

Work-Life Balance, Compensation, Leadership and Recognition as Predictors of Public Service Delivery in Turkana County, Kenya

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Abstract

Employee engagement is an important consideration in public service delivery because employees are directly involved in implementing government programmes and responding to citizens' needs. However limited empirical evidence exists on how specific employee engagement practices relate to service delivery within Kenya's devolved county governments. This study examined the relationship between work-life balance, compensation, supportive leadership, employee recognition and service delivery in the County Government of Turkana, Kenya. A cross-sectional correlational design was used and from a population of 3,696 county government employees, 361 were selected through proportionate stratified and simple random sampling. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and 311 completed questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of 86.15%. Analysis involved descriptive statistics where Pearson's correlation and regression analysis with Principal Component Analysis used to assess the structure of the measurement items where Cronbach's alpha used to establish internal consistency. Work-life balance ($r = 0.813$, $p < 0.01$), compensation ($r = 0.805$, $p < 0.01$), supportive leadership ($r = 0.817$, $p < 0.01$) and employee recognition ($r = 0.794$, $p < 0.01$) were each positively correlated with service delivery. The combined regression model was significant, explaining 35.9% of the variation in service delivery ($R^2 = 0.359$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.350$; $F_{0.05(4, 306)} = 42.782$, $p < 0.001$). In the combined model, compensation was the only variable with a statistically significant independent contribution to service delivery ($\beta = 0.229$, $p = 0.042$). Work-life balance ($\beta = 0.200$, $p = 0.087$), supportive leadership ($\beta = 0.108$,

$p = 0.308$) and employee recognition ($\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.389$) were not statistically significant. The findings show that employee engagement practices are related to service delivery but their individual contributions differ when considered together. Compensation appears to have the clearest independent relationship with service delivery suggesting that fair and reliable remuneration should remain an important consideration in the management of county employees. Attention to compensation should however, be accompanied by appropriate working conditions, supportive supervision and recognition of employee contributions.

Keywords: Employee engagement, work-life balance, compensation, supportive leadership, employee recognition, service delivery, county government

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Introduction

Public service delivery is one of the main ways through which citizens experience government and assess its performance and the quality of public services depends on more than the availability of financial resources, infrastructure and administrative systems. It also depends on the employees who implement government programmes and interact with citizens on a daily basis with their commitment, motivation and involvement in their work influencing how efficiently and consistently public services are provided. For this reason, employee engagement has become an important area of research in understanding organizational performance in both public and private institutions (Bakker et al., 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015; Bailey et al., 2017). Employee engagement refers to a positive work-related state characterized

by energy, dedication and involvement in one's work. Research has linked higher levels of engagement with a range of employee and organizational outcomes including job satisfaction, commitment and performance. A meta-analysis covering 130 studies found that work engagement was associated with attitudinal, behavioural and performance outcomes across public, semi-public and private organizations (Borst et al., 2020). Mazzetti et al. (2023) similarly found that job and social resources were positively associated with work engagement. In the public sector, Zahari and Kaliannan (2023) reviewed 48 studies and found that organizational conditions as well as leadership, job characteristics and organizational interventions were among the main factors associated with employee engagement and their review

additionally showed that public-sector engagement research has often focused on individual factors or limited groups of organizational conditions.

The conditions created by organizations therefore matter in shaping how employees experience their work. Human-resource practices can influence the resources available to employees with their perceptions of organizational support and their willingness to invest effort in their duties. Albrecht et al. (2015) argue that engagement-oriented human-resource practices can create job resources that encourage employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. Similarly Farndale and Murrer (2015) using evidence from employees in Mexico, the Netherlands and the United States found positive relationships between employee engagement and financial rewards, team climate and participation in decision-making. These findings indicate that employee engagement is influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by the organizational practices and working conditions experienced by employees.

One of these conditions is work-life balance and employees often have to manage competing demands arising from their employment and personal or family responsibilities. Work-Family Border Theory explains this relationship by viewing work and family as separate but interconnected domains between which individuals move regularly. The nature of the boundaries between the two domains can affect how employees experience and manage their responsibilities as noted by Clark (2000). Recent empirical research has continued to associate work-life balance with employee engagement and other work outcomes as Wood et al. (2020), in a review of empirical research who found a consistent relationship between work engagement and work-life

balance while Žnidaršič and Bernik (2021) reported that work-family balance was positively associated with employee work engagement. Thilagavathy and Geetha (2023) also found that work-life balance is related to several employee and organizational outcomes thus the findings suggest that employees who are able to manage work and personal responsibilities may be better able to maintain their energy and involvement at work.

Compensation is another important aspect of the employee–organization relationship. Employees expect the rewards they receive to reflect the effort, skills and time they contribute. Equity Theory provides a useful explanation of this process by suggesting that employees assess the fairness of their rewards by comparing their contributions and outcomes with those of other employees. Empirical findings, however indicate that the relationship between financial rewards and engagement is not always straightforward. Farndale and Murrer (2015) found that financial rewards were positively associated with engagement whereas Breevaart et al. (2016) found that salary, benefits and bonuses did not explain additional variation in engagement after job demands and job resources were taken into account and this suggests that compensation may matter partly through employees' perceptions of fairness and adequacy rather than through financial rewards alone. In public-sector settings, where pay and benefits are often governed by formal structures, these perceptions may be particularly important. Wushe and Shenje (2019) for example found that compensation and incentives were among the factors associated with employee engagement in Zimbabwean government departments.

Leadership also shapes the conditions under which employees perform their work. Supportive leaders provide direction, feedback, encouragement and opportunities for employees to develop their capabilities. Transformational Leadership Theory explains how leaders can influence employees through inspiration, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and a shared sense of purpose. Evidence from the wider literature supports the importance of leadership for employee engagement. A meta-analysis of 86 studies by Decuyper and Schaufeli (2021) found a positive relationship between positive leadership styles and work engagement. Their findings suggest that different positive leadership approaches share mechanisms involving supportive relationships, employee autonomy and positive social exchange. Within the public sector, Zahari and Kaliannan (2023) identified leadership as one of the major categories of factors associated with employee engagement while Wushe and Shenje (2019) reported a positive relationship between effective leadership and engagement among employees in government departments. Supportive leadership may therefore influence the way employees approach their responsibilities and ultimately affect the performance of public organizations.

Recognition provides another way through which organizations can influence employee attitudes and behaviour. Recognition acknowledges employees' contributions and communicates that their efforts are valued. Unlike salary, recognition does not necessarily require a financial reward and can take the form of appreciation, acknowledgement of good performance, awards or positive feedback. Recent research provides evidence of its relevance to engagement. Chin and Yusof

(2022) found positive relationships between rewards and recognition and employee engagement while Presslee et al. (2023) found that a team-based recognition programme was associated with increased employee engagement and effort. Yang and Jiang (2023) further showed that employees who witnessed colleagues being recognized could experience more positive perceptions of their workplace thus recognition may therefore influence both the employees who receive it and the wider workplace environment.

The four practices considered in this study represent different aspects of the employee's relationship with the organization. Work-life balance relates to the management of competing personal and work demands; compensation concerns the financial returns associated with employment; supportive leadership concerns the quality of supervision and interpersonal support; and recognition concerns acknowledgement of employee contributions. Although each has been examined in previous studies, they have less often been considered together when explaining service delivery in public organizations. This is important because employees experience these practices simultaneously rather than in isolation. Zahari and Kaliannan (2023) observed that public-sector engagement research remains fragmented, with many studies concentrating on particular antecedents rather than examining several organizational conditions within a common framework. The importance of these practices becomes clearer when employee engagement is considered in relation to public service delivery. Public employees are responsible for implementing government policies, managing public resources and providing services directly to citizens. Higher employee engagement has been associated with performance outcomes

across organizational sectors (Borst et al., 2020) while evidence from Zimbabwe suggests that employee engagement and its antecedents are related to service delivery in government departments (Wushe & Shenje, 2019). At the same time, public organizations differ considerably in their administrative structures, resources, working environments and institutional arrangements. Findings from one setting therefore cannot necessarily be assumed to apply in another.

The relationship between employee practices and service delivery is particularly important in devolved systems of government. Devolution transfers specified responsibilities, authority and resources from central government to sub-national governments with the intention of bringing decision-making and public services closer to citizens. Its success, however, depends on more than the formal transfer of functions. Sub-national governments require adequate financial, institutional and human-resource capacity to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Employees are therefore an important part of the implementation of devolution because they are responsible for turning county policies, budgets and programmes into services received by citizens. Kenya provides an important setting for examining this relationship. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) established 47 county governments and assigned them a range of functions including county health services, county roads and other local services. The introduction of county governments in 2013 changed the way many public services were planned, financed and delivered. Evidence from Kenya suggests that the effects of devolution have varied across sectors and counties. Wagana et al. (2017) for example found that financial decentralization was positively related to

service delivery in Kenyan county governments. Wagana & Iravo (2017) and Muwonge et al. (2022) similarly argue that the experience of devolution needs to be understood in relation to the circumstances of individual counties rather than assuming that its effects are uniform across the country.

Human-resource capacity has emerged as one of the important issues in the functioning of devolved governments. This is particularly evident in the health sector, where county governments assumed responsibility for service delivery and management of health personnel. A systematic review of Kenya's devolved health system found improvements in health infrastructure after devolution but also identified continuing problems involving inadequate resources and staffing (Masaba et al., 2020). Tsofa et al. (2021) reported similar concerns in relation to county-level priority setting for human resources for health. Nyikuri et al. (2017) also found that changes in hospital autonomy and management arrangements under devolution affected leadership, staff motivation and service delivery in some county hospitals.

These findings indicate that the success of devolution is partly dependent on how county governments manage and support the employees responsible for delivering devolved services. Financial resources and formal institutional arrangements may provide the foundation for service delivery, but they do not by themselves determine how effectively employees perform their responsibilities. Management support, staffing, motivation, leadership and working conditions can influence the capacity of county institutions to deliver services. Research in selected Kenyan counties has, for instance, found a significant relationship between management support and the delivery of

devolved services (Karama & Linge, 2019). Other studies have linked human-resource management practices with service delivery and organizational performance in county governments (Kimilu et al., 2020; Masaviru, 2021; Geoffrey & Muli, J. (2024). County governments also operate in markedly different geographical and socio-economic environments. Differences in poverty, population distribution, climate, infrastructure, political conditions and available budgets can affect how services are organized and delivered. Research on county water services for example has shown that county-level responsibilities and service-delivery conditions are influenced by factors such as poverty, climate risk, urbanization, budgets and political considerations (Mwihaki, 2018; Otieno et al., 2023). Such differences make it important to examine employee-related factors within individual county contexts rather than treating the experience of all county governments as identical.

Turkana County presents a distinctive context within Kenya's devolved system. The county covers a large geographical area and has a predominantly arid environment, dispersed settlements and substantial challenges associated with access to public services. Employees serving in county institutions may therefore operate under working conditions that differ considerably from those experienced in more densely populated counties. Distance between service points, difficult terrain, limited infrastructure and the distribution of the population can affect staffing, supervision and the provision of services. These conditions make the management and support of county employees particularly relevant to the performance of public institutions. The county government has also recognized the importance of human-resource

capacity in improving organizational performance. In 2024, the County Government of Turkana launched a five-year staffing plan intended to align the county workforce with its development priorities and address staffing requirements. The emphasis on staffing provides further evidence that human resources remain an important concern within the county's service-delivery system. Nevertheless, staffing levels alone do not capture the broader conditions under which employees work. How employees balance their responsibilities, perceive their compensation, experience leadership and receive recognition may also shape their engagement with their work.

The existing literature provides useful evidence on employee engagement and on the performance of devolved governments, but the two areas have not been sufficiently connected. International research has established relationships between engagement and organizational outcomes and has identified leadership, rewards, work resources and organizational conditions as important influences on engagement (Borst et al., 2020; Mazzetti et al., 2023; Zahari & Kaliannan, 2023). Kenyan research has, meanwhile, examined financial decentralization, human-resource management, management support and other institutional factors in relation to county-government performance (Wagana et al., 2017; Karama & Linge, 2019; Masaba et al., 2020; Geoffrey & Muli, 2024). What remains less clear is how specific employee engagement practices operate together in explaining service delivery within a county-government setting.

The present study therefore examined work-life balance, compensation, supportive leadership and employee recognition in relation to service delivery in the County

Government of Turkana, Kenya. Work-Family Border Theory provides the basis for considering work-life balance, Transformational Leadership Theory informs the examination of supportive leadership while Equity Theory provides a basis for understanding compensation and recognition. By examining the four practices within one framework, the study provides empirical evidence on an employee-centred dimension of service delivery that has received comparatively limited attention in research on Kenya's devolved governments.

Materials and Methods

Study area

The research was carried out in Turkana County, north-western Kenya, within the county government established under Kenya's devolved system of governance. Turkana is largely arid and semi-arid, with a widely dispersed population and long distances between settlements and administrative

centres. The study covered employees drawn from ten departments of the county government involved in the provision and administration of devolved public services.

Research design

A cross-sectional correlational design was employed to examine the relationship between employee engagement practices and service delivery. The analysis focused on four employee engagement practices, namely work-life balance, compensation, supportive leadership and employee recognition. Service delivery constituted the dependent variable.

Study population and sampling

The study population consisted of 3,696 employees of the County Government of Turkana, based on the 2025 Staff Establishment Report of the County Human Resource Management Department.

Table 1: Target Population and sample size

Department	Population	Sample
Health and Sanitation	1,553	151
Education, Sports and Social Protection	624	61
Public Service, Administration and Disaster Management	725	71
Tourism, Culture, Natural Resources and Climate Change	173	18
Water Services, Environment and Mineral Resources	135	14
Agriculture and Land Reclamation	120	12
Livestock Production and Fisheries	113	11
Trade, Enterprise Development, Cooperatives, Gender and Youth Affairs	101	10
Roads, Transport and Public Works	72	7
Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Areas Management	70	6
Total	3,696	361

The population included senior managers, middle-level managers and frontline employees across the ten departments. Employees were selected through stratified random sampling. Each department constituted a stratum and the

required number of respondents was allocated proportionately to the size of the department. Simple random sampling was then used to select respondents within each stratum.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula:

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

Where (n) is the sample size, (N) the target population and (e) the margin of error. Using a population of 3,696 and a 5% margin of error produced a sample of 361 employees as indicated in Table 1.

Data collection and measurement

Data were obtained using a structured questionnaire administered through a drop-and-pick procedure. The instrument contained 35 items covering work-life balance, compensation, supportive leadership, employee recognition and service delivery. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Work-life balance reflected employees' ability to manage work and personal responsibilities while compensation covered perceptions of pay and related benefits. Supportive leadership focused on supervisory support, communication and guidance, whereas employee recognition captured the acknowledgement of employees' efforts and contributions. Service delivery was assessed in relation to its perceived effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness, responsiveness and quality.

Validity and reliability

The questionnaire was reviewed by experts in human resource management to assess its content validity and ensure that the items adequately represented the study constructs. A pilot study was subsequently conducted in West Pokot County, selected because of similarities in its public-sector setting while being outside the study area. Individuals who participated in the pilot were excluded from the main survey. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values of 0.70 or higher

regarded as indicating acceptable internal consistency. Findings from the pilot were used to revise items that required clarification before the main survey.

Data analysis

Data were coded and analysed using SPSS (v20). Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize categorical characteristics while means and standard deviations described the study variables. The underlying structure of the 35 questionnaire items was examined using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the direction and strength of associations among the study variables. Simple linear regression was performed separately for each employee engagement practice and service delivery, followed by multiple linear regression to determine the combined and independent contribution of the four practices.

The multiple regression model was expressed as:

$$SD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where (SD) denotes service delivery, (WLB) work-life balance, (COMP) compensation, (SL) supportive leadership and (ER) employee recognition. The model constant is represented by (β_0) while (β_1 - β_4) are the respective regression coefficients and (ϵ) is the error term. Model performance was assessed using (R), (R^2), adjusted (adjusted R^2), and the F-statistic. Individual relationships were examined using regression coefficients, t-statistics and p-values. Linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, independence of errors and multicollinearity were assessed before interpreting the regression results.

Hypotheses were tested at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

collected was used exclusively for research purposes.

Ethical considerations

The necessary ethical approval and research authorization were obtained before data collection including approval from the relevant university authorities and NACOSTI, together with permission from the County Government of Turkana. Participation was voluntary and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained and the information

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

Of the 361 questionnaires distributed, 311 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 86.15%. Fifty questionnaires (13.85%) were not returned (Table 2). The response rate provided an adequate number of observations for the statistical analyses undertaken in the study.

Table 2: Response rate

Response category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned	311	86.15
Not returned	50	13.85
Total	361	100.00

Source: Survey data, 2026

Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents represented a range of ages, educational backgrounds and levels of work experience. Those aged 26–35 years constituted the largest group

(32.8%), followed by those aged 46–55 years (21.2%), 36–45 years (19.0%), below 25 years (15.4%) and above 55 years (11.6%). Males accounted for 61.7% of the respondents and females 38.3%.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 311)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 25 years	48	15.4
	26–35 years	102	32.8
	36–45 years	59	19.0
	46–55 years	66	21.2
	Above 55 years	36	11.6
Gender	Male	192	61.7
	Female	119	38.3
Education	Certificate	56	18.0
	Diploma	99	31.8
	Bachelor's degree	103	33.1
	Master's degree	39	12.5
	PhD	14	4.5
Work experience	Less than 1 year	44	14.1
	1–5 years	209	67.2
	6–10 years	53	17.0
	Above 10 years	5	1.6

Source: Survey data, 2026.

Certificate holders accounted for 18.0%, Master's degree holders 12.5% and PhD holders 4.5%. Most respondents (67.2%) had between one and five years of work experience while 17.0% had six to ten years, 14.1% had less than one year and 1.6% had more than ten years of experience. The distribution indicates that the study captured employees with varied demographic and professional backgrounds. The relatively large proportion of respondents with one to five years of experience was particularly useful because these employees were

likely to have sufficient exposure to the working environment while still being closely involved in routine service delivery activities (Table 3).

Reliability of the Study Measures

The five study constructs demonstrated good internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.837 for compensation to 0.884 for service delivery while corrected item-total correlations ranged from 0.555 to 0.725 (Table 4).

Table 4: Reliability analysis of the study constructs

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α	Corrected item-total correlation	Reliability
Work-life balance	7	0.850	0.578–0.636	Good
Compensation	7	0.837	0.562–0.618	Good
Supportive leadership	7	0.846	0.559–0.653	Good
Employee recognition	7	0.844	0.555–0.645	Good
Service delivery	7	0.884	0.615–0.725	Good
Overall	35	0.837–0.884	0.555–0.725	Good

Source: Survey data, 2026.

