An Assessment of Strategic Corporate Communication Practice on the Service Delivery of Police in Kirinyaga County

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to assess internal accountability strategies of the National Police Service and their impact on service delivery in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Specific objective of this study was to establish how strategic Corporate Communication Practices contribute towards service delivery in Kirinyaga County. The study was guided by the theory of functionalism championed by Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The sample population consisted of 220 consisting of two National Police Services (130 Administrative Police, 80 Kenya Police, and 10 Members of Police disciplinary team. These combined forces included 13 Senior Officers from the rank of Inspector and above and 207 other Ranks. Out of the target population, stratified and random sampling techniques were employed. Data collection was by Interview Guide and a questionnaire. Thematic approach was used to analyze data after sorting and coding. Presentation of findings was by narration. The findings revealed that accountability strategic management practices especially corporate communication had a significant positive impact on service delivery at National Police Service in Kirinyaga County. Despite this, a number of challenges still exist. The study is relevant to departmental needs especially equipping the Police Service as means of enhancing service delivery.
Key terms: Accountability: The fact or condition of being responsibility. It means an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions.
Communication: means sending or receiving information
Strategies: Plans of action designed to achieve long-term aims

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background
Organization accountability rests within bureaucratic organizations such as those prevalent within the public sphere (Lindberg, 2013). Internally, agents within the same organization hold their colleague to account for their actions especially concerning use of organizational resources and performance of responsibilities (Lindberg, 2013).

Rached (2016), Bovins (2010), Behn (2001) have argued that accountability is important because of four main reasons. Firstly, it helps to shape expectations of conduct and deter misconduct and abuses of power. Secondly, it provides a way through which account-holder can exercise voice and expect response on issues he or she has legitimate concerns. Thirdly, accountability contributes towards institutional reflection, learning and capacity for good behavior. Fourthly, accountability enables confidence in and legitimacy of agents tasked to undertake various functions. Efficient communication assist in the delivery of service and enhances the name of an institution.

At the global level, scholars like Perez and Moore (2013) have asserted that police officers play pivotal role in the society and therefore they are accountable to diverse stakeholders. Police officers are accountable to their fellows, human rights bodies, citizens, legislators and government officials as a whole. Perez (2009), United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC (2011) and Walker (2010) argue that due to the fact that police play a wide role, they must strike a deal on how to balance different stakeholders to cases of biasness and provide justice to all including their colleagues without any form of favoritism. If communication is not at its best information flow may jeopardize the credibility of the police service.

Accountability makes the Police Officers more responsive to their profession and prevents abuse by some government officials who take advantage of the ranks given to suit their personal whims (Amnesty International, 2015). Even though law enforcement officials have the mandate of protecting citizens from any form of violence, securing their rights while maintaining human rights and dignity, more often than not, they violate human rights by, torture, using unlawful firearms or force, unlawful arrest, discrimination and failure to abide by stipulated regulations and policies (Amnesty International, 2015; National Research Council, 2010). This calls for an effective internal accountability mechanism or oversight mechanism of all the sections in police service in order to balance the law enforcers' powers and ensure operations of agencies and individuals are within the law and high accountability is maintained. Besides it is crucial to establish how training and provision

of communication equipment's contributes in promoting accountability in Kenya as reports from India and USA shows (The Hindu, 2007).

At the African level, Alemika (2009) argues that the police should be given proper guidance and direction so that they can be accountable for their wrongdoings and actions. He explains that the police need to be trained well in order to do their work professionally and that they must be assured of better working conditions especially provision of communication equipment's in addition to others in order to enhance their proper internal accountability.

In Kenya the Police are vested with power and freedom to perform their duties, uphold the rule of law and order, and protect the public against any harm. Such powers and trust from citizens necessitate accountability for any police action. Harrison and Cunneen (2010) opine that accountability is key when police actions may be labelled as misconduct. This justifies why we need a strong communication department to inform the public and other stakeholders on police work.

Phillips and Trone (2002), Thomassen (2002) and Walker (2011) confirms that failure of the internal accountability mechanisms has left civilian oversight through the Ombudsman and human rights activists as the only trusted check. Murphy and McKenna (2008), Pollock (2010), Sewell (2010), and Police Integrity (2012) all affirm that internal accountability as seen from state on misconduct of police officers is always biased, unfair and ineffective rather than ethics to reign in the Police departments and stations (Police Integrity, 2012; Police Accountability& Citizen Review, 2012. Among the departments which need to be audited regularly is communication. This is in form of equipment, organization structure among others.

According to the US Department of Justice (2011), police internal accountability lies the heart of security sectorial development. It is unfortunate that accountability in Kenya police Service is low as the institution corruption index is always listed as the most corrupt in the country (Transparency International 2019). Perhaps the bad image is due to communication challenges within the police service.

1.2 Statement of the problem
Evidence from scholars show that state investigation on misconduct of police officers is always biased, unfair and ineffective possibly due to ineffective internal accountability mechanisms. Complaints on failures related to internal accountability mechanisms have been met with Public Relations responses. The key cause of this lack of accountability seem to be inadequate training, poor communication and the general police culture. It is therefore vital to note that this study interrogated the existing internal strategies for ensuring police accountability especially communication aspect in meeting the desired goal of service delivery. Specifically, the study assessed the internal accountability strategies of the national police service by focusing on strategic Corporate Communication Practice.

I.3 Objective of the study
To establish how strategic Corporate Communication Practice contribute towards service delivery in Kirinyaga County that enhances their image as an accountable organization

1.4 Research question
Which good communication practices can the National Police Service adopt in service delivery in Kirinyaga County to enhance their positive image as an accountable organization?

1.5 Justification of the study.
Police service are paramilitary bureaucratic organization that has traditionally responded slowly to change. Due to accountability concept and related mandate for police service, as organization administrators across the country. The changes within policing institution have largely been unsuccessful due to administrators within organization failing to understand the complexity of their stand and subsequently instituting linear model of change in the National police service in Kenya.

1.6 Scope of the study
In terms of geographical scope, the research was done in Mwea East Sub-County in Kirinyaga County. In terms of content, the study focused on how communication practices contribute towards service delivery by police in Kirinyaga County.

1.6.0 Literature review
1.6.1 Theoretical framework
The theory of functionalism championed by Comte, Durkheim, Spencer, Parsons, and Merton guided the study. This theory classifies society as a complex system with parts working together in promoting stability and

solidarity. The proposed study perceives the "policing society" as a system whose parts (police and members of the public) must work together to promote service delivery.

Functionalism considers both social functions and social structure that must anchor the survival of the system, so are the police and service delivery. Spencer popularized a common analogy presenting these society parts as "organs" working towards the "body's" proper functioning. In line with the above, this study will treat the police officers, as organs working towards the policing is proper functioning, specifically in service delivery.

The second theory will be Kurt Lewis theory of change (Kristonis 2005). The theory explains that changes occur in 3 phases and forces active towards status quo or equilibrium characterize each phase. The forces are the restraining and driving forces and using analogy of change in the eyes' shape helps understand the phases. The phase is unfreezing, moving and freezing.

Change is life's only reality and is observed both on a professional front and in personal aspect. Learning and managing to adapt it takes time, training, effort and energy. That way several organizations globally have come up with well-defined and structured model to change. The theories are important to understand the framework to enable police service to cope with the changes and minimize resistance for accountability purposes (especially on communication aspects) for the equilibrium of the service.

1.7 Corporate communication
Good communication practices enhance efficiency in the police service. Lack of relevant and sufficient resources undermines the ability of Police Officers to execute their mandate. Conversely, research evidence asserts that provision of these resources enhances the quality of performance of Police Officers (Ransely, 2009). Improved communication systems would also prevent criminal gangs from accessing sensitive information regarding national security. Indirectly, this boosts the performance of police officers because they are able to plan and execute their duties with utmost ease. As the police institution is a dynamic organization, changes in communication network needs to progress Kurt Lewis (Kristonis 2005) for it to improve services. This aspect therefore needs to be enhanced all the time in order to improve service and people's perception on police accountability.

1.8 Knowledge gap
Several researches have been done in Kenya concerning other topic areas but little has been done pertaining to internal police accountability especially on strategic corporate communication.

