

# Influence of Beneficiary Feedback on Public Service Delivery in Kenya's County Governments

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the influence of beneficiary feedback on the service delivery of county governments in Kenya. Grounded in the Participatory Development Theory, the research focused on understanding how structured citizen input can enhance the responsiveness, efficiency, and quality of public service delivery. Using a descriptive research design, qualitative data were collected from 47 county officials through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret emerging patterns on beneficiary feedback practices and their impact on service outcomes. Quantitative analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.753$ ) and a significant regression coefficient ( $\beta = 1.91$ ), indicating a robust influence of beneficiary feedback on service delivery. The results highlighted that counties with consistent and inclusive feedback mechanisms demonstrated greater improvements in responsiveness, citizen satisfaction, and service efficiency. The study recommends the institutionalization of feedback channels, integration of citizen input in decision-making, and policy reforms to enhance participatory governance. These findings offer critical insights for policymakers and public administrators seeking to promote citizen-centered service delivery within devolved governance structures.*

**Keywords:** Beneficiary feedback, service delivery, county governments, participatory governance, citizen engagement

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been increasing global recognition of the role beneficiary feedback plays in shaping public service delivery. Governments and municipal authorities worldwide are transitioning toward more citizen-centric governance models by integrating feedback channels to enhance accountability and responsiveness. For instance, studies on AI-assisted communication between citizens and public officials indicate that structured feedback mechanisms significantly improve trust, clarity, and user satisfaction in public administrations (Zhang & Nie, 2025). Additionally, segmentation strategies in digital government services have proven effective in tailoring feedback loops to diverse citizen groups, thereby improving service uptake and institutional trust (Deloitte Center for Government Insights, 2024). These trends underscore a growing consensus on the importance of embedding beneficiary feedback into the design and delivery of public services globally.

Across Africa, growing dissatisfaction with public services has been partly attributed to limited citizen engagement and weak feedback mechanisms. Research shows that governance metrics in many African countries have declined, with citizens expressing concerns about the lack of responsiveness from public institutions (Delapalme, 2021). In South Africa, the implementation of accessible e-government platforms has shown promise in improving service delivery, particularly where beneficiary feedback mechanisms are integrated into digital systems (Abdurahman & Kabanda, 2024). Furthermore, initiatives such as MOBISAM (Mobile Social Accountability Monitoring) have demonstrated how feedback systems can empower communities and enhance local government performance through real-time reporting and participatory engagement (Khene et al., 2021). These examples reveal that across the region, feedback mechanisms are becoming instrumental in redefining citizen-government relations and improving public service outcomes.

In Kenya, the 2010 Constitution introduced a devolved system of governance intended to bring services closer to citizens and enhance participatory governance. County governments, as the main agents of localized service delivery, are now expected to incorporate beneficiary feedback into planning and decision-making processes. However, several counties continue to face challenges in implementing effective feedback systems. For example, a study in Isiolo County revealed that the lack of follow-up on citizen input undermines the legitimacy of participatory frameworks, ultimately weakening service delivery outcomes (Ngoyoni, 2021). Similarly, in Nairobi City County, public participation and access to feedback channels were found to significantly influence the quality and responsiveness of services, with strong correlations between citizen involvement and delivery efficiency (Gathumbi & Gatobu, 2022). Another study in Nairobi noted that the adoption of e-government services particularly at Huduma Centres was positively influenced by real-time feedback and client satisfaction systems, thereby enhancing service access and efficiency (Osundwa, 2024). Additionally, county-level customer care systems were found to significantly contribute to service delivery performance when integrated with feedback tracking and resolution processes (Kimilu et al., 2020). These findings collectively highlight the importance of beneficiary feedback as a key pillar in improving the performance and accountability of Kenya's county governments.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Although Kenya's devolved governance system was designed to promote citizen-centered service delivery, many county governments struggle to effectively incorporate beneficiary feedback into their decision-making processes. While public participation is mandated, mechanisms for gathering and utilizing citizen input are often weak, fragmented, or underutilized. In many cases, feedback is collected but not meaningfully acted upon, leading to a disconnect between citizen expectations and actual service outcomes. Studies show that effective feedback systems can enhance

transparency and improve service quality (Gathumbi & Gatobu, 2022; Abdurahman & Kabanda, 2024). However, in the Kenyan context, such systems are frequently symbolic, with limited influence on planning, budgeting, or implementation (Ngoyoni, 2021; Osundwa, 2024). Digital access barriers and insufficient public awareness, particularly in rural counties, worsen this situation. As a result, there is growing concern that the failure to institutionalize meaningful beneficiary feedback undermines the core objectives of devolution. This study seeks to examine how beneficiary feedback influences service delivery in county governments and to explore ways to strengthen citizen engagement and responsiveness.

## 1.2 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the Influence of beneficiary feedback on service delivery in Kenya's county governments.

## 1.3 Research Hypothesis

Beneficiary feedback has no statistically significant influence on Service Delivery in county governments in Kenya.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it contributes to the growing discourse on citizen participation and public sector performance in devolved governance systems. By focusing on the role of beneficiary feedback in enhancing service delivery within Kenya's county governments, the study provides valuable insights for policy-makers, practitioners, and scholars alike. For county governments, the findings can help inform the design and implementation of more effective feedback mechanisms, enabling them to align service delivery with citizen needs and improve accountability. For national government agencies and oversight bodies, such as the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) and the Office of the Auditor-General, the study offers evidence to support policies and frameworks that enhance participatory governance at the county level. The study is also relevant to civil society organizations and development partners, who often serve as intermediaries in strengthening citizen engagement. Insights from the research can guide advocacy, capacity-building initiatives, and the development of tools for monitoring and evaluating feedback systems. Lastly, for academia and researchers, the study contributes to literature on governance, public administration, and participatory development. It provides a contextualized understanding of how feedback influences service outcomes in a decentralized African setting, thereby filling empirical and theoretical gaps in the field.

## 2. Literature Review

This section presents a review of both the theoretical and empirical literature on Service Delivery with a specific interest in Beneficiary Feedback. The theoretical framework encapsulates the reviewed theories, which formed the basis of the study. The empirical studies were reviewed in line with the study objective and were conceptualized into a framework.

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was guided by Participatory Development Theory, which emphasized the active involvement of beneficiaries in decision-making processes to enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability of public services (Chambers, 1983). The theory supported the notion that meaningful citizen feedback led to improved service delivery outcomes, particularly within devolved governance systems such as those in Kenya. Additionally, Public Value Theory (Moore, 1995) complemented this perspective by proposing that public institutions created value when they aligned services with citizen needs. Feedback mechanisms were viewed as essential for defining service priorities, ensuring responsiveness, and enhancing public trust. Together, these theories provided a foundation for examining how beneficiary feedback influenced county government performance.

