Stakeholder Engagement and Service Delivery in the National Police Service Commission, Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper examines the implications of stakeholder engagement on service delivery in the National Police Service Commission (NPSC), Nairobi City County, Kenya. The NPSC is mandated with recruitment, promotions, welfare management, and disciplinary processes of police officers. This mandate directly influences public trust and service delivery outcomes. Despite this critical role, the NPSC continues to face persistent challenges in engaging stakeholders effectively, thereby leading to inefficiencies, delays, and diminished public trust. This study investigates the implications of stakeholder engagement on service delivery in the NPSC, Nairobi City County, Kenya. A mixed-methods design was employed, targeting NPSC civilian staff, police officers of varying ranks, and community representatives. The target population comprised NPSC staff, police officers of various ranks, and community representatives. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical analysis revealed that stakeholder engagement had a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with service delivery outcomes at the NPSC ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.461$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that enhanced stakeholder participation directly improves transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in service delivery. These findings are consistent with Kaito and Njoroge (2023) and Biwott and Nyamwanya (2023), who found that inclusive engagement mechanisms significantly strengthen public trust and institutional performance in policing organizations. The study concludes that deepening stakeholder engagement is central to strengthening public trust in police oversight institutions. The study's recommendations emphasize the need for more robust participatory mechanisms, while suggesting further research on technology-enabled stakeholder engagement practices.

Keywords: *Stakeholder Engagement, Service Delivery, National Police Service Commission (NPSC), Public Trust, Strategic Management, Participatory Governance, Kenya*

1. Introduction

Service delivery is a cornerstone of effective public administration. It is defined as the processes and avenues through which services are offered efficiently, reliably, and equitably to beneficiaries. The quality of these services directly influences societal well-being, economic growth, and public trust in governmental institutions (Sagwa, 2021). Conversely,

inefficiencies, delays, or inequities in service delivery can erode trust, exacerbate inequalities, and lead to public dissatisfaction (Wasike, 2024).

Stakeholder engagement is an essential tool for addressing inefficiencies in service delivery (Christabel, 2018), particularly the NPSC. The active participation of stakeholders ensures that services are tailored to public needs (Nguyen Long et al., 2019). Stakeholder engagement also fosters transparency and accountability, vital to building public trust (Kisaka, 2023) between the police service and the populations they serve. Engaging community stakeholders allows the commission to align its objectives with public safety needs. Active stakeholder engagement ensures that public concerns are addressed and that the police service remains adaptive to the evolving needs of society.

Globally, stakeholder engagement through co-production and participatory budgeting has been shown to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of public services in the United States and the United Kingdom (Smith et al., 2022). Similarly, within the European Union, inclusive governance mechanisms have been institutionalized as part of reforms to strengthen trust between citizens and state institutions. In Africa, South Africa and Nigeria have experimented with participatory mechanisms in local government and the health sector, and the results have shown that incorporating diverse stakeholder voices leads to more responsive, equitable, and transparent service delivery outcomes (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014; Ojo, 2022).

Kenya has undergone significant governance reforms since the enactment of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK, 2010). The reforms emphasized accountability, transparency, and public participation. These reforms extended to the security sector, particularly after the 2007–2008 post-election violence, which exposed deep flaws in policing structures. The establishment of the NPSC under Article 246 of the Constitution was part of these reforms. They were aimed at professionalizing the police service and insulating it from political interference.

NPSC is a regulatory body in Kenya established under Article 246(3) of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010. Before its creation, Kenya's police services operated under the Office of the President and were commonly referred to as the "police force". This structure was heavily influenced by the executive branch, which raised concerns about the potential misuse of the police for political purposes. Following the 2007-2008 post-election violence in various parts of Kenya, the Waki Commission highlighted the need to separate the police service from direct executive control. This led to the formation of the NPSC, which was tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the recruitment, appointment, and welfare of law enforcement officers within the National Police Service (NPS). The NPSC's mission is to transform the human resource management function in the NPS for optimum proficiency and effectiveness. The vision of the NPSC is to foster a dignified and professional police officer.

1.1 Problem Statement

The NPSC is central to police reforms in Kenya but continues to face persistent inefficiencies, including delayed recruitment, inadequate training, weak disciplinary systems, and poor resource allocation. Reports by IPOA (2023) show that over 34% of citizen complaints concern disciplinary inaction, while KNBS (2022) found that only 58% of Kenyans trust recruitment and promotion processes. The NPSC Annual Report (2022) further highlighted prolonged recruitment cycles and a backlog of 3,000 disciplinary cases. Existing research underscores the importance of engagement and strategic alignment but leaves critical gaps. Awino et al. (2022) linked stakeholder engagement to improved service delivery but overlooked disciplinary and recruitment challenges. Chebotibin (2021) examined strategic alignment but excluded stakeholder factors. Broader studies on governance (Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020; Andrews

& Esteve, 2019) focus on other sectors, leaving police commissions underexplored. This study addresses these gaps by investigating stakeholder engagement's role in enhancing NPSC service delivery.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the literature on public sector reforms by offering empirical evidence on how stakeholder engagement influences service delivery in a critical governance institution in Kenya. Additionally, the study will provide fresh perspectives on how strategic management practices can improve service quality. The findings will guide policymakers, practitioners, and oversight bodies in designing participatory mechanisms that enhance accountability, responsiveness, and trust, especially within NPS and similar organizations. The findings will also create a roadmap for the creation of focused initiatives to deal with pertinent management issues and enhance the commission's efficacy. Practically, strengthening stakeholder engagement can help the NPSC address community concerns, improve transparency in recruitment and disciplinary processes, and foster cooperation with civil society and government agencies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Stakeholder Theory, developed by Freeman (1984), challenged the traditional shareholder-centric model by emphasizing that institutions must consider the interests of all groups affected by their actions. Freeman argued that organizational success depends on effective stakeholder management, which enhances adaptability and responsiveness to diverse expectations. This framework is especially significant in the public sector, where institutions are accountable not only to internal actors but also to citizens, oversight bodies, and civil society.

The theory emphasizes three principles: identifying relevant stakeholders, prioritizing them based on influence, and engaging them meaningfully in decision-making. For the NPSC, key stakeholders include police officers, government agencies, the public, civil society, and international human rights organizations. High-priority stakeholders, such as oversight bodies and citizens, shape policy legitimacy and public trust, making their engagement critical.

Effective stakeholder engagement improves service delivery by aligning institutional practices with societal needs while addressing conflicting interests among diverse actors. For the NPSC, this involves balancing demands for efficiency, fairness, and human rights compliance. Empirical studies reinforce this view: Ogola et al. (2021) showed that stakeholder participation improved public trust, while Topister and Wambua (2020) found that inclusive strategies enhanced transparency. These findings affirm Stakeholder Theory as a strong foundation for analyzing NPSC service delivery.

Institutional Theory, advanced by DiMaggio and Powell (2023), explains how institutions are shaped by formal and informal rules, norms, and cultural expectations that define acceptable behavior (Krücken, 2021). Central to the theory is institutional isomorphism, where organizations converge in structure and practices due to three types of pressures: coercive, mimetic, and normative. Coercive pressures stem from laws and regulations, mimetic pressures arise when organizations imitate successful peers under uncertainty, and normative pressures reflect societal values and professional standards (Krücken, 2021).

This framework is highly relevant to public institutions like the NPSC, which operates in a politically influenced and regulated environment. Coercive forces from government and oversight bodies shape its policies, while mimetic learning may prompt it to borrow practices

from other successful oversight institutions. Normative expectations, including international human rights standards, also shape its governance practices. Christensen et al. (2020) emphasize that institutions navigating these pressures through participatory approaches build trust and operational efficiency. Thus, Institutional Theory complements Stakeholder Theory by situating engagement within systemic and societal contexts.

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, evaluates service quality by measuring gaps between customer expectations and perceptions (Shi & Shang, 2020). It identifies five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—that provide a framework for improving service outcomes (Chuenyindee et al., 2022). In the NPSC context, tangibles include facilities for police training and the professionalism displayed during recruitment or disciplinary hearings. Reliability assesses consistency in meeting objectives such as timely recruitment, fair promotions, and efficient case resolution. Responsiveness reflects the institution's willingness to address grievances promptly, a crucial element emphasized by Chuenyindee et al. (2020) and Afandi & Namusonge (2024). Assurance concerns confidence and trust, fostered by transparency in recruitment and disciplinary procedures (Androniceanu, 2021). Empathy involves individualized attention, such as addressing officers' welfare concerns or community expectations. Integrating SERVQUAL directly informs this study's conceptual framework, linking strategic practices to measurable improvements in service delivery within the NPSC.

