**Optimising** **Service Delivery in State-Owned Energy Corporations: Examining Stakeholder Participation Strategies at Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited**

**Abstract**

This research examined the impact of bureaucratic practices on service delivery in state-owned energy corporations, focusing on Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL) Limited. Stakeholder Theory provided the foundation for assessing how stakeholder participation influences service efficiency. A quantitative approach incorporating correlational and survey research designs was adopted, targeting 678 individuals, including board members, UEDCL employees, and private sector participants in the energy industry. Stratified, proportionate, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques facilitated the selection of 251 respondents. Self-administered questionnaires were used for data collection, with analysis conducted through descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations, alongside inferential techniques, including linear regression and correlation analysis, using SPSS version 28. Results indicated a significant relationship between stakeholder participation and service delivery (β = 0.401, t = 6.057, p = 0.000; p < 0.05), emphasising the crucial role of stakeholder engagement in improving service efficiency. Strengthening stakeholder involvement mechanisms can enhance responsiveness and decision-making processes in service delivery. This study provides an empirical examination of stakeholder participation in Uganda’s energy sector, offering valuable insights for improving governance and operational efficiency in state-owned enterprises.

**Keywords:** Service Delivery, Energy Corporations, Stakeholder Participation, Electricity Distribution Company

**Introduction**
State-owned energy corporations significantly contribute to providing essential services and ensuring national energy security. Achieving effective service delivery in these entities depends on stakeholder participation strategies that enhance operational efficiency, transparency, and service quality (Bhattacharya et al., 2020; Ghosh et al., 2022). Research highlights that stakeholder involvement promotes collaboration and accountability, leading to improved policy implementation and project success (Mahapatra & Mahapatra, 2020; Kumar et al., 2022). Reports from global organisations emphasise that engagement strategies support long-term energy transitions and climate goals (IEA, 2020; IRENA, 2022). Inclusive participation strengthens stakeholder satisfaction and trust in public energy services, reinforcing the need for structured engagement mechanisms (UNDP, 2020). Examining stakeholder participation in state-owned energy corporations remains critical for optimising service delivery and ensuring sustainable energy development.

Enhancing service efficiency, transparency, and trust in state-owned energy corporations requires well-structured stakeholder participation strategies. Research suggests that engaging stakeholders through structured dialogue fosters effective policy implementation and improved service outcomes (Bhattacharya et al., 2020; Mahapatra & Mahapatra, 2020). Stakeholder mapping and analysis help energy corporations tailor engagement strategies based on the influence and interests of different groups (Ghosh et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2022). The International Energy Agency [IEA] (2020) and IRENA (2022) highlight that transparent communication and continuous feedback mechanisms increase stakeholder satisfaction and facilitate sustainable energy transitions. Strengthening accountability and public trust remains essential for the long-term success of these corporations (UNDP, 2020; Climate Investment Funds, 2020). Addressing stakeholder concerns early in project planning ensures smoother implementation and minimises resistance, ultimately improving service delivery in the energy sector (National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 2021; Initiative for Climate Action Transparency, 2020).

State-owned energy corporations in advanced economies often achieve high service delivery standards due to substantial investments in infrastructure, technology, and regulatory frameworks (Bardouille, 2022). Utilities such as Eversource and United Illuminating in Connecticut, USA, ensure transparency and efficiency by segmenting customer bills into supply, local delivery, transmission, and public benefits components (CT Insider, 2025). Structured regulatory processes and public consultations facilitate stakeholder participation, enabling consumers and other interested parties to influence decision-making (Littlechild, 2020). Balancing diverse stakeholder interests and ensuring equitable service access remain ongoing challenges (Sovacool et al., 2020).

Distinct challenges affect state-owned energy corporations in emerging economies, often arising from financial constraints, infrastructural deficits, and governance issues (Kumar et al., 2022). In India, financial aid is being considered for debt-ridden power distribution utilities to stabilise the sector amid growing demand (Reuters, 2025). Limited communication channels and transparency hinder stakeholder participation, fostering mistrust and resistance within local communities (Ghosh et al., 2022). Political influences and regulatory uncertainties further complicate engagement efforts, restricting effective collaboration between utilities and stakeholders (Marples, 2020).

Uganda’s state-owned energy corporations have undergone significant reforms to enhance efficiency and accessibility. The unbundling of the power sector in 1999 resulted in the establishment of separate entities for generation, transmission, and distribution, with UEDCL responsible for distribution. Persistent challenges, including infrastructural deficits, financial constraints, and delays in planned mergers, continue to disrupt service delivery and impede sector performance (New Vision, 2024).

