

Influence of Social Awareness Competencies on Internal Service Quality among County Employees in Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of social awareness competencies on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. The study drew on three key theoretical perspectives; Emotional Intelligence Theory, Learning Organization Theory, and Quality Management Theory to shape its conceptual foundation and guide the analysis. It was conducted within a positivist philosophical framework and used an explanatory correlational research design. The target population consisted of 9165 employees drawn from the 47 counties in Kenya. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula through which 383 respondents were obtained. Data was collected using structured questionnaire achieving a response rate of 85%. A pilot study involving 40 county employees was conducted to test reliability of the research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the 0.7 threshold for all constructs was obtained. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 26. Moderation effects were tested through stepwise regression modeling. The findings indicated that social awareness competencies had a significant correlation ($r = 0.418, p < 0.01$), and explained 17.5% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.175, \beta = 0.483, t = 8.306, F = 68.996, p < 0.001$) in internal service quality. The study concludes that the relationship between social awareness competencies and internal service quality is both positive and statistically significant. The study recommends that public institutions should promote empathy, organizational sensitivity, and inclusive communication through targeted interventions aimed at enhancing social awareness.

Key words: Competencies, County employees, Emotional intelligence competencies, Internal service quality, Social awareness

Introduction

Internal Service Quality (ISQ) refers to the flow of services between people and departments within the organization, where employees are treated as internal customers whose expectations and satisfaction influence overall organizational performance (Kang, et al., 2022). It has been observed globally that when the internal service quality is high, the satisfaction level of the employees also tends to be high and the processes should be well defined to achieve the desired outcomes in the context of internal service quality (Aydemir, 2024). Abdullah et al. (2021) indicate that internal service quality is important in the context of both private and public organizations. Good internal service quality helps in achieving the desired outcomes in terms of efficiency and gaining a competitive advantage in the context of both developed and developing countries (Abdullah et al., 2021).

In public institutions across Africa, there is an emerging trend of its increasing significance as governments and civil service bodies implement reforms aimed at improving the quality of services and how well such organizations operate (Dessy, 2023). According to Al-Ibrahim (2022), in order for public agencies to improve the quality of citizen-centric services, there is

a need to improve internal service quality by enhancing the quality of internal service interactions between departments and staff through better communication and training support systems (Thokoa, 2022). In African public organizations, new public management and public governance reforms are aimed at making internal processes in them more responsive and accountable to quality principles (Onyango, 2025).

In Kenya public sector, the quality of Internal Service Quality (ISQ) for employees depends on the quality of human resource management, the quality of communication, and the quality of organizational support received. Although specific research on ISQ in Kenya's public institutions remains limited, broader studies indicate lack of internal communication, training, and fragmented service delivery as major negative influences on service quality (Nyamai, 2023). In order to increase ISQ in Kenya, organizations need to place a greater emphasis on employee development and training. Even greater priority should be given to the development of a robust feedback system that allow employees to understand service quality within the organization, thereby promoting collaboration in advancing institutional objectives (Ludenyo & Shitseswa 2024).

Social awareness is a key dimension of emotional intelligence skills which entails empathy, organizational understanding, and having a service perspective (Merlin & Prabakar, 2024). Research indicates that social awareness positively influences how employees perceive internal service quality because socially aware employees are sensitive to the needs of others in the organization. Additionally, they are effective in handling social interactions in the organization, and are instrumental in creating a positive working environment that facilitates the exchange of services positively (Kagwe et al., 2025). The research findings suggest that employees who exhibit high levels of social awareness are effective in internal organizational communication, display respect for diverse perspectives in the organization, and work collaboratively in groups, thus enhancing internal service quality positively in the organization (Laing-Hall, 2023). In the workplace, social awareness helps in conflict resolution, reduces misunderstandings, and makes employees more responsive to the needs of internal customers, thus enhancing service delivery between employees (Wangari et al., 2019).