2.2 Empirical Review

Stakeholder engagement entails the active involvement of diverse actors in organizational decision-making, encompassing identification of stakeholders, understanding their interests, participation in planning, and open communication (Kujala et al., 2022; Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020). Global studies highlight its positive impact: in the U.S., Androniceanu (2021) found participatory governance enhanced policy effectiveness and sustainability, while Smith et al. (2022) in the UK reported that citizen involvement in service design improved quality and satisfaction. Osborne et al. (2021) emphasized that co-production fosters innovation by integrating citizen and institutional expertise, and Lehtinen and Aaltonen (2020) showed that EU participatory mechanisms build legitimacy and trust. Similarly, Nguyen Long et al. (2019) demonstrated improved municipal service relevance through inclusive decision-making.

In Africa, Nabatchi and Amsler (2014) found that community participation enhanced service delivery in South Africa. Ojo (2022) reported improved outcomes in Nigeria's health sector, though Agyepong et al. (2012) and Olu-Ogunleye (2022) highlighted barriers such as weak institutional capacity and bureaucratic resistance. In Kenya, Ogola et al. (2021) linked stakeholder participation to transparency in policing, while Topister and Wambua (2020) found it enhanced accountability. Gjelsvik (2020) stressed its importance in facilitating reforms in organizations. Yet, Kisaka (2023) cautioned that NPSC's engagement remains largely consultative, with political interference and resource constraints undermining meaningful participation.

The reviewed literature highlights several gaps. Firstly, while global studies emphasize the benefits of participatory governance, much of this research is concentrated in developed countries. There is limited empirical evidence on how stakeholder engagement functions in African contexts characterized by resource constraints and political interference. Secondly, African studies highlight engagement challenges in sectors such as healthcare and local government, but few focus specifically on police oversight institutions, despite their central role in governance and public trust. Finally, within Kenya, existing studies often discuss police

reforms broadly, without systematically analyzing the link between stakeholder engagement and service delivery outcomes within the NPSC. This study addresses these gaps by empirically testing how stakeholder engagement affects service delivery outcomes in the NPSC, Nairobi City County. It contributes to both theory and practice by situating stakeholder engagement within the unique context of a police oversight commission.

3. Methodology

The research design was a mixed-methods design. It integrated both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The quantitative component adopted a descriptive and correlational design, focusing on statistically analyzing data collected through structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics reviewed patterns in the data. Inferential statistics tested hypotheses and established the strength of relationships between independent variables and service delivery. The qualitative component used an explanatory design to delve into organizational nuances. In-depth interviews using questionnaires with key informants, including NPSC officials and community representatives, provided contextual perspectives on barriers, facilitators, and the moderating effects of organizational culture and the regulatory environment. Quantitative methods offered empirical precision, while qualitative approaches enriched understanding by addressing underlying factors.

The study targeted NPSC staff, police officers, and community representatives. Staff provided insights on internal systems, officers experienced recruitment, training, and discipline outcomes, while communities reflected service impacts. The population comprised 240 staff, 1000 officers, and 500 community stakeholders within Nairobi City County, a combination that guaranteed diverse stakeholder perspectives.

Table 1: Departments, Staff, and Officers Involved in the Study

Category	Departments/Groups	Number of staff
NPSC Staff	Appeals, Policy, and Legal Affairs	50
	ICT & HCM Automation	40
	Human Capital Management	80
	Finance and Administration	70
Police Officers	Police Service Departments	1,000
Community Stakeholders	Community Stakeholders	500
Total		**1,740**

The study employed a stratified random strategy to pick a representative sample. This entailed distributing the population into distinct strata and then randomly picking respondents from each stratum. NPSC staff were categorized into departments such as Appeals, Policy, and Legal Affairs; ICT & HCM Automation; Human Capital Management; and Finance and Administration. Similarly, police officers were grouped without further subdivision to reflect their uniform role within the service delivery framework.

