

## **Challenges of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission of Kenya for effective service delivery**

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This study focused on challenges of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) in Public Service Commission of Kenya for effective service delivery. The Programme which is offered at the Kenya School of Government (KSG) was evaluated to determine its effectiveness. The evaluation was guided by the following research question: What are the challenges of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme. This evaluation was based on the convergent parallel mixed methods design and was anchored on Kirkpatrick's framework of evaluating training Programmes. Purposive and simple random sampling methods were used to identify a representative sample to participate in the study. Data collection was done through the use of questionnaires and interview guides. The data collected was analyzed through the application of qualitative and quantitative techniques and thereafter, presented in tables and figures. Study findings show that the Programme has challenges of large class sizes, long duration of the programme, lack of training experts, the study suggested need for recruitment of additional resource persons for delivery of the course content and reduction of sizes of the classes.

### **Background**

Employee training is a global well-known human capital management role which systematically deals with sharpening skills of manpower for improved productivity and service delivery. Organisational growth, productivity and service delivery requires that top management leads by example and by exhibiting the right behaviour, attitudes, skills and competencies as well as creating a brand for institutional excellence. This can be achieved when senior management is trained to provide strategic leadership which increases productivity and efficiency.

Effective government performance is one reason why it has become increasingly necessary to make economies market focused, nurture excellent human capital and expand democracy to foster growth. Any development activity in a country is anchored on training to remove the performance lacuna in public sector organisations (Ngure and Njiru, 2013). Further, training the human resource in an organisation promotes professionalism and increases returns and service delivery.

Kenya has experienced a major shift in policies and procedures occasioned by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Kenya Vision 2030 (Ngure and Njiru, 2013). The new Constitution and other emerging trends have made the country shift its development agenda and align it to the change. This has occasioned need to train government employees especially those in senior management positions for them to effectively deliver services to members of the public. The effectiveness of such training programmes should be of major concern to the government and policy makers, since ineffectiveness of such programmes adversely affects service delivery.

The essential expectations of capacity building include improved human capital performance, better compensation, strategic organisational structures and levels of skills transfer which foster growth in an organisation Grindle and Hilderbrand (2006). Kenya needs to take its unique position in the region in order to exploit the social, economic and political opportunities and expand the knowledge base (Ahmed & Hanson, 2011). A result oriented public service will need to recruit and train specialised personnel. Further, the new public service will require skills and knowledge (Okotoni & Erero, 2005). Training therefore, should be part of a comprehensive education planning programme for civil servants' development.

Evaluation is one way of finding out if a particular training programme is achieving the desired objectives, or the training programme is achieving what it was meant to achieve. Donald Kirkpatrick developed a four-dimensional training programmes evaluation method which examines training in terms of reactions, learning, behaviour and results (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2005). The model posits that in training learning takes place and it brings about changes in attitudes, cognitive domain, and behaviour as its outcomes. Behaviour refers to on the job performance and, thus, is measured after training. Further, reactions refer to how a participant or an employee feels after learning new ideas or concepts in the training. The learning which the participants acquires makes them change or modify their behaviour which brings about improvement in productivity or overall results (Alvarez, Garofano, & Salas, 2004).

The reasons for evaluating a training programme include improving the programme, assessing viability and accounting for the training resources Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2005). According to Fretwell (2003) other reasons for training evaluation include decision making and improving quality of systems in an organisation (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). To measure the effectiveness and impact of the programme, it is vital to carry out its evaluation. Training assesment therefore addresses the deficits which may exist in a programme and aim to make it better Armstrong (2009). Any form of training at any given time addresses the skills lacuna (Staley, 2008). Therefore evaluation of any training programmes assists to address organisational challenges which hinder productivity and service delivery (Alvarez, et al., 2004).

The need to address concerns that there were skill gaps after SLDP's mid-term evaluation in 2012, and the need to examine the levels of service delivery of officers who have been trained on Strategic Leadership Development Programme (Republic of Kenya, 2012) prompted this evaluation of the programme especially since most senior staff in public service undergo the training. The midterm evaluation of the programme indicated that, there are gaps in the programme because the officers who undergo the training continue performing at the same level. The evaluation also indicated that most of the course instructors have not undertaken the 'Trainer of Trainers '(T.o.T) course.