Despite the global and regional research that links emotional intelligence skills with organizational success in terms of internal service quality, evidence remains limited in the Kenyan context. In particular, there is a lack of empirical research examining the relationship between social awareness and internal service quality among county public service employees in Kenya (Ndege, 2020). Therefore, the need to assess the influence of social awareness competencies on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya.

Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on three foundational theoretical frameworks: Emotional Intelligence Theory, Learning Organization Theory, and Quality Management Theory, which collectively informed the conceptual and analytical direction of the research. Emotional intelligence theory offered significant benefits in both personal and professional contexts by enhancing individuals' ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as those of others. The learning organization theory served as an anchor for the study because it emphasized continuous learning and adaptability, which were essential for improving internal service quality through the development of emotional intelligence competencies. Quality management theory emphasizes continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, and process optimization to enhance organizational performance and service delivery.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework served as a theoretical structure that guided the research by outlining the key variables and their interrelationships. For this study, Figure 1 illustrated the influence

of the moderating variable on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Social awareness competencies involved the ability to understand and respond to the emotions and needs of others, captured through variables like empathy, organizational awareness, interpersonal sensitivity, and team collaboration. Learning organization practices emphasize continuous improvement and adaptability within the organization. These were represented by variables such as continuous learning, leadership support and performance feedback. Internal service quality referred to the effectiveness and efficiency of services delivered within the organization and was measured through indicators such as operational efficiency, employee satisfaction, and work collaboration.

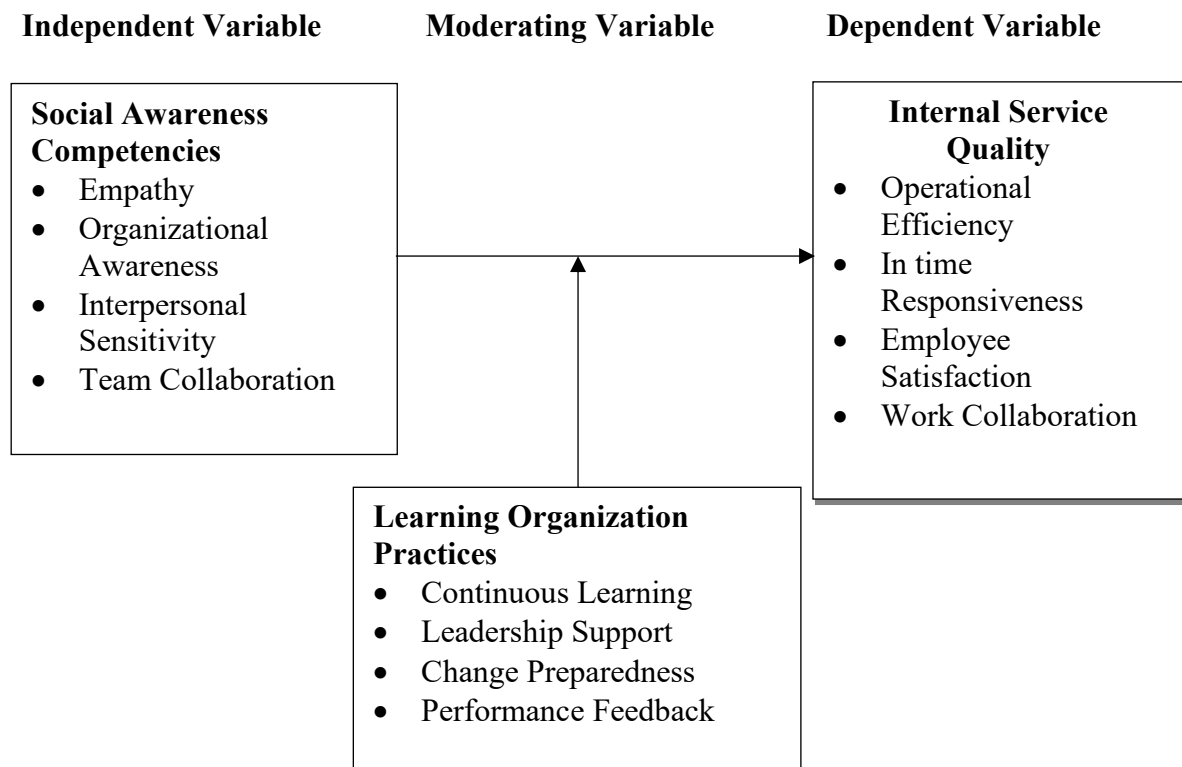


Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

Social Awareness Competencies

Oshinyandi and Olaniya (2025) examined the relationship between social awareness, internal quality assurance practices and employability of final-year graduate students in public universities in Nigeria. The study employed descriptive research design with a target population of 1,036 final-year students. The sample size comprised of 254 respondents selected using multistage random sampling technique. The findings established that there was a significant association between social awareness, internal quality assurance practices and employability of final-year graduate students in public universities. This study was in Nigeria and in education sector- which is a contextual gap. The conceptual gap is the focus on the relationship between social awareness, internal quality assurance practices and employability, while the current study focused on social awareness competencies and internal service quality.

Merlin and Prabakar (2024) examined social awareness abilities (empathy, social skills via MSCEIT) among university students in India and their connections to internal service quality,

which can be extended to employees. The dependent construct was quality (team responsiveness, collaboration), and the independent variables were social-awareness competencies (organizational awareness). Among the theories were the Social Competence Theory and the Mayer-Salovey EI. The study used a PLS-SEM quantitative research design, targeting 800 students with a sample size of 412. Online surveys were used to collect data, and path methods were used for analysis. The results showed that interpersonal service dynamics were enhanced by social awareness. The study's use of a student sample while omitting public sector workers is the empirical gap.

Ayeni (2024) explored the association between emotional intelligence and quality of service in private universities among Nigeria private university administrators. Data was collected from professional administrators in 5 private universities using questionnaires. The sample size comprised of 320 respondents selected using stratified random sampling. The results indicated that social awareness strand of emotional intelligence had a positive and significant prediction on quality of service. The findings also revealed that those private universities with administrators who excelled in use of social awareness offered superior services compared with counterparts using other practices. The contextual gap is that the study was in Nigeria and in the education sector.

Similarly in Nigeria, Onu and Gabriel (2020) conducted a study on the social awareness and employee work-life balance of indigenous oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with primary data collected using structured questionnaires. The target population consisted of 6410 employees from 10 indigenous oil and gas firms. The findings indicated that a significant relationship existed between social-awareness and employee work-life balance of indigenous oil and gas firms. The contextual gap is that the study was in Nigeria and in the oil and gas industry.

Matjie (2018) investigated how social awareness skills (empathy, cross-cultural sensitivity) affect internal service quality in South Africa by lowering turnover in public sectors. Quality (efficiency, retention via SERVPERF) was the dependent variable while social competences (service orientation, awareness) were the independent variables. Internal marketing and Goleman EI were among the theories applied. A sample size of 20 was chosen, and a qualitative research design was used using public managers as the target audience. Semi-structured interviews and document reviews were used to gather data. Thematic analysis of the data revealed a positive and considerable impact of social awareness on service quality. The managerial focus against frontline employees, which lacks quantitative rigor in Kenyan county contexts, was the empirical disparity.

Nazeer et al. (2014) investigated the impact of social awareness competences (empathy, interpersonal skills) on internal service quality among university professors in Pakistan using SERVQUAL. Social competences (team awareness, service focus) were the independent variable, and quality (assurance, responsiveness) was the dependent variable. SERVQUAL and the Social Exchange Theory were among the theories used. A cross-sectional survey design was used to target 300 employees. The results demonstrated a strong relationship between social awareness and improved internal service quality. The reliance on private academia, which ignored publicly devolved services like Kenyan counties, was the empirical gap.

Ouma et al., (2025) assessed the impact of social awareness competences (empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation via TEIQue) on internal service quality at Kenyan universities. Independent social competences (empathy, institutional understanding) and dependent quality (responsiveness, teamwork using modified ISQ measures) were among

the variables examined. The study used a cross-sectional quantitative design using Goleman's EI model. The study used a sample size of 450 respondents and targeted 1,500 academic staff members. Strong effects of social awareness were validated by regression analysis, which increased efficiency by 31%. The fact that the study was conducted in a university setting and ignored local governments is one of the empirical gaps.

Kagwe (2025) examined the influence of social awareness on the organizational performance in universities in Kenya. The following concepts under social awareness constituted the independent variables- empathy, institutional awareness and service orientation. The study conducted a structured literature review through selection of peer-reviewed studies from 2020 to 2025. The findings established that social awareness enhanced employee engagement, student satisfaction and inclusivity in decision-making. The contextual gap is that the study was in the education sector. The methodological gap is that the study adopted structured literature review from established databases, while the current study used descriptive and correlational analysis techniques.

Wangari et al. (2022) investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on organizational performance among insurance companies in Kenya. Adopting a positivism research philosophy, the study utilized descriptive and explanatory cross-sectional research designs. Findings indicated that social awareness showed moderate correlations with organizational performance. The study also showed that social awareness dimension of emotional intelligence significantly influences organizational performance among insurance companies in Kenya. The contextual gap is that the study was in the insurance sector.

From the foregoing, this study proposed a hypothesis that;

H₀: Social awareness competencies have no statistically significant positive effect on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya

Research Methodology

The study adopted a positivist philosophy and explanatory correlational design. The quantitative approach allowed for the objective measurement of competencies such as social awareness and its influence on internal service quality. It also supported the examination of the moderating role of learning organization practices in the relationship between social awareness and internal service quality. The target population for this study was county employees in Kenya. Specifically, the study targeted county employees working within public organizations across all 47 counties of Kenya. According to the data available from the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) (2025), there are approximately 226,540 county employees in Kenya. Specifically, the study targeted the County Executive Employees, County Assembly Members, Directors, Sub- County administrators, and County Public Service employees, who were 9165 employees (SRC, 2025). The sample size for this study was 383 determined using Yamane's formula. Data was collected using structured questionnaire achieving a response rate of 85%. Reliability was tested using a pilot study involving 40 county employees, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the 0.7 threshold for all constructs. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26, employing both descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and percentages) and inferential analyses (correlation and regression). Moderation effects were tested through stepwise regression modelling.

Table 1
Sample Size Distribution

Structure	Target Population	Sample Distribution	Percentage
County Executive Members	658	28	7.3
Chief Employees	756	32	8.4
County Assembly Members	4089	171	44.6
Directors	1739	73	19.1
Sub County Administrators	408	17	4.4
County Public Service Employees	1515	62	16.2
Total	9165	383	100%

To test the specific objective, simple linear regression model was estimated individually for the emotional intelligence construct (Social Awareness Competencies). The model was structured as follows:

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

Where:

Y= Internal Service Quality (ISQ), the dependent variable

β_0 = Regression constant or intercept

β_1 = Regression coefficients for each independent variable

X_1 = Social awareness competencies (SOCA)

ε =Error term assumed to be normally distributed with mean z

Results and Findings

Descriptive Analysis for Social Awareness Competencies

The descriptive findings as shown in Table 2 indicate that the overall mean score for social awareness was 3.45 with a standard deviation of 1.30, suggesting that county employees exhibit moderately strong awareness of social and organizational dynamics in their workplace interactions. Empathy recorded an average score of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 1.31. Employees indicated that they make deliberate efforts to understand the emotional challenges faced by colleagues (M= 3.66; SD= 1.27), adjust their behavior based on others' emotional states (M = 3.54; SD= 1.33), actively listen and respond supportively (M= 3.51; SD= 1.31), and offer encouragement when colleagues are emotionally overwhelmed (M= 3.25; SD= 1.31). Supportive peer behavior exists but is not uniformly strong, possibly affecting team morale. Emotional encouragement can mitigate burnout and stress. A more proactive approach to peer support could boost collective emotional well-being.