All alpha coefficients exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating that the items within each construct measured their respective concepts consistently. The reliability results provided sufficient support for combining the items into construct-level measures for subsequent correlation and regression analyses. The findings are consistent with the recommendation by Tavakol and Dennick (2011) that alpha values of approximately 0.70 or higher generally indicate acceptable internal consistency.

Descriptive Statistics

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance received generally favourable ratings, with item

means ranging from 4.20±0.626 to 4.31±0.634 (Table 5). The highest rating concerned employees' ability to complete assigned tasks within official working hours (4.31±0.634). Employees also rated their ability to maintain overall well-being while fulfilling their duties and the positive influence of work-life balance practices on job performance highly, both with mean scores of 4.28. Support for flexible working arrangements recorded the lowest mean (4.20±0.626). The findings suggest that employees generally considered their workloads manageable and compatible with their personal responsibilities. Completing duties within official working hours may reduce the extent to which work interferes with family and personal life. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identified excessive work

demands as an important source of work–family conflict while Allen et al. (2000) similarly linked work-related pressures to difficulties in managing family responsibilities. The relatively lower score for flexible working arrangements indicates that flexibility may be less strongly experienced than other aspects of work-life balance. This is relevant because employee control over working time can assist in managing competing

work and personal demands (Kossek et al., 2014). Kelly et al. (2014) likewise showed that changes in work organisation that increased employee control could improve work–family outcomes. Thus while the overall assessment of work-life balance was favourable, flexibility remains an area through which the County Government could further support employees.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for work-life balance

Work-life balance item	N	Range	Mean±SD
Work schedules allow adequate time for personal or family responsibilities.	311	1–5	4.24±0.631
A balance between work and personal life is maintained within the workplace.	311	1–5	4.23±0.637
Burnout due to excessive work demands is uncommon.	311	1–5	4.26±0.622
Assigned tasks can be completed within official working hours.	311	1–5	4.31±0.634
Flexible working arrangements are supported by the County Government.	311	1–5	4.20±0.626
Employees are able to maintain overall well-being while fulfilling duties.	311	1–5	4.28±0.628
Work-life balance practices positively influence my job performance.	311	1–5	4.28±0.623

Source: Survey data, 2026.

Compensation

Compensation was also viewed positively, with mean scores ranging from 4.23±0.620 to 4.32±0.610 (Table 6). Compensation practices promoting motivation and productivity received the highest rating (4.32±0.610), followed by the perception that fair compensation enhances commitment to quality service delivery (4.29±0.638). The lowest rating was recorded for the alignment of compensation with job responsibilities across departments (4.23±0.620). The results indicate that employees associated compensation with motivation and commitment. This is consistent with findings from the Kenyan

public sector. Mugambi et al. (2021) for example reported a positive relationship between employee rewards and performance among Kenya Police Service employees while Mutui, Gichunge and Nzioki (2022) highlighted the importance of employee benefits in public-sector performance. The lower score concerning alignment of compensation with job responsibilities may reflect some variation in employees' perceptions of pay equity across departments. Compensation therefore appears to be viewed positively overall, but perceptions of fairness and the relationship between remuneration and job responsibilities remain important considerations. This

becomes particularly relevant in the subsequent regression analysis, where

compensation is examined alongside the other engagement practices.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for compensation

Compensation item	N	Range	Mean±SD
Compensation aligns with job responsibilities across departments.	311	1–5	4.23±0.620
Salaries and benefits are competitive compared to similar counties.	311	1–5	4.25±0.628
Remuneration is paid consistently and on time.	311	1–5	4.28±0.623
Non-monetary benefits such as insurance and allowances are fairly provided.	311	1–5	4.27±0.632
Compensation practices promote motivation and productivity.	311	1–5	4.32±0.610
Performance-based promotions and salary increments are practiced.	311	1–5	4.28±0.653
Fair compensation enhances employees' commitment to delivering quality services.	311	1–5	4.29±0.638

Source: Survey data, 2026.

Supportive Leadership

Supportive leadership was favourably assessed, with the available item means ranging from 4.23±0.614 to 4.32±0.594 (Table 7). Clear communication of goals and expectations received the highest rating (4.32±0.594), whereas regular provision of constructive feedback recorded the lowest (4.23±0.614). Open communication, leadership accessibility and employee involvement in decision-making were also positively rated. The strong rating for communication of goals and expectations

suggests that employees generally understood their responsibilities and organisational expectations. Clear communication is particularly important in county governments because service delivery requires coordination among departments and different levels of administration. Kibai & Awuor (2024) and Koech & Namusonge (2012) similarly reported a relationship between leadership practices and organisational performance in Kenyan public organisations.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for supportive leadership

Supportive leadership item	N	Range	Mean±SD
Leadership encourages open communication across departments.	311	1–5	4.28±0.639
Constructive feedback is regularly provided to employees.	311	1–5	4.23±0.614
Supervisors and leaders are accessible and responsive.	311	1–5	4.27±0.632
Decision-making processes involve input from various staff levels.	311	1–5	4.26±0.641
Leadership provides adequate support during work-related challenges.	311	1–5	4.25±0.647
Clear goals and expectations are communicated by leadership.	311	1–5	4.32±0.594

Source: Survey data, 2026.

The relatively lower rating for constructive feedback suggests that feedback may not be provided as consistently as other forms of leadership support. This is important because feedback provides employees with information on their performance and areas requiring improvement. Katz et al. (2021) found that positive feedback environments were associated with better performance and lower burnout. Improving the regularity and quality of feedback could therefore strengthen an already favourable leadership environment.

Employee Recognition

Employee recognition was rated positively, with mean scores ranging from 4.21±0.657 to 4.31±0.637 (Table 8). Recognition practices were rated highest for fairness and consistency (4.31±0.637) while formal programmes for recognising outstanding performance received the lowest score (4.21±0.657). Recognition was also perceived to enhance employee

motivation and morale (4.27±0.637) and contribute to service quality and efficiency (4.28±0.630). The findings indicate that employees generally perceived recognition as part of the workplace environment. The strong rating for fairness and consistency is important because the effect of recognition may depend not only on whether employees are recognised but also on whether recognition is perceived as equitable. Imran et al. (2025) similarly reported that performance recognition can strengthen employee engagement and encourage positive work behaviours. The comparatively lower rating for formal recognition programmes may indicate that recognition is more often experienced through routine or informal acknowledgement than through structured programmes. Developing clearer mechanisms for recognising outstanding performance could therefore strengthen the existing recognition practices without diminishing informal forms of appreciation.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for employee recognition

Employee recognition item	N	Range	Mean±SD
Employee achievements are acknowledged by supervisors and peers.	311	1–5	4.27±0.635
Recognition practices are applied fairly and consistently.	311	1–5	4.31±0.637
Organisational culture promotes acknowledgment of effort and contribution.	311	1–5	4.23±0.627
Formal programmes exist for recognising outstanding performance.	311	1–5	4.21±0.657
Peer-to-peer recognition is encouraged within departments.	311	1–5	4.27±0.661
Recognition enhances employee motivation and morale.	311	1–5	4.27±0.637
Recognition practices contribute to improved quality and efficiency of services.	311	1–5	4.28±0.630

Source: Survey data, 2026.

Service Delivery

Service delivery received favourable ratings, although the scores

were slightly lower than those recorded for the four employee engagement practices. Mean scores ranged from

4.05±0.638 to 4.12±0.657 (Table 8). Employee commitment to performing duties recorded the highest mean (4.12±0.657), followed by fair and consistent service provision (4.10±0.677). Perceived citizen satisfaction recorded the lowest mean (4.05±0.638). The high rating for employee commitment suggests that respondents perceived a strong level of dedication to the performance of assigned duties. This is consistent with Mwaniki and Omuya (2024), who reported a positive association between employee commitment and organisational performance in Kenyan state

departments. The comparatively lower rating for citizen satisfaction is noteworthy because service delivery can be viewed differently by employees and service users. Employees may assess performance in terms of internal processes and commitment, whereas citizens may place greater emphasis on accessibility, waiting time, responsiveness and the extent to which their needs are met. The Council of Governors (2021) similarly identifies timeliness, service outcomes and customer satisfaction as important dimensions of county government performance.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics for service delivery

Service delivery item	N	Range	Mean±SD
Services in my department are usually delivered within the set timelines.	311	1–5	4.07±0.613
Employees attend to public needs and service requests without unnecessary delay.	311	1–5	4.06±0.674
Most citizens appear to be satisfied with the services provided by the County Government of Turkana.	311	1–5	4.05±0.638
Employees in my department demonstrate a high level of commitment in performing their duties.	311	1–5	4.12±0.657
Services in my department are provided fairly and consistently to all members of the public.	311	1–5	4.10±0.677
My department provides clear information and guidance to citizens seeking services.	311	1–5	4.06±0.642
Complaints and feedback from citizens are addressed promptly and appropriately.	311	2–5	4.07±0.651

Source: Survey data, 2026.

Correlation between Employee Engagement Practices and Service Delivery

Pearson correlation analysis showed strong positive associations between each employee engagement practice and service delivery (Table 10). Work-life balance was positively correlated with service delivery ($r = 0.813$, $p < 0.01$), as were compensation ($r = 0.805$, $p < 0.01$), supportive leadership ($r = 0.817$, $p < 0.01$) and employee recognition ($r = 0.794$, $p < 0.01$). The

correlations indicate that higher scores on each engagement practice were associated with higher perceived service delivery. Supportive leadership had the strongest bivariate association, followed by work-life balance, compensation and employee recognition. These results are consistent with the broader argument that employee experiences within the workplace are related to organisational outcomes. However, the predictors were also strongly correlated with one another, with intercorrelations ranging from 0.847

to 0.881. This indicates substantial overlap among the four engagement practices. Consequently, the bivariate correlations should not be interpreted as evidence that each practice

independently influences service delivery. Multiple regression was therefore necessary to determine the unique contribution of each practice while controlling for the others.

