Effect of Labour Mobility Socio Cultural Factors on Service Delivery: Evidence from Selected Refugee Organizations in Kenya

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
History *Revised format: May 2025* *Available Online: Jun 2025*	**Purpose:** The study focused on Effect of Socio-Cultural Factors on Service Delivery of Refugee Organizations: Evidence from Selected refugees in Kenya.
Keywords *Socio-Cultural Factors,* *Service Delivery* *Employees.*	**Design/Methodology:** The study utilized descriptive and explanatory research designs targeting 300 employees of dominant Refugee Organizations operating in Kakuma Refugee camp in Turkana West Sub County, Turkana County, Kenya. Mixed purposive sampling technique was used. Structured questionnaires aided data collection from employees of dominant Refugee Organizations. Validity and reliability of the instrument was tested. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.
JEL Classification *M10, M14*	**Findings**: The study found out that Socio-Cultural Factors had a positive and significant effect on Service Delivery. **Implications/Value:** The study seeks to guide policy makers in refugee organization to develop a more explicit and proactive organizations that should support employee welfare since a perception of Social cultural factors, will help to boost employee morale and improve overall service delivery outcomes. These findings will also be helpful for organizations working in international Human resource management ecosystem in shaping their human resource acquisition and retention policies.

Introduction

Refugee serving organizations in Kenya, especially those operating in regions like Turkana County, are central to the provision of essential humanitarian support to displaced populations. These

organizations operate within socio-culturally complex environments, characterized by ethnic diversity, infrastructural fragility and varying expectations from both host and refugee communities. The effectiveness of their service delivery is not solely dependent on institutional strength or logistical capacity, but is intricately shaped by the socio-cultural fabric within which they function. Elements such as language, religious affiliation, traditional customs, community-based norms and prevailing gender dynamics can either enhance or impede the implementation and reception of aid services (Ababor *et al.* 2019).

On a global scale, countries that host significant refugee populations frequently encounter socio-cultural obstacles in their efforts to deliver humanitarian aid. In Germany, for example, the integration of large numbers of Syrian and Afghan refugees revealed critical cultural dissonances between service providers and recipients, particularly in areas such as public health, gender-sensitive programming, and child protection (Kikhia *et al.* 2021). Sweden, with its comprehensive welfare system, faced challenges in tailoring mental health and educational services to accommodate the diverse cultural expectations of refugee groups (Cetrez *et al.* 2020). Similarly, in the United States, well-developed institutional frameworks have often been hindered by socio-cultural mismatches, including language limitations and divergent interpretations of authority and governance, which diminish refugee trust and reduce service uptake (Kainat, Eskola & Widén, 2022). In Lebanon, where longstanding refugee-host dynamics prevail, the presence of entrenched sectarian identities and political fragmentation has complicated service delivery, with cultural biases sometimes influencing how assistance is allocated (Alcantar, 2017). These international experiences affirm a broad recognition that effective humanitarian service delivery must be grounded in cultural sensitivity and local contextual understanding.

Within the African continent, the socio-cultural landscape has similarly played a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of humanitarian interventions. Countries hosting refugees across Africa frequently grapple with multi-ethnic constituencies, traditional leadership systems, and ingrained cultural values. In South Africa, initiatives aimed at integrating asylum seekers have often been undermined by xenophobic sentiments and resistance rooted in cultural and national identity concerns (Kandjii, 2023). In Uganda, while refugee policies are relatively inclusive, service delivery has been challenged by linguistic pluralism and varying socio-cultural expectations regarding gender roles and authority structures (Idris, 2020). Although Rwanda has achieved commendable progress in its refugee management systems, cultural misalignments between humanitarian frameworks and traditional community norms continue to pose implementation challenges. Collectively, these examples demonstrate that even in the presence of sound institutional policies, socio-cultural contexts remain critical determinants in the efficacy of humanitarian services.

Kenya, as one of Africa's primary refugee-hosting countries, presents a compelling case for deeper analysis of the socio-cultural influences on humanitarian service delivery. Refugee settlements such as Kakuma and Kalobeyei are home to populations originating from Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia and the Great Lakes region, each bringing distinct cultural practices, languages and religious traditions. While NGOs both international and local seek to deliver fair and effective services, their efforts are frequently hampered by socio-cultural impediments including language discrepancies, culturally defined gender norms, and divergent religious customs (Terlau, 2021). These difficulties are further magnified in marginalized and environmentally stressed regions like Turkana County, where host and refugee communities live under parallel but distinct socio-cultural systems, often competing for scarce resources. Despite the centrality of these cultural dynamics to program success, there remains a notable gap in empirical scholarship focusing on how socio-cultural factors specifically influence service provision within Kenya's refugee support framework. This study therefore addresses that gap by systematically exploring the socio-cultural variables that shape the quality, equity, and accessibility of services provided by selected refugee organizations

in Kenya. In doing so, it seeks to inform the design of culturally attuned service models that are both responsive to community realities and capable of improving humanitarian outcomes in complex operational environments.

Statement of the Problem

Despite growing recognition that effective humanitarian service delivery in refugee settings relies heavily on culturally responsive practices, refugee organizations operating in Kenya continue to face persistent challenges in adapting their services to complex socio-cultural environments. Reports and field evidence from regions like Turkana County reveal that misalignments between service delivery models and the cultural realities of refugee and host communities have led to diminished access, poor service uptake, and strained community relations (Terlau, 2021; Emuron, 2020). These issues are compounded by language barriers, traditional power dynamics, gender norms, and divergent religious practices, which often obstruct the smooth execution of aid programs (Ababor et al., 2019; Khamati, 2022).

Although various studies have explored logistical, economic, and policy dimensions of aid delivery (Maksoud *et al.* 2021), limited scholarly attention has been given to how socio-cultural misalignments specifically influence service effectiveness within the refugee organizational context. International experiences from countries such as Germany, Sweden, and Lebanon show that failure to integrate socio-cultural understanding into humanitarian programming often results in program inefficiencies and decreased trust among refugee populations (Kikhia *et al.,* 2021; Cetrez *et al*., 2020; Alcantar, 2017). Within Africa, similar patterns have been observed in Uganda, South Africa, and Rwanda, where socio-cultural complexities either strengthen or undermine aid outcomes depending on how well they are accounted for (Idris, 2020; Kandjii, 2023).

Given Kenya's role as a major refugee-hosting nation and the pronounced cultural diversity in camps such as Kakuma and Kalobeyei, there is an urgent need for empirical research to determine the extent to which socio-cultural factors influence service delivery in refugee organizations. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this critical gap by investigating how these factors shape service quality, accessibility, and acceptability, with the aim of improving humanitarian responses through culturally informed strategies**.**

Main Objective

To examine the Effect of Socio-Cultural Factors on Service Delivery of Refugee Organizations: Evidence from Selected refugees in Kenya.

Research Hypotheses

HO: Effect of Socio-Cultural Factors has no significant effect on service delivery of refugees' organization: Evidence from selected refugees in Kenya.

Literature Review
Theoretical Review

Neoclassical Migration Theory, originally proposed by Ernst Ravenstein 1890 and later expanded by J.R. Hicks in 1993 served as the anchor theory for this study. This theory explