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EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS IN ENHANCING SERVICE DELIVERY AT KENYA POWER'S KILIFI COUNTY FIELD OFFICE.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: This study assessed the effectiveness of community engagement events in improving service delivery at the Kenya Power Kilifi County Field Office, focusing on how forums, public meetings, and information-sharing activities affect customer satisfaction.

Research Methodology: A mixed methods approach was used, targeting 298,472 households and 16 staff members. A sample of 341 customers and 8 staff was selected using the Yamane formula and cluster/convenience sampling. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using SPSS v24.

Findings: Findings indicated that 71% of customers had never participated in a Kenya Power engagement event, and 62% were dissatisfied with feedback mechanisms. Only 18% rated service delivery as good or excellent. Respondents cited poor communication, delayed responses, and weak community involvement as key concerns.

Conclusion: While engagement activities exist, their limited scope, poor implementation, and lack of inclusivity have hindered their impact on customer satisfaction and service quality.

Recommendation: The study recommends more frequent and inclusive engagement events, improved digital feedback systems, enhanced staff training, and the establishment of a structured complaint-handling mechanism.

Implication: Effective community engagement is essential for improving public utility performance. Strengthening these efforts can foster customer trust, accountability, and better service outcomes.

Keywords: *Service Delivery, Customer Satisfaction, Community Engagement Events, Kenya Power*.

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and competitive environment, both private and public organizations increasingly recognize the strategic importance of community engagement in strengthening service delivery and institutional reputation. Community engagement refers to the process by which organizations actively involve local populations in decision-making, problem-solving, and the co-creation of services (Rowe & Frewer, 2005; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). This participatory approach is vital in enhancing transparency, trust, social responsibility, and long-term sustainability in service provision (Bowen, 2017). Community events—ranging from town hall meetings, service briefings, educational workshops, to corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives—have emerged as important mechanisms for achieving these objectives. By facilitating two-way communication, managing expectations, and encouraging participatory decision-making, such events enable organizations to foster inclusivity while addressing operational concerns.

Globally, especially in developed nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom, community engagement practices are institutionalized within legal and regulatory frameworks. These frameworks mandate public consultations, town hall meetings, and ongoing dialogue with affected communities, particularly in sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and telecommunications (USAID, 2017; Mirzania et al., 2019). The underlying rationale is that structured public engagement not only fulfills regulatory requirements but also aligns service delivery with community expectations and strengthens organizational legitimacy (Kotler et al., 2022). For example, utility firms in these contexts utilize forums to clarify service interruptions, communicate energy efficiency programs, and build trust during periods of operational disruptions. As Grunig and Hunt (1984) emphasize, such public relations platforms are central to stakeholder communication, allowing organizations to proactively address service disruptions and strengthen stakeholder relationships.

In contrast, community engagement practices in Africa, while steadily gaining momentum, continue to face structural barriers such as political instability, socio-economic inequality, and weak regulatory enforcement (Gaventa & Barrett, 2012). Nonetheless, there are emerging examples of effective integration of community engagement into corporate and public service strategies. In South Africa, energy companies consistently involve communities in discussions on environmental and socio-economic impacts (Louma & Canel, 2020). In Nigeria, gas firms deploy engagement programs to mitigate conflict, maintain peace, and ensure operational continuity (Magdalene & Anthony, 2018). Rwanda has also embraced community participation to align energy distribution with local development priorities. Across these contexts, CSR-oriented initiatives have been used to reinforce trust and goodwill, signaling organizational commitment to broader societal wellbeing (Kahn & Sinha, 2017).

Kenya has increasingly embraced community engagement within state-owned enterprises and public utilities, with initiatives by projects such as Lake Turkana Wind Project, KENGEN, KETRACO, and Total Energies focusing on education, healthcare, and sustainability (Kerubo, 2019; Wanjekeche, 2022). Empirical studies affirm that such initiatives enhance customer satisfaction and trust, while participatory forums foster positive emotional connections and empowerment (Jang & Namkung, 2009; O'Connell & Williams, 2016). Kenya Power, as a critical state enterprise, has adopted CSR programs, education campaigns, and town hall meetings to strengthen service reliability, though their effectiveness in underserved regions like Kilifi remains uncertain (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Baker, 2003; Dick & Basu, 1994; Palmatier et al., 2006). This underscores the need to assess whether engagement strategies genuinely translate into improved service delivery outcomes.

Service delivery, particularly in public utilities, refers to the provision of timely, efficient, and equitable services aligned with consumer needs and expectations (Coombs & Holiday, 2020). Research has demonstrated that community events are instrumental in supporting these outcomes. For instance, stakeholder forums offer opportunities for direct feedback, enabling organizations to realign services with customer priorities (Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Huang & Liu, 2015). Trust-building through open communication enhances organizational legitimacy (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), while participatory events reinforce loyalty by creating a sense of ownership among customers (Dick & Basu, 1994). These dynamics are particularly critical for Kenya Power in Kilifi, where community engagement could address recurring challenges such as billing disputes, extended power outages, and perceptions of inefficiency.

Statement of the Problem

In established utility sectors like those in Europe and North America, community engagement is institutionalized as a strategy to foster trust and enhance service delivery (Mirzania, 2019). In contrast, Kenya Power; the primary electricity distributor in Kenya, continues to face public dissatisfaction due to frequent outages, delayed connections, billing issues, and allegations of staff misconduct (Odour, 2016; Chuang & Huang, 2018). While the company has responded with public relations efforts, staff training, ethics policies, and CSR initiatives (Waiganjo, 2016; Ochindo & Njoroge, 2016), these interventions have not placed sufficient emphasis on direct community engagement events such as forums, open days, and outreach programs. This gap is particularly evident in underserved areas like Kilifi County, where localized engagement could significantly improve service delivery and rebuild customer trust.

Despite increasing recognition of community engagement as a key driver of public sector effectiveness, the specific impact of such events on service delivery within Kenya Power remains under-researched. Existing studies have largely focused on the role of communication strategies, CSR, or public relations in enhancing organizational performance (Njitu & Nyamoto, 2018; Moipel et al., 2023; Wanjue, 2023), with limited empirical investigation into how direct community engagement influences service quality and customer satisfaction.

This study, therefore, addresses a critical gap by examining the effectiveness of community engagement events in enhancing service delivery at Kenya Power's Kilifi County Field Office. By focusing on localized, event-based strategies for community involvement, the research aims to generate actionable insights that can guide future engagement initiatives and contribute to more responsive and citizen-centered public utility services.

Objectives

To determine the effectiveness of community engagement events in enhancing service delivery at Kenya Power's Kilifi County Field Office

Research Question

What is the effectiveness of the community engagement activities that Kenya Power uses to enhance service delivery at its Kilifi County Field Office?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in three interrelated theories: Stakeholder Theory, Relationship Management Theory, and SERVQUAL Theory. Each provides a unique conceptual lens for examining how community engagement events influence service delivery, particularly within public utilities like Kenya Power in Kilifi County.

Stakeholder Theory

Proposed by Freeman (1984), Stakeholder Theory posits that organizations operate in complex environments shaped by various stakeholders: customers, employees, governments, communities, and others, whose interests must be recognized and balanced in decision-making processes. Unlike traditional management models that prioritize shareholder value, Stakeholder Theory argues that sustainable success is more likely when organizations build long-term, trust-based relationships with all their stakeholders.

In the context of Kenya Power, this theory is particularly useful in highlighting the importance of community engagement events as mechanisms for stakeholder inclusion. Given the persistent challenges in service delivery such as outages, billing errors, and customer dissatisfaction, the company must view the public not merely as passive recipients of services but as active partners in service delivery. Hosting forums, open days, and educational outreach events signals a shift toward participatory governance and mutual accountability, which aligns with stakeholder-centric thinking. This study therefore employs Stakeholder Theory to interrogate how the inclusion of community voices can improve operational transparency and build institutional legitimacy in underserved areas like Kilifi.

Relationship Management Theory

Relationship Management Theory, rooted in public relations scholarship, emphasizes the strategic and ethical cultivation of relationships between organizations and their publics (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998; Farhad, 2019). It moves beyond transactional communication to emphasize long-term engagement, dialogue, and trust-building as central to organizational effectiveness.

This theory is relevant to the current study because it provides a framework for evaluating Kenya Power's efforts to move from reactive, top-down communication to proactive, two-way engagement. Relationship Management Theory outlines several key principles including: commitment, mutuality, trust, and satisfaction that organizations should foster through sustained interaction with stakeholders (Kiyanagwa et al., 2018). Community engagement events are a practical expression of these principles. They create platforms for open dialogue, address local concerns, and humanize the institution behind the electricity service. The study uses this theory to assess whether Kenya Power's engagement activities have resulted in more responsive, empathetic, and trustworthy relationships with the Kilifi community.

SERVQUAL Theory

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), is a widely used tool for measuring service quality based on the gap between customer expectations and perceptions. The model identifies five critical dimensions of service quality: reliability (ability to deliver promised service dependably), responsiveness (willingness to help customers), assurance (knowledge and courtesy of staff), empathy (individualized care and attention), and tangibles (physical facilities and appearance of personnel).

This study leverages SERVQUAL to analyze how Kenya Power's community engagement efforts influence perceptions of service quality. For example, if forums or open days lead to faster connection times, fewer billing disputes, or better communication from staff, this would reflect improvements in reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. Moreover, when staff are present in local events and offer empathetic attention to community needs, this enhances perceptions of empathy and tangibles. Thus, the SERVQUAL model enables a structured evaluation of whether engagement events are narrowing the expectation-perception gap in Kenya Power's service delivery in Kilifi County.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed research design to assess the influence of community events, forums, partnerships, and engagement activities on service delivery at Kenya Power's Kilifi field office. The target population included 298,472 households in Kilifi County and 16 Kenya Power staff. A sample size of 384 community members was selected using Yamane's formula and cluster sampling from five villages in Malindi, followed by simple random sampling. For the qualitative component, 8 staff members involved in community engagement were purposively selected. Data were collected using structured questionnaires for community members and in-depth interviews for staff and community leaders. A pilot study involving 39 respondents in Mtwapa Sub County was conducted to test the reliability and validity of instruments, following Al-Mekhlafi et al. (2020). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed as per Silvia and Skilling (2016).

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics Results

Effectiveness of Community Engagement Events in enhancing Service Delivery at Kenya Power

To understand the effectiveness of community engagement events on service delivery, the study sought to determine the extent to which residents were aware of Kenya Power's community engagement initiatives, the types of events they had attended, the frequency of their attendance, their level of satisfaction with the events, and their perceptions of how effectively the events addressed community concerns. To complement and further contextualize these findings, qualitative data was gathered through interviews with Kenya Power staff based in Kilifi. These staff provided detailed accounts of the types of community events held and their perceived effectiveness in enhancing service delivery.

Awareness of Kenya Power's Community Engagement Events

The study sought to assess the level of public awareness regarding Kenya Power's community engagement events among residents of Kilifi County.

Understanding awareness levels was crucial in determining the effectiveness of Kenya Power's outreach strategies and the extent to which the public was informed about opportunities to interact with the company through forums such as public meetings, town halls, CSR activities, and energy conservation workshops. The results are as tabulated in Figure 4.1 below.

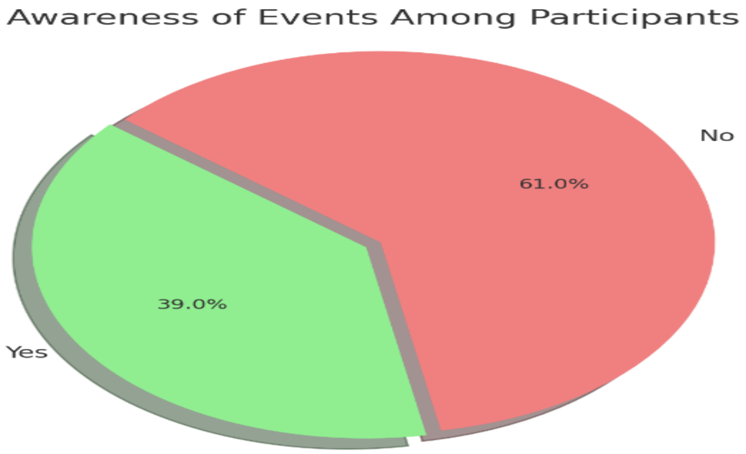

Figure 1: Awareness of Kenya Power's Community Engagement Events

As presented in Figure 1, findings revealed that only 39% (n = 111) of the respondents reported being aware of Kenya Power's community engagement events, while a majority of 61% (n = 173) indicated that they were not aware of such initiatives. This demonstrates a low level of awareness among the general population in Kilifi County.

The low awareness of Kenya Power's community engagement events suggests a significant gap in the company's outreach and communication efforts. Community engagement literature emphasizes that awareness is the first critical step toward meaningful public participation (Creighton, 2005). Without adequate awareness, opportunities for public feedback, education on power issues, and relationship-building between Kenya Power and its customers are limited. The findings align with previous research indicating that weak communication channels and a lack of localized engagement efforts often lead to poor public participation in utility governance (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

Several factors may explain the low awareness. First, the dominance of informal communication networks in rural and semi-urban areas like Kilifi County means that formal announcements (e.g., in national newspapers or on urban radio stations) may not effectively reach intended audiences (Manyozo, 2012). Second, the limited use of local languages and community structures in disseminating information might further marginalize certain groups (World Bank, 2014). Third, the relatively low education levels among the population (with 75% of respondents having only primary or secondary education) could hinder the effectiveness of written or technical communications (UNESCO, 2017).

Given these challenges, Kenya Power needs to rethink its outreach strategies. Leveraging local leaders, community groups, vernacular radio stations, and grassroots networks could significantly enhance awareness. Additionally, incorporating simple, relatable messaging tailored to Kilifi's socio-cultural context would likely improve communication outcomes and increase participation rates in community engagement events.

Types of Events Attended

The respondents were asked to indicate which types of Kenya Power community engagement events they had attended, if any. The options included public meetings, town halls, CSR activities, energy conservation workshops, and other events. Additionally, respondents were asked to specify if they had not attended any of these events. The goal was to understand the distribution of attendance across different types of events and to gauge the level of participation in these community engagement activities. The findings are as tabulated in the Figure 2 below:

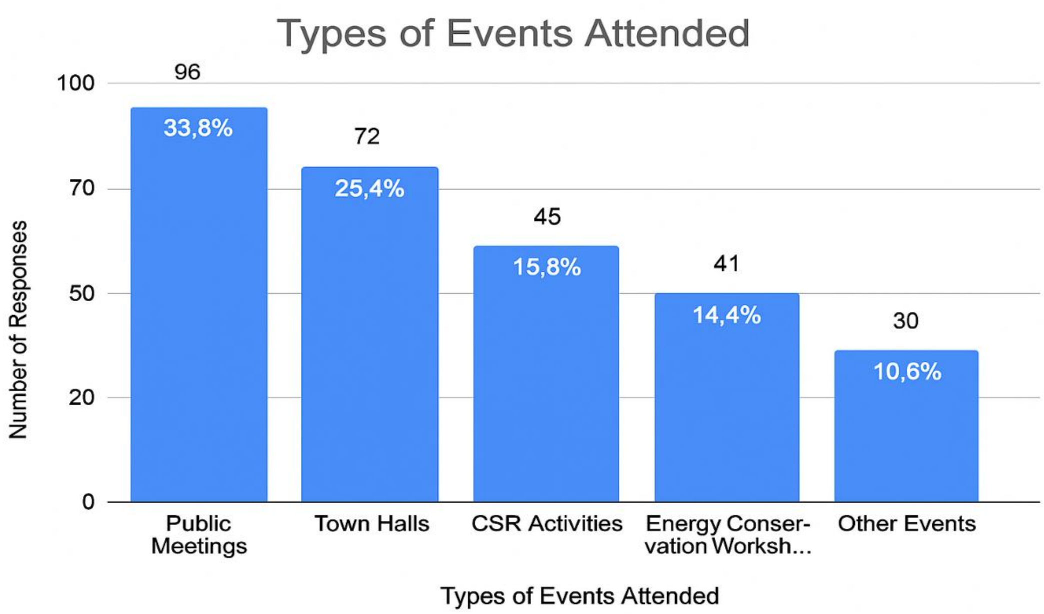

Figure 2: Types of Events Attended

The findings revealed that a minority of the respondents attended Kenya Power's community engagement events. Out of the total 284 respondents, 111 individuals (39%) indicated that they had attended at least one event. The breakdown of the types of events attended showed that 34.2% of those who attended participated in public meetings, 25.2% attended town halls, 15.3% participated in CSR activities, and 14.4% attended energy conservation workshops. The remaining 10.8% attended other types of events. However, a significant proportion, 61% of the total sample, indicated that they had not attended any events, highlighting a low level of engagement with Kenya Power's community engagement initiatives.

The low attendance at community engagement events can be attributed to various factors, including limited awareness, accessibility, and perceived relevance of the events. A substantial portion of respondents (61%) reported not attending any events, which may suggest that Kenya Power's community engagement efforts are not reaching or engaging a large segment of the population. This aligns with the earlier finding that a majority of respondents were unaware of such events, with only 39% reporting awareness.

Several factors may explain the limited attendance. According to research by Rowe and Frewer (2000), lack of awareness and accessibility are key barriers to participation in community engagement events. If residents are not informed about the events or do not feel that they address their specific concerns, they may be less likely to attend. Additionally, the nature and timing of these events could be a limiting factor. For example, community members with demanding schedules or those in remote areas may face challenges in attending events due to logistical constraints (Cornwall, 2008).

Moreover, the types of events that saw higher attendance, such as public meetings and town halls, suggest that respondents value opportunities for direct interaction with Kenya Power. These events provide platforms for discussing issues such as power outages and service delivery, which are of significant concern to the community. However, more specialized events like energy conservation workshops and CSR activities garnered lower participation, which could indicate that the focus of these events might not align with the immediate concerns or priorities of the wider community.

To further understand these findings, the study incorporated qualitative data collected through interviews with Kenya Power staff in Kilifi County. When asked to identify the types of community events Kenya Power had organized and their perceptions of the events' effectiveness in enhancing service delivery, the staff provided the following insights:

Several staff emphasized the variety of forums organized in both urban and rural areas. These included open town forums, market outreach clinics, mobile billing units, chief's barazas, safety awareness campaigns, stakeholder meetings, and school outreach programs. According to one staff member,

"In Kilifi, we've organized several open forums in towns like Malindi and Mariakani, held market outreach clinics, and also set up customer service desks during county trade fairs. We've also participated in chief's barazas to engage the rural community."KPLC Staff 1

These events, while useful for raising awareness, were often said to lack sustained impact without follow-up. *"People appreciate being heard,but they expect action afterwards."KPLC Staff 2*

The effectiveness of community engagements was also tied to their relevance and visibility. One participant noted,

"We've done extensive engagement in Kilifi including customer sensitization forums, school outreach programs, and information booths at agricultural shows. We also ran a series of stakeholder engagement meetings with local businesses and institutions in Kilifi Town and Watamu."KPLC staff 5

According to this staff member, the key to effectiveness lies in follow-up and responsiveness:

"They are very effective when followed through with tangible improvements. They allow us to demystify our services and humanize the company to the public."KPLC Staff 5

The importance of awareness was a recurring theme. According to one participant involved in outreach,

"We've been involved in outreach events at bus parks and trading centers where we distribute informational leaflets, register customer complaints, and promote our customer care contact lines. We've also partnered with local radio stations to run call-in programs."

KPLC staff 7

However, they were cautious about overestimating the impact:

"Unless service response improves afterward, customers still lose trust. The information helps, but delivery is what counts most."KPLC Staff 8

Frequency of Attendance

The study investigated the frequency with which residents participated in Kenya Power's community engagement events over the preceding year. Measuring attendance patterns served not only to gauge levels of public involvement but also to assess the consistency of interface between the utility and its customers. Regular participation can be indicative of community trust, perceived value of the engagement process, and institutional accessibility, whereas sporadic attendance may point to gaps in outreach, relevance, or convenience of such forums. By examining this variable, the study aimed to uncover underlying trends in civic responsiveness and organizational transparency within the utility's engagement strategy; factors widely recognized as central to effective community relations (Head, 2007).The findings are tabulated in Table 1

Table 4.3: Frequency of Attendance at Community Engagement Events

Frequency of Attendance	Frequency	Percent (%)
Never	175	61.6
Once	60	21.1
Occasionally	35	12.3
Frequently	14	5
Total	284	100

The findings revealed that a majority of the respondents, 61.6%, had never attended any Kenya Power community engagement event. About 21.1% had attended once, 12.3% reported attending occasionally, while only 5% indicated attending frequently.

These findings suggest that participation in Kenya Power's community engagement activities is considerably low. This trend is consistent with previous studies which indicate that lack of awareness, perceived irrelevance of the events, and logistical challenges such as inconvenient timing or inaccessible locations are common barriers to attendance (Rowe & Frewer, 2005; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Moreover, low trust in service providers, as observed by Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2014), may discourage citizens from participating in public engagement activities, especially if they perceive such events as ineffectual or merely symbolic. The findings imply that for Kenya Power's engagement efforts to be more effective, there is a need to strengthen publicity around events, tailor the content to directly address pressing community concerns, and remove barriers related to timing, location, and format to encourage greater community participation.

