

ISSN NO: 2224-2023

DBA AFRICA MANAGEMENT REVIEW

VOLUME 16 NO 1

INFLUENCE OF SELF-MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES ON INTERNAL SERVICE QUALITY AMONG COUNTY EMPLOYEES IN KENYA

KITHUSYA PETER MUSYOKI
VERONICAH KALUYU
RUTH MWAI

PREFERRED STYLE (APA)

Kithusya P. M. , Kaluyu V. , Mwai R. (2026). Influence Of Self-Management Competencies On Internal Service Quality Among County Employees In Kenya. *DBA Africa Management Review*, 16(1), 56–75.

A Quarterly publication of the Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Business and Management Sciences (FBMS) University of Nairobi

2026



DBA Africa Management Review

Received Date
18/03/2026
Last Revision Date
15/04/2026
Acceptance Date
17/04/2026

INFLUENCE OF SELF-MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES ON INTERNAL SERVICE QUALITY AMONG COUNTY EMPLOYEES IN KENYA

Kithusya Peter Musyoki¹, Veronicah Kaluyu², Ruth Mwai³

Abstract

The study sought to determine the influence of self-management competencies on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. The study was grounded on three key theories; emotional intelligence theory, learning organization theory and quality management theory. This study adopted positivist philosophy and explanatory correlational design. The target population comprised 9,165 selected county employees working in public organizations across counties in Kenya, including County Executive staff, County Assembly Members, Directors, Sub-County Administrators, and County Public Service employees. This study employed purposive sampling to strategically select county employees who could provide the most relevant insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence competencies and internal service quality. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula to obtain 383 respondents. Data was collected using structured questionnaire from which a response rate of 85% was achieved. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26, employing both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The findings indicated that self-management competencies had moderate positive correlation with significant regression effect in internal service quality. The study concludes that self-management competencies exert a significant positive influence on internal service quality among Kenyan county employees. Employees who effectively regulate their emotions, manage stress, remain adaptable, and maintain self-discipline are better positioned to deliver dependable and timely internal services. The study recommends that county governments should launch targeted self-management training programs emphasizing self-regulation, emotional control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and time management to enhance reliability, responsiveness, and collaboration in internal service delivery.

Key words: County Employees, Self-Management, Emotional Intelligence, Internal Service Quality, Competencies

¹ ORCID : <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2939-4060>, Department of Chandaria School of Business, United States International University – Africa, Nairobi, Kenya - kithusya@gmail.com

² Department of Chandaria School of Business, United States International University – Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

³ Department of Chandaria School of Business, United States International University – Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction

Self-management competencies encompass the capacity to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively across situations, thus enabling stress management, impulse control, and sustained goal focus (Najjarpour, 2024). Moreover, research positions self-management as a cornerstone of emotional intelligence, directly influencing job performance (Ihemeje, Adeleke & Adegun, 2022). According to Goleman (1998) emotional intelligence is the capability of recognizing, understanding, and managing one's own emotions along with the emotions of other people. Self-management is an important element of emotional intelligence, which is concerned with the regulation of emotions, self-control, and modifying behavior for reaching certain objectives (Ismail, Potgieter & Coetzee, 2023). By means of self-management, a person can deal with work-related problems through impulse control, stress management, and motivation. Thus, emotional intelligence can be seen as a contributing factor for self-management skills, leading to improved performance, decision-making, and interpersonal effectiveness (Shestakova & Lapenok, 2025).

Self-management competencies encompass several key indicators, including self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative, and time management (Goleman, 1998). Self-control enables individuals to regulate impulses and respond calmly under pressure, while adaptability allows them to adjust effectively to changing circumstances and organizational demands. Achievement orientation reflects a strong focus on setting and attaining challenging goals, driving performance and continuous improvement (Boyatzis, 2009). Time management involves prioritizing tasks, planning effectively, and

using time efficiently to meet deadlines, ensuring consistent productivity and contribution to internal service quality (Greenberg & Baron, 2021).

Background of the Study

According to Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2020), in today's ever-changing global business environment, organizations are increasingly focusing on emotional intelligence competencies as essential drivers of improving employee performance as well as delivering effective service. Among these competencies, self-management skills such as self-control, flexibility, initiative, as well as managing stress, are critical in enabling employees to effectively regulate their emotions, behavior, as well as overall performance within the business environment.

Gbarale and Benjamin (2022) asserts that organizations that focus on self-management competencies among their respective workforce on a global perspective are more likely to achieve better internal service quality, which is defined as the effectiveness as well as efficiency of services that are mutually exchanged among employees within an organization. Internal service quality is critical in improving coordination as well as service errors within an organization with the aim of improving overall organizational performance (Aydemir & Kıpçak, 2024). Various studies indicate that employees with better self-management competencies are able to effectively manage organizational pressures as well as deliver effective internal support to colleagues within the organization (Lopes, 2021).

On a global scale, internal service quality is recognized as an important factor in organizational success, especially in service-

oriented organizations where employee interactions have a significant impact on organizational efficiency. Self-management skills play an important role in ensuring internal service quality since they instill discipline, responsibility, and hardiness in employees (Hur et al., 2020). Employees with effective self-regulation skills are more likely to exhibit positive reactions to internal customer demands, handle conflicts in a constructive manner, and sustain their performance levels even in challenging situations (Zeidner et al., 2020). In this regard, many organizations in developed countries are investing on emotional intelligence training programs aimed at developing employee's self-management skills, foster better workplace relationships, and enhance overall performance outcomes (Mehler, Balint & Hölzer, 2024).

Research conducted across various African countries showed that the ability of employees to manage themselves plays a crucial role in enhancing relationships and service delivery (Agyapong & Amankwah-Amoah, 2021). However, some organizations still experience low service quality due to poor time management, emotional intelligence, and accountability of employees (Nguyen et al., 2020). This indicates that improving self-management competencies could improve service interactions in African organizations.

Additionally, internal service quality is of utmost importance in the Kenyan public sector, especially in county governments that were created under the devolved system of governance. In this regard, county workers are expected to provide efficient services, but some of the challenges, such as poor time management, low adaptability, and poor stress management, have contributed to the failure of effective internal service delivery (Mutuku &

Mathooko, 2022). Self-management skills are, therefore, of crucial importance in ensuring that workers at the county governments are not only productive, disciplined, and effective in responding to internal service delivery needs. Empirical evidence has shown that workers with high self-management skills in Kenya contribute significantly to the success of the organizations in which they work (Kariuki & Kiiru, 2021). This study aimed to analyze the influence of self-management competencies on internal service quality in county governments in Kenya.

Problem Statement

Service delivery problems arising from the operation of county governments in Kenya continue to show inadequacy in self-management skills of the workers. Devolution was meant to increase efficiency and responsiveness, but even today, many counties are faced with problems such as delayed service delivery, coordination problems, inefficiency, and lack of responsiveness to the demands of citizens (Barasa & Omariba, 2024). These challenges associated with the performance of county governments may be traced to poor self-management behaviors among employees, characterized by poor time management, poor self-motivation, poor emotional regulation, and lack of accountability. Inefficiency in the use of resources and services provided is evident, according to reports by the Controller of Budget and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics indicating that financial resources alone are insufficient without strengthening employee competencies (Pkatey, 2024).

Also, a significant gap in county government's approach on internal service quality arises with respect to the extent to which employees can handle themselves in challenging and scarce

environments (Johnson & Smith, 2021). Internal service quality is not consistent, causing poor coordination among departments, low levels of motivation, and negative consequences for service delivery. Although changes have centered around the delivery of external services, little effort has been made to consider internal behavior skills including self-discipline, adaptability, initiative, and resilience. This gap is exacerbated by insufficient resources allocated towards professional development, culminating in an ineffective incorporation of self-management competencies into public sector performance frameworks and ultimately undermining effective, citizen-centered service delivery (Waduu & Omido, 2025).

In addition, limited empirical attention has been given to the relationship between self-management competencies and internal service quality, particularly within the public sector. This creates a clear research gap that warrants further investigation, especially among county employees in Kenya. The study by Kariuki and Kiiru (2021) was done on the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance in public institutions. The study found that emotional intelligence improves productivity; however, the study did not consider self-management competencies or internal service quality as the dependent variable. Additionally, the study by Mutuku and Mathooko (2022) focused on internal service quality and service delivery in county governments in Kenya, showing that internal processes influence service delivery outcomes, though the study did not focus on self-management competencies as an independent variable influencing internal service quality.

Previous studies have largely examined emotional intelligence as a broad construct

without looking at self-management competencies as a distinct factor influencing workplace outcomes. In addition, limited empirical attention has been given to the relationship between self-management competencies and internal service quality, particularly within the public sector. This creates a clear research gap that warrants further investigation, especially among county employees in Kenya. Addressing this gap was therefore critical, as strengthening self-management competencies among county employees may enhance internal service quality and ultimately improve the effectiveness of devolved governance in Kenya.

Literature Review

Theoretical Anchorage

This study was guided by three theories: learning organization theory, emotional intelligence theory, and the quality management theory.

Learning Organization Theory

Learning Organization Theory, advanced by Peter Senge (1990), posits that organizations achieve sustained success through continuous learning at individual, team, and organizational levels. The theory assumes that knowledge sharing, experiential learning, and systems thinking enhance innovation, adaptability, and long-term performance. It emphasizes that organizations must integrate learning into their structures and cultures to remain competitive in dynamic environments (Senge, 1990).

In research, the learning organization theory has been widely applied to examine how organizational culture, leadership, and knowledge management practices influence employee competencies, collaboration, and performance outcomes. It provides a useful

framework for understanding how continuous learning enhances both individual capabilities and organizational effectiveness, particularly in public sector institutions where adaptability and responsiveness are critical (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008).

However, the learning organization theory has been criticized for being overly idealistic and difficult to operationalize in practice, especially in complex bureaucratic settings such as government institutions. Critics also argue that it lacks clear empirical measures and may not adequately account for structural and resource constraints that limit learning processes (Garvin et al., 2008).

This study contributes to the development of the theory by contextualizing it within Kenyan county governments, demonstrating how learning-oriented practices can strengthen employee competencies and improve internal service quality. Although the moderating variable was excluded, the theory still provides a foundational lens for understanding the role of continuous learning in enhancing self-management competencies and organizational performance.

Emotional Intelligence Theory

Emotional Intelligence Theory, popularized by Daniel Goleman (1995), explains that the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as those of others, is essential for effective workplace functioning. The theory is built on key components including self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management, which collectively influence behavior, decision-making, and interpersonal interactions (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008).

The emotional intelligence theory is widely applied in organizational research to explain variations in employee performance, leadership effectiveness, teamwork, and service delivery. It is particularly relevant in public sector contexts, where emotional regulation and interpersonal skills are critical for managing stakeholder relationships and ensuring efficient service provision (Mayer et al., 2008).

Despite its relevance, emotional intelligence theory has faced criticism regarding measurement inconsistencies and conceptual ambiguity, as different scholars define and operationalize emotional intelligence in varying ways. Additionally, some critics argue that the theory overlaps with personality traits and lacks universally accepted assessment standards (Mayer et al., 2008).

This study contributes to the theory by empirically examining the role of emotional intelligence competencies, particularly self-management, in influencing internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. It extends the application of the theory to the public sector in a developing country context, providing evidence of its practical relevance in improving service delivery outcomes.

Quality Management Theory

Quality Management Theory, advanced by Edwards W. Deming (1986) and Joseph M. Juran (1992), asserts that organizational performance improves through continuous improvement, process optimization, and a strong focus on customer satisfaction. The theory assumes that quality is achieved through systematic processes, employee involvement, and ongoing evaluation of performance standards (Deming, 1986; Juran, 1992).

In research, the quality management theory is applied to assess how structured quality

practices influence service delivery, operational efficiency, and organizational outcomes. It highlights the importance of internal processes and employee interactions in achieving high-quality outputs, making it particularly relevant in studies of internal service quality and organizational effectiveness (Oakland, 2014).

However, the quality management theory has been criticized for its rigidity, as strict adherence to standardized processes may limit flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness in dynamic environments. Additionally, its strong focus on process control may overlook human and behavioral factors that influence performance (Oakland, 2014).

This study contributes to Quality Management Theory by integrating it with emotional intelligence concepts, demonstrating that internal service quality is not only a function of structured processes but also of employees' self-management competencies. It provides a more holistic perspective by showing how behavioral factors complement quality management practices in enhancing service delivery within county governments.

Empirical Review

Edewhor and Okuwa (2024) examined the relationship between self-management and organizational effectiveness among employees of commercial banks in Delta State, Nigeria, using a cross-sectional design and structural equation modeling (SEM). The study found that self-management significantly enhances employee service quality and overall organizational effectiveness, emphasizing the role of self-regulation, emotional control, and behavioral discipline in service outcomes. However, the study is conceptually limited as it focuses on organizational effectiveness rather than internal service quality dimensions such as

coordination, responsiveness, and communication flow. Additionally, its reliance on Upper Echelon Theory emphasizes top management traits rather than employee-level emotional intelligence competencies. The private-sector banking context also differs from Kenya's devolved county governments, where service delivery is shaped by bureaucratic systems, public accountability, and interdepartmental service processes.

Gilar-Corbi et al. (2024) examined self-management competencies, particularly emotional regulation and adaptability, and their influence on internal service quality among private-sector employees in Spain. Using a quasi-experimental design informed by Emotional Intelligence Theory and Social Exchange Theory, the study found that self-management significantly improves internal service quality ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), explaining 28% of the variance in responsiveness and collaboration. However, the study is limited by its private-sector context, which differs from devolved public institutions where service delivery is shaped by bureaucratic structures, statutory mandates, and political oversight. Additionally, the absence of a longitudinal public-sector perspective limits understanding of how self-management competencies evolve over time within complex governance systems such as Kenyan county governments.

Welbeck, Amponsah-Bediako, and Dorhetso (2023) highlight self-regulation as a key emotional intelligence dimension influencing leadership styles among managers of small and medium enterprises in Ghana. Grounded in Goleman's emotional intelligence framework, the study emphasizes self-management as central to effective leadership, empathy, and stakeholder communication. However, the study adopts a leadership-centric perspective,

limiting its focus to managerial behavior rather than broader institutional service processes. Leadership style does not fully capture internal service quality dimensions such as coordination, responsiveness, and workflow reliability among employees. Additionally, the SME context differs from county governments, where service delivery is guided by statutory mandates and public accountability frameworks. The present study addresses this gap by focusing on internal service quality outcomes across employees, extending self-management beyond leadership to institutional service performance.

Similarly, Ihemeje, Adeleke, and Adegun (2022), as well as Olukayonde and Aderinola (2022), examined the relationship between self-management competence and entrepreneurial innovativeness in tertiary institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria. Both studies found a significant positive relationship, indicating that employees with strong self-regulation are more likely to exhibit creativity, initiative, and proactive behavior. However, innovativeness differs conceptually from internal service quality, as it focuses on creativity and opportunity recognition rather than service reliability, coordination, and responsiveness. Additionally, the education-sector context contrasts with Kenya's county governments, where service delivery operates within complex, multi-departmental and accountability-driven systems. Methodologically, the reliance on correlational designs limits causal interpretation, highlighting the need for more robust analysis of how self-management competencies influence internal service quality in public-sector settings.

Ncube and Chimucheka (2019) examined the influence of managerial competencies on the performance of small, medium, and micro

enterprises (SMMEs) in Makana Municipality, South Africa, using a quantitative survey of 96 owners and managers. The study found that self-management competencies had a significant positive effect on SMME performance, while teamwork and strategic action competencies were not statistically significant. However, the study is limited by its contextual focus on South African SMMEs, which differ from public-sector institutions such as Kenya's county governments in structure and service delivery mandates. Conceptually, the study also emphasizes overall enterprise performance rather than internal service quality constructs such as coordination, responsiveness, and interdepartmental support. This creates a gap that the current study seeks to address.

Muchechetere, Ganesh, and Karambwe (2018) examined the impact of emotional intelligence on empowering business leaders in Zimbabwe using a quantitative descriptive design involving 262 respondents. The study found strong positive relationships between self-management competencies and leadership effectiveness, with results further indicating that emotional intelligence improves with age and experience. However, the study is limited by its focus on business leaders, which narrows its applicability to broader employee populations. It also differs contextually from public-sector environments such as Kenyan county governments, where service delivery is guided by statutory mandates, accountability structures, and complex administrative workflows. Consequently, its leadership-oriented and private-sector framing limits direct application to internal service quality among county employees.

Aumuhaimi Md Yusof and Zaini (2025) conducted a quantitative study on 148

information professionals in Malaysian government agencies to examine the relationship between self-management competencies and job performance. The study found that self-management had a significant positive influence on performance, indicating that emotional regulation and self-direction enhance work outcomes in public sector settings. However, the study did not directly measure internal service quality, limiting its explanatory relevance to interdepartmental coordination and service interactions. Additionally, differences in governance systems and public administration structures between Malaysia and Kenya reduce the direct applicability of the findings to devolved county governments.

Sharma, Kong, and Kingshott (2016) examined the relationship between self-management competencies and internal service quality, job satisfaction, commitment, and performance in large service organizations in China. Using correlational and mediation analyses, the study found that emotional self-regulation significantly influences job satisfaction and internal service climate, which in turn enhances internal service quality. However, the study is limited by its non-public sector context, as it focuses on general service organizations rather than government institutions. This limits its applicability to devolved systems such as Kenyan counties, where service delivery is shaped by bureaucratic structures and public accountability requirements.

Munir, Chachar, and Kakepoto (2024) examined the relationship between emotional

intelligence, leadership support, and self-efficacy on job satisfaction among public sector employees, with self-management conceptualized as part of emotional intelligence. Using a quantitative design and correlation analysis, the study found that self-management and emotional regulation positively influence job satisfaction and employee morale in public organizations. However, the study did not directly measure internal service quality, instead using job satisfaction as the dependent variable, which limits its relevance to service delivery processes. Additionally, the broad public sector context differs from Kenya's devolved county governments, where internal service quality is shaped by specific interdepartmental workflows and accountability structures.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework serves as a theoretical structure that guides research by outlining the key variables and their interrelationships (Mensah, Agyemang & Dontoh 2020). Figure 1 illustrates the influence of the independent and dependent variables. Self-management competencies are crucial for regulating emotions and behaviors, with key sub-variables including self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and time management (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee 2000). The dependent variable is internal service quality. Reddedn (2024) indicated that the key measurements for internal service quality are operational efficiency, timely responsiveness, employee satisfaction, and work collaboration.

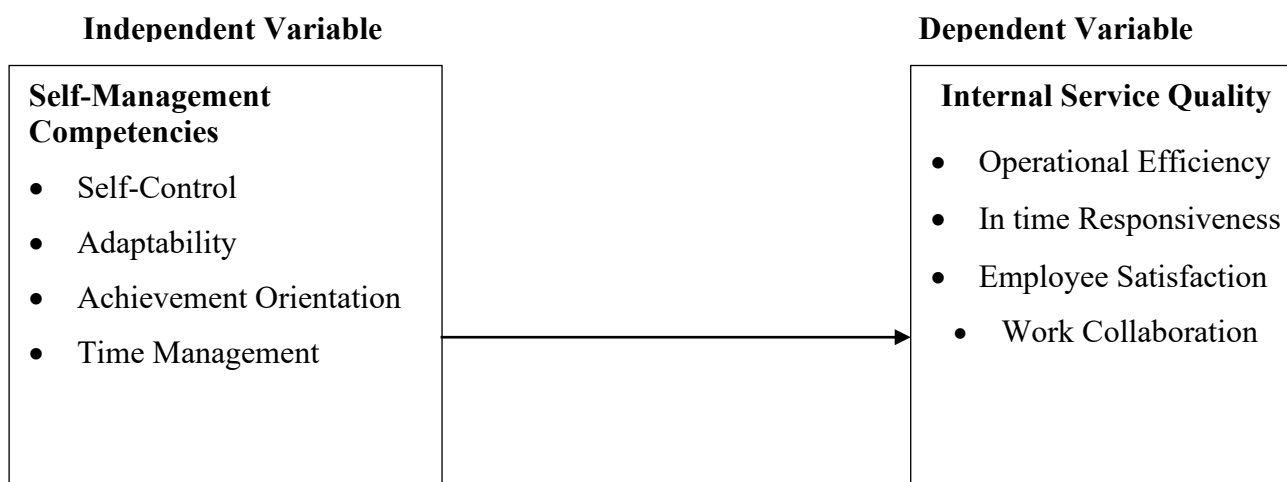


Figure 1 Conceptual Model

Research Methodology

This section presents the research methodology used in the study, including research philosophy, research design, target study population, sampling procedures, data collection, reliability assessment, and data analysis techniques.

Research Philosophy

The study was grounded in three theoretical foundations: Emotional Intelligence Theory, Learning Organization Theory, and Quality Management Theory. Guided by a positivist research philosophy, the study assumed that emotional intelligence competencies and internal service quality are objective phenomena that can be measured empirically using quantifiable data. Positivism emphasizes hypothesis testing, objectivity, and the use of scientific methods to establish relationships between variables (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this study, self-management competencies and internal service quality were operationalized as measurable constructs using structured questionnaires. The approach enabled the use of statistical analysis to test relationships and draw generalizable conclusions across the

target population, consistent with positivist principles.

Research Design

The study adopted an explanatory correlational research design to examine the relationship between self-management competencies and internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. This design was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables without manipulation (Babin & Zikmund, 2016). The quantitative approach was applied to facilitate objective measurement and statistical analysis of variables. However, no moderating variable (e.g., learning organization practices) was included in the final conceptual model; therefore, moderation analysis was not conducted in this study.

Target Study Population and Sampling

The target study population comprised county government employees working in selected functional departments across all 47 counties in Kenya. These included employees in executive offices, administrative units, sub-county offices, and service delivery departments directly involved in internal coordination and

public service processes. The selection of these categories was informed by their direct involvement in organizational service interactions, making them appropriate respondents for examining the influence of self-management competencies on internal service quality.

The study employed purposive sampling to select respondents with relevant experience in service delivery and interdepartmental coordination. This approach enabled the researcher to focus on information-rich participants who are most suitable for addressing the study objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2017). By targeting employees engaged in core service functions, the study ensured that the data collected was both reliable and contextually relevant.

