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Influence of Staff Empowerment on Service Delivery in Consultancy Firms in Eldoret Town

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ABSTRACT
In today's competitive environment, delivering quality service is considered as an essential strategy for success and survival. Even the consulting organizations have come under increasing pressure to deliver quality services and improve efficiencies. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of staff empowerment on service delivery in consultancy firms in Eldoret Town. The study was guided by Theory of Competitive Advantage. The study was done in three consultancy firms within Eldoret town. A descriptive survey design was utilized in this study. The target population for this study was 582 respondents. The sample size of the study was 237 respondents selected using simple random sampling technique. Data collection was done using structured questionnaires. In order to establish the validity and reliability of the research instruments a pilot study was carried out in consultancy firms in Kapsabet town. The data collected was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Collected data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptively data was analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Where inferentially data was analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The study findings illustrated that staff empowerment has a positive significant effect on service delivery (β_1=0.835, p=0.000<0.05). The study concluded that staff empowerment has a positive significant effect on service delivery. The consultancy firms had enhanced their decision making through staff empowerment. The study recommended that consultancy firms should be encouraged to look for better ways of strengthening their staff empowerment in order to enhance their customer service delivery.
Key words: Staff Empowerment, Quality Service, Strategy, Success
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I. Background to the Study

Service delivery is a component of business that defines the interaction between providers and clients where the provider offers a service, whether that be information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses value as a result (Mustak, 2019). Good service delivery provides clients with an increase in value. Consultants provide their advice to their clients in a variety of forms. Advice can be general and also domain-focused. However, in some specialized fields, the consultant may develop customized software or other products for the client (Ackery et al., 2017). Depending on the nature also named mandate or statement of the consulting services and the wishes of the client, the advice from the consultant may be made public, by placing the report or presentation online, or the advice may be kept confidential and only given to the senior executives of the organization (Kalaimani, 2016).

Rebranding occurs when a brand is "reborn," and thus attempts to suit customer demands and desires. Re-branding may experience evolutionary or revolutionary transformation. Revolutionary change occurs when franchises in firms' new happenings with their distinct name, sign, and jingle, but evolutionary change occurs only when changes to the logo are made, for example (Keller et al., 2011). Rebranding and brand building are critical in today's competitive service delivery market. A strong branding can open up opportunities for expansion, command market share, establish a barrier to entry for competitors, and increase consumer loyalty. A strong branding can open up opportunities for expansion, command market share, establish a barrier to entry for competitors, and increase consumer loyalty.

Moreover, a strong brand will enhance positive perceptions of a product's quality, provides a consistent brand image and personality and maintains high level of product awareness. For firms to keep up with fierce competition in the market, they must sought to transform their business and make them adapt to changing business environment. Therefore, re-branding can be termed as a necessary strategy or ingredient that can help build a new business image and also help in building confidence in the consumers. Rebranding is also one of the most important factors that marketers and brand experts must pay attention to in order to refresh a brand that could be becoming obsolete (Unegbu & Eke, 2016).

Business in Colombia carries a contemporary rebranding taking different forms which does not only limited to the change of a name (Singh *et al.* 2021). When consumer perceptions, attitudes and behaviours are changed due to a change in a brand that leads to a positive market growth, rebranding could be said to have taken place. The scope of such changes could be as minor as slight changes to the company's graphics and logo or as major as a full-blown name change. Changing any of the visual brand elements like logo and colour can basically be termed as rebranding. This in turn influences firm image, and together, they influence student loyalty (Ali, Zhou, Hussain, Nair & Ragavan 2016).

Consultancy firms have become a predominant form of business in the USA, among other countries, and by 2005, contributed over 68 percent to the gross domestic product (Carlson, 2016). While consultancy services represent many forms of businesses, including financial services, professional, health care, and entertainment, to name a few, extensive research has focused on transactional service encounters between customers and employees, such as those that occur in convenience stores, fast food restaurants, supermarkets, and firms (Roy, Sreejesh & Bhatia, 2019). Much of this focus has been on how to organize and empower low-skilled employees to manage the temporary, impersonal, and often nonrecurring interactions with customers.

Consultancy firms' roles in the Kenyan market have primarily focused on accounting and accounting-related services like as due diligence reviews, tax consulting services, auditing, and assurance, among other things (Leposo, 2019). Only through auditing and assurance is information technology recognised to play a role in the consulting profession. These companies also have information technology consulting services, with the goal of providing specialized and experienced advice to their clients. Consultancy businesses play a unique role in any economy because they strategically use information technology for both internal and external reasons (Poulfelt, Olson, Bhambri & Greiner, 2017).