1.9.1 Conceptual framework
It is based on the perception that police internal accountability improves their image and enhances good relationship with public members.
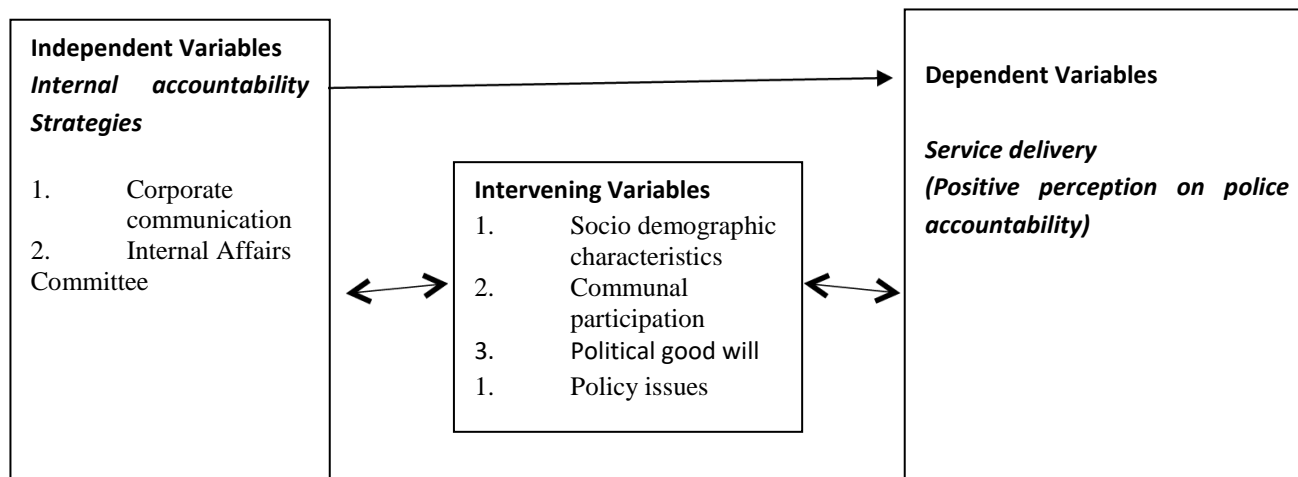

Figure 1.0 Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors (2021)

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research design
A descriptive survey research design was adapted for this study. The design assessed the police institution and described the characteristics of its internal communication mechanism.

2.2 Target population
The target population in this study were 220 members of the National Police Service in Mwea East Sub-County consisting of 130 Administrative Police, 80 Kenya Police, and 10 members of police disciplinary group. In Mwea, these combined forces included 13 Senior Officers from the rank of Inspector and above and 207 other Ranks. The 13 officers, were, subjected to interviews for purpose of gathering information which, complemented data from other sources.

2.3 Sampling techniques
The researcher used stratified and random sampling techniques to select 66 out of 220 National Police Service members in Mwea East Sub-County. Stratified random sampling was adopted in population categorization of Senior Officers and Other Ranks from Administrative Police, Kenya Police, and members of police disciplinary groups. Simple random sampling was employed in selecting 62 from other ranks and 4 Senior Officers from Senior Officers and Other Ranks strata. This gave a sample of 66 participants.

2.4 Sample size
The sample size for this study was 66 out of the target population of 220 respondents. The sample consisted of 4 Senior Officers and 62 other Ranks.

Table 1.1 Sampling Matrix

Category	Population	Sample	% Sampled
Senior Officers 13	Administrative Police 5 Kenya Police 5 Director of Criminal 3 Investigation Officers	1 2 1	30.0 30.0 30.0
Other ranks. 207	Administration-police.119 Kenya Police 62 Director of Criminal 5 Investigation Officers	31 23 2	24.7 24.0 30.0
Members of Police Dicipinary group 10	Members of Police Dicipinary group 10	6	30.0
Total	220	66	100.0

2.5 Ethical considerations
Sources of information were acknowledged through referencing in order to avoid cases of plagiarism. Respondents were also asked to answer questions voluntarily without coercion. They were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. The purpose of the research was explained to the respondents and this aided in receiving objective information.

3.0 Research findings
3.1 Accountability strategic corporate communication practice
Of the 66 respondents of both two National police services and members of disciplinary group, 42% indicated that the service has appropriate work equipment while the remaining 58% said the equipment used are inappropriate.

Table 2: Appropriateness of Service Equipment

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Service equipment appropriate	28	42
Service equipment inappropriate	38	58
Total	**66**	**100**

Not so many of the respondents gave a precise explanation of how inadequate equipment affects service delivery. However, they contended that inappropriate equipment has negative effects on service delivery. In addition to compromising rapid response to emergencies, they cited that unsuitable equipment prevents officers from securing and handling scenes of crimes and undertaking forensic investigation. Findings of this research also showed that National Police Officers have limited communication equipment relative to the number of officers. Further, these are in some instances defective and susceptible to tapping by criminal gangs. Some respondents cited that in most instances, they resort to their mobile phones to communicate critical information regarding security issues.