Satisfaction with the Community Engagement Events

The study aimed to assess the level of satisfaction among residents regarding Kenya Power's community engagement events. Specifically, it sought to determine how respondents rated the quality and usefulness of these events in terms of meeting their expectations and addressing their concerns. To measure this, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Very Dissatisfied" to "Very Satisfied.". The results are as indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Satisfaction with Community Engagement Events	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Skewness**		**Kurtosis**	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Satisfaction with Kenya Power's Community Engagement Events	241	2.85	1.12	0.31	0.145	-0.66	0.289
Valid N (listwise)	241						

The results revealed a mean satisfaction score of 2.85**,** indicating that overall sentiment hovered slightly below neutral. This suggests that while some respondents expressed satisfaction, a larger proportion were either neutral or dissatisfied with the events. The standard deviation of 1.12 shows a moderate spread in responses, indicating variability in individual experiences. The skewness value of 0.31 shows a slight rightward skew, meaning there were more responses below the mean, further supporting the finding that dissatisfaction or indifference was more common. Additionally, the kurtosis value of -0.66 implies a relatively flat distribution, suggesting that responses were more evenly spread out and not sharply clustered around the mean.

These findings suggest that a significant portion of respondents did not find Kenya Power's community engagement events particularly satisfying. One plausible explanation for this is that a majority of respondents (61%) had never attended any of these events. As such, their perceptions may be based on limited or second-hand information, leading to neutral or low satisfaction ratings. Literature supports this pattern, where lack of direct involvement or firsthand experience with public engagement initiatives often results in ambivalence or skepticism (Rowe & Frewer, 2004).

Another factor contributing to the lower satisfaction levels could be the quality or content of the events themselves. If the events are perceived as one-way communication or fail to directly address pressing community concerns, such as frequent outages, billing issues, or slow service restoration, then satisfaction is likely to suffer. Furthermore, issues such as poor publicity, inconvenient timing, or inaccessible locations might prevent broader community participation, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness and perceived value of such initiatives.

To enhance satisfaction levels, Kenya Power may need to improve both the inclusiveness and relevance of its community engagement strategies. This includes ensuring that events are well-publicized, held at accessible venues, and structured to promote two-way dialogue. Follow-up actions based on community input could also help build trust and improve the public's perception of the events' value.

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

To determine the degree of relationship between the explanatory variables, Pearson's Correlation was performed as illustrated in Table 3. Pearson's Correlation (r) is a measure of the strength of the association between two variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient ranges between 0 and 1, where higher values indicate a stronger association. This study adopted Taylor's (2018) interpretation scale, where 0.80–1.00 represents a very strong relationship, 0.60–0.79 is strong, 0.40–0.59 is moderate, and 0.20–0.39 is too weak.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation between Community Engagement and Service Delivery

		Service Delivery
Community Engagement Events	N	341
	Pearson Correlation	0.432**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

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

The findings in Table 4.5 from the correlation analysis reveal a moderate positive relationship between Community Engagement Events and Service Delivery, with a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.432. According to Taylor's (2018) interpretation scale, a coefficient in the range of 0.40–0.59 is considered moderate, indicating that there is a noticeable but not very strong association between the two variables. While not a very strong relationship, the moderate and significant correlation indicates that community engagement is a relevant factor in improving service delivery, and efforts to strengthen such engagement could lead to more responsive and customer-centered public service. However, the results also suggest that other factors beyond just engagement events, are contributing to service delivery outcomes and should be considered in a broader strategy.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable The model summary was used to explain the variation in service delivery that the independent variables could explain. The R-squared for the relationship between the independent variable (Community Engagement Events), and the dependent variable (Service Delivery) was adjusted to 0.281. This means that only 28.1% of the variation in service delivery can be explained by the independent variable. The remaining 71.9% of the variation suggests that other factors, not captured in this study, might significantly influence service delivery. The correlation coefficient (R) now indicates a weak positive relationship, with r = 0.530, suggesting a moderate but still positive correlation between the study variables.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.530[a]	.281	0.276	3.847

a. Predictors: (Constant) Community Engagement Events

Beta Coefficient of the Study Variable

The regression analysis aimed to determine the extent to which community engagement influences service delivery at Kenya Power in Malindi. The results are presented in the regression output below:

Table 5: Regression Coefficient for Community Engagement

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.80	0.018	0.070	3.67	0.001
Community Engagement Events	0.043	0.762	0.390	2.39	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery					

The regression analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant effect of community engagement on service delivery, with a coefficient of 0.043 ($p = 0.017$), indicating that increased engagement contributes to measurable improvements in service outcomes. The model explains 28.1% of the variation in service delivery ($R^2 = 0.281$), based on 521 observations. The overall model was robust and significant, as confirmed by the F-test value of 90.72 with a probability level of 0.000, underscoring the reliability of the relationship.