Stakeholder participation plays a vital role in ensuring effective service delivery within UEDCL, though several challenges hinder meaningful engagement (Kagenyi, 2022). Initiatives such as public consultations on electricity tariffs organised by the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) have provided platforms for stakeholders to voice concerns regarding affordability and reliability (ERA, 2022). Limited communication channels (Muhumuza, 2022), inadequate transparency (Ssekandi, 2022), and political influences (Tumwine, 2022) continue to obstruct constructive dialogue, resulting in mistrust and resistance from local communities (Kasozi, 2022). Strengthening communication strategies (Manyak, 2020), enhancing transparency (Bategeka, 2020), and promoting inclusive participation (Mugisha, 2022) are essential for building trust and improving service outcomes (Kagenyi, 2022). These challenges provided the context for this study, which examined the effectiveness of stakeholder participation strategies implemented by UEDCL to enhance service delivery.

This study underscores the role of stakeholder participation in enhancing service delivery efficiency, transparency, and sustainability at the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company.

**Research Question**

How does stakeholder participation influence service delivery in state-owned energy corporations, with a focus on Uganda Electricity Distribution Company?

**Null Hypothesis (H₀)**

Stakeholder participation has no significant impact on service delivery in state-owned energy corporations, including Uganda Electricity Distribution Company.

NOTE:

**2.1 Underpinning Theory**

Stakeholder Theory, developed by Freeman (1984), provides a fundamental basis for understanding the role of stakeholder engagement in enhancing service delivery within UEDCL. This theory asserts that organisations must consider the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, government agencies, and communities, to achieve long-term success and legitimacy (Kagenyi, 2022; Ssekandi, 2022). Applying this framework to UEDCL highlights the importance of structured stakeholder involvement in decision-making, ensuring that diverse perspectives contribute to improved service efficiency and transparency (Mugisha, 2022). Inclusivity, a key tenet of the theory, underscores the need for broad stakeholder participation in organisational processes, particularly in regulatory decisions led by bodies such as the ERA and the Ministry of Energy (Freeman, Harrison, & Zyglidopoulos, 2018). Public consultations on electricity tariffs and service expansion plans create opportunities for consumer engagement, yet inadequate communication channels and limited transparency often undermine meaningful participation (ERA, 2022; Muhumuza, 2022). Accountability, another core principle of Stakeholder Theory, requires organisations to take responsibility for their actions and decisions, fostering trust through transparent engagement, independent audits, and regular reporting (Bategeka, 2020; Kasozi, 2022). Balancing competing interests is also critical, as UEDCL must navigate financial sustainability while maintaining affordability for electricity consumers, ensuring operational viability without imposing excessive costs on the public (Tumwine, 2022; Kagenyi, 2022). Implementing effective stakeholder engagement strategies, aligned with the principles of inclusivity, accountability, and balanced decision-making, can enhance UEDCL’s credibility and contribute to a more sustainable and transparent electricity distribution system.

Collaboration and partnerships play a crucial role in strengthening service delivery within UEDCL, aligning with the principles of Stakeholder Theory. Organisations benefit from stakeholder relationships by gaining access to essential resources and expertise, facilitating operational efficiency and expansion (Freeman et al., 2018). UEDCL depends on government funding, private sector investments, and international donor support to advance infrastructure development and integrate new technologies. Engaging with energy sector investors and development agencies strengthens electricity distribution networks and enhances service quality (Manyak, 2020). Political interference and regulatory inconsistencies present significant challenges to effective collaboration, limiting the impact of stakeholder engagement efforts (Ssekandi, 2022).

Stakeholder Theory emphasises inclusive participation, accountability, balancing competing interests, and fostering strategic partnerships to improve service delivery at UEDCL. Strengthening stakeholder engagement mechanisms enhances the organisation’s ability to provide reliable and affordable electricity. Institutionalising stakeholder participation in policy development and service delivery frameworks reinforces operational efficiency and contributes to Uganda’s broader energy sector objectives.

**2.1 Empirical Review**

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that stakeholder participation plays a vital role in enhancing service delivery within state-owned energy companies worldwide, including Uganda. Findings from Kagenyi (2022) indicates that involving stakeholders in Uganda’s energy sector contributes to improved service provision by incorporating diverse perspectives and addressing various needs. Mugisha (2022) further highlights that inclusive participation fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, ultimately leading to better service outcomes.

Studies conducted in different contexts reinforce the significance of stakeholder engagement in energy service delivery. Sovacool et al. (2020) emphasize that active stakeholder involvement ensures energy services align with local community needs. Ghosh et al. (2022) also demonstrate that effective participation enhances transparency, accountability, and trust in service providers, which are essential for sustainable energy management.

Research also identifies key obstacles to stakeholder engagement in state-owned energy firms. Muhumuza (2022) reports that limited communication channels and a lack of transparency often hinder effective participation in Uganda’s energy sector. Tumwine (2022) further notes that political influences can distort engagement processes, leading to unequal representation and decision-making that favours specific groups.

Insights from case studies in other countries highlight successful stakeholder participation models. Bardouille (2020) observes that South Africa’s energy sector has achieved greater responsiveness to local needs through enhanced stakeholder involvement. Manyak (2020) similarly finds that engagement initiatives in Kenya’s energy sector have strengthened transparency and accountability, improving service provision.

Empirical evidence affirms the critical role of stakeholder participation in ensuring effective service delivery within state-owned energy companies. Addressing communication barriers, increasing transparency, and minimising political interference remains essential to enabling meaningful stakeholder engagement. Strengthening these aspects ensures energy services respond effectively to community needs while promoting inclusive decision-making.

**Research Gaps**

Empirical research underscores the importance of stakeholder participation in enhancing service delivery within state-owned energy companies, yet certain critical gaps remain insufficiently explored. A significant issue involves the mechanisms through which stakeholder feedback is solicited, processed, and applied to improve service delivery. Studies conducted by Kagenyi (2022) and Mugisha (2022) highlight the role of stakeholder engagement but do not assess whether companies have established effective feedback systems that enable meaningful contributions. This study addressed this issue by examining whether structured channels such as surveys, meetings, and emails are effectively utilised to gather stakeholder perspectives and whether these inputs lead to tangible operational improvements.

A further gap exists regarding the extent to which stakeholder feedback informs decision-making processes. Research by Sovacool et al. (2020) and Ghosh et al. (2022) confirms that stakeholder engagement fosters transparency and accountability, yet limited evidence exists on whether companies systematically incorporate feedback into their service enhancement strategies. This study aimed to bridge this gap by evaluating whether stakeholder input is analysed to identify areas for improvement and whether organisations actively respond to concerns raised.

The timeliness and effectiveness of responses to stakeholder concerns also remain underexamined. Muhumuza (2022) and Tumwine (2022) identify inadequate communication channels and political influences as barriers to engagement, yet little attention has been given to whether companies address stakeholder concerns promptly and effectively. This study investigated the extent to which state-owned energy companies act on stakeholder feedback and whether stakeholders perceive these responses as meaningful and impactful.

Collaborative decision-making between energy companies and stakeholders remains an underexplored research area. While Bardouille (2020) and Manyak (2020) demonstrate that stakeholder engagement enhances service delivery, they do not assess the extent to which stakeholders, including employees, customers, and suppliers, actively participate in decision-making. This study examined whether companies create opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to key decisions affecting service delivery and whether this collaboration leads to improved outcomes for all parties involved.

Limited research exists on how companies cultivate a culture of transparency, trust, and open communication with stakeholders. Previous studies have emphasised the importance of accountability, yet there is insufficient analysis of how organisational culture influences stakeholder relationships. This study addressed this gap by evaluating whether energy companies actively foster a transparent and inclusive environment that promotes meaningful engagement and trust.

**Methodology**

*Research Approach*

A quantitative research approach effectively examined bureaucratic practices and service delivery in UEDCL by enabling the systematic collection of objectives, measurable data (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This method facilitated the quantification of stakeholder participation, efficiency levels, and their impact on service delivery through statistical tools, ensuring reliability and validity in findings (Saunders et al., 2023). Structured surveys and data analysis techniques captured numerical insights into procedural effectiveness, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction, allowing for generalisable conclusions (Bryman, 2022). The approach also supported hypothesis testing and provided empirical evidence for assessing administrative performance and decision-making within the organisation (Bell et al., 2022).

*Research Design*

A correlational and survey research design examined the relationship between bureaucratic practices and service delivery efficiency in UEDLC. This design effectively assessed how stakeholder participation influenced service delivery outcomes through statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Structured surveys ensured systematic data collection from respondents, maintaining consistency and comparability across responses (Bryman, 2022). The correlational approach identified associations between variables without manipulation, providing an objective analysis of the connection between stakeholder participation strategies and service efficiency (Saunders et al., 2023). This methodology strengthened the study’s capacity to generate empirical evidence and derive meaningful insights into administrative performance within the company.

*Target Population*

The study focused on individuals with direct and continuous interactions with UEDCL, ensuring that respondents possessed relevant experience and knowledge for accurate data collection. Selection criteria prioritised board members, company employees, and private sector players in the energy industry, as these groups offered valuable insights into bureaucratic practices and service delivery (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Board members contributed perspectives on strategic decision-making, employees provided insights into operational and service delivery processes, and private sector players shared external viewpoints on efficiency and collaboration within the industry (Saunders et al., 2023).

Individuals without direct involvement in the company’s operations, including customers and regulatory officials, were excluded, as their perspectives, though valuable, did not align with the study’s focus on internal bureaucratic processes (Bryman, 2022). Employees with less than a year of experience were also excluded to ensure that data was collected from respondents familiar with the company’s administrative and service delivery framework (Bell et al., 2022). This approach strengthened the reliability and validity of the findings by focusing on well-informed participants.

**Table 1: Target Population**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Target** | **Population** |
| Board Members | 8 |
| Employees of UEDC | 661 |
| Private sector Players in the Energy Industry | 9 |
| **Total** | **678** |

**Sources:** UEDC (2024*)*

*Sample Size and Sampling Techniques*

The sample size for this study was 251 obtained from Yamane's (1967) formula.

Yamane (1967):$n=\frac{N}{1+N(e)^{2}}$

Where: **N** – represents the target population; **n** – represents the sample size; **e**- is the margin of error (0.05).

Thus,$n=\frac{2062}{1+2062(0.05^{2})}$$n=\frac{678}{1+678(0.05^{2})}$ =251

The study adopted stratified, purposive, proportionate, and simple random sampling techniques to achieve a representative selection of respondents from UEDCL. Stratified sampling facilitated the categorisation of the target population into distinct groups based on roles and responsibilities, ensuring adequate representation of key respondents such as board members, employees, and private sector players (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Proportionate sampling ensured that the sample size for each group corresponded to its relative proportion within the overall population, minimising the risk of over- or under-representation (Saunders et al., 2023). Purposive sampling was employed to select private sector players in the energy industry, as their industry expertise and direct involvement provided critical insights into bureaucratic practices and service delivery efficiency (Etikan et al., 2023).

Simple random sampling was applied within each stratum to eliminate selection bias, ensuring equal chances of selection for all respondents and enhancing the reliability and generalisability of findings (Kumar, 2023). The integration of these techniques strengthened the study’s methodological rigour by ensuring a well-balanced, representative, and unbiased participant selection.

*Data Collection Instruments*

A self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) incorporating a five-point Likert scale was used to collect quantitative data, ensuring consistency with the research approach. This method enabled the standardisation of responses, allowing for the measurement of perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding stakeholder participation and service delivery at UEDCL (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The Likert scale provided a structured format for respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement, facilitating statistical analysis of trends and correlations (Saunders et al., 2023). Utilising SAQs improved data reliability by reducing interviewer bias and allowing respondents to complete the questionnaire at their convenience, encouraging honest and reflective responses (Bryman, 2022). The structured nature of the Likert scale further ensured comparability of responses, supporting rigorous quantitative analysis to generate objective conclusions about administrative efficiency and service delivery (Kumar, 2023).

*Piloting*

A pilot study involving 32 respondents from Umeme Limited, representing 10% of the study sample, was conducted to enhance the questionnaire’s reliability and validity. This preliminary test identified potential design flaws, ensuring clarity and consistency in the data collection tool (Hou & Cheng, 2021). Following Mugenda and Mugenda’s (2003) recommendation for social science research, the pilot study provided insights into question comprehensibility and response accuracy. Data collected underwent immediate screening to assess its suitability for analysis, refining the final instrument for the main study and improving measurement precision.

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were assessed to ensure accuracy and consistency in data collection. Validity was established through face, construct, and content validity tests, evaluating readability, clarity, and language use, as recommended by Bloomfield and Fisher (2019). A panel of experts and supervisors reviewed the questionnaire, refining it based on their feedback to enhance its effectiveness in measuring research constructs (Yasir, 2016). Reliability was tested using Cronbach’s alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 for acceptability, ensuring consistency in responses across multiple trials (Osborn & Waters, 2012). SPSS v28 was employed for reliability analysis, identifying and addressing ambiguous items to improve the instrument’s precision and the overall quality of research findings (Haley et al., 2021).

*Data Analysis*

Data analysis and presentation utilised both descriptive and inferential statistics to ensure a thorough interpretation of the findings. Descriptive statistics summarised data using measures such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, offering a clear overview of bureaucratic practices, stakeholder participation, and service delivery patterns at UEDCL (Saunders et al., 2023). Inferential statistics, including simple linear regression and correlation analysis, examined the relationship between stakeholder participation and service delivery, assessing the strength and direction of their association (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 0.05 significance level to maintain statistical validity and minimise the likelihood of Type I errors (Field, 2022). The results were presented in graphs and tables, ensuring structured and visually comprehensible data interpretation, which enhanced understanding of how stakeholder involvement influences service delivery at the company (Pallant, 2023).

*Ethical Considerations*

Ethical principles were rigorously observed throughout this study to uphold integrity, confidentiality, and respect for all participants. Informed consent was secured from respondents before data collection, ensuring voluntary participation based on a clear understanding of the study’s objectives, potential risks, and expected benefits (Cohen et al., 2023). Confidentiality and anonymity were safeguarded by assigning unique identification codes instead of personal details, protecting respondents’ privacy and preventing unauthorised access to sensitive information (Saunders et al., 2023).

The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence were maintained by ensuring that no harm was inflicted on participants, with responses handled impartially and with due care (Bryman, 2022). Ethical approval was obtained from relevant institutional review boards, and data collection followed established professional research ethics, including accuracy in reporting findings and avoiding fabrication or manipulation of data (Resnik, 2023). Participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing consequences. These measures ensured responsible research conduct, reinforcing the credibility and validity of the study while safeguarding the rights and dignity of all stakeholders involved.

**4.0 Discussion of Findings**

*4.1 Response Rate*

A response rate of 65% was achieved, exceeding the minimum threshold considered acceptable in organisational research. Baruch and Holtom (2008) indicated that response rates ranging from 60% to 70% are adequate for ensuring data reliability and representativeness. Attaining this level of participation strengthened the study’s credibility by reducing non-response bias and ensuring that the collected data accurately represented the target population.

**Table 2: Response Rate**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Response**  | **Frequency/Rate** |
| Number of distributed Questionnaires | 251 |
| Returned Questionnaires | 163 |
| Response rate  | 65% |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**4***.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Demographic data collected provided insights into the study population's characteristics. These included gender and experience of respondents

*4.2.1 Gender Profile of Respondents*

The gender distribution of respondents at UEDCL, with 74.2% male and 25.8% female representation, aligns with broader employment patterns in the energy sector, as shown in Table 3. Global research highlights the underrepresentation of women in technical roles within utility companies. IRENA (2019) indicated that women constitute only 22% of the global energy workforce, while the World Bank (2020) identified persistent gender disparities in Sub-Saharan Africa, where female participation in technical positions rarely surpasses 30%. The African Development Bank (2023) linked this imbalance to structural barriers, including restricted access to STEM education and prevailing cultural norms. Clancy et al. (2020) observed that gender disparities impact service delivery and organisational performance in state-owned utilities. At the national level, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024) reported similar trends, with female representation in technical and managerial roles at approximately 27%, aligning with this study’s findings. These insights highlight the necessity for targeted policies to enhance gender inclusivity in Uganda’s energy sector.

**Table 3: Gender Profile of Respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **N** | **%** |
| Male | 121 | 74.2% |
| Female | 42 | 25.8% |

**Source:** Field Survey (2025)

*4.2.2 Experience Profile of Respondents*

The research examined respondents' experience distribution. Data on gender was collected, analysed, and presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Experience of Respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | **N** | **%** |
| Less than 1 year | 84 | 51.5% |
| 2-5 | 28 | 17.2% |
| 6-10 | 37 | 22.7% |
| Above 11 | 14 | 8.6% |

**Source:** Field Survey (2025)

The workforce at UEDCL is predominantly composed of relatively new employees, with 51.5% having less than one year of service and only 8.6% exceeding 11 years, as shown in Table 5. This composition reflects challenges in staff retention and turnover within East African public utilities, as identified by Mwesigwa and Namiyingo (2021). A workforce where over 70% of employees have less than five years of experience, such as UEDCL's 68.7%, negatively impacts service delivery and institutional knowledge retention, as noted by Ibrahim et al. (2023). Limited retention of experienced staff often correlates with lower operational efficiency, a concern reported by the African Development Bank (2024). Employees with five to ten years of experience constitute 22.7%, aligning with World Bank (2023) findings on employment trends in developing countries. This proportion, however, remains below the recommended 30-35% necessary for effective knowledge transfer and succession planning in utility companies. Addressing these gaps requires strategic interventions to enhance staff retention and maintain an optimal experience balance at UEDCL.

*4.3 Descriptive Statistics on Stakeholders Participation and Service Delivery*

The study sought to determine the influence of stakeholders’ participation on service delivery in Uganda Electricity Distribution Company. The mean and standard deviation are provided in the table below. The Likert scale ranged 1 and 5.

**Table 5: Stakeholders Participation and Service Delivery**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **N** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| The company has established effective feedback mechanisms that allow stakeholders to provide input on its operations. | 163 | 3.3497 | 1.39458 |
| Stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the company's services and operations. | 163 | 2.8834 | 1.33515 |
| The company regularly solicits feedback from stakeholders through various channels (e.g., surveys, meetings, email). | 163 | 2.9632 | 1.29047 |
| Stakeholder feedback is used to identify areas for improvement and implement changes. | 163 | 2.7914 | 1.19388 |
| The company responds to stakeholder feedback in a timely and effective manner. | 163 | 2.9080 | 1.28529 |
| The company collaborates effectively with stakeholders, including employees, customers, and suppliers, to achieve common goals. | 163 | 2.9387 | 1.26048 |
| Stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes that affect them. | 163 | 2.6564 | 1.30706 |
| The company works closely with stakeholders to identify and address their needs and concerns. | 163 | 2.4785 | 1.24889 |
| Collaboration with stakeholders has led to improved outcomes and benefits for all parties involved. | 163 | 3.5153 | 1.30221 |
| The company fosters a culture of transparency, trust, and open communication with stakeholders | 163 | 3.4969 | 1.10763 |
| **Valid N (listwise)** | **163** | **2.9982** | **1.27256** |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Stakeholder engagement at UEDCL exhibits moderate effectiveness, with an overall mean of 3.00 (SD=1.27), suggesting the presence of mechanisms but limited active participation and feedback utilisation. Feedback mechanisms (M=3.35, SD=1.39) are in place yet do not meet the optimal engagement levels outlined by Nyangoma (2023). Actual feedback solicitation (M=2.88, SD=1.34) and its application in decision-making (M=2.79, SD=1.19) highlight notable gaps, aligning with findings from Mugera (2024) and Basalirwa (2024). Organisational response effectiveness (M=2.91, SD=1.29) and stakeholder collaboration (M=2.94, SD=1.26) further reflect persistent challenges, as documented by Arinaitwe (2024) and Namata (2023).

Stakeholder involvement in decision-making recorded the lowest score (M=2.66, SD=1.31), reinforcing Kaweesa’s (2024) conclusions on the limited participatory governance in state-owned enterprises. Efforts to address stakeholder needs (M=2.48, SD=1.25) align with Nakimuli’s (2023) observations on assessment difficulties within public utilities. Positive outcomes emerge when engagement takes place, as reflected in collaboration results (M=3.52, SD=1.30) and transparency efforts (M=3.50, SD=1.11), supporting research by Nabasa (2024) and Kisembo (2023). The overall mean underscores the necessity for strengthening stakeholder participation, enhancing feedback integration, and improving decision-making processes, consistent with Muwonge’s (2024) analysis of African utilities.

*4.4 Service Delivery* *in Uganda Electricity Distribution Company*

The study sought to determine the perception of respondents on service delivery in Uganda as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Service Delivery in Uganda Electricity Distribution Company**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **N** | **Mean** | **SD** |
| I believe our customers are satisfied with the overall service quality we provide. | 163 | 3.0613 | 1.28953 |
| Our customers appreciate the helpfulness and courtesy of our staff. | 163 | 3.2086 | 1.23954 |
| The company's electricity supply reliability meets customer expectations. | 163 | 2.8712 | 1.24299 |
| Customers are satisfied with the timeliness of our response to their complaints. | 163 | 3.1840 | 1.26315 |
| I think our customers are happy with the services we provide. | 163 | 2.9755 | 1.28116 |
| Our customers are generally satisfied with the reliability of our electricity supply. | 163 | 3.0123 | 1.14389 |
| Customers appreciate our prompt response to their complaints and inquiries. | 163 | 3.1227 | 1.22108 |
| Our customers are happy with the overall quality of our services. | 163 | 2.9018 | 1.32038 |
| Customers find our billing and payment processes easy and convenient. | 163 | 3.4969 | 1.10763 |
| Our customers would recommend our services to others. | 163 | 2.8650 | 1.16807 |
| **Valid N (listwise)** | **163** | **3.0699** | **1.22774** |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

Stakeholder engagement in the utility sector exhibits moderate effectiveness, with existing feedback mechanisms (M=3.35, SD=1.39), yet encouragement of stakeholder input remains insufficient (M=2.88, SD=1.34), highlighting challenges in fostering active participation (Mugera, 2024; Nyangoma, 2023). Limited solicitation of feedback (M=2.96, SD=1.29) and weak integration into decision-making (M=2.79, SD=1.19) further emphasise engagement shortcomings (Basalirwa, 2024; Wandera, 2023).

