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An assessment on the influence of planning strategy on service delivery in Meru High Court

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Abstract

Despite numerous reforms, the Judiciary of Kenya has seen a rise in complaints about its service delivery. Common issues include slow service, missing files, corruption, delayed rulings, and delayed orders. This increase in complaints is surprising given the efforts to improve the judiciary's service delivery. Consequently, it is important to examine the planning strategies within the Judiciary and how they impact service delivery. This area has rarely been studied, leading to a lack of understanding in the existing literature about the effects of planning on service delivery in Kenya's Judiciary. This study aimed to fill that gap by focusing on the Meru High Court. The study aimed to examine the impact of planning strategy on service delivery at the Meru High Court, with a target population of 86 respondents. The research was guided by Kotter's Eight Step Change Model. A descriptive survey design was employed. Before collecting the main data, a pilot test with 9 respondents was conducted at the Chuka Law Courts to assess the questionnaire's reliability and validity. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean, and SD, along with regression and correlation analyses. The findings showed that a plan is created prior to implementing any changes. Respondents confirmed that the information provided by the Judiciary regarding changes is both reliable and pertinent. The research is significant as it helps the Judiciary understand how planning strategies affect service delivery.

Keywords: Planning; Strategies; Service; Change Model

1. Introduction

The core responsibility of any government is provision of quality public services and goods to its citizens. As a result, all government agencies, companies, and other state groups were responsible for making sure that citizens had access to the public goods and services they needed to live a healthy life (Ramakrishnan, 2013). (2011) Ramakrishnan (2013). In order to improve service delivery, governments around the world were able to adjust to a wide range of changes caused by things like environmental disasters and financial problems (Peters, 2019). But good service performance in any institution depends a lot on how well strategy change was managed. Making people aware of the need for change, planning it correctly, putting it into action, and integrating it were all parts of change management. Organizations were always looking for ways to improve service delivery, so they used learning, experimenting, and communication to keep growing.

A planning strategy spelt out the course of action to adopt to cushion the organization from the detrimental effects of change thereby ensuring the business was a going concern. Patson and McCalman (2018) elucidated that a viable planning strategy should determine when a change was needed and how to accredit changes. In addition, an operable planning strategy demonstrated clearly how to effect the changes. Finally, a feasible planning strategy was able to keep track of the changes to ensure they had brought out the contemplated effect (By, 2011).

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In industrialized nations like Britain and New Zealand during the last ten years, enhancing public service delivery had taken center stage (Jooste, 2008). As a result, firms were embracing strategic management as a tool to reinvent themselves in order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. Organizations needed to improve their service delivery by using current or future possibilities and addressing market challenges, which led to strategic transformation (Woodcock, 2017). In order to overcome the difficulties brought on by the changes they made, businesses that were committed to improving their service delivery must plan and carry out the necessary change programs that simplified their service delivery, according to Riposo et al. (2013).

Jooste (2008) says that developing countries, especially those in Asia, South America, and Africa, have been trying to make their public sector groups better at what they do. They had therefore started adopting adjustments in their public sector institutions. Jerono (2017) observed that several adjustments had been made in Kenya's public sector in an effort to offer services effectively and efficiently. These improvements included staff rationalization, institutionalizing result-based management, and structural adjustment programs.

Gafar (2017) said that service delivery in public institutions had been failing, especially in most African countries that got their freedom after a long period of colonialism. This was true even though many changes had been made to different public institutions to improve service delivery. Thus, it was important to examine these institutions' planning techniques. In light of this, the overarching issue driving this research is: What planning strategies were being used in implementing the reforms in the various Kenyan institutions, and how did they affect service delivery? This was what the research, which focused on the judiciary in Meru County, aimed to investigate.

Delivering services to the target receiver as efficiently and fast as feasible. Service referred to positioning that satisfied public demands while delivery was the occasional presentation of a service. A method or organization for routinely meeting public needs was known as public service delivery. According to Tembo et al. (2020), the provision of efficient and effective services should be prioritized in the delivery of services, and it required some level of excellence on the part of the organization. The use of one-stop shopping improved public service delivery since it entailed contact between providers and customers (Kuldosheva, 2021). Understanding the factors that influence residents' happiness, experiences, and expectations was crucial to ensuring high-quality service delivery (World Bank, 2018).