Table 10: Pearson correlations between employee engagement practices and service delivery

Variable	Service delivery	Work-life balance	Compensation	Supportive leadership	Recognition
Service delivery	1.000	0.813**	0.805**	0.817**	0.794**
Work-life balance	0.813**	1.000	—	—	—
Compensation	0.805**	—	1.000	—	—
Supportive leadership	0.817**	—	—	1.000	—
Employee recognition	0.794**	—	—	—	1.000

*Note: * $p < 0.01$.

Regression Analysis

Effect of Work-life Balance on Service Delivery

A simple linear regression showed that work-life balance significantly explained variation in service delivery. Work-life balance accounted for 33.2% of the variance in service delivery ($R^2 = 0.332$) and the regression model was statistically significant, $F_{0.05(1,309)} = 153.375$, $p < 0.001$. The finding indicates that work-life balance was strongly associated with service delivery when considered on its own. Employees who reported better work-life balance also tended to report better service delivery. This is consistent with the descriptive results, where employees reported that work-life balance practices supported their well-being and job performance. The finding is also consistent with the work-family literature, which suggests that excessive conflict between work and personal responsibilities can undermine employee well-being and work outcomes (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Allen et al., 2000).

However, the importance of work-life balance changes when the other engagement practices are considered simultaneously. In the multiple regression model, its coefficient was positive but not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.200$, $t = 1.716$, $p = 0.087$). Thus, the evidence supports a strong bivariate relationship but does not provide sufficient evidence of an independent effect at the 5% significance level.

Effect of Compensation on Service Delivery

Compensation accounted for 33.4% of the variance in service delivery in the simple regression model ($R^2 = 0.334$), with the model being statistically significant, $F_{0.05(1,309)} = 154.964$, $p < 0.001$. The result indicates a substantial positive relationship between compensation and perceived service delivery when compensation was examined independently.

This finding is consistent with the descriptive results, in which compensation practices received

favourable ratings, particularly regarding their contribution to motivation and productivity. It also corresponds with Kenyan public-sector evidence linking rewards and employee outcomes (Mugambi et al., 2021). Compensation can provide both a direct material incentive and an indication of how the organisation values employee contribution. Importantly, compensation remained statistically significant when all four engagement practices were entered into the multiple regression model. It had the largest statistically significant standardised coefficient among the predictors ($\beta = 0.229$, $t = 2.046$, $p = 0.042$) and this suggests that after accounting for work-life balance, supportive leadership and employee recognition, compensation made a significant unique contribution to service delivery. The result led to rejection of the null hypothesis that compensation has no significant effect on service delivery. Among the four practices examined, compensation was therefore the only predictor that demonstrated a statistically significant independent effect in the final model.

Effect of Supportive Leadership on Service Delivery

Supportive leadership explained 31.0% of the variance in service delivery in the simple regression model ($R^2 = 0.310$) and the model was statistically significant, $F_{0.05(1,309)} = 138.826$, $p < 0.001$. The result demonstrates a strong positive bivariate relationship between supportive leadership and service delivery. The finding is consistent with the high descriptive ratings for leadership communication, accessibility and support. It also agrees with Kibai & Awuor (2024) who found that leadership practices were associated with organisational performance in Kenyan public organisations. Supportive leadership may create conditions in which employees

understand their roles, receive direction and obtain assistance when dealing with work-related challenges. Despite the significant simple regression relationship, supportive leadership did not make a statistically significant unique contribution in the combined model ($\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.308$). This difference between the simple and multiple regression results is important. The strong bivariate association appears to overlap substantially with the other engagement practices, particularly given the high correlations among the predictors. Once the shared variance was controlled, the independent effect of supportive leadership was no longer statistically significant. The null hypothesis concerning supportive leadership was therefore not rejected. The finding does not imply that leadership is unimportant; rather, it indicates that its apparent relationship with service delivery was not sufficiently distinct from the effects shared with the other engagement practices in the full model.

Effect of Employee Recognition on Service Delivery

Employee recognition accounted for 30.9% of the variance in service delivery in the simple regression model ($R^2 = 0.309$), with the model being statistically significant, $F_{0.05(1,309)} = 138.178$, $p < 0.001$. Thus, employees who reported stronger recognition practices also tended to report better service delivery. This result is consistent with the descriptive findings, where recognition was associated with motivation, morale and improved service quality. Recognition can reinforce employee effort by signalling that individual and collective contributions are valued. Imran, Ghazwan and Firmansyah (2025) similarly linked recognition with employee engagement and positive work behaviours. However, employee recognition did not have a

statistically significant independent effect in the multiple regression model ($\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.389$). The finding again illustrates the difference between a bivariate relationship and an independent regression effect. Much of the association between recognition and service delivery appears to be shared with the other engagement practices. The null hypothesis that employee recognition has no significant effect on service delivery was therefore not rejected. Recognition remains relevant as part of the broader employee engagement environment, but the present analysis does not demonstrate a statistically significant unique contribution after the other engagement practices are controlled.

