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**Knowledge Management Practices and Service Delivery: Evidence  
from Regional Water Supply and Sanitation Authorities in  
Tanzania**



## Knowledge Management Practices and Service Delivery: Evidence from Regional Water Supply and Sanitation Authorities in Tanzania

 **Peter Teleli Andrea<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr Lawrence Wainaina, PhD<sup>2</sup>, Dr Samuel Maina, PhD<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>PhD Student, School of Business, Economics and Tourism, Kenyatta University, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, School of Business, Economics and Tourism, Kenyatta University, Kenya

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8223-2333>

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Reliable water service delivery remains a persistent challenge in Tanzania despite government efforts to improve the sector. Knowledge management practices (KMP) are increasingly recognized as important for organizational performance, yet empirical evidence from public water utilities remains limited. This study examined the effect of knowledge management practices on service delivery in selected Regional Water Supply and Sanitation Authorities (WSSAs) in Tanzania.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a positivist philosophy and descriptive and explanatory research designs. Data were collected from 286 employees selected through multistage sampling from 10 Regional WSSAs. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression were used for analysis.

**Findings:** The findings indicate that organization-oriented KMP had the strongest positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery, followed by human-oriented KMP. Technology-oriented KMP showed a positive bivariate association with service delivery but had no statistically significant independent effect in the regression model. The three KMP dimensions jointly explained 42.6% of the variance in service delivery (adjusted  $R^2 = 42.0\%$ ). The study concludes that organizational structures, employee capabilities, and supportive management practices are important for improving service delivery, while technology requires integration with appropriate organizational and human capabilities.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice:** The study contributes empirical evidence from public water utilities in a developing-country context and provides implications for managers and policymakers.

**Keywords:** *Knowledge Management Practices, Service Delivery, Human-Oriented Practices, Technology-Oriented Practices, Organization-Oriented Practices, Regional WSSAs, Tanzania*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Effective service delivery is a fundamental indicator of public sector performance because it reflects the ability of public institutions to meet citizens' needs through efficient, responsive, accountable, and quality services. Water utilities are particularly important because reliable water supply directly affects household welfare, public health, and economic activity. However, public water utilities in developing countries continue to experience operational inefficiencies, service delays, and customer complaints despite reforms and infrastructure investments (Controller and Auditor General [CAG], 2024; Joseph et al., 2024; Lombana et al., 2024; World Bank, 2023; African Development Bank, 2021; OECD, 2020).

Across Africa and parts of Asia, water service delivery remains constrained by limited institutional capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and weak financial sustainability, undermining the quality, reliability, and accessibility of water services (World Bank, 2023; African Development Bank, 2021). Studies from South Africa, Nigeria, India, and other developing-country contexts have reported challenges involving service quality, unreliable supply, infrastructure constraints, and operational performance (Ishola et al., 2025; Ojo & Sohail, 2024; Nyathikala et al., 2023; World Bank, 2023; WHO & UNICEF, 2023; Hope et al., 2022). These challenges suggest that infrastructure and financial investment alone may not be sufficient to ensure consistent service delivery; internal organizational capabilities are also important.

In Tanzania, the government has undertaken several policy and institutional reforms to improve water services, including the National Water Policy 2002, Water Resources Management Act 2009, Environmental Management Act 2004, and Water Supply and Sanitation Act 2019; and the establishment of institutions such as Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority, Regional WSSAs and the Ministry of Water. Nevertheless, service delivery challenges remain, including delays in new customer connections, delayed responses to complaints, and intermittent water supply (CAG, 2024; EWURA, 2024). These deficiencies suggest that infrastructure investments and institutional reforms, although necessary, may be insufficient on their own to achieve sustained improvements in service delivery.

Consequently, scholarly attention has increasingly shifted towards internal organizational capabilities that enable institutions to utilize available resources more effectively. Among these capabilities, knowledge management has emerged as a strategic organizational resource that enhances employee competence, organizational learning, innovation, and overall organizational performance (Andrea & Wanyoike, 2024; Meher & Mishra, 2022; Patwary et al., 2022; Balasubramanian et al., 2020; Ha & Lo, 2018). In water utilities, effective knowledge management is particularly relevant because service delivery depends on access to technical information, employee expertise, coordination, problem-solving, and organizational learning (Sandelin et al., 2019). This study therefore examines the effect of human-, technology-, and organization-oriented KMP on service delivery in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Despite policy reforms and investments in Tanzania's water sector, Regional WSSAs continue to experience service delivery challenges. The CAG (2024) reported that some Regional WSSAs, including Mwanza, Tanga, Dar es Salaam, and Geita, took between 5 and 408 days to provide new customer connections against the required seven-day standard. Similarly, complaints that were expected to be resolved within five working days took between 8 and 129 days in some authorities. EWURA (2024) also reported approximately 378,000 complaints during 2022/23, with many related to customer service, disconnections, low pressure, and water leakages.

Although infrastructure development, institutional reforms, and financial investments are important, they may not fully explain differences in service delivery performance. Internal organizational capabilities, including the ability to create, share, integrate, and apply knowledge, can support decision-making, coordination, innovation, and continuous improvement. Such capabilities are particularly relevant in water utilities where service delivery requires effective use of technical and operational knowledge (Sandelin et al., 2019).

Existing empirical research on KMP has largely focused on private organizations and developed economies, leaving limited evidence from public water utilities in developing countries. Tanzanian studies, such as Abduel (2023) and Shishiwa and Ndyemalila (2021), have examined individual water authorities and specific aspects of information systems or human resource practices. In addition, KMP have been conceptualized using different approaches, some studies emphasize knowledge processes such as acquisition, transfer, and application (Amayreh, 2023; Ugwu & Ejikeme, 2023; Meher & Mishra, 2022; Muslim et al., 2021), whereas others conceptualize knowledge management through broader organizational practices comprising human, technology, and organization-oriented dimensions (Heisig, 2009; Inkinen, 2016; Andreeva & Kianto, 2012; Kianto et al., 2017). This broader perspective provides a basis for examining how different organizational practices for managing knowledge may influence performance.

### **1.2 Study Objectives**

This study aimed to examine the effect of knowledge management practices on service delivery in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania. Specifically the study aimed to: determine the effect of human-oriented on service delivery, establish the effect of technology-oriented on service delivery; and examine the effect of organization-oriented on service delivery in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Foundation**

#### **2.1.1 AMO Theory**

The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory, originally proposed by Bailey (1993) and advanced by Appelbaum et al. (2000), explains employee performance through three elements: ability, motivation, and opportunity. Ability refers to employees' knowledge, skills, and competence; motivation concerns willingness and commitment to perform; while opportunity refers to the organizational conditions that allow employees to apply their capabilities (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016; Nehles et al., 2023). The theory provides a basis for explaining how KMP may influence service delivery. Human-oriented practices such as recruitment, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, and leadership can strengthen employee ability and motivation. Technology-oriented practices can provide opportunities for employees to access, share, and apply knowledge, while organization-oriented practices such as delegation, cross-functional teams, and participatory decision-making create an environment for knowledge sharing and problem-solving. Thus, AMO theory links KMP with service delivery through employee capability, motivation, and opportunities to use knowledge effectively.

#### **2.1.2 Public Value Theory**

Public Value Theory, associated with Moore (1995), emphasizes the creation of value through effective public services that respond to citizens' needs and expectations. Public value is reflected in service outcomes, responsiveness, efficiency, and public trust (Kelly et al., 2002; Bryson et al., 2014; Turkel & Turkel, 2016). The theory is relevant because Regional WSSAs operate as public service organizations whose effectiveness is ultimately reflected in the quality of services provided to citizens. KMP can contribute to public value by enabling employees to access relevant information, solve operational problems, respond to customer needs, and improve service reliability.

### **2.2 Empirical Review and Hypotheses**

#### **2.2.1 Human-oriented Practices and Service Delivery**

Human-oriented practices emphasize employees as key carriers, creators, and users of organizational knowledge. They include recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, and leadership (Donate & Guadamillas, 2011; Inkinen, 2016; Andreeva & Kianto, 2012). These practices can strengthen employee competence, motivation, problem-solving, and responsiveness, which are important for service delivery. Empirical studies provide supporting evidence. Nama et al. (2022) found that coaching and mentoring improved employee effectiveness and service outcomes in a South African local municipality. Ineye-Briggs (2024) reported that employee participation and professional

development enhanced morale and service delivery in Nigerian public secondary schools. In Tanzania, Shishiwa and Ndyemalila (2021) found that human resource practices influenced organizational effectiveness in MORUWASA, although implementation was inconsistent. Yamak and Eyupoglu (2021) also found that authentic leadership positively influenced service innovation behaviour among banking employees. However, evidence remains fragmented across sectors such as education, banking, and local government, with limited attention to public water utilities in developing countries. Moreover, Tanzanian water-sector studies have largely focused on individual authorities, providing limited evidence on the effect of human-oriented practices across multiple Regional WSSAs. Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Human-oriented practices have no significant effect on service delivery in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania.

### 2.2.2 Technology-oriented Practices and Service Delivery

Technology-oriented practices involve ICT infrastructure and its utilization to facilitate knowledge creation, storage, sharing, and application (Heisig, 2009; Inkinen, 2016). ICT can improve information access, coordination, decision-making, customer management, and monitoring, thereby supporting service delivery. Evidence from different contexts indicates potential benefits. Abubakari et al. (2023) found that ICT utilization improved administrative efficiency at Tamale Technical University. Essien et al. (2022) reported an association between ICT use and library service delivery. In Tanzania, Abduel (2023) found that the Water Information System contributed positively to customer service at Arusha WSSA. Bokhari and Myeong (2022) also found that technology-oriented knowledge management improved e-service in smart cities. Despite growing recognition of technology as a knowledge management enabler, limited evidence exists on how it influences service delivery in public water utilities in developing countries. In particular, there is limited empirical evidence on whether the availability and utilization of ICT infrastructure translate into improved service outcomes across multiple Regional WSSAs in Tanzania. Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Technology-oriented practices have no significant effect on service delivery in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania.

### 2.2.3 Organization-oriented Practices and Service Delivery

Organization-oriented practices concern organizational structures and managerial arrangements that facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and utilization. They include delegation of authority, participatory decision-making, teamwork, and cross-functional collaboration (Heisig, 2009; Andreeva & Kianto, 2012). Such practices are important in public water utilities because service delivery requires coordination across departments and timely organizational decisions. Njuguna et al. (2021) found that delegation and employee involvement positively influenced

performance in Kenyan water utility companies. Engdaw (2022) reported that administrative decentralization, particularly discretion in human resource and legislative matters, significantly influenced public service quality in Ethiopia. Chota and Zenebe (2022) found that delegation enhanced employee performance through greater responsibility and engagement, while Kuye and Akinwale (2021) reported that excessive bureaucracy constrained service delivery in Nigerian public hospitals. Although previous studies demonstrate the importance of organizational structures and management practices, most have examined isolated practices such as delegation or decentralization rather than organization-oriented practices as an integrated construct. Furthermore, limited studies have investigated their effect on service delivery within Tanzanian public water utilities. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Organization-oriented practices have no significant effect on service delivery in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy and Design**

The study adopted a positivist philosophy because it examined measurable relationships between knowledge management practices and service delivery using quantitative methods. A cross-sectional approach was used, with data collected at one point in time. Descriptive and explanatory research designs were employed to describe respondents' perceptions and examine the effects of the three KMP dimensions on service delivery.

#### **3.2 Study Area, Population and Sampling**

The study was conducted in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania. The target population comprised 1,359 employees from four departments: Human Resources and Administration, Customer Service, ICT, and Water Supply and Sanitation Management. Multistage sampling was used. First, 10 of the 26 Regional WSSAs were selected; five were purposively selected based on service delivery challenges identified by CAG (2024), while five were selected through stratified random sampling to enhance geographical representation. Second, respondents were selected through simple random sampling using employee lists from the four departments. A total of 286 usable responses were obtained for analysis.

#### **3.3 Data Collection and Measurement**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. KMP were measured using three dimensions based on Inkinen et al. (2015): human-oriented practices covering recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, and leadership; technology-oriented practices covering ICT availability and utilization; and organization-oriented practices covering delegation, cross-functional teams, and participatory decision-making. Service delivery was measured using reliability, responsiveness,

assurance, empathy, and tangibility based on Parasuraman et al. (1988). Measurement items were adapted from established studies, including Donate and Guadamillas (2011), Inkinen et al. (2015), Kokkaew et al. (2022), and Njuguna et al. (2021).

### 3.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through review of relevant literature and expert assessment. Construct validity was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO values ranged from 0.683 to 0.881, while Bartlett's tests were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded 0.70 for all constructs, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the study variables, Pearson correlation was used to examine bivariate relationships, and multiple linear regression was used to test the effects of human, technology, and organization-oriented practices on service delivery. Hypotheses were tested at the 5% significance level.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 below summarizes the descriptive statistics for the study variables.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables**

| Variable                        | Items | N   | Mean | SD    | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----|------|-------|----------------|
| Human-oriented Practices        | 19    | 286 | 4.14 | 0.418 | High           |
| Technology-oriented Practices   | 10    | 286 | 4.25 | 0.451 | High           |
| Organization-oriented Practices | 12    | 286 | 3.84 | 0.485 | Moderate-high  |
| Service Delivery                | 20    | 286 | 3.99 | 0.488 | Moderate-high  |

**Source: Survey data (2026)**

Technology-oriented practices recorded the highest mean ( $M = 4.25$ ), followed by human-oriented practices ( $M = 4.14$ ). Organization-oriented practices had a comparatively lower mean ( $M = 3.84$ ), while service delivery recorded a mean of 3.99. Overall, respondents reported relatively high implementation of knowledge management practices and moderate-to-high service delivery performance.

### 4.2 Diagnostic Tests

Diagnostic tests indicated that the assumptions for regression analysis were adequately met. KMO values ranged from 0.683 to 0.881 and Bartlett's tests were significant ( $p < .001$ ). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were non-significant ( $p > .05$ ), tolerance values

ranged from 0.724 to 0.813, and VIF values ranged from 1.230 to 1.381. Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg tests were also non-significant ( $p > .05$ ), indicating no serious multicollinearity, normality, or heteroscedasticity concerns.

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the associations between knowledge management practices and service delivery. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

| Variable                           | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4 |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Human-oriented Practices        | 1      |        |        |   |
| 2. Technology-oriented Practices   | .336** | 1      |        |   |
| 3. Organization-oriented Practices | .458** | .396** | 1      |   |
| 4. Service Delivery                | .406** | .228** | .638** | 1 |

**Note:** N = 286;  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

**Source:** Survey data (2026)

All three KMP dimensions had positive and statistically significant correlations with service delivery. Organization-oriented practices had the strongest association ( $r = .638$ ), followed by human-oriented practices ( $r = .406$ ), while technology-oriented practices had a weaker association ( $r = .228$ ). Correlations among the independent variables ranged from .336 to .458, indicating no evidence of problematic multicollinearity at the bivariate level.

### 4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was conducted to determine the independent effects of the three dimensions of knowledge management practices on service delivery.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

| Model | R    | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | Std. Error of Estimate |
|-------|------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1     | .653 | .426           | .420                    | .372                   |

*Dependent variable: Service delivery*

*Source:* Survey data (2026)

The model produced  $R = .653$ ,  $R^2 = .426$ , and adjusted  $R^2 = .420$ . Thus, the three dimensions of KMP jointly explained 42.6% of the variance in service delivery, with the adjusted model explaining 42.0%.

**Table 4: ANOVA**

| Model        | Sum of Squares | df         | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|--------------|----------------|------------|-------------|--------|------|
| Regression   | 28.989         | 3          | 9.663       | 69.844 | .000 |
| Residual     | 39.015         | 282        | .138        |        |      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>68.004</b>  | <b>285</b> |             |        |      |

*Dependent variable: Service delivery.*

*Source: Survey data (2026)*

The ANOVA results show that the overall regression model was statistically significant,  $F(3, 282) = 69.844$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . This indicates that the three KMP dimensions collectively provide a statistically significant prediction of service delivery in the selected Regional WSSAs.