Justice was the service provided to the general people in the framework of the judiciary. Justice, as a public service, had both good and bad characteristics, according to Hladunova (2021), depending on how each user interpreted their own experiences and the information they got from various sources about the judiciary. Also, expectations were different because there were many people involved with different goals, such as claimants, defendants, victims, witnesses, and lawyers (Desta, 2019). Desta (2019) told judiciaries that they should make sure they supported informal, flexible ways for users or customers to voice complaints or ideas about how the staff or system was working. For the government, it was more about buyer freedom than service taste (Tamrakar, 2010). This showed how important it is for court service delivery to be in line with customer happiness by meeting their real needs. So, the quality of the legal services was used to judge the service performance in this study. This meant that service delivery was judged by how many cases were cleared from the backlog, how quickly rulings and orders were given, how reliable those rulings and orders were, and how many complaints the public made about the judiciary staff and its services.

According to Kenya's 2010 Constitution, Chapter 10, Article 159, the Judiciary was a branch of the government. The Kenyan judicial system was set up in the Constitution as an independent custodian of justice with the responsibility of administering justice in accordance with the Constitution and other laws. Its original goal was to support the ideal rule of law by settling disagreements in a way that was fair and protected everyone's rights and freedoms. The Supreme Judicial, the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the Employment and Labor Relations Court and the Environment and Land Court are all parts of the Justice System. Other courts in the system are Magistrates' Courts, Kadhis Courts, and tribunals (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

Since 2011, the court has gone through big changes. The goal was to better serve the public by getting rid of graft and case backlogs and fixing the shortcomings that made it challenging for people to get justice. From 2012 to 2016, the JTF was put into effect, which included changes such as people-centered justice delivery, changing leadership, organizational culture, and skilled and inspired staff. Part of the plan was to make it easier for justice to be done with technology (UNDP, 2016). The plan, Sustaining Judiciary Transformation: A Service Delivery Agenda (SJT) 2017–2021, was used to guide the most recent changes. The five main goals of the SJT were to improve service delivery through better availability of justice, case backlog clearing, fighting graft and maintaining ethics, a digital strategy for the judiciary, and strong institutional leadership and governance. The Courts of Kenya, 2019).

Even though the judiciary had gone through a lot of changes over the last ten years as part of different reform plans, like the judiciary transformation framework from 2012 to 2016 and the judiciary transformation service delivery agenda from 2017 to 2021, service delivery was still not clear. Even though things were getting better, complaints about how the court was doing its job were on the rise, which showed this. To give you an example, in the fiscal year 2017/2018, 3,515 people told the OJO that they were unhappy with the way the Judiciary was providing services. This was 16.9% more than the 3,005 reports that were made in 2016–2017. The most frequent concerns were about slow service, missing data, graft, and judgments and orders that were late (The Judiciary of Kenya, 2019). The changes that were made didn't seem to make service better, which made people question how the Judiciary managed change. What kinds of planning strategies were being used in the courts, and how did they change the way services were given? In 2019, Kurgat and Ombui wanted to look into a number of factors that affected the Kenyan judiciary's ability to provide services. However, they didn't look into how the judiciary's planning strategy practices affected service delivery. The Kimutai (2018) examined the effects of planning strategies on organizational performance with a particular emphasis on Kenyan public institutions. Because the planning techniques employed may not always be the same, the outcomes cannot be applied to the judiciary. Wangui (2017) assessed factors that affected the efficiency of Kenya's legal system. Unlike the prior research, which solely utilized secondary data using a desktop research technique, the current study incorporated primary data. Based on a review of previous research, it was determined that there was not enough clarity in the literature to explain how strategic planning affected service delivery, especially at Meru High Court, which was the focus of this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Literature

John Kotter introduced his Eight-Step Change Model in 1996, a framework designed to guide organizations through effective change management. This model delineates eight specific phases that organizations should follow to ensure that desired changes are successfully implemented. Each step is strategically crafted to build momentum and ensure that the change is deeply rooted within the organization.