In addition, the evaluation showed that there seems to be very little skills transfer, and behaviour change among the senior officers who have gone through the programme (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Considering the fact that the senior officers are the ones who influence the junior staff in the Commission, then it is probable that Public Service Commission of Kenya improvement in employee performance will be constantly low. Further, the need to evaluate the programme was also due to the fact that incompetence and poor service delivery, on the part of the PSCK may spillover and affect the entire public sector in Kenya.

It is on the basis of these gaps that the researcher was prompted to evaluate the Strategic Leadership Development Training Programme, to identify underlying problems facing its effectiveness and propose improvements to enhance productivity of the public servants. This is important because, post-training evaluation is a critical aspect of training programmes. Leadership development programme evaluation is necessary since it provides guidance on how a given

programme is effectively meeting its objectives and prepares an organisations to develop leaders to move the institution forward. Organisations have embraced capacity building programmes for effectiveness and increased returns and value for government funding (UNDP, 2013).

A review of the Public Service Commission of Kenya specifically the issue of inefficiency of service delivery, lack of trainers who are trained as ‘Trainers of Trainers’, lack of skills transfer from officers who have undergone training in SLDP, poor productivity among other gaps prompted the researcher to undertake the study. This evaluation study therefore, endeavors to examine the effectiveness of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission of Kenya for effective service delivery.

### **Statement of problem**

There exists an important link between performance and productivity of the public service employees and the growth of Kenya’s economy. Human capital development and capacity building is a critical programme that a government employs to sharpen skills of its employees to address challenges which arise (Armstrong, 2006). In the Public Service in Kenya, concerns have been raised over delivery, and efficiency of the services offered to the public. The Ministry of State for Public Service conducted a midterm evaluation in 2012 of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme and established leadership skills gap in the public service despite the programme having been implemented for over six years (Republic of Kenya, 2012). In the recent past government performance evaluation and appraisal of all government departments and agencies, the Public Service Commission was lowly rated. In the 2010 performance evaluation of all government departments, the Public Service Commission ranked very low yet the Commission gives direction in public sector (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Therefore, there is a leadership development lacuna which could be addressed by an effective Strategic Leadership Development training Programme. The Commission continues to experience criticism regarding service delivery not only from senior government officials but also from members of the public. Recently the President of the Republic of Kenya noted with concern slackening in the leadership and service delivery by the civil servants in his office, who fall under the purview of Public Service Commission. Along the same line, the Auditor General’s report for 2013/2014 financial year indicates serious corruption and misuse of public resources by public sector employees all of whom are controlled by the Commission in terms of appointment, promotion and discipline. This growing concern over the performance of the Commission informs the need to evaluate the Strategic Leadership Development Training Programme to determine whether it is indeed transforming the leaders of the Commission for effective service delivery.

A number of studies have been carried out on leadership development, although they have not adequately informed on this specific programme. For example, a study by Piyali, Joshi, Satyawadi, Mukherjee and Ranjan (2011) in India on evaluating effectiveness of a leadership development training programme with trainee reaction revealed that 75% of managers and 45% of non-managerial employees found the training manuals and handouts to be valuable as learning tools. Harris and Leberman (2012) conducted an evaluation on leadership development for Women in New Zealand universities using a longitudinal case study approach and established that leadership development programmes help women to provide leadership in faculty, and that women continue to be underrepresented in senior academic and general staff positions in New Zealand universities.

Ngure and Njiru, (2013) conducted an evaluation of Senior Management Course (SMC) a course for middle level managers in the public sector in Kenya and found out that senior

management course trainees reacted positively on the training and were satisfied with the management skills imparted, which made them better managers. However, all these studies were carried in different contexts such as New Zealand, United States of America and India. Furthermore, methodologically, nearly all of them used a survey design and the reviewed studies have mainly dealt with reaction level one only of Kirkpatrick's four levels. Evidently, from available literature, little research has been done on evaluation of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in Kenya generally and this is a gap that this study addresses. This evaluation study therefore, sought to determine the effectiveness of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in preparing leaders for efficient service delivery within the Public Service Commission.

### **Evaluation Question**

What are the challenges facing the Implementation of the strategic leadership development programme

### **Logic Model**

The logic model for evaluating the Strategic Leadership Development Programme is shown in Table 1. In the model, the overall goal of the programme is to transform public service leaders who offer strategic guidance in dynamic environments, in the public service of Kenya. Table 1. Clearly shows that performance indicators, means of verification and critical assumptions.

Table 1  
**Logical Framework.**

<b>Narrative Summary</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>	<b>Critical Assumptions</b>
GOAL: The overall goal of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme is to transform public service leaders who offer strategic guidance in dynamic environments, in the public service of Kenya.	-Public service running effectively and efficiently -satisfied customers and clients. -improved productivity -timeliness	Transfer of knowledge to junior staff	The senior managers will complete the SLDP programme
How adequate is the SLDP implemented for effective transformation of senior managers for strategic leadership of the Public Service Commission?	-adequacy of trainers -adequacy of teaching materials -adequacy of resources -cost effective	Transformational leadership. Reviewing of performance. Evaluation reports.	There will be behavior change on a SLDP trainees after the programme
What are the satisfaction levels of different stakeholders on Strategic Leadership Development Programme training of top leadership of the Public Service Commission in Kenya?	-Level of satisfaction of customers -satisfaction from staff using satisfaction survey reports Minimal complains	Reactions and expectations after training. Satisfaction index levels No employee complains	High Positive expectations and satisfactions. New attitudes.
How efficient are the trainees of Strategic Leadership Development Programme in service delivery at the Public Service Commission of Kenya?	- Improvement in Efficiency in the work place after training. -shortened delivery time -current trainee levels -cost effective services	Efficient service delivery.	Good efficient services.
What are the challenges facing the implementation of Strategic Leadership Development Programme?	-provision of solutions to new challenges in the programme	List of challenges identified. Provide Solutions to problems	Proactive focused, senior managers.
How can the implementers improve the implementation of the Strategic Leadership Development programme?	- update of content and syllabus -document analysis using document register Improved training manuals Highly qualified instructors	Curriculum Review reports	Improved programmes.

*Source: SLDP Logic Model Design*

## Challenges Facing the Implementation of Leadership Development Programmes

Gordon, & Yukl, (2014) conducted a study on the Future of Leadership Research. In this study, the researchers discussed several reasons for the slow progress in strategic leadership development. The study argued that there is a lack of collaborative effort between academics and practitioners, and the leadership theory and research has lacked adequate emphasis on strategic issues, explanatory processes, and the moderating effects of the situation. The researchers discussed these shortcomings and ways to remedy them. Though there may be points of convergence in the findings of the two studies, the current study applied a parallel convergent mixed methods design to evaluate the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission of Kenya for effective service delivery.

Hedman, (2016) elucidated on Leadership Team Tool for better meaning making: Developing leadership team communication and reflexivity. The purpose of this study was to present a Leadership Team Tool for developing reflexivity in the context of leadership teams. The Leadership Team Tool is based on the theoretical premises of seeing communication as meaning making, and therefore placing discourse and conversation in the centre of developing leadership teams. The paper illustrates how reflexivity can be facilitated through a structured process of using the Leadership Team Tool. However the current study evaluated the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission, Kenya for effective service delivery and did not target presentation of a leadership team tool.

Hamill (2011) did a study on embodied leadership: towards a new way of developing leaders. The purpose of this study was to critique common practice in leadership development with a view to suggesting an alternative approach based on neuroscience. The paper references existing research in the field of neuroscience to carry out a critique, before presenting a case study of a different approach to leadership development. The leadership development programme utilises models and theories and self-awareness for its practice. Results reveal that models and theories do not in any way impact the section of the brain required for behaviour change, further the use of self-awareness may not be adequate though it is an essential starting point. This paper was not a critique on leadership behaviour but an evaluation of Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission for effective service delivery.

Megheirkouni, (2016) did a study on Leadership development methods and activities. The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of leadership development (LD) methods adopted by companies operating in Syria by exploring the content, purpose, and the implantation of LD methods. The findings show that leadership development interventions are either experiential learning between individual and team. Specifically, five major methods or activities used in Syria: action learning, coaching, feedback, rotation, and networking. These methods and activities were not only used for a specific purpose, but also for multiple purposes. This study was about methods and activities in leadership development but the current study is an evaluation of Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission for effective service delivery.

Viitala, Kultalahti and Kangas (2017) conducted a study on does strategic leadership development feature in managers' responses to future HRM challenges? This was a qualitative research done in Finland. Findings showed that top managers do not very actively consider either leadership or LD when asked to consider the HR challenges of the future. In addition, when they did so, the ideas of LD were mostly traditional and individual-centred. Only a few of the informants connected LD to business needs. The comments mainly reflected ideas of heroic leadership and training. This study was a case study of a children's Centre's but the current study was a convergent

parallel mixed methods design evaluating Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission of Kenya for effective service delivery.

McCarthy and Milner (2013) conducted a study on Managerial coaching: challenges, opportunities and training in Australia. The study revealed the issues faced by managers and the importance of training. The training on coaching to managers should not mean they would be useful and supportive to the managers. This study was a cross sectional study and the current evaluation utilized a convergent parallel mixed methods design and was anchored on Kirkpatrick's evaluation model.

Buus (2005) conducted research on the evolution of leadership development: challenges and best practice. The findings of the study revealed that the DIEU study has found that more than half (53 per cent) of key European business players have not increased their leadership training budget for the last four years and 46 per cent say they cannot see this level of investment changing in the next three years. Less than one-quarter of boardrooms and under one-third of senior management teams are fully committed to their companies' goals for leadership development and nearly half (48 per cent) are not integrating their leadership development with business needs. The report cites organisational frictions and a general lack of awareness that leadership development matters as being among the reasons for this lack of support for leadership development. This study focused leadership development challenges but the current study was an evaluation of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission for effective service delivery.

Khalili (2017) conducted a study on creative and innovative leadership: measurement development and validation. This was a quantitative approach, the population sample was composed of 514 respondents who held management and non-management positions. The findings indicated that the tool achieved adequate levels of validity and reliability. Eventually, the findings revealed positive and significant influence of creative and innovative leadership behaviour on creativity and innovative behaviour at the individual level in the workplace. This study covered leadership development and focused on behaviour. The current study focused effectiveness of Strategic Leadership Development Programme for effective service delivery.

Antwi and Analoui (2008) conducted a research on reforming public sector: Facing the challenges of effective human resource development policy in Ghana. The research was done in Ghana and adopted an exploratory case study design. From the research findings indicated that amongst others, it was found that Ghana's PSR has significantly influenced the strategic direction of human resource development policies of the decentralized local government service. Major human resource capacity challenges manifest three-dimensionally as: policy, task/skill/organisation and performance motivation induced. This study was centred on reforms in the public sector. Although the context is different but it was done within the African region and since African challenges manifest themselves in similar ways. The current study was an evaluation of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme in the Public Service Commission of Kenya for effective service delivery and only reviewed challenges of the programme to make it effective

## **Findings**

This study sought to determine the challenges facing the implementation of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme. Data regarding this were obtained using a qualitative open-ended item within the questionnaire. The information obtained were analysed and presented in Table 2.

**Table 2***Challenges facing SLDP implementation According to Senior Managers and On Session Staff*

Statement	Senior Managers		On-Session Staff	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Inadequate time for programme implementation	10	29.4	12	20.7
Little exposure of facilitators to public service practice	2	5.8	4	6.9
Over-emphasis on leadership skills in comparison to followers, group dynamics and team applications	4	11.7	6	10.3
Very large class causing poor teacher-student interaction	3	8.8	4	6.9
Few resource persons making the course monotonous	3	8.8	8	13.8
Facilitators did not check for grasping of content by participants	1	2.9	4	6.9
No response	2	5.8	6	10.3
Lack of support from organisation	1	2.9	3	5.2
Training material not current	1	2.9	2	3.4
Lack of enough training material	1	2.9	2	3.4
Issues related to power point presentation	1	2.9	2	3.4
Environment and work place pressures	1	2.9	2	3.4
Those trained become so busy after training	1	2.9	2	3.4
Attending the course for promotion only	1	2.9	1	1.7
Some lecturers do not have masterly of content	1	2.9	-	-
No attitude change after training	1	2.9	-	-