Organizational awareness had a mean of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 1.35. Respondents affirmed that they understand the organization's mission and internal structure (M = 3.35; SD = 1.34), are familiar with policies and workplace culture (M = 3.31; SD = 1.35), recognize the role of key decision-makers in service delivery (M = 3.49; SD = 1.29), and appreciate how departments function together to achieve organizational goals (M = 3.31; SD = 1.40). Staff moderately understand how their roles contribute to broader organizational goals. This awareness is key to collaboration and strategic alignment. Organizations should enhance cross-functional learning and communication.

The construct of interpersonal sensitivity yielded a mean score of 3.40 with a standard deviation of 1.27. Participants reported being mindful of how their actions impact others (M = 3.31; SD

= 1.34), respecting cultural and personal differences (M = 3.34; SD = 1.42), taking time to consider diverse workplace views before making decisions (M = 3.39; SD = 0.97), and providing support to emotionally distressed colleagues (M = 3.54; SD = 1.33). There is a fair tendency to show empathy and support to peers, contributing to a caring workplace culture. Emotional support improves team cohesion and trust. However, high variability suggests a need for structured emotional intelligence training.

Team collaboration recorded the highest mean at 3.53 with a standard deviation of 1.29. Respondents stated that they contribute actively in team discussions (M = 3.57; SD = 1.27), work cooperatively across departments (M = 3.53; SD = 1.29), share knowledge and resources to achieve common goals (M = 3.50; SD = 1.24), and promote a culture of mutual respect and collective problem-solving (M = 3.52; SD = 1.37). In summary, the data reflects consistent and relatively strong social awareness competencies among county employees. These competencies support effective communication, inclusive engagement, and cooperative service delivery within public institutions.

Table 2]

Descriptive Statistics for Social Awareness Competencies

Social Awareness Competencies Statements	Mean	Std Dev
Empathy	3.49	1.31
I make a deliberate effort to understand the emotions and challenges my colleagues face, ensuring that I provide appropriate support and encouragement.	3.66	1.27
I adjust my communication and behavior based on the emotional state of my colleagues to foster a positive and productive work environment.	3.54	1.33
I actively listen when my colleagues share their concerns and ensure that I respond in a way that validates their experiences and emotions.	3.51	1.31
I can sense when colleagues are struggling emotionally and offer assistance or encouragement to help them navigate their challenges.	3.25	1.31
Organizational Awareness	3.37	1.35
I have a clear understanding of my organization's mission, goals, and internal structure, which enables me to align my work with broader institutional objectives.	3.35	1.34
I am informed about workplace policies, procedures, and cultural dynamics that influence operations within my department.	3.31	1.35
I am aware of key decision-makers within my organization and understand how their roles impact service delivery and overall organizational effectiveness.	3.49	1.29
I recognize how different departments function and collaborate within my organization, which helps me effectively engage in cross-functional teamwork.	3.31	1.39
Interpersonal Sensitivity	3.40	1.27
I consider how my words and actions affect my colleagues and adjust to maintain respectful and professional workplace interactions.	3.31	1.34
I am mindful of the cultural and personal differences among my colleagues and strive to create an inclusive work environment.	3.34	1.42

I take time to understand different workplace perspectives before making decisions that affect my team.	3.39	0.98
I recognize when my colleagues are feeling overwhelmed and offer assistance or emotional support when necessary.	3.54	1.33
Team Collaboration	3.53	1.29
I actively contribute to team discussions, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes.	3.57	1.27
I work cooperatively with colleagues from different backgrounds and departments to enhance workplace cohesion.	3.53	1.29
I willingly share knowledge, resources, and expertise to support team members in achieving shared goals.	3.5	1.24
I encourage a workplace culture that fosters mutual respect, collaboration, and collective problem-solving.	3.52	1.37
Aggregate	3.45	1.30

Correlation Analysis

The study conducted Pearson correlation analysis to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationships between social awareness and internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. This analysis was essential in understanding how the independent variables were associated with the dependent variable. The results, as presented in Table 3 indicate that social awareness competencies exhibited a moderate positive correlation with internal service quality ($r = 0.418$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the importance of interpersonal understanding in shaping service interactions. These findings imply that higher levels of emotional intelligence and supportive organizational learning environments are associated with improved internal service quality in the public sector. The positive and significant correlations across all variables support the theoretical linkages proposed in the conceptual framework and justify further inferential testing through regression analysis.