The first step in Kotter's model is to create a sense of urgency. This involves developing a compelling narrative that highlights the importance and immediacy of the change. The goal is to convince employees and other stakeholders that the change is necessary and to inspire them to support the initiative. Creating a sense of urgency can involve presenting data that shows potential risks if changes are not made, as well as illustrating the benefits that the change will bring. This step is crucial as it sets the tone for the entire process and helps to overcome initial resistance.

The second step is to form a powerful guiding coalition. This involves assembling a team of influential and respected individuals within the organization who are committed to leading the change effort. These individuals should possess a variety of skills and perspectives to effectively drive the change. The guiding coalition is responsible for providing leadership and direction, ensuring that the change initiative has the necessary support and resources to succeed. By building a strong and cohesive team, organizations can create a united front that can inspire confidence and commitment throughout the organization.

The third step is to create a vision for change. This entails articulating a clear and compelling vision that outlines the desired future state of the organization. The vision should provide a sense of direction and motivate employees by showing them the benefits of the change. It should be aspirational yet achievable, and it must resonate with all stakeholders. A well-defined vision serves as a guiding star for the organization, helping to align efforts and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals.

Communicating the vision is the fourth step, where all available communication channels are utilized to convey the vision effectively and succinctly to all members of the organization. This step involves not only disseminating information but also engaging in dialogue with employees to ensure that they understand and buy into the vision. Effective communication is crucial to maintaining momentum and ensuring that the vision remains at the forefront of everyone's mind. It involves regular updates, open forums for discussion, and addressing any concerns or questions that employees may have.

The fifth step is empowering employees to act on the vision. This involves removing obstacles that may hinder the change process and providing the necessary training and resources to enable employees to contribute effectively. Empowering employees means building their capacity through effective leadership and creating an environment where they feel confident and capable of taking action. It also involves encouraging innovative thinking and allowing

employees to take ownership of their roles in the change process. By empowering employees, organizations can harness their collective energy and creativity to drive the change forward.

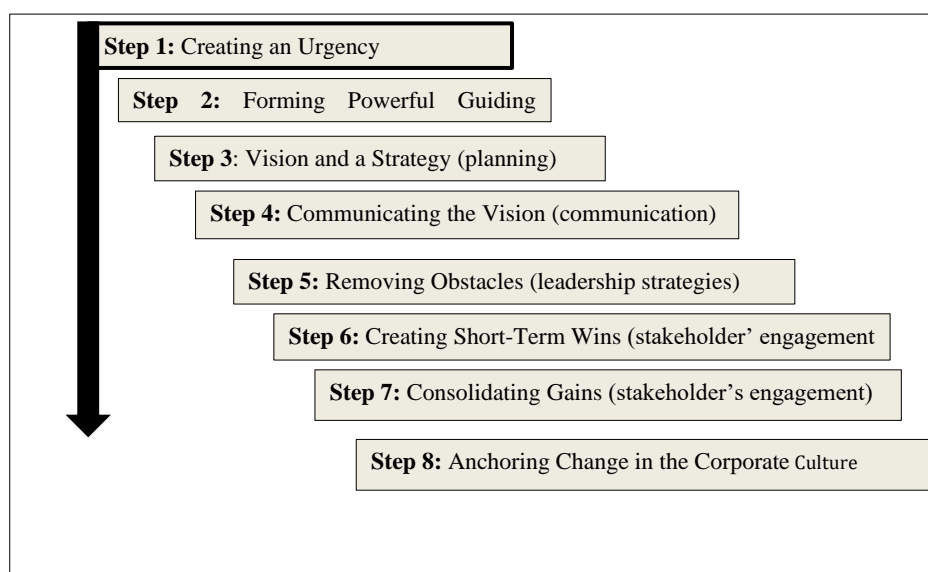
Creating short-term wins is the sixth step, which focuses on planning for and achieving quick, visible successes. These wins help to build momentum and demonstrate the benefits of the change initiative. They are carefully planned to ensure that they are achievable and meaningful. Celebrating these short-term wins reinforces the value of the change efforts and motivates employees to continue their hard work. It also provides tangible evidence that the change is working, which can help to convert skeptics and build broader support for the initiative.

The seventh step is to consolidate gains and produce more change. This involves using the credibility gained from the short-term wins to tackle additional and more substantial changes. It's essential to keep up the momentum by continuously improving and refining processes, systems, and structures. During this phase, organizations should look for ways to enhance their change efforts and ensure that new practices are firmly embedded in the organizational culture. This step emphasizes the importance of persistence and continuous effort to achieve lasting transformation.

The final step is to anchor the new approaches in the organizational culture. This means making sure that the changes become an integral part of the organization's core values and operations. It involves reinforcing the changes by showing how they have improved performance and by ensuring that the new behaviors are rewarded and recognized. Leaders play a crucial role in this step by modeling the new behaviors and ensuring that they are sustained over time. Anchoring change in the culture helps to prevent regression to old habits and ensures that the benefits of the change are long-lasting.

In summary, Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model provides a comprehensive framework for managing organizational change. By following these steps in order, organizations can increase their chances of successfully implementing change initiatives. The model emphasizes the importance of creating a sense of urgency, building a strong guiding coalition, developing and communicating a clear vision, empowering employees, achieving short-term wins, consolidating gains, and embedding the changes in the organizational culture. Each step builds on the previous one, creating a structured approach to change that is both strategic and practical. By adhering to this model, organizations can navigate the complexities of change and achieve sustainable improvements in performance and outcomes.

Consolidating the progress and creating additional change were stages seven and eight. This is when the short-term gains were used as a springboard for even bigger improvements. These were made by building on what had already worked and coming up with new ways to make progress. Key players were also asked to contribute their ideas for how to keep getting better until the desired state was reached. The eighth and final step was to create a new mindset that would help with the change. In order to guarantee that the change stuck moving forward, this included institutionalizing it into the company culture.



Source: Adapted from Kotter 1996

Figure 1 Theoretical framework

This study looked at the four strategic change management strategies that make up the independent factors. These are the planning strategy, the communication strategy, the leadership strategy, and the stakeholder involvement strategy. The Kotter's eight-step change model gave information on all of these things through its different stages of change management. The third step of the model helped with the review of the planned method. In the fourth stage of the plan, we looked at communication strategy. The fifth stage of the plan helped with the study of the leadership style. The research of the stakeholder engagement approach was guided by the sixth and seventh stages. As a result, the model helped determine how strategic change management approaches had an impact on the judiciary. The elements that were stressed at each level of the model provided light on how to use them in change management.

2.2. Planning strategy and service delivery

Planning strategy was a process used by businesses to describe their future vision and determine their aims and objectives, according to Immordino, Gigliotti, Ruben, and Tromp's (2016) definition. Jan and Veronika (2017) looked at the variables influencing how organizational changes were implemented in Slovak businesses. To collect information from different companies' employees, the study employed a survey methodology and questionnaire. Based on the findings, preparation was crucial to the transformation's success. On the other hand, the study didn't examine the impact of the planning strategy on service delivery or compare pre- and post-change service delivery. The present research evaluates how planning affects the delivery of services at Kenya's Meru High Court.

Kharroub and Mansour (2019) investigated the relationship between planning and service quality in Palestinian municipalities. In this descriptive research, 114 randomly selected workers of the Jenin Municipality were asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to collect primary data. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings demonstrated a favorable and statistically significant relationship between planning and service delivery quality. Although it evaluated service delivery using the SERVQUAL paradigm, it did not examine planning for change management; instead, it evaluated organizational planning in general. Additionally, research was performed in a different setting than the judiciary in a foreign nation, making it risky to extrapolate the results to the judiciary in Kenya.

Planning had a considerable impact, according to Daniel (2019), who studied how change management impacted corporate performance in Nigeria. Only secondary data was utilized in the research, which used a literature review methodology. The research found that having a well-developed strategy to direct the change management process was very helpful in keeping the business on track and preventing it from deviating into other directions. However, the research did not examine how the planning technique affected service delivery. This study looked at the planned approach to change management and how it affected service delivery. Additionally, there was no guarantee that using primary data in different organizational contexts produced the same outcomes as Daniel (2019) only used secondary data. Primary data pertaining to Kenya's judicial institutions was the subject of the current study.

