

From Table 4.6 where [F (1, 365) = 837.085, P<.05], it is evident that outsourced cleaning service empathy influence service delivery in Kakamega county and thus a significant predictor.

To show the strengths of the relationship between outsourced cleaning service empathy and service delivery, regression analysis was done. Regression model coefficients are shown in Table 4.7.

**Table 9:** Regression Coefficients

Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.511	.100		6.940	.000
	Outsourced cleaning service empathy	.436	.052	.470	6.735	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery						
Model: $Y=0.511+0.470X_1$						

Source: Author (2020)

From Table 4.7, there was a positive beta co-efficient of 0.470 as indicated by the co-efficient matrix with a p-value = .000 < .05 and a constant of 0.511 with a p-value = .000 < .05. Therefore, outsourced cleaning service empathy contribute significantly to service delivery. Consequently, the model can provide the information needed to predict service delivery from outsourced cleaning service empathy. The regression equation is presented as follows:  $Y=0.511+0.470X_1$ ; Where Y = service delivery, 0.511 is the Y-intercept (constant) and  $X_1$  is outsourced cleaning service empathy.

The null hypothesis of this study was that there is no relationship between outsourced cleaning service empathy and service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. According to Table 4.6, outsourced cleaning service empathy had coefficients of estimate which was significant basing on  $\beta = 0.470$  (p-value = .000 which is less than  $\alpha = .05$ ). The null hypothesis was thus rejected and it was concluded that outsourced cleaning service empathy had a significant effect on service delivery.

**5. Summary of Findings**

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of outsourced cleaning service empathy on service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega. Outsourced cleaning service empathy recorded a Pearson Moment correlation coefficient of .834. This implies that outsourced cleaning service empathy has a very strong positive correlation with service delivery. The regression analysis results indicated that outsourced cleaning service empathy is a strong predictor of service delivery in the County Government of Kakamega.

From the findings, it can be concluded that the traders in Kakamega highly value the way providers of cleaning services take consideration of their needs and feelings as they provide the services. Therefore, the service providers should be encouraged to foster closer working relationship with traders and continue improving their services by paying attention to the needs of traders. It calls for a lot of caution on the part of service providers, to encourage traders to express their feelings towards the services provided and also to point out areas they would wish the service providers to improve on.

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