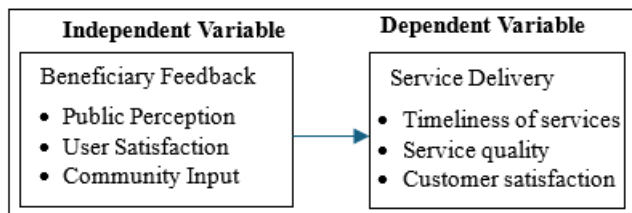
### 2.2 Empirical Review

Recent global studies have consistently shown the significance of Strategic Integrated Development Planning (SIDP) and beneficiary feedback in enhancing service delivery across local governments. In the United States, Morrison et al. (2019) and Nabatchi et al. (2018) demonstrated that SIDP and structured citizen feedback improve infrastructure, social services, and user satisfaction. Similar findings were noted in Mexico (López-Pérez et al., 2020; Fox, 2019), Colombia (Galaz et al., 2021), and Brazil (Gaventa & Barrett, 2019), where feedback loops empowered marginalized groups and promoted transparency. In Asia, countries like China, Pakistan, and Indonesia reported positive SIDP outcomes in infrastructure and social service delivery (Liu et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2020; Kusumasari et al., 2021). Likewise, beneficiary feedback mechanisms enhanced accountability and public trust in India and Malaysia (Joshi, 2019; Tan et al., 2020). Across Africa, studies from Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Malawi showed that SIDP and citizen engagement facilitated participatory governance and improved local government legitimacy (Njoku et al., 2019; Hassen et al., 2020; Chinsinga et al., 2018). In Kenya, multiple studies have underlined the growing role of beneficiary feedback in shaping responsive and efficient service delivery. Mwenda et al. (2020) and Nyaga et al. (2021) found that feedback mechanisms improved water and general public service delivery. However, challenges such as underfunded governance structures and limited integration persist (Kagwanja et al., 2024). The use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in tracking service effectiveness was recognized across several countries, including Kenya, Pakistan, and the U.S. (Kimemia et al., 2018; Shafqat et al., 2019; Margetta, 2018). Despite broad progress, a recurring gap across contexts is the limited exploration of how feedback influences resource mobilization or enhances SIDP effectiveness in county governments justifying the need for focused research within Kenya's devolved system.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The dependent variable of the study is service Delivery while

the independent variable is beneficiary feedback. This is Illustrated in Figure one below.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

### 3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2014), collecting quantitative data first, followed by qualitative insights to explain statistical findings. The research focused on the influence of Beneficiary Feedback on county government service delivery in Kenya, with resource mobilization as a moderating variable. Data was collected from 47 county governments, targeting 658 staff members in Finance and Economic Planning departments, including 47 CECMs, 47 Chief Officers, and 564 support staff. A stratified random sampling technique ensured representativeness, yielding a final sample size of 243 respondents, proportionately distributed across 17 systematically selected counties. Quantitative data was gathered via structured questionnaires using Likert-scale items, while qualitative data came from interviews with executive officials. Instruments were piloted with 22 individuals, ensuring clarity and reliability. Validity was established through expert review, pilot testing, and theoretical alignment (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, achieving acceptable thresholds ( $\alpha \geq 0.7$ ). Data collection employed a drop-and-pick approach, maintaining participant anonymity and ethical standards. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS v27, employing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and Simple linear regression models was used to test the hypothesis. The function was given as follows

$$SD_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BF_1 + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (i),$$

Where SD is service delivery and BF is Beneficiary Feedback A normality test was done to ensure the assumption was met Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, offering deeper

contextual insights. Findings from both strands were integrated to enhance the validity and practical relevance of the study.

## 4. Findings of the Study

### 4.1 Response Rate

The study targeted 243 respondents across three key categories: County Executive Committee Members (CECMs), Chief Officers, and support staff. Out of these, 206 responses were received, resulting in an overall response rate of 83.4%, surpassing the 75% threshold typically recommended for paper-based surveys (Nulty, 2008). This high level of engagement enhances the reliability and generalizability of the study's findings. The results were presented in table 1 below

**Table 1:** Response Rate

Category	Target Sample	Actual Response	Response Rate
County Executive Committee Members (CECM)	17	15	88.2%
Chief Officers	17	13	76.5%
Support Staff	208	178	85.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>83.4%</b>

Table 1 presents the detailed response rate by respondent category. Notably, CECMs recorded the highest response rate at 88.2%, followed by support staff at 85.6%, and Chief Officers at 76.5%. These rates indicate a strong commitment among stakeholders and provide a credible basis for the study's analysis. The broad and balanced representation of respondents from across the county government structure contributes to the robustness and validity of the research data.

### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Beneficiary Feedback

Beneficiary feedback is essential in improving service delivery, ensuring that government programs align with the needs and expectations of the public. Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics for beneficiary feedback in the context of Strategic Integrated Development Planning (SIDP). The table highlights how beneficiaries perceive service delivery, the extent of community engagement, and the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics for Beneficiary Feedback

Statement	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	Mean	SD
Public perception of our services reflects positively on SIDP implementation.	4 (2.2)	17 (9.6)	60 (33.7)	82 (46.1)	15 (8.4)	3.49	0.87
User satisfaction with services provided under SIDP is high.	4 (2.2)	18 (10.1)	60 (33.7)	81 (45.5)	15 (8.4)	3.48	0.87
Community input is actively sought and valued in the planning and delivery of services.	5 (2.8)	15 (8.4)	60 (33.7)	83 (46.6)	15 (8.4)	3.49	0.87
Feedback from beneficiaries is used to improve service delivery under SIDP.	4 (2.2)	18 (10.1)	62 (34.8)	79 (44.4)	15 (8.4)	3.47	0.87
Our county government regularly evaluates public perception of SIDP initiatives.	6 (3.4)	19 (10.7)	58 (32.6)	76 (42.7)	19 (10.7)	3.47	0.94
Community engagement is prioritized in the implementation of SIDP projects.	9 (5.1)	21 (11.8)	49 (27.5)	80 (44.9)	19 (10.7)	3.44	1.00
<b>Overall Mean &amp; SD</b>						<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.90</b>

The analysis of beneficiary feedback within the Strategic Integrated Development Planning (SIDP) framework revealed moderate to high levels of agreement on the importance and effectiveness of community engagement in service delivery. Descriptive statistics showed that mean scores for all measured aspects ranged from 3.44 to 3.49, indicating a generally positive perception among beneficiaries regarding feedback mechanisms, though with some variability in agreement. The statement on public perception of services reflecting SIDP implementation had the highest agreement (46.1%), with a mean of 3.49, suggesting a largely favorable view, albeit with a significant neutral segment. This supports Morrison et al. (2019), who argued that public perception strongly correlates with trust and accountability in service delivery.

Similarly, 45.5% of respondents agreed that user satisfaction with services is high, reflecting moderate satisfaction and highlighting areas where service quality can be improved. This is consistent with Nabatchi et al. (2018), who linked user satisfaction with effective public service delivery. A notable 46.6% of respondents agreed that community input is actively sought and valued in service planning, aligning with Wampler et al. (2020), who emphasized the role of citizen engagement in inclusive governance. However, the large proportion of neutral responses across items (about one-third for each) indicates possible uncertainty or inconsistency in the implementation of these practices.

On the use of feedback to improve services, 44.4% agreed, though many remained neutral. Joshi (2019) highlighted that integrating feedback into service design strengthens responsiveness and performance, suggesting a need for counties to make feedback loops more visible and actionable. Regular evaluation of public perception by county governments also received moderate agreement (42.7%), with a call for more systematic approaches as suggested by Okunlola et al. (2020). Lastly, while 44.9% agreed that community engagement is prioritized, the relatively high standard deviation (1.00) reflects differing experiences among respondents, echoing Chinsinga et al.'s (2018) call for authentic, not tokenistic, community participation.

Overall, while counties appear to be incorporating feedback into SIDP implementation, the findings suggest a need for more structured, transparent, and inclusive engagement mechanisms to optimize service delivery outcomes.

#### 4.3 Correlation Coefficient

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between beneficiary feedback and service delivery in county governments. This statistical technique measures the degree to which the two variables move together. A correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) closer to 1 or -1 indicates a strong relationship, while a value near 0 suggests a weak or no linear association.

**Table 3: Correlation Coefficient Table**

Variables	Beneficiary Feedback	Service Delivery
Beneficiary Feedback	1	0.753**
Service Delivery	0.753**	1

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

The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.753 indicates a strong positive relationship between beneficiary feedback and service delivery. This suggests that improvements in feedback mechanisms are strongly associated with enhanced service delivery outcomes in county governments.

#### 4.4 Model Summary

To determine the predictive power of beneficiary feedback on service delivery, a simple linear regression model was tested.