Table 3: Effectiveness of Service Equipment in service delivery

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean
Very effective in service delivery	18 (28)	21 (31)	18 (28)	9 (13)	2.8696

With respect to effectiveness of the service equipment at their disposal, 59% of the respondents said that they were very effective in-service delivery (31%) agreeing and (28%) strongly agreeing. 41% of the respondents disagreed that the equipment was not effective in-service delivery with (28%) disagreeing and (13%) strongly disagreeing.

At this point, the fact that communication equipment is vital for effective performance of Police officers cannot be overstated. The gadgets allow officers to communicate relevant information in a timely and efficient manner. They enhance information flow and contribute positively to job satisfaction. Lack of effective communication equipment contributes to poor performance of National Police Officers in Kirinyaga County. By increasing the susceptibility of security information to interception by criminals, defective gadgets have adverse effects on response and general performance of the officers. Use of mobile telephony in communicating classified security information has cost implications too, besides increasing the vulnerability of such information landing to wrong sources; it makes officers to incur additional budgetary expenses.

Table 4: ANOVA for Accountability Strategic Corporate Communication

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.818	1	1.818	3.083	.013[b]
	Residual	134.464	228	.590		
	Total	136.283	229			

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery
b. Predictors: (Constant), SCC - Accountability strategic corporate communication

The regression model' overall significance is measured by ANOVA. 0.013 P-Value that is < 0.05 (5% significance level) explains the ANOVA findings hence the model is significant statistically since Kirinyaga County NPS service delivery and accountability strategic corporate communication correlate. 3.083 value was

given by F-test, p<0.1 sufficiently supports the model's fit goodness to explain the service delivery variation. It further noted that in Kirinyaga County NPS service delivery, accountability strategic corporate communication was a useful predictor and this was confirmed by one of the officers who said; "Communication is necessary during service delivery as one perform his work with confidence"

3.2 Discussion

The key objective was to assess and explore the good practices on National Police Service delivery in Kirinyaga County, Kenya by focusing on communication. From the finding, National Police officers in Kirinyaga County lack sufficient and effective communication equipment to undertake their duties effectively. Their management systems are out dated and, in some instances, obsolete. Lack of relevant and sufficient resources undermines the ability of Police Officers to execute their mandate. Conversely, research evidence asserts that provision of these resources enhances the quality of performance of Police Officers (Ransely, 2009). Improved communication systems would also prevent criminal gangs from accessing sensitive information regarding national security. Indirectly, this boosts the performance of police officers because they are able to plan and execute their duties with utmost ease. Effective and adequate communication gadgets would have a positive impact on information flow too. Ultimately, this would address instances of confusion that have adverse effects on police's delivery of service. Further, it would encourage and necessitate sharing of critical information as well as timely response to distress calls and other forms of emergencies. In a functioning organization information sharing is essential. As the police institution is a dynamic organization, changes in communication network needs to progress Kurt Lewis (Kristonis 2005) for it to improve services. This key aspect of communication was seen to be wanting as one police officer reported;

"I was investigating a case, I had identified the culprit and was on the verge of arresting him when I was told to go slow. I got confused as my immediate boss was happy with my work. Thus the functioning information sharing though essential is wanting in the police service"

Relative to this, the government should consider providing officers with new technology and equipment. This will make the institution more efficient and effective in meeting its objectives and priorities. New technology is applicable to various policing activities. In particular, issues pertaining to forensic techniques, command and control, surveillance, and border control require sophisticated tools. Lack of certain technological infrastructure handicaps police officers and makes them to resort to traditional and in some instances unlawful methods of detecting crime. Currently, most of their investigative methodologies rely on interviewing. The outcome of such 'traditional' approaches is usually dismal. After providing officers with new technologies, the government should focus on training them in order to ensure effective performance.

3.3 Conclusions
This paper has presented results, analysis and discussion of the study by focusing on the following objective:

To establish how strategic Corporate Communication Practice contribute towards service delivery in Kirinyaga County that enhances their image as an accountable organization. The findings revealed that the use of superior communications equipment's and mechanisms had a significant positive impact on service delivery at National Police Service in Kirinyaga County and vice-versa.

3.4 Recommendations

The following recommendation was made based on the objective

The government should focus on providing the National Police Service with relevant and sufficient resources, new technology and equipment, to enhance quality of service delivery through effective corporate communication.

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