**Table 5: Regression Coefficients**

| Predictor                       | B     | Beta ( $\beta$ ) | t      | Sig. | Decision           |
|---------------------------------|-------|------------------|--------|------|--------------------|
| Constant                        | 1.219 |                  | 4.595  | .000 |                    |
| Human-oriented Practices        | .181  | .154             | 2.987  | .003 | Reject H01         |
| Technology-oriented Practices   | -.062 | -.057            | -1.147 | .252 | Fail to reject H02 |
| Organization-oriented Practices | .594  | .590             | 11.138 | .000 | Reject H03         |

*Dependent variable: Service delivery.*

*Source: Survey data (2026)*

Organization-oriented practices had a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery ( $\beta = .590$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It had the largest standardized coefficient among the three dimensions. The finding indicates that practices such as delegation, participatory decision-making, and cross-functional collaboration are associated with improved service delivery. The result is consistent with findings emphasizing knowledge sharing, collaboration, and organizational coordination as important performance-related mechanisms (Donate & de Pablo, 2015; Ali et al., 2020).

Human-oriented practices also had a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery ( $\beta = .154$ ,  $p = .003$ ). This suggests that recruitment; training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, and leadership contribute to service delivery by strengthening employee capabilities and motivation. The finding is consistent with the AMO perspective and previous empirical evidence linking employee development and leadership practices with organizational and service outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2021; Otoo-Arthur & Van Zyl, 2022; Ineye-Briggs, 2024).

Technology-oriented practices did not have a statistically significant independent effect on service delivery ( $\beta = -.057$ ,  $p = .252$ ). Although technology-oriented practices had a positive and significant bivariate correlation with service delivery ( $r = .228$ ), its independent regression coefficient was negative and statistically insignificant after the other KMP dimensions were included. This difference suggests that ICT resources alone may not translate into improved service delivery without complementary human capabilities and organizational arrangements. Similar arguments have been made concerning the importance of integrating digital technologies with broader organizational capabilities (Alshurideh et al., 2022; Santoro et al., 2021).

Overall, the results indicate that KMP dimensions do not contribute equally to service delivery. Organization-oriented practices showed the strongest independent association, followed by human-oriented practices, while technology-oriented practices did not demonstrate a statistically significant independent effect.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study examined the effects of human, technology, and organization-oriented practices on service delivery in selected Regional WSSAs in Tanzania. The findings demonstrate that the three dimensions contribute differently to service delivery. Organization-oriented practices had the strongest and statistically significant effect, while human-oriented practices also had a significant positive effect. Technology-oriented practices had a positive bivariate association with service delivery but no statistically significant independent effect in the regression model. The findings therefore emphasize the importance of organizational arrangements and employee capabilities in translating knowledge into improved service delivery.

### **5.2 Practical Implications**

The findings have implications for managers and policymakers in Regional WSSAs. Greater attention should be given to participatory decision-making, delegation of authority, and cross-functional collaboration to facilitate knowledge sharing and timely problem-solving. Human-oriented practices should also be strengthened through appropriate recruitment, employee training and development, performance appraisal, supportive leadership, and recognition of employee contributions. Investment in ICT should be accompanied by appropriate organizational processes and employee capabilities so that technology is effectively integrated into service delivery rather than treated as a stand-alone intervention.

### **5.3 Limitations and Future Research**

The cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish changes over time and constrains strong causal inference. The study also focused on the direct effects of KMP on service delivery and selected Regional WSSAs, which may limit generalization to other sectors and settings. Future studies could adopt longitudinal designs and examine mediating or moderating mechanisms

through which KMP influence service delivery. Similar research could also be conducted in other public service organizations and countries.

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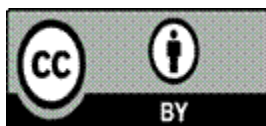
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