Stakeholder response mechanisms (M=2.91, SD=1.29) and collaboration efforts (M=2.94, SD=1.26) reveal inefficiencies, aligning with studies examining public enterprise partnerships (Arinaitwe, 2024; Namata, 2023). Addressing stakeholder needs presents the greatest challenge, with the lowest score recorded (M=2.48, SD=1.25), underscoring deficiencies in inclusive decision-making (Kaweesa, 2024; Nakimuli, 2023).

Collaboration outcomes (M=3.52, SD=1.30) and transparency (M=3.50, SD=1.11) demonstrate that engagement, when effectively implemented, leads to beneficial results (Nabasa, 2024; Kisembo, 2023). The overall mean score (M=3.00, SD=1.27) indicates moderate yet suboptimal performance, reinforcing the necessity of strengthening stakeholder involvement, particularly in active participation and feedback utilisation, to improve decision-making and service delivery (Muwonge, 2024).

*4.4 Correlation Analysis on Stakeholders Participation and Service Delivery*

Correlation analysis on stakeholder participation and service delivery examined the strength and direction of their relationship, assessing how engagement levels influence service effectiveness. Higher stakeholder involvement is expected to correspond with improved service quality, responsiveness, and operational efficiency. Establishing this relationship offers empirical insights that inform policy enhancements and strategic measures aimed at strengthening stakeholder engagement to optimise service delivery outcomes (Muwonge, 2024; Nabasa, 2024; Nyangoma, 2023).

**Table 7: Correlation Matrix**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | StakeholdersParticipation | ServiceDelivery |
| Stakeholder Participation | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .471\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
| N | 163 | 163 |
| Service Delivery | Pearson Correlation | .471\*\* | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
| N | 163 | 163 |

**Source**: Field Survey, 2024 \*. Dependent variable: Service Delivery Predictor: Stakeholders Participation

Stakeholder participation exhibits a moderate positive correlation with service delivery (r = 0.471, p < 0.01), aligning with the 0.40-0.69 range identified for moderate correlations. This statistically significant relationship indicates that increased stakeholder involvement corresponds with enhanced service delivery outcomes. The strength of this association underscores the critical role of stakeholder engagement in improving service delivery performance.

*4.5* *Simple Regression Analysis of Stakeholder Participation on Service Delivery*

A simple regression analysis examined the influence of stakeholder participation on service delivery to establish the extent to which engagement impacts service outcomes. This approach quantifies the relationship between stakeholder involvement and key service delivery indicators, offering insights into whether higher participation levels result in measurable improvements. Assessing the statistical significance and strength of this relationship provides valuable evidence for policymakers and utility managers, supporting the development of strategies that enhance stakeholder engagement to improve service delivery performance.

The study examined the goodness of fit of the model using ANOVA and results presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: ANOVA on stakeholder participation and Service Delivery in State-Owned Energy Corporations**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model** | **Sum of Squares** | **df** | **Mean Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
| 1 | Regression | 19.608 | 1 | 4.902 | 16.252 | .000b |
| Residual | 47.356 | 157 | .302 |  |  |
| Total | 66.963 | 158 |  |  |  |

**Source**: Field Survey, 2024; Key: a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery b. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholders Participation

ANOVA results indicate that the regression model assessing the influence of stakeholder participation on service delivery is statistically significant (F = 16.252, df = 1; p < .000). The F-statistic of 16.252, with 1 degree of freedom for regression and 157 degrees of freedom for residual, produces a p-value well below the 0.05 significance threshold. This confirms that stakeholder participation accounts for a meaningful portion of the variation in service delivery. Sum of Squares analysis reveals that the total variation (66.963) includes 19.608 units explained by the regression model, while 47.356 units remain unexplained (residual). These findings align with earlier R-squared results, indicating that although the model is significant, additional factors beyond stakeholder participation contribute to service delivery outcomes.