The impact of planning on organizational performance in Kenyan agricultural state-owned firms was investigated by Kabiru, Theuri, and Misiko (2018). Using a questionnaire, they collected data from 43 agricultural state-owned firms using a descriptive study technique. The results demonstrated that preparation significantly affected output, leading to more punctual client service. Despite the fact that the study took place in Kenya, the focus was not on the country's legal system. Also, it didn't look at planning as a tool for managing change, but rather as a managerial role.

Sophia and Owuor (2015) looked at the impact of planning on organizational growth at the Kenya Medical Research Institute. This study used a descriptive research approach. Fifty people working for the company, including department heads, middle managers, and regular workers, provided the data. We used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the findings of the staff surveys. The results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between preparation and advancement within a company. Planning functions' contributions to change management and their effects on service delivery were not, however, investigated in the aforementioned studies.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. The materials

This plan informed the organization of the study's flow from the aim to the outcomes and acted as direction for the research process (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). The research used a descriptive survey approach. As it incorporated the viewpoints of the people, this allowed for direct interpretation of the findings without researcher interference. The approach was chosen because earlier studies, like Kimari, Gathenya, and Kihoro's (2018) investigation of service delivery in the judiciary, had employed it effectively.

The targeted community, according to Cooper and Schindler (2016), is the group of people, things, or events that were used to get the results of the study. The study looked at more than just judges. It also looked at registrars, assistant registrars, court managers, officers in the department of planning and group performance, and the Meru High Court's customer service center. Table 1 showed the description of the people who lived there.

Table 1 Target Population

S/No	Level	Target population
1	Judges	11
2	Registrar	1
3	Deputy registrars	17
4	Court administrators	26
5	Directorate of planning and performance of the organization	23
6	Customer service center	8
	Total	86

Source: Meru high court registry (2023)

3.2. Methods

The original data was organized to make sure it was logically full, right, consistent, and uniformity prior to analysis. The survey's raw data was cleansed and checked for correctness by eliminating unrelated material, excluding evasive responses, and eliminating contradictory information from questions that were linked. SPSS was then analyze to look at the data. The mean, frequency, and percentage were the first tools used to look at numeric statistics. Regression analysis and association analysis were used to draw conclusions. This kind of regression model was used to do linear regression analysis:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$$

Where;

Y = service delivery,

X₁ = planning strategy,

Regression coefficient for planning was β_1 , while the error term was e. The regression constant was denoted by β_0 .

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Response Rate

Based on the established sample size, 86 questionnaires were distributed using a stratified random sampling method. Of these, 83 were completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 96.5%.

4.2. Planning strategy in change management

As can be seen in Table 2, five statements were used in order to get an understanding of the planning approach that is implemented in the process of change management in the Judiciary.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Strategic planning

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Any modification that is implemented in the judicial system is done so with a specific goal in mind.	83	1	5	3.96	1.004
It is made very apparent what the aims and objectives of the transformation are.	83	1	5	3.88	0.904
The formulation of a plan comes before the implementation of any change.	83	1	5	4.18	1.026
	83	1	5	2.38	0.924
An appropriate amount of financial resources have been allocated for the implementation of reform inside the Judiciary.	83	1	5	4.13	1.079
Valid N (listwise)	83				
Overall Mean and SDiation				4.006	0.9874

Source: Researcher (2024)

An overall mean of 4.006 and a SD of 0.9874 are shown in Table 2, which presents the results of the investigation. Based on this mean, it can be deduced that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the suggestion that strategic planning should be implemented inside the Judiciary. The SD of 0.9874 is less than 1, which indicates that the majority of the answers did not substantially differ from the mean. This is because the majority of respondents indicated that they were in agreement with the statement "strongly agree." It is specifically stated that there is a vision for any change that is implemented in the judicial system (mean = 3.96), and that the aims and objectives of the change are clearly outlined (mean = 3.88). Furthermore, they said that a strategy is established prior to the implementation of any change (mean = 4.18), and that workers of the Judiciary match their objectives with the aims of the institution (mean = 4.13). A mean score of 2.38 indicates that the respondents did not agree with the statement that there is sufficient financial allocation for the implementation of reform in the Judiciary. In spite of the fact that the Judiciary is doing a good job of putting its planned approach into action, the data suggest that the lack of proper budgetary allocation is a significant limitation in terms of financial resources.

4.3. Correlation Results of Study Variables

These were used in order to conduct an analysis of the impact that change management practices have on the provision of services within the Judiciary. Both correlation and regression studies were carried out with reference to this matter. A presentation of the results may be found in table 3.

Table 3 Correlation Analysis

		Planning strategy	Service delivery
Planning strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	83	
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	0.621**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	83	83

Source: Researcher (2024)

Research revealed a correlation of 0.621 between service delivery and the change management planning approach. The fact that the correlation's p-value (Sig. = 0.000) is less than 0.05 suggests that it is statistically significant. To the extent that this is the case, it's proof that the change management planning method greatly improves the justice system's service delivery. The results also corroborate those of Daniel (2019), who found that planning significantly improves a company's success.

Similarly, service delivery was shown to be positively correlated with the communication approach employed in change management (0.501). Also, the association is deemed significant since the p-value (Sig. = 0.000) is less than 0.05. Because of this, it seems that the change management communication strategy greatly improves the quality of services provided by the Judiciary. These findings are in line with those of Hasanaj and Manxhari (2017), who found that communication was crucial to a change process, greatly contributing to the successful implementation of change and simultaneously increasing labor productivity.

4.4. Regression Analysis

Table 4 Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.645 ^a	0.424	0.394	1.117

Predictors: Planning strategy; Source: Researcher (2024)

An R-squared value of 0.424 was determined during the regression analysis. Involvement of planning strategy was the model predictor that account for 42.4% of the changes in service delivery within the Judiciary. In addition, the data suggest that planning strategy was responsible for around 57.6% of the changes that occur in the delivery of services in the Judiciary.

Table 5 Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.249	4	1.062	17.851	.000 ^b
	Residual	172.185	78	1.248		
	Total	176.434	82			

Dependent Variable: Service delivery ; Predictors: (Constant), Planning strategy

Service delivery was the dependent variable, and the predictor was planning strategy. To find out how significant the regression model was, an ANOVA was used. The relevance of the F-value was assessed in this context. An F-value of 0.963 and a p-value of 0.000 were recorded. In evaluating the extent to which the independent variables impact the dependent variable, the regression model proved significant (p-value < 0.05).

Table 6 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.023	0.462		4.145	0.000
	Planning strategy	0.123	0.072	-0.095	-1.015	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

Within the framework of the multiple linear regression model, the regression coefficients were used in order to estimate and develop the model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$$

The variables Y represent service delivery, X₁ stands for planning strategy. The intercept, symbolized as β_0 , is the regression constant. The regression coefficient for planning strategy was β_1 . The error term is denoted by e. As a result, the model for regression was:

$$Y = 1.023 + 0.123X_1$$

0.123 was the value of the regression coefficient for the planning approach. It was determined that the coefficient had a p-value of 0.000. In light of the fact that the p-value is lower than 0.05, the findings clearly indicate that the planning method has a substantial and favorable impact on the delivery of services. Furthermore, this indicates that when the planning approach for change management in the Judiciary is enhanced, it's quite probable that service delivery will be much enhanced as a consequence. This study's results are in line with those of Kharroub and Mansour (2019), who discovered a favorable and strong relationship between planning and product quality.

5. Conclusion

Regarding the impact of planning strategy, it was found that planning strategy significantly and positively influences service delivery. A favorable regression coefficient and a robust positive correlation between planning methodology and service provision are the reasons for this outcome.

5.1. Recommendations

The government, and the Treasury in particular, has to boost the funding for the Judiciary in national budgets so that change management strategy planning may be better executed. This action will guarantee that the Judiciary possesses adequate financial resources to facilitate appropriate budgetary allocations for the implementation of necessary changes. Consequently, this will lead to enhancements in service delivery within the Judiciary.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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