Table 3
Correlation Matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Social Awareness Competencies	Pearson Correlation	.437**	.617**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000				
	N	327	327	327			
6. Internal Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	.569**	.501**	.418**	.470**	.315**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	327	327	327	327	327	327

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

The specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of social awareness competencies on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. This objective was addressed through simple linear regression analysis. The analysis was also used to test the research hypothesis:

H0: Social Awareness Competencies have no significant influence on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya.

Table 4 presents the model summary, which includes the correlation coefficient (R), the coefficient of determination (R Square), and the standard error of the estimate. The findings show a moderate positive correlation between social awareness competencies and internal service quality (R = 0.418). The R Square value of 0.175 implies that 17.5% of the variation in internal service quality can be explained by social awareness competencies. The remaining 82.5% of the variation is due to other factors not accounted for in the model.

Table 4

Model Summary for Social Awareness Competencies on Internal Service Quality

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.418	.175	.173	.54967

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Awareness Competencies

b. Dependent Variable: Internal service quality

The ANOVA test results, as shown in Table 5 indicate that the F-statistic was 68.996 with a p-value less than 0.001. This demonstrates that the regression model was statistically significant and that social awareness competencies are a meaningful predictor of internal service quality.

Table 5

ANOVA for Social Awareness Competencies and Internal Service Quality

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.846	1	20.846	68.996	<.001 ^b
	Residual	98.195	325	.302		
	Total	119.042	326			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Awareness Competencies

b. Dependent Variable: Internal Service Quality

The regression coefficients in Table 6 provide further detail on the influence of social awareness competencies. The unstandardized coefficient (B) was 0.483, with a standard error of 0.058. The t-value was 8.306, and the p-value was less than 0.001. These findings confirm that the relationship between social awareness competencies and internal service quality is both positive and statistically significant.

The final regression equation is therefore expressed as:

$$\text{Internal Service Quality} = 1.759 + 0.483(\text{Social Awareness Competencies})$$

Table 6

Regression Coefficients for Social Awareness Competencies on Internal Service Quality

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.759	.203		8.679	.000
	Social Awareness	.483	.058	.418	8.306	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Internal Service Quality

As a result, the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected. The findings suggest that a one-unit increase in social awareness competencies leads to an estimated 0.483 increase in internal service quality. These results reinforce the importance of interpersonal sensitivity, empathy, and social awareness in driving higher standards of service delivery among county employees.

Summary of the Hypotheses Tests and Operational Framework

Based on the findings on emotional intelligence competencies social awareness had statistically significant positive influence on internal service quality as shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Summary of the Study Hypotheses

Study variable	Study Hypothesis	Type of analysis	Hypothesis test result
Social Awareness Competencies	H0: There is no statistically significant influence of social awareness on internal service quality.	Simple linear regression	H0 rejected ($p < 0.05$)

Discussion of Findings

The study found that social awareness competencies exert a statistically significant positive effect on internal service quality among county employees in Kenya. Social awareness competencies recorded a mean of 3.45 (SD = 1.30), a significant correlation ($r = 0.418$, $p < 0.01$), and explained 17.5% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.175$, $\beta = 0.483$, $t = 8.306$, $F = 68.996$, $p < 0.001$). These metrics indicate that county employees exhibiting stronger empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation deliver more effective collaboration, responsiveness, and internal satisfaction across departments. This underscores social perceptiveness and interpersonal understanding as vital for quality internal services in devolved public settings, where relational dynamics drive institutional cohesion. These findings align with Kagwe (2025), whose structured literature review of 2020–2025 peer-reviewed studies from Scopus, JSTOR, and Google Scholar established that social awareness (empathy, institutional awareness, service orientation) enhanced university employee engagement, student satisfaction, and decision-making inclusivity via thematic analysis. The current quantitative correlational results ($r=0.418$) extend this to Kenyan counties, addressing educational contextual gaps and methodological reliance on reviews over primary data.