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.753	0.567	0.562	0.414

The model summary shows an R-squared value of 0.567, indicating that 56.7% of the variance in service delivery is explained by beneficiary feedback. This reflects a substantial explanatory power of the independent variable (beneficiary feedback) on the dependent variable (service delivery).

#### 4.5 ANOVA

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to test the statistical significance of the regression model. This test assesses whether the regression model provides a better fit to the data than a model with no predictors. A significant F-statistic indicates that beneficiary feedback contributes meaningfully to variations in service delivery.

**Table 5: ANOVA Table**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.273	1	19.273	112.58	0
Residual	14.702	86	0.171		
Total	33.975	87			

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ( $F(1, 86) = 112.58, p < 0.001$ ), implying that beneficiary feedback significantly predicts service delivery among county governments.

#### 4.6 Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients table presents the unstandardized beta values, t-statistics, and significance levels. These coefficients indicate the direction and strength of the effect of beneficiary feedback on service delivery, controlling for other factors. A significant beta coefficient supports the hypothesis that beneficiary feedback has a measurable and positive impact on service delivery outcomes.

**Table 6: Regression Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.732	0.143	—	5.118	0
Beneficiary Feedback	1.91	0.18	0.753	10.608	0

The unstandardized beta coefficient of 1.910 implies that a one-unit increase in beneficiary feedback leads to a 1.91-unit increase in service delivery performance, holding other factors constant. The standardized beta (0.753) further



confirms a strong positive influence. The t-value of 10.608 and p-value  $< 0.001$  confirm that the effect is statistically significant.

#### 4.7 Hypothesis Testing

##### 4.7.1. Hypothesis

$H_0$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between beneficiary feedback and service delivery in county governments.

$H_1$ : There is a statistically significant relationship between beneficiary feedback and service delivery in county governments.

##### 4.7.2 Decision

Reject  $H_0$  because  $p = .000 < 0.05$ .

There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between beneficiary feedback and service delivery among county governments in Kenya.

### 5. Summary of Findings

The study revealed that beneficiary feedback had a strong and significant positive relationship with service delivery ( $r = 0.753$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Regression analysis further confirmed that beneficiary feedback significantly influenced service delivery outcomes ( $\beta = 0.91$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), explaining 56.7% of the variation in service delivery performance. The findings underscore the importance of feedback mechanisms in enhancing the quality, efficiency, and responsiveness of county government services.

### 6. Conclusions

The study concluded that beneficiary feedback is a critical determinant of service delivery effectiveness in county governments. Where county governments actively incorporate citizen feedback into planning, monitoring, and service adjustments, there is a notable improvement in satisfaction and trust in public services. The high beta coefficient and model fit indicate that feedback mechanisms should not be peripheral but central to county service delivery strategies.

### 7. Recommendations

#### 7.1 Recommendations for Policy

The study recommends that policymakers at both national and county levels develop comprehensive frameworks that institutionalize beneficiary feedback as a core component of governance and service delivery. These policies should mandate regular collection, analysis, and integration of citizen feedback into all phases of county planning and service implementation. In addition, legislative provisions should be established to ensure accountability and transparency in the way county governments respond to feedback. It is also essential that policy guidelines promote inclusive participation; ensuring marginalized and underrepresented groups are given a platform to contribute their views on county service performance. Further, investment in digital platforms and open-data systems is

recommended to facilitate efficient feedback collection and foster public trust in government responsiveness.

#### 7.2 Recommendations for Decision Making

From a managerial and administrative standpoint, county government leaders and service providers are encouraged to prioritize the operationalization of feedback mechanisms such as community forums, suggestion boxes, mobile applications, and social media platforms. Decision-makers should establish clear internal systems for processing and acting on the feedback received to enhance the quality and efficiency of public services. To support informed decision-making, it is necessary to train staff on data interpretation, citizen engagement, and participatory governance. Moreover, leadership within counties should foster a culture of evidence-based decision-making, where strategies and interventions are continuously refined based on actual beneficiary input and satisfaction metrics. This approach would not only improve service delivery outcomes but also strengthen the legitimacy and accountability of county administrations.

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