In today’s competitive environment, delivering quality service is considered as an essential strategy for success and survival (Hoe & Mansori, 2018). Even the consulting organizations have come under increasing pressure to deliver quality services and improve efficiencies. Customer needs and expectations are changing when it comes to governmental services and their quality requirements. However, service quality among consulting firms delays and is further exacerbated by difficulties in measuring outcomes, greater scrutiny from the clients and press, lack of freedom to act in an arbitrary fashion and a requirement for decisions to be based in law. In addition, low technical now how from the firm officials, poor communication and poor customer management have undermined firm’s service delivery. Services are intangible in nature, evaluating the customer’s perception of quality can be done through the interaction with the personnel offering services. The current study therefore attempted to solve the existing problem and to fill the existing gap by investigating the staff empowermentand service delivery in consultancy firms in Eldoret Town.

II. Theoretical Review

Porter created the Competitive Advantage theory in 1985. It implies that decisions should be made based on competitive advantage at all levels, including national, company, local, and individual. A competitive advantage is what distinguishes an entity's brand or services from all of the other options available to a customer. The techniques are applicable to any company, country, or individual operating in a competitive climate. The theory is based on the fundamental assumption that adequate brands are available to those who engage in leveraging the competitive advantage of others to the extent that they can optimize their own potential, for example, move up the value chain if they were previously constrained due to capacity rather than capability (King & Baatartogtokh, 2015).

The idea of national competitive advantage provides a comprehensive instrument for examining competition in all of its ramifications. Porter's thesis adds to a better understanding of nations' competitive advantages in international trade and production. Its core, on the other hand, focuses on individual industries or clusters of sectors where competitive advantage ideas are used. The notion starts with specific industries and works its way up to the economy as a whole. Because enterprises, not states, compete in international marketplaces, understanding how corporations establish and preserve competitive advantage is critical to understanding the role of the nation in the process. Given this interconnection, it appears that in order to draw conclusions about the competitiveness of a certain industry, it is necessary to evaluate the various facets of the competitive diamond of the entire nation (Fang et al., 2018).

According to Fang et al. (2018), a country's competitiveness is determined by four primary determinants: factor circumstances, demand conditions, linked and supporting industries, and company strategy, structure, and rivalry. Despite the fact that these factors determine the existence of a nation's competitive advantage, their nature suggests that they are more distinctive to a single industry than characteristic of a country. The rationale for this is that the industry is the main unit of study for understanding competition in Porter's theory. The industry is the arena where competitive advantage is gained or lost.

So, attempting to isolate a firm's competitive edge entails explaining the function that firm qualities such as online services, staff empowerment, firm office, and rebrand marketing play in increasing firms' capacity to compete in a specific industry. The condition for their interdependence is critical in understanding the determinants' ability to generate competitiveness in an industry. This means that the determinants should form a mutually reinforcing system known as a "diamond," and the effect of one should be dependent on the status of the others. This means not only that one positive national trait is insufficient to generate competitive advantage in and of itself, but also that an advantage in one determinant might originate or enhance advantages in others.

Staff empowerment and Service Delivery in Consultancy Firms

Tarnovskaya and Biedenbach, (2018) examined experimental discourse in marketing; staff empowerment and the findings showed that a strong staff rebranding strategy can add significant value in terms of implementing the long-term vision, creating unique positions in the market place and unlocking the leadership potential within the organization. A rebranding strategy creates simplicity and gives a new look hence attracting former and new clients in an organization while building brand loyalty, with positive impact on performance. There are cost efficiencies in terms of reduced marketing and advertising spending as the firms brand replaces budgets for individual product marketing efforts. A combined firms/product rebranding strategy can often enable management to reduce costs and exploit synergies from a new and more focused brand architecture.

A study by (Beise-Zee,2021) investigating retail brand which had undergone staff rebranding in 2007 reveal that perceived brand image changes with rebranding. An overview of the world’s 100 strongest brands by inter brand, rebranding is increasingly playing an important role in purchasing decisions. Similarly, an event study methodology to study the effect of a company’s name change announcement on the stock market using 58 firms’ findings show an overall positive performance in terms of abnormal returns and name change seemed to act more as a signal that serious change is underway. Furthermore, a name change seemed to have a greater effect on performance for industrial products and for more risky firms and for those with previously poor performance.

Mesis (2016) studied on rebranding strategy and performance. The study concluded that organizations throughout the world have had to use one strategy or another, in order to improve their performance. This is as a result of the emerging trends that have intensified the level of competition among different firms, causing them to strategize in order to stay ahead of competition. The banking industry globally has witnessed intense competition and the Kenyan banking industry has not been spared. The sector is undergoing a period of major upheaval and restoring customer confidence has emerged as priority as customers are increasingly demanding higher quality of service from their firms. The study revealed that NBK has recently undergone a transformation drive where it has rebranded and not only created a new vibrant look, but has also radically changed the way they carry out their operations.

Delbaere et al., (2021) in a study product-service development found that a branded product or service allows for the identification of the product, service and the business itself. This also differentiates companies' or their products from their competitors. In other words, a brand comprises both tangible and non-tangible elements and when communicated effectively, differentiates the product or service, reduces the risk involved in a buying decision, leads to sustained competitive advantage and ultimately, to long term profitability. An un-branded product or service, on the other hand, delivers no extra value to the customer and is indistinguishable except in terms of price. “Successful brands create strong, positive and lasting impressions, all of which are perceived by audiences to be of value to them personally.

Sarfraz et al., (2021) on staff rebranding denoted that it helps in achieving a position of competitive advantage and enhancing firm performance relative to competitors are the main objectives that business organizations should strive to attain. A strong rebranding strategy can add significant value to the organization, as it helps leverage on the tangible and non-tangible assets of the organization. A strong firm’s brand is no less or more than the face of the business strategy, portraying what any given organization stands for. However, it is important to note that past superior performance does not guarantee superiority in the future, hence the need to rebrand and remain relevant.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework represented the relationship between independent variable and dependent variables.

Staff empowerment
- Decision making
- Minimum supervision
- Ownership
- Training

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Figure 1:Conceptual Framework

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was utilized in this study. Descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation or phenomenon (Akhtar, 2016) accurately and systematically. It can answer what, where, when and how questions, but not why questions. A descriptive research design can use a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables. This design was chosen because it is relatively quick and easy to conduct; data on all variables is only collected once. It is also good for descriptive analyses and for generating hypotheses.

Target Population

The study targeted 582 respondents from three consultancy firms within Eldoret town namely: Eldotec Consultancy firm, Mwafaca Business consultants and Eldera Management Agencies. The accessible population comprised of 3 CEOs, 100 marketing officers, 70 financial officers, 62 Legal officers and 347 individual walk-in clients from the three selected firms.

Sample Size

The Yamane's formula was used to calculate a sample size. According to (Pletz et al., 2020), if the target population is less than 10,000, then the sample can be determined using a formula. The sample size of this study is drawn using Yamane formula for determining the sample size is given by:

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

Where n is the sample size required
N is the population size =582
e is the level of precision =0.05
n =582/ (1+582*0.05^2)
n=237
Thus, the sample size of the study was 237 respondents.

Sampling Technique

The researcher used simple random sampling technique to select the 237 respondents. This technique was appropriate for this study because it allowed to avoid biasness in selecting respondents and easy to conduct.

Data Collection Instruments

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires with closed ended questions. Dalati and Marx Gómez (2018) considers this tool best placed to collect a lot of data being justifiable for use in a qualitative study. Denscombe (2017) further highlights that, questionnaires encourage respondents to respond to the questions without fear and accurately gives a deeper understanding of issues being investigated. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection for the study.

Pilot Study

The study carried out a pilot test to establish the validity and reliability of the research instruments at consultancy firms in Kapsabet town. The researcher used 24 respondents for pilot study representing 10% of sample size (Zohrabi, 2013). Pilot study helped the researchers to gain valuable insights into the process and make adjustments in case the research instruments is reliable. The pilot study allows for pre-testing of the research instrument. The results would help the researcher to correct inconsistencies arising from the instruments, which ensure that they measure what is intended (Rahi, 2017).

Data Processing and Analysis
The data collected was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Collected data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptively data was analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Where inferentially data was analysed using correlation andregression analysis;
The regression model to be used in this study is;
$Y= \beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\varepsilon$ **…………………………..…………Equation 1**
Where;
Y represents service delivery
β_0, $\beta_1$represent Model coefficients
X_1 represents staff empowerment
ε represents Error term (variables not included in the model)
The level of significance for this study was at 95%
The analyze data was presented in form of tables

PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS
This chapter focuses on presentation, discussion and interpretation of the study findings.

Descriptive Statistics
Descriptive statistics for staff and the dependent variable service delivery were analysed through use of mean, frequencies, percentage and standard deviation as shown below. To achieve this, a five-point Likert scale was used where; 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided.4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

Staff Empowerment
The study sought todetermine the influence of staff empowerment on service delivery in consultancy firms in Eldoret Town. The study results are presented on Table 1.