Oshinyandi and Olaniya (2025) reported a significant association between social awareness, internal quality assurance, and employability among Nigerian public university final-year students (descriptive/correlational design). Echoing this linkage, the present $\beta=0.483$ applies to county service quality, bridging student-focused conceptual gaps to adult public sector responsiveness.

Ouma et al. (2025) validated strong regression effects of social awareness (empathy, organizational awareness via TEIQue) on university internal service quality in Kenya, boosting efficiency by 31%. The current study's county extension ($R^2=0.175$) fills their local government omission, affirming transferability with descriptive-inferential parallels. Meanwhile, Merlin and Prabakar (2024) showed social awareness (empathy, social skills via MSCEIT) enhanced interpersonal service dynamics among Indian university students. Aligning quantitatively, Kenyan public results address student-public sector gaps, adapting to employee collaboration.

Ayeni (2024) found social awareness significantly predicted service quality among 320 Nigerian private university administrators (stratified sampling, questionnaires). This supports the current moderate correlation, shifting educational-private focus to county internal efficacy. Further, Wangari et al., (2022) revealed social awareness's moderate significant influence on organizational performance in Kenyan insurance firms (n=208, descriptive/explanatory designs). The present findings parallel this (F=68.996), extending to public devolution beyond insurance.

Onu and Gabriel (2020) established a significant relationship between social awareness and work-life balance in Nigerian oil/gas firms (n=327, cross-sectional correlational, SPSS). Though conceptualizing balance over service, the current study adapts this to quality outcomes, filling industry gaps. Matjie (2018) thematically confirmed social awareness skills (empathy, cross-cultural sensitivity) positively impacted South African public sector service quality and retention (n=20 managers, qualitative). The Kenyan quantitative rigor (t=8.306) addresses managerial-frontline and methodological disparities. Nazeer et al. (2014) demonstrated a strong SEM relationship between social awareness (empathy, interpersonal skills) and internal service quality among Pakistani university professors. This aligns with the current variance explanation, extending private academia to Kenyan devolved public services.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social awareness competencies have a statistically significantly positive influence on internal service quality among Kenyan county employees. Employees exhibiting stronger empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation deliver more effective collaboration, responsiveness, and internal satisfaction across departments. This underscores social perceptiveness and interpersonal understanding as vital for quality internal services in devolved public settings, where relational dynamics drive institutional cohesion. Targeted development of these competencies through training is recommended to foster supportive environments and elevate overall public sector performance.

Recommendations

- i. The study recommends that county governments should develop targeted social awareness training programs focusing on empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation to improve collaboration, responsiveness, and internal satisfaction across departments.
- ii. Launch mandatory workshops for all employees, incorporating role-playing scenarios and feedback sessions tailored to devolved public relational dynamics.
- iii. Integrate social awareness assessments into recruitment, onboarding, and performance reviews to prioritize candidates with strong interpersonal perceptiveness.
- iv. Promote cross-departmental initiatives like empathy-building circles and service orientation mentoring to foster institutional cohesion. Leadership should model these competencies through regular team huddles emphasizing understanding colleague needs.
- v. Track progress with pre-post surveys measuring service quality gains, dedicating HR resources for quarterly programs. These measures will strengthen relational dynamics, reduce silos, and enhance overall internal service effectiveness in Kenyan counties.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research may explore the moderating effects of other organizational variables such as leadership style, workplace culture, or digital maturity to establish if these factors more meaningfully influence the relationship between social awareness competencies and internal service quality.

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