Adjusted Regression Equation:

$Y = 2.800 + 0.043X$

Where:

- Y = Service Delivery
- X = Community Engagement

The R-squared value of 0.281 implies that 28.1% of the variability in service delivery can be attributed to community engagement activities such as engagement events, forums, and partnerships. However, the remaining 71.9% of the variance may be explained by other factors not included in the model, such as organizational efficiency, infrastructure quality, employee performance, or external socio-political dynamics.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of community engagement in enhancing service delivery. The results support the strategic value of participatory and inclusive practices in building stronger relationships between Kenya Power and the communities it serves, ultimately contributing to improved service outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of Community Engagement Events in enhancing Service Delivery

The study examined the effectiveness of Kenya Power's community forums in enhancing service delivery in Kilifi County, revealing a significant gap between intention and impact. Quantitative data showed that participation in these forums remains critically low. Only 20.4% of respondents had ever attended a Kenya Power-organized engagement event, while a vast majority (79.6%) reported no participation. Among those who had attended, the frequency of attendance was minimal, just 9.2% attended once a year, and a mere 2.8% participated monthly. These figures point to weak public engagement and suggest that most residents have limited or sporadic interaction with Kenya Power through these forums.

Accessibility was also identified as a key barrier. A majority of respondents (60.6%) were neutral on the forums' accessibility, while 27.1% considered them either inaccessible or very inaccessible. This indicates potential challenges such as poor publicity, inconvenient scheduling, and logistical difficulties, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas. The high rate of neutral responses further suggests that many residents may be unaware of these forums altogether.

In terms of impact, the forums appear to have made little impression on the public. An overwhelming 62% of respondents were neutral on whether the forums had helped improve complaint resolution or communication with Kenya Power. Only 13.4% believed they were effective, while 24.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. These responses reflect a general skepticism or uncertainty regarding the event's ability to deliver meaningful change.

Qualitative insights from Kenya Power staff helped contextualize these findings. Staff acknowledged that the events are held irregularly and are often limited to major towns like Kilifi and Malindi, leaving out smaller or remote communities. They recognized that while the events are useful for raising awareness about billing procedures, service protocols, and channels for escalating complaints, their effectiveness is hindered by inconsistent scheduling and a lack of follow-up.

Staff members also noted that the events have helped reduce tension by providing a platform for explaining technical delays and encouraging the use of official communication channels such as the customer care number (97771) and social media. However, they emphasized that residents expect tangible action after raising their concerns, and without this follow-through, the forums risk being dismissed as superficial exercises in public relations.

Taken together, these findings reveal a clear disconnect between Kenya Power’s goals for community engagement and the reality on the ground. While the forums have had some success in increasing awareness and shifting communication behaviors, their overall impact on service delivery and public trust remains limited. To truly enhance their effectiveness, Kenya Power must increase the frequency and geographic reach of these forums, improve accessibility, and most importantly, ensure that feedback collected during these engagements translates into visible and meaningful action.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that community engagement significantly and positively influences service delivery at Kenya Power, explaining 28.1% of the variation in outcomes. Nonetheless, persistent challenges such as delayed outage response, weak communication, and unreliable supply diminish the impact of these initiatives. For engagement to be meaningful, it must be reinforced by tangible operational improvements and responsive customer service. Ultimately, Kenya Power’s effectiveness will hinge on integrating public feedback, strengthening staff capacity, and ensuring accessible, impactful engagement platforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that Kenya Power and similar public service organizations institutionalize community engagement as a core part of their service delivery strategies. Rather than treating forums and outreach activities as ad hoc public relations efforts, these organizations should embed regular and structured engagement platforms into their operational plans. This is particularly critical in underserved regions such as Kilifi, where involving residents in dialogue and decision-making can enhance transparency, responsiveness, and trust in service provision.

Additionally, future research should expand beyond the current study's geographic and methodological scope. A comparative study across multiple counties could offer deeper insights into how regional, cultural, and infrastructural differences influence the effectiveness of community engagement. Incorporating longitudinal data and objective service metrics would also strengthen the evidence base and allow for a more detailed evaluation of impact over time.

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