Table 1Staff empowerment

Statements		SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	Std. dev.
1. Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have enhances their decision making	F	49	108	13	22	20	3.68	1.209
	%	23.1	50.9	6.1	10.4	9.4		
2. Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve minimum supervision	F	57	112	15	14	14	3.87	1.089
	%	26.9	52.8	7.1	6.6	6.6		
3. Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve their work ownership	F	43	131	11	13	14	3.83	1.035
	%	20.3	61.8	5.2	6.1	6.6		
4. Staffs training on new branding have enhances service delivery in the consultancy firms	F	46	125	8	18	15	3.80	1.093
	%	21.7	59.0	3.8	8.5	7.1		

Table 1 showed that 157(74.0%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have enhances their decision making. However, 42(19.8%) of the respondents disagreed that staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have enhances their decision making. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have enhances their decision making (Mean=3.68, Std. dev=1.209). Also, 169(79.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve minimum supervision. On the other hand, 28(17.2%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve minimum supervision. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve minimum supervision (Mean=3.87, Std. dev=1.089).

Further, 174(82.1%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve their work ownership. However, 27(12.7%) of the respondents disagreed that

Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve their work ownership. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that Staff empowerment in the consultancy firms have improve their work ownership (Mean=3.83, Std. dev=1.035).

Finally, 171(80.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that Staffs training on new branding have enhances service delivery in the consultancy firms. Also, 33(15.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that all estimated expenditures of the organization are usually verified and justified before funds are allocated. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that Staffs training on new branding have enhances service delivery in the consultancy firms (Mean=3.80, Std. dev=1.093).

The study results show that the consultancy firms have enhances their decision making through Staff empowerment. Mores so staff empowerment have minimum supervision and improve work ownership thus it has led to enhance service delivery in the consultancy firms.

Inferential Analysis

Correlation Analysis Results

Correlation analysis was carried out determine the strength and the direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Multiple Correlation Analysis Results

		Service delivery	Staff empowerment
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Staff empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.835**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The study findings in Table 2 indicated a strong, positive and statistically significant correlation between staff empowerment and service delivery (r=.835**; $p < 0.01$).

Linear Regression Model of Staff empowerment and Service delivery

The linear regression analysis models the relationship between staff empowerment and service delivery. The results are shown in Table 3;

Table 3 Regression Model Summaryof Staff empowerment

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.835[a]	.696	.695	.66515

The results of the linear regression in Table 3 indicated that R^2 =0.696 and R = 0.835. R value of 0.835 gives an indication that there is a positive relationship between staff empowerment and service delivery. The R^2 indicates that explanatory power of the independent variable is 0.696.

Table 4Model Fitness Resultsof Staff empowerment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	213.155	1	213.155	481.791	.000[b]
Residual	92.909	210	.442		
Total	306.064	211			

From the study results in Table 4 the F-statistics (F = 481.791) was significant at p=0.000 thus confirming the fitness of the model. The F test provides an overall test of significance of the fitted regression model. The F value indicates that the variable in the equation is important hence the overall regression is significant. Therefore, there is statistically significant influence of staff empowerment on service delivery. This means that the independent variable (staff empowerment) was a significant predictor of the dependent variable (service delivery).

Table 5 Regression Analysis Coefficients of Staff empowerment

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.231	.164		1.415	.159
Staff empowerment	.901	.041	.835	21.950	.000

From Table 5 the results it illustrated that staff empowerment has a positive significant effect on service delivery (β_1=0.835, p=0.000<0.05). This gives an implication that a unit increase in staff empowerment will cause a 0.835 increase in service delivery. Thus, the regression equation model as follows;

Y= 0.231 + 0.835X_1 ……………………………………………………Equation 2

Hypotheses Testing

H_{01}: Staff empowerment has no significant influence on service delivery in consultancy firms in Eldoret Town. The regression results in Table 6 indicate that there is significant influence of staff empowerment on service delivery with a beta coefficient of 0.835 and significance of (p= 0.001). The study rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that staff empowerment has a positive significant influence on service delivery in consultancy firms in Eldoret Town.

Table 12: Summary of Hypotheses Test Results

	Hypothesis	Coeff	p-value	Decision
H_{01}	Staff empowerment has no significant influence on service delivery in consultancy firms in Eldoret Town.	.835	.000	Rejected the null hypothesis

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concluded that staff empowerment has a positive significant effect on service delivery. The consultancy firms had enhanced their decision making through staff empowerment. Mores so staff empowerment have minimum supervision and improve work ownership thus it has led to enhance service delivery in the consultancy firms.

Recommendations of the Study

The study has established that staff empowerment is very essential in improving service delivery in consultancy firms. Therefore, consultancy firms should be encouraged to look for better ways of strengthening their staff empowerment in order to enhance their customer service delivery.

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1Pauline Wambui Wangui, et. al. "Influence of Staff Empowerment on Service Delivery in Consultancy Firms in Eldoret Town." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 27(10), 2022, pp. 01-08.