It is clear from Table 2 that, 29.4% of the participants stated that inadequate time for programme implementation was a major challenge facing programme implementation. From the same Table, 12% of the participants reported that over-emphasis on leadership skills in comparison to followers, group dynamics and team applications was also a challenge. An equal 8.8% reported that there were very large classes causing poor teacher-student interaction and few resource persons making the course monotonous. This observation concurs with what Okotoni & Erero (2005) asserted that resource challenges exist and they assist in strengthening partnerships for resource mobilisation to achieve goals of the programme. This is also in agreement with (Hannun and Craig, 2008) who noted that evaluation of leadership development activities faces specific challenges which need multilevel evaluation criteria and multiple methods for data collection are lacking, hence need for an examination of individual development over time. It is also evident that



5.8% of the participants indicated that there was little exposure of facilitators to public service practice and a similar percentage did not have any challenge with the programme as it is. About three percent of the participants noted that not all senior personnel were trained in SLDP the rest others indicated that there was lack of support from the organisation, this observations were in agreement with the observations by course coordinators KSG who said:

Most of the participants indicated that the departments and the government agencies they work for were not concern about their bright. The organisations do not care whether one undertakes the programme or not as long as one is on duty doing activities he/she is supposed to do. Some organisations don't give the top leadership the opportunity to attend any course for personal growth and development.

Other participants representing three percent also mentioned that where they are working, training material were not adequate, others said that they had challenges related with power point presentation, environment and work place pressures, those trained become so busy after training, attending the course for promotion, some lecturers do not have mastery of content and finally another 3% indicated that there is no attitude change after training. It is evident that quite a number of senior management participants indicated that it is possible there are issues and challenges assist to make the programme better. These challenges are in agreement with the work of Busari (2013) who asserts that leadership development challenges in the health sector are related to lack of requisite competencies, learning materials, presentation skills, and subject matter which should increases productivity in the health care.

From the same Table 2 it was clear that 20.7% of the On-Session Staff stated that inadequate time for programme implementation, 10.3 % indicated over- emphasis on leadership skills in comparison to followers, group dynamics and team dynamics in the organisation. Almost 6.9% indicated little exposure of the facilitators, another 6.9% indicated facilitators not checking for grasping of content by participants, and 6.9% responded that there was little exposure of public service participants. About 13% indicated that there are very large classes as indicated by supervisors at the Commission. About 5.2% indicated that there is lack of support from organisation. 3.4% indicated that training materials were not current or lack of enough training material. This is in agreement with Kolb and Kolb (2009) who noted need for adequate subject content to change behaviour of the learner. A similar 3.4% also indicated that environmental workplace pressures, and those trained becoming so busy after the training. Finally, 1.7% indicated that it was a challenge since it was for promotion only. This can be directly related with the observation by human resource supervisor and head of training at the Commission who noted that:

There is a problem of people skills, as much as people are doing their work very well at times some directors lack people skills on how to deal with those who work under them in their place of work. This, has led people to develop good strategic plans but they are not people centered to improve performance. The course coordinators at the KSG did indicate that some people in leadership are not ripe enough. Some professionals are not conversant with management skills hence they are not in tandem with other managers and some leaders had never attended the programme and are not interested in the course

## Conclusions

The challenges facing the implementation of the SLDP 40% of the participants stated that inadequate time for programme implementation was a major challenge facing programme implementation and that over-emphasis on leadership skills in comparison to followers, group dynamics and team applications was also a challenge. Few reported that there were very large classes causing poor teacher-student interaction and few resource persons making the course monotonous. Generally, lack of adequate time for programme implementation was the main challenge facing programme implementation.

## Recommendations

Participants raised several challenges facing the SLDP programme as follows: lack of adequate time for programme implementation was the main challenge facing programme implementation other challenges included, little exposure of facilitators to public service practice, over-emphasis on leadership skills in comparison to followers, group dynamics and team applications, very large class causing poor teacher-student interaction, few resource persons making the course monotonous, facilitators did not check for grasping of content by participants, lack of support from organisation, training material not current, lack of enough training material, issues related to power point presentation, environment and work place pressures, those trained become so busy after training, attending the course for promotion only, some lecturers do not have mastery of content ,no attitude change after training and other participants do not indicate any response. After analysing the challenges it is concluded that leadership development programmes, lack of time as the main challenge in covering what is expected. Secondly it is concluded that the programme has a challenge of capacity of qualified experts and lecturers. It can also be concluded that since the course is for promotion of senior managers then it is attended as such and not necessarily for behaviour and character change.

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