Table 2: Sample Size

Category	Specific NPSC Departments/Groups	Target Population	Sample Size (Proportional Allocation)
NPSC Staff	Appeals, Policy, and Legal Affairs	50	5
	ICT & HCM Automation	40	4
	Human Capital Management	80	8
	Finance and Administration	70	7
Police Officers	Police Service Departments	1,000	100
Community Stakeholders	Community Stakeholders	500	50
Total		**1740**	**174**

The total population size was estimated to be 1,740 individuals, distributed across these categories. To ensure proportional representation, the sample size for each stratum was determined using the proportionate allocation method. For instance, police officers represented 1000 individuals, approximately 57% of the total population. Accordingly, their allocated sample size was computed as follows:

Sample Size for Police Officers $= \frac{1000}{1740} \times 174\% = 100$

Participants were randomly picked using methods such as a random number generator or lottery system to ensure that every individual has an equivalent chance of inclusion and minimize selection bias

Primary data was gathered using structured questionnaires (both in physical and electronic formats). These structured questionnaires were distributed to a large sample of respondents to gather quantitative data on the impact of stakeholder engagement practices on service delivery. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions that were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The Likert scale allowed for easy quantification and statistical analysis of the data.

A pilot study involving 10% of the sample (NPSC staff, police officers, and community stakeholders) tested the questionnaire's validity. Stratified sampling was used to pick participants. Items were tested for their ability to record data on stakeholder engagement. Data from the pilot study were investigated using mixed methods. Quantitative data were examined for patterns of missing responses, ambiguous questions, and inconsistent answers. Poorly performing questionnaire items were rephrased or removed, and the questionnaire guide was adjusted to focus on more impactful areas.

Validity was ensured through expert review, alignment with the conceptual framework, and pilot testing. Content validity was confirmed by supervisors and practitioners, while construct validity was tested via factor analysis. Ambiguous or redundant items were revised or removed, ensuring instruments accurately measured stakeholder engagement and service delivery outcomes.

Reliability was achieved through well-designed instruments, pre-testing, and statistical evaluation. The structured questionnaires were developed with clear and standardized instructions to ensure consistency in data collection. The use of Likert scale items in the

questionnaires provided uniformity in responses and facilitated easier comparison and review. Reliability was statistically tested using Cronbach's Alpha for the structured questionnaires.

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The data was checked for completeness, consistency, and errors. Missing values were resolved using appropriate techniques. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) summarized stakeholder engagement practices. Inferential analysis included correlation and regression models, which tested the strength and significance of the relationship between stakeholder engagement (independent variable) and service delivery (dependent variable). Multiple regression analysis was also carried out to assess the impact of the independent variables on service delivery. The regression equation for the study was structured as follows:

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

Where:

- Y: National Police Service Delivery

- X_1: Stakeholder Engagement

- β_0: Intercept

- β_1 Coefficient that point to the strength and direction of the relationships.

- ϵ: Error term taking into account for unexplained variability.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis. Regression outputs included coefficients, significance values (p-values), and model fit statistics (R^2). Qualitative data from open-ended responses were analyzed thematically and integrated with quantitative findings to enrich interpretation.

The study adhered to ethical standards in social science research. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose and provided voluntary consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, with no identifying details collected. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents retained the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Authorization to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the relevant NPSC authorities. The research design also aligned with the ethical guidelines of Kenyatta University. These safety measures ensured that the study maintained integrity and respect for the rights and dignity of all participants.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study aimed to reach a total of 174 respondents. Out of the total respondents, 167 questionnaires were duly filled out and returned. This resulted in a response rate of 95.98%. This is considered a strong response rate for organizational studies, as response rates above 70% are normally considered acceptable in academic research (Babbie, 2021).

Table 3: Response Rate of the Study

Category	Targeted Respondents	Actual Responses	Response Rate (%)
NPSC Staff	24	24	100
Police Officers	100	99	99.00
Community Stakeholders	50	44	88.00
Total	**174**	**167**	**95.98**

4.2 Descriptive Results

This section interprets participants' perceptions of stakeholder engagement practices and their influence on service delivery within the NPSC in Nairobi City County. The responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Means and standard deviations were computed for each item. Respondents were requested to rate statements regarding stakeholder engagement in NPSC operations. Results were summarized as follows.

Table 4: Descriptive Results on Stakeholder Engagement

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	SD
The NPSC actively involves stakeholders in decision-making processes	5.0	9.0	18.0	46.0	22.0	3.7	0.9
Stakeholder engagement enhances transparency and trust in the NPSC's operations	4.0	8.0	16.0	48.0	24.0	3.8	0.8
The NPSC has established clear feedback mechanisms for stakeholders	6.0	11.0	20.0	41.0	22.0	3.6	0.9
The NPSC responds adequately to stakeholder concerns and incorporates input into policy decisions	8.0	12.0	19.0	39.0	22.0	3.5	1.0
Inter-agency collaboration and partnerships have strengthened service delivery outcomes	4.0	7.0	18.0	48.0	23.0	3.8	0.8

Respondents affirmed the critical role of stakeholder engagement in fostering transparency and trust. Yet, community stakeholders noted instances where engagement felt superficial, particularly during disciplinary reviews or community policing reforms. This reflects Freeman's (1984) Stakeholder Theory, which opines that meaningful engagement is essential for institutional trust. Ayee (2019) similarly argues that early stakeholder involvement enhances accountability and policy implementation. Forums such as public barazas and vetting panels provided insights into NPSC processes, consistent with OECD (2015) principles linking participation to governance. Wambua and Nyambura (2022) found that active engagement reduces corruption and improves fairness perceptions, while Bryson (2020) emphasized transparency in building cooperation. However, limited follow-through echoed Nabatchi and Leighninger's (2015) warning that participation succeeds only when feedback informs policy, aligning with World Bank (2021) governance indicators on responsiveness.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis examined the independent and dependent variables. The results were presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Service Delivery	Stakeholder Engagement
Stakeholder Engagement	.589**	1

The results showed that the independent variable was positively and significantly correlated with service delivery. Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level. Stakeholder engagement had a correlation (r = .589, p < 0.01). This suggests that inclusivity, transparency, and feedback mechanisms are directly linked to higher public trust and operational accountability in NPSC services. This aligns with Nabatchi & Amsler (2014), who found that participatory governance enhances responsiveness in public service delivery.

4.4 Regression Models

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of the independent variable on service delivery. ϵ = Error term

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.751	.564	.557	0.492

The model showed an R value of .751. This indicated a strong positive relationship between the predictor and service delivery. The R Square value of .564 indicated that 56.4% of the variation in service delivery was illuminated by stakeholder engagement. The adjusted R^2 value of .557 confirmed that the model was strong, with minimal shrinkage when adjusted for the number of predictors.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.315	3	16.105	66.625	.000**
Residual	37.285	154	0.242		
Total	85.600	157			

The regression model was statistically significant (F = 66.625, p < .001). This indicated that stakeholder engagement predicts service delivery outcomes at the NPSC.

Table 8: Coefficients

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
Stakeholder Engagement	0.228	0.067	0.201	3.403	.001**

The coefficients indicated that the predictor significantly influenced service delivery. Stakeholder engagement showcased an effect of (β = .201, p < .001). Stakeholder engagement's coefficient supported Nabatchi and Amsler (2014), who argued that while engagement fosters trust, its measurable impact on outcomes is often diluted by institutional inertia.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this research study revealed that stakeholder engagement has a ripple effect in building trust and transparency. However, its full potential is constrained when feedback is not

consistently incorporated into final decisions. The study validates Stakeholder Theory, demonstrating that effective engagement enhances legitimacy and aligns organizational actions with diverse stakeholder interests. It also affirms Institutional Theory, which explains how coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures shape the NPSC's adoption of participatory practices. The SERVQUAL model further contextualizes engagement's impact by linking it to responsiveness, assurance, and empathy in service delivery. The study concludes that stakeholder engagement is not an optional add-on but a strategic requirement for effective service delivery in public oversight institutions.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the NPSC adopt a structured stakeholder engagement framework that categorizes stakeholders by influence and interest. For high-influence groups such as police unions, civil society watchdogs, and senior government oversight bodies, engagement should involve the formulation of mutually potent policies and programs. For high-interest but lower-influence stakeholders such as community representatives, regular consultative forums should be organized to capture their needs and perceptions. To enhance transparency, the NPSC should establish publicly accessible feedback channels that can be tracked, analyzed, and reported quarterly. To strengthen inter-agency collaboration, NPSC should formalize MoUs with critical partners such as the IPOA and county policing authorities. These MoUs should define clear roles, joint performance targets, and shared accountability mechanisms for service delivery outcomes.

This study illuminated how stakeholder engagement influences NPSC service delivery. However, it revealed gaps for further inquiry. Future research should assess the quality versus quantity of interactions, using qualitative approaches like ethnography or case studies. Comparative studies across Counties are also needed, as variations in resources, politics, and community needs may influence outcomes. Such work would inform adaptive strategies and strengthen stakeholder-centered service delivery within the NPSC.

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