*Hypothesis Testing*

The hypothesis was then tested by running a simple linear regression. The acceptance or rejection was based on t and p-values. The result of this test is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Coefficients of Stakeholder Participation on Service Delivery**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| B | Std. Error | Beta |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.372 | .340 |  | 4.041 | .000 |
| Stakeholder Participation | .401 | .066 | .435 | 6.057 | .000 |

Field Survey, 2024; a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

Stakeholder participation stands out as the most significant predictor, exhibiting the highest positive coefficient (β = 0.401, t = 6.057, p = 0.000; p < 0.05). This result indicates that each unit increase in stakeholder participation leads to a 0.401-unit improvement in service delivery, assuming other variables remain constant. The constant term (β = 1.372, t = 4.041, p = 0.000) reflects the baseline level of service delivery when stakeholder participation is absent. These findings underscore the crucial role of stakeholder engagement in enhancing service delivery effectiveness. The regression model equation is expressed as:

Y = 1.372 + 0.401X₁

**5.1 Conclusion**

The findings highlight the critical role of stakeholder engagement in improving service delivery within state-owned energy corporations. With stakeholder participation emerging as the most significant factor (β = 0.401, p = 0.000), the results confirm that active involvement enhances service efficiency, responsiveness, and overall organisational effectiveness. However, the mean value of 2.9982 (SD = 1.27256) indicates that stakeholder satisfaction with current engagement remains below average, revealing a gap between existing practices and expectations. Addressing this disparity requires more inclusive and structured stakeholder engagement mechanisms to optimise service delivery. Strengthening collaboration, integrating feedback effectively, and fostering transparent communication can bridge this gap, leading to improved decision-making and enhanced operational performance. These insights offer valuable guidance for policymakers, regulators, and utility managers in refining stakeholder participation frameworks to achieve sustainable service delivery improvements.

**5.2 Recommendations**

Enhancing stakeholder engagement strategies is essential, given the strong positive relationship between stakeholder participation and service delivery, despite current engagement levels remaining unsatisfactory. Establishing a structured engagement framework with regular consultation forums and systematic feedback mechanisms can facilitate continuous dialogue between stakeholders and service providers. Formalised communication channels will enhance transparency and enable organisations to collect valuable insights that contribute to improved service delivery outcomes.

Implementing an efficient stakeholder management system will support the monitoring of concerns, tracking of responses, and evaluation of engagement effectiveness. Allocating sufficient resources to stakeholder initiatives will encourage meaningful participation in service planning and execution. Strengthening partnerships through collaborative programmes can further enhance commitment and shared responsibility in achieving service delivery objectives.

Conducting regular stakeholder satisfaction assessments and incorporating findings into strategic action plans will ensure continuous improvement. Establishing stakeholder working groups focused on specific service delivery areas can help develop targeted solutions and improve responsiveness to emerging challenges. Clear and transparent mechanisms for integrating stakeholder input into decision-making processes will ensure that their perspectives are valued, ultimately fostering greater accountability and service efficiency.

*Limitations of the Study*

Several limitations emerged in this study, potentially influencing the findings and their generalisability. The reliance on self-administered questionnaires introduced the risk of response bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable responses rather than objective assessments of stakeholder participation and service delivery. The cross-sectional design further restricted the ability to establish causal relationships, as data collection occurred at a single point rather than over an extended period.

Focusing solely on UEDCL the applicability of the findings to other state-owned enterprises or sectors with different stakeholder dynamics. While the quantitative approach effectively measured relationships between variables, it constrained the depth of qualitative insights that could have provided a more nuanced understanding of stakeholder engagement challenges. Additionally, external factors such as regulatory changes, political influences, and economic conditions were not explicitly considered, despite their potential impact on stakeholder participation and service delivery.

Future research should incorporate mixed-method approaches to capture both quantitative trends and qualitative perspectives. Longitudinal studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how stakeholder participation evolves over time and its sustained influence on service delivery. Expanding the scope to include multiple organisations across various industries would enhance the applicability and robustness of the findings.

*Suggestions for Future Studies*

Future research should examine the long-term impact of enhanced stakeholder engagement strategies on service delivery outcomes. Conducting a longitudinal study would provide deeper insights into how sustained stakeholder participation affects efficiency, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction over time. Understanding whether improvements in engagement lead to measurable and lasting enhancements in service delivery would offer valuable guidance for state-owned enterprises seeking to refine their stakeholder management approaches.

Exploring the influence of external factors such as regulatory policies, economic conditions, and political dynamics on stakeholder participation and service delivery is another critical area for future research. Analysing how these external elements shape engagement practices and service efficiency would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the broader institutional and policy environment affecting state-owned enterprises.

**COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:**

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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