The sample size for the study was determined using Yamane's (1967) approach for known populations at a 95% confidence level, resulting in a sample size of 383 respondents drawn from a population of 9,165 employees. This sample size was considered adequate to ensure representativeness and enhance the reliability and generalizability of the study findings.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires to obtain firsthand information from county employees regarding self-management competencies and internal service quality. The questionnaire was distributed both electronically (via Google Forms) and in printed form where internet access was limited. A pilot study involving 38 respondents (approximately 10% of the sample size) was conducted to test clarity, reliability, and validity of the instrument. The pilot results informed minor adjustments to improve

question clarity and consistency. Ethical considerations such as anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed to enhance data integrity and respondent trust.

Reliability Assessment

Reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine internal consistency of the measurement scales. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2022), a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 and above is acceptable for social science research. The results of the reliability test showed Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.713 to 0.84, indicating that all constructs met the required threshold for internal consistency. This confirmed that the research instrument was reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from the questionnaires was coded, cleaned, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, were applied to determine the relationship between self-management competencies and internal service quality. The results were presented in tables for ease of interpretation and discussion.

Data Analysis And Results

This section presents the results and findings of the study. It includes findings on the response rate, and results organized according to the study objective.

Response Rate

Out of the 383 questionnaires distributed, 327 were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 85.4%. This response rate is considered very good and adequate for

statistical analysis (Sataloff & Vontela, 2021), and therefore sufficient for conducting both descriptive and inferential analyses.

Descriptive Analysis for Internal Service Quality

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Internal Service Quality

Internal Service Quality Statements	Mean	Std Dev
Operational Efficiency	3.47	1.26
My department ensures that service delivery processes are well-structured, reducing delays and inefficiencies.	3.57	1.30
Internal workflows in my organization are optimized to ensure that tasks are completed efficiently and with minimal errors.	3.39	1.29
I have access to the necessary tools, resources, and support required to perform my duties effectively.	3.52	1.23
My organization continuously evaluates and improves operational efficiency by implementing better processes and technological advancements.	3.41	1.23
Responsiveness	3.46	1.25
My department addresses service requests and inquiries in a timely manner to ensure a seamless workflow.	3.47	1.36
My organization prioritizes urgent matters and actively resolves service-related challenges to maintain high efficiency.	3.65	0.89
Employees are encouraged to act swiftly and proactively when responding to internal and external service needs.	3.27	1.42
I take necessary measures to ensure that my work output aligns with the organization's responsive standards.	3.43	1.31
Employee Satisfaction	3.29	1.29
I feel valued and appreciated in my workplace, which enhances my job satisfaction and motivation.	3.31	1.31
My organization fosters an inclusive and engaging work environment that prioritizes employee well-being.	3.28	1.39
I receive adequate support in terms of resources, professional development, and leadership guidance to ensure job satisfaction.	3.24	1.43
My workplace culture promotes employee engagement, leading to a high level of commitment and enthusiasm for my work.	3.31	1.03
	3.48	1.29

Work Collaboration

My department encourages teamwork by fostering open communication and shared responsibilities.	3.44	1.35
Colleagues in my workplace support each other, ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently and with cooperation.	3.5	1.26
Interdepartmental collaboration is highly encouraged in my organization, ensuring that work processes are integrated and effective.	3.52	1.28
My team engages in joint decision-making and cooperative efforts to achieve our shared goals.	3.46	1.29

Aggregate	3.42	1.27
------------------	-------------	-------------

Internal service quality was measured using four dimensions: operational efficiency, responsiveness, employee satisfaction, and work collaboration. The results as shown in table 1 indicates that the respondents reported a moderate level of internal service quality ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.27$), indicating that perceptions of service processes were average and not optimal, with notable variability across respondents.

Operational efficiency recorded a mean score of ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.26$), suggesting moderate agreement that service processes are structured and efficient. Responsiveness also showed a moderate level ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.25$),

indicating variability in timely service delivery and prioritization of tasks. Employee satisfaction had a slightly lower mean ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.29$), reflecting moderate perceptions of motivation, support, and work environment. Work collaboration recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.29$), suggesting relatively stronger teamwork and interdepartmental coordination among employees.

Overall, while internal service quality is fairly established, the variation in responses indicates the need for improvements in responsiveness and employee satisfaction to achieve optimal service delivery.

Descriptive Analysis for Self-Management Competencies

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Self-Management Competencies

Self-Management Competencies Statements	Mean	Std Dev
Self-Control	3.39	1.26
I manage my emotions effectively, even in stressful or high-pressure situations.	3.4	1.38
I remain professional and composed when facing conflicts or disagreements at work.	3.4	0.92
I can regulate my emotions and avoid reacting impulsively.	3.44	1.33
I handle workplace frustrations calmly without allowing them to affect my productivity.	3.33	1.40

Adaptability	3.40	1.34
I quickly adjust to changes in workplace policies, procedures, and organizational goals without resistance, maintaining a positive attitude toward transitions.	3.46	1.36
I embrace new ideas, innovations, and evolving workplace technologies, ensuring that I remain competitive and relevant in my role.	3.42	1.31
I am flexible in my approach to work and can easily modify my strategies to align with shifting priorities or unforeseen circumstances.	3.33	1.31
I view workplace changes as opportunities for growth and proactively seek ways to adapt while supporting my colleagues through transitions.	3.37	1.37
Achievement Orientation	3.43	1.20
I set clear, challenging, and measurable performance goals for myself and work diligently to achieve them while maintaining quality standards.	3.46	0.95
I am highly motivated to exceed expectations in my professional duties and continuously seek ways to enhance my productivity and efficiency.	3.39	1.31
I proactively look for learning opportunities, mentorship, and additional responsibilities that will contribute to my career development and workplace impact.	3.42	1.28
I take ownership of my work, ensuring that I remain accountable for my responsibilities and strive to make meaningful contributions to my organization.	3.43	1.25
Time Management	3.48	1.25
I effectively plan my daily tasks, ensuring that I allocate sufficient time to complete assignments while balancing multiple responsibilities.	3.39	1.33
I set clear priorities to ensure that urgent and high-impact tasks are completed first without compromising the quality of my work.	3.48	1.39
I minimize distractions and remain focused on my objectives, ensuring that I maintain productivity throughout my workday.	3.47	0.93
I use time management tools, schedules, and structured workflows to optimize efficiency and meet deadlines consistently.	3.56	1.35
Aggregate	3.42	1.26

Self-management competencies were assessed across four dimensions: self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and time management. The overall mean score was (M =

3.42, SD = 1.26), as shown in table 2 indicating a relatively high level of self-management competencies among county employees.

Among the dimensions, self-confidence and achievement orientation recorded relatively higher scores, suggesting that employees are confident in handling tasks and achieving set goals. Adaptability and time management also demonstrated moderate to high levels, indicating employees' ability to adjust to changing work demands and manage tasks effectively. However, some variability in

Regression between Self-Management Competencies and Internal Service Quality

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of self-management competencies on internal service quality. The results as shown in table 3 revealed a significant positive relationship

responses suggests inconsistencies in the application of these competencies across different employees and departments.

Overall, the findings indicate that self-management competencies are well developed among employees and provide a strong foundation for improving internal service quality.

between self-management competencies and internal service quality, $r = .501$, indicating a moderate positive correlation. The coefficient of determination showed that self-management competencies explained 25.1% of the variance in internal service quality ($R^2 = .251$), suggesting that other factors account for the remaining variation.

Table 3 Model Summary for Self-Management Competencies on Internal Service Quality

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.501	.251	.249	.52376

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-management competencies

b. Dependent Variable: Internal service quality

ANOVA for Self-Management Competencies and Internal Service Quality

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 325) = 108.94$, $p < .001$. This result as shown in table 4 demonstrates that self-management competencies significantly predict internal service quality among county employees in Kenya.

Table 4: ANOVA for Self-Management Competencies and Internal Service Quality

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.886	1	29.886	108.944	<.001 ^b
	Residual	80.525	325	.274		
	Total	119.042	326			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Management Competencies

b. Dependent Variable: Internal Service Quality

Regression Coefficients for Self-Management Competencies and Internal Service Quality

The regression analysis results as shown in table 5 indicates that self-management competencies significantly predict internal service quality, $\beta = .556$, $SE = .053$, $t(325) = 10.44$, $p < .001$. This indicates that an increase

in self-management competencies is associated with a corresponding increase in internal service quality.

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H01) was rejected, confirming that self-management competencies have a statistically significant influence on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients for Self-Management Competencies and Internal Service Quality

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.520	.185		8.230	.000
	Self-Management	.556	.053	.501	10.438	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Internal Service Quality

Discussion Of Findings

Self-Management Competencies and Internal Service Quality

The findings of this study show that self-management competencies significantly enhance internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. This confirms that employees' emotional regulation, adaptability, and time management directly influence operational efficiency, responsiveness, collaboration, and employee satisfaction within county governments. The results further demonstrate that improving individual competencies alone is not sufficient; organizational systems that support learning and quality practices strengthen these effects, leading to better internal service delivery. Overall, the study highlights that internal service quality in county governments is a

combined outcome of employee competencies and supportive organizational practices.

The current study found that self-management competencies exert a statistically significant and positive effect on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. Self-management competencies recorded a mean of 3.42 ($SD = 1.26$), a significant correlation ($r = 0.501$, $p < 0.01$), and accounted for 25.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.251$, $\beta = 0.556$, $t = 10.438$, $F = 108.944$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that county employees with stronger self-regulation, emotional control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and time management exhibit greater reliability, responsiveness, and collaboration in internal service delivery. This confirms self-management as a foundational emotional intelligence competency that bolsters operational effectiveness in devolved public

institutions, where dynamic pressures demand resilient behaviors.

These findings align with Edewhor and Okuwa (2024), who employed structural equation modeling on 62 Nigerian commercial bank employees and revealed self-management's significant effect on service quality, deeming it instrumental for organizational effectiveness under Upper Echelon theory. Echoing this, the current study's regression strength ($\beta=0.556$) extends their banking focus to Kenyan county internal service quality, addressing contextual gaps in public devolution while affirming training needs for emotional regulation. Gilar-Corbi et al. (2024) demonstrated self-management competencies (emotional regulation, adaptability) boosted internal service quality ($\beta=0.45$, $p<0.01$; 28% variance) among Spanish private workers via quasi-experimental moderated regression, grounded in Goleman's emotional intelligence and Social Exchange Theory. The present results ($R^2=0.251$) corroborate this linkage, surpassing their private sector scope by quantifying public county impacts post-devolution, filling longitudinal gaps.

Welbeck, Amponsah-Bediako, and Dorhetso (2023) found that self-regulation strongly influences leadership styles, which aligns with the current study's positive relationship between self-management and internal service quality ($r = 0.501$), confirming its importance in shaping employee behavior. Similarly, Ihemeje, Adeleke, and Adegun (2022) reported a significant link between self-management and innovativeness, which supports the present finding that self-management enhances responsiveness and collaboration in county governments. Overall, these studies reinforce the current result that self-management is a key

driver of improved internal service quality in public sector settings.

Similarly, Olukayonde and Aderinola (2022) found a significant relationship between self-management and innovativeness, which supports the current study's positive effect of self-management on internal service quality ($\beta = 0.556$), particularly in enhancing adaptability and achievement orientation. Similarly, Ncube and Chimucheka (2019) reported that self-management improves performance in SMMEs, while Muchechetere et al. (2018) confirmed strong links between emotional intelligence and effective leadership behavior. Overall, these findings align with the present study in demonstrating that self-management consistently enhances workplace effectiveness and service-related outcomes across different contexts.