Combined Effect of Employee Engagement Practices on Service Delivery

A multiple regression model was fitted to determine the combined effect of work-life balance, compensation, supportive leadership and employee recognition on service delivery. The model produced a multiple correlation

coefficient of $R = 0.599$ and explained 35.9% of the variance in service delivery ($R^2 = 0.359$), with an adjusted R^2 of 0.350. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F_{0.05(4,306)} = 42.782$, $p < 0.001$. The significant F-test indicates that the four employee engagement practices, taken together, provided a statistically significant prediction of service delivery. The model therefore provides stronger evidence for the overall relationship between employee engagement practices and service delivery than the individual descriptive findings. Although the four predictors were strongly associated with service delivery at the bivariate level, their combined explanatory power was 35.9%. This difference reflects the substantial overlap among the predictors. Employees who report favourable work-life balance may also be more likely to report supportive leadership, fair compensation and recognition. The regression model therefore provides a more conservative assessment of the independent contribution of each practice.

Table 11: Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Test result	Decision
H ₀₁ : Work-life balance has no significant effect on service delivery.	$\beta = 0.200$, $p = 0.087$	Do not reject H ₀₁
H ₀₂ : Compensation has no significant effect on service delivery.	$\beta = 0.229$, $p = 0.042$	Reject H ₀₂
H ₀₃ : Supportive leadership has no significant effect on service delivery.	$\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.308$	Do not reject H ₀₃
H ₀₄ : Employee recognition has no significant effect on service delivery.	$\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.389$	Do not reject H ₀₄

Dependent variable: Service delivery.

The estimated regression equation was:

Service Delivery = 0.409 + 0.039(Work-Life Balance) + 0.045(Compensation) + 0.021(Supportive Leadership) + 0.018(Employee Recognition).

Of the four predictors, compensation was the only statistically significant independent predictor of service delivery ($\beta = 0.229$, $t = 2.046$, $p =$

0.042). Work-life balance had a positive but non-significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.200$, $t = 1.716$, $p = 0.087$) while supportive leadership ($\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.308$) and

employee recognition ($\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.389$) were also positive but not statistically significant.

The results suggest that employee engagement practices are relevant to service delivery collectively, but their independent effects are not equivalent. Compensation emerged as the most important predictor in the final model. This may indicate that tangible and perceived fairness in rewards has a more distinct relationship with service delivery than the other practices once the overlap among engagement dimensions is taken into account. The overall finding is broadly consistent with evidence linking employee management practices with organisational performance in public-sector settings. Tensay and Singh (2020) for example reported a positive relationship between human-resource practices, employee engagement and organisational performance in public service organisations. The present study extends this evidence by showing that although several engagement practices have strong bivariate relationships with service delivery, compensation is the only practice that retains a statistically significant independent contribution in the combined model.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that employee engagement practices are important in shaping service delivery in the County Government of Turkana. Although work-life balance, compensation, supportive leadership and employee recognition were all positively related to service delivery, their individual contribution was not the same when considered together. Compensation stood out as the factor with a distinct contribution to service delivery while the influence of work-life balance, supportive leadership and employee recognition

appeared to overlap with other aspects of the work environment and this suggests that improving service delivery requires attention to the broader employment environment rather than relying on a single employee engagement practice.

The County Government should give particular attention to compensation by ensuring that employees are fairly rewarded and that salaries, allowances and other approved benefits are paid accurately and on time. Reward and promotion procedures should be clear and consistently applied across departments. Management should also maintain reasonable workloads and working arrangements that allow employees to balance their work and personal responsibilities. Strengthening communication between managers and staff, providing constructive feedback and recognising good performance can further contribute to a positive working environment. These measures would be more effective if implemented as part of a coordinated employee-management strategy. The County Government should regularly obtain feedback from employees and use it to identify areas requiring attention. It is also important to assess whether improvements in employee-related practices are reflected in actual service outcomes including timely delivery of services, responsiveness to citizens, resolution of complaints and citizen satisfaction. Further research should examine other factors that may account for differences in service delivery including staffing, workload, availability of resources, training and development, infrastructure organisational culture and employee commitment. Studies involving several county governments could provide a basis for comparing employee engagement and service delivery across different settings.

Future researchers could also use longitudinal and mixed-methods

approaches to provide a deeper understanding of how changes in workplace conditions influence service delivery over time.

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