Conclusion, Implication And Recommendations

This section provides the conclusion, implication and recommendations of the study

Conclusion

The study concludes that self-management competencies exert a significant positive influence on internal service quality among Kenyan county employees. Employees who effectively regulate their emotions, manage stress, remain adaptable, and maintain self-discipline are better positioned to deliver dependable and timely internal services. Self-management supports emotional stability and resilience, allowing employees to remain focused and cooperative even in demanding work environments. Consequently, this competency enhances teamwork, minimizes service disruptions, and contributes to improved internal operational efficiency in county governments.

Implication

The study is expected to contribute to the improvement of internal service delivery in county governments by focusing on the self-management competencies of their employees, such as their disciplines and ability to manage their own stress. The study is expected to help human resource managers develop training interventions that improve self-control, flexibility, and accountability of the county governments' employees. The study is expected to contribute to the development of policies that improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. And to contribute to the body of knowledge by showing the link between self-management competencies and internal service quality, as well as serving as a basis for future studies on emotional intelligence competencies in developing countries.

Recommendations

The study recommends that county governments should launch targeted self-management training programs emphasizing self-regulation, emotional control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and time management to enhance reliability, responsiveness, and collaboration in internal service delivery. Introduce mandatory workshops during onboarding and quarterly refreshers for frontline employees, using practical simulations tailored to devolved public pressures. Incorporate self-management assessments into recruitment, performance appraisals, and promotions to prioritize resilient candidates. Foster a supportive culture through leadership modelling of these competencies, paired with autonomy initiatives like flexible tasking to build initiative. Monitor effectiveness via pre-post evaluations linking gains to service metrics, allocating dedicated

budgets for sustained programs. These steps will strengthen operational resilience, reduce dynamic pressure vulnerabilities, and elevate institutional performance in Kenyan counties.

This study on emotional intelligence (EI) competencies and internal service quality among Kenyan county employees suggests several avenues for future research. While it confirmed significant positive effects of self-management. Future studies should examine additional variables interacting with EI, such as psychological safety, organizational commitment, or resilience, to uncover nuanced dynamics. Broaden sectoral scope to health services, education, or state-owned enterprises for generalizability beyond devolved governments.

Ethical Approval

License No: NACOSTI/P/25/415625

REF:USIU-A/IERC/US437-2025

Funding

No internal or external funding either by fundraising, or any other financial support from any source. This research work was supported by Myself Only Enterprises.

Conflicts of Interest

There is no known competing interest or any form of conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to sincerely acknowledge the respondents drawn from various counties across Kenya, whose participation and valuable insights greatly contributed to the success of this study. Their willingness to provide information formed the foundation upon which this research was built. The authors also extend their gratitude to the management of the United States International University-Africa (USIU-A) for providing the academic environment and support necessary to undertake this study. Appreciation is further

extended to colleagues, friends, and peers from USIU-A and beyond for their encouragement, constructive feedback, and moral support throughout the research process.

References

- Agyapong, A., & Amankwah-Amoah, J. (2021). Managing inter-organizational relationships in emerging economies: Insights from Africa. *Journal of Business Research*, 134, 456–465. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.012>
- Alshammari, A. A. (2020). The impact of human resource management practices, organizational learning, organizational culture and knowledge management capabilities on organizational performance in Saudi organizations: a conceptual framework. *Revista Argentina de Psicología*, 29(4), 714. <https://revistaclinicapsicologica.com/data-cms/articles/20201004054927pmSSCI-219.pdf>
- Aydemir, S., & Kıpçak, E. (2024). The impact of internal service quality and ethical leadership on employee performance. *Sustainability*, 16(21), 9446. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16219446>
- Babin, B. J., & Zikmund, W. G. (2016). *Essentials of marketing research* (5th ed.). Cengage Learning. https://books.google.co.ke/books/about/Essentials_of_Marketing_Research.html?id=4wrynQEACAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Barasa, D. W., & Omariba, A. (2024). Impediments to effective leadership in public service: A case of administrative and political challenges in county governments in Kenya. *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(1), 548–560. DOI:10.37284/eajass.7.1.2146
- Belbin, M., & Johnson, S. (2023). The role of time management in enhancing internal service quality: A study in telecommunications. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness*, 10(1), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-12-2022-0173>
- Boyatzis, R. E., Goleman, D., & Rhee, K. (2000). Clustering competence in emotional intelligence: Insights from the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI). *Handbook of Emotional Intelligence*, 343–362.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2009). Competencies as a behavioral approach to emotional intelligence. *Journal of Management Development*, 28(9), 749–770. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710910987647>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. MIT Center for Advanced Engineering Study.
- Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. L. (2021). Achievement orientation and its impact on internal service quality in retail. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 62(2), 182–198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102512>
- Edewhor, V., & Okuwa, O. (2024). Analysis of the Impact of Self-Management on Organizational Effectiveness of Selected Commercial Banks in Delta State Nigeria. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, 17(1), 218–226.
- Garvin, D. A., Edmondson, A. C., & Gino, F. (2008). Is yours a learning organization? *Harvard Business Review*, 86(3), 109–116.
- Gbarale, K., & Benjamin, O. (2022). Self-management competencies and employee effectiveness: A conceptual review. *Journal of Human Resource & Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t4056>
- Gilar-Corbi, R., Pozo-Rico, T., & Pérez-González, J.-C. (2024). Does social and organizational support moderate emotional intelligence training transfer to employee service behaviors? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, (1), 34.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (2001). Emotional intelligence: Issues in paradigm building. *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace*, 13, 26–44.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2020). *Primal leadership: Unleashing the power of emotional intelligence* (Updated ed.). Harvard Business Review Press.

- Greenberg, J., & Baron, R. A. (2021). Self-control, stress management, and internal service quality in the healthcare sector. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(4), 669-680. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000824>
- Harrison, D. A., & Wagner, S. H. (2022). Adaptability and internal service quality in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 46(3), 453-470. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348021103225>
- Hur, W. M., Moon, T. W., & Jun, J. K. (2020). The role of emotional intelligence on internal service quality and job performance. *Service Business*, 14(3), 471-490. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11628-019-00405-1>
- Ihemeje, J. C., Adeleke, E. O., & Adegun, E. A. (2022). Self-management of emotional intelligence and its effect on the innovativeness component of entrepreneurship orientation. *Indian Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 3(2), 237-264.
- Ismail, S., Potgieter, I. L., & Coetzee, M. (2023). Self-regulatory employability attributes and competency: The strengthening role of grit. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1298299. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1298299>
- Johnson, K., & Smith, A. (2021). The impact of robust monitoring frameworks on governance outcomes within county governments. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 55(1), 78-101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2020.1785663>
- Juran, J. M. (1992). *Juran on quality by design: The new steps for planning quality into goods and services*. Free Press.
- Kariuki, A., & Kiiru, D. (2021). Influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance in Kenyan public institutions. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 11(2), 45-60.
- Koskela, L., Tezel, A., & Patel, V. (2019). *Theory of quality management: Its origins and history*. publications.aston.ac.uk
- Lopes, P. N. (2021). Emotional intelligence in organizations: Bridging research and practice. *Emotion Review*, 13(2), 150-160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073920980987>
- Mayer, J. D., Roberts, R. D., & Barsade, S. G. (2008). Human abilities: Emotional intelligence. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59, 507-536. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093646>
- Mehler, M., Balint, E., Gralla, M., Pöbnecker, T., Gast, M., & Hölzer, M. (2024). Training emotional competencies at the workplace: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Psychology*, 12, 718. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-02198-3>
- Mensah, R. O., Agyemang, F., Acquah, A., Babah, P. A., & Dontoh, J. (2020). Discourses on conceptual and theoretical frameworks in research: Meaning and implications for researchers. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(5), 53-64.
- Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2020). A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and work attitudes. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 93(1), 177-202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12252>
- Muchechete, C., Ganesh, L., & Karambwe, S. (2018). Effect of emotional intelligence on empowerment of business leaders in Zimbabwe. *International journal of Science and Research*, 3(1), 302-307.
- Munir, M., Chachar, A. A., & Kakepoto, H. (2024). A correlational study of leadership support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and job satisfaction in public sector employees. *International Research Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 5(3), 401-407
- Mutuku, P., & Mathooko, P. (2022). Internal service quality and service delivery in devolved governments in Kenya. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 45(5), 367-379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1882531>
- Najjarpour, M. (2024). Constructing a self-management competence model for EFL teachers: A perception-strategy evaluation. *Acta Psychologica*, 251, 104592. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104592>

- Ncube, M. S., & Chimucheka, T. (2019). The effect of managerial competencies on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Makana Municipality, South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(5), 1-15.
- Nguyen, T. T., Mia, L., Winata, L., & Chong, V. K. (2020). Effect of transformational leadership style and management control system on managerial performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 202–213.
- Oakland, J. S. (2014). *Total quality management and operational excellence: Text with cases* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Olukayode, A. E., & Aderinola, A. E. (2021). Self-Management of Emotional Intelligence and Its Effect on the Innovativeness Component of Entrepreneurship Orientation. *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research*, 3(1), 86-94.
- Pkatey, J. K. (2024). Internal control systems and performance of county government in Kenya: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance Research*, 12(11), 58–77. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ejaafr.2013/vol12n115877>
- Redden, F. A. (2024). *Demystifying the impact of service climate and internal service quality on managerial outcomes: Interactive effects of role stressors and managerial levels* (Published doctoral dissertation, Curtin University). Curtin eSpace. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11937/95826>
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211. <https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG>
- Senge, P. M. (1990). Continuous learning and internal service quality: Insights from the automotive sector. *Journal of Organizational Learning and Leadership*, 29(3), 175-192. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOLL-12-2020-0172>
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday.
- Sharma, P., Kong, T. T. C., & Kingshott, R. P. J. (2016). Internal service quality as a driver of employee satisfaction, commitment and performance: Exploring the focal role of employee well-being. *Journal of Service Management*, 27, 773–797. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-10-2015-0294> (Frontiers)
- Shestakova, L. G., & Lapenok, M. V. (2025). A model for developing self-management competence in students. *Russian Journal of Education and Psychology*, 16(4), 266–282. <https://doi.org/10.12731/2658-4034-2025-16-4-806>
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. SAGE Publications. <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=4002312>
- Uvhagen, H., Gärdegård, A., & Klinga, C. (2024). Through the lens of learning organization theory: strategies used when introducing new work methods as described by practitioners and leaders in social services. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 14(1), 1–17. DOI:10.1080/2156857X.2024.2329945
- Waduu, J., & Omido, K. (2025). Challenges affecting the implementation of e-government procurement in Kenyan county governments. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 3(3).
- Welbeck, D. N. O., Amponsah-Bediako, K., & Dorhetso, S. N. (2023). Appraisal of the effects of emotional intelligence on leadership styles of managers of small and medium enterprises in Ghana. In C. Aigbavboa, W. Thwala, J. N. Mojekwu, L. Atepor, E. Adinyira, G. Nani, & E. Bamfo-Agyei (Eds.), *Applied Research Conference in Africa (ARCA) proceedings*. pp. 77–95. Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper and Row.
- Zeidner, M., Matthews, G., & Roberts, R. D. (2020). Emotional intelligence in the workplace: A critical review. *Applied Psychology*, 69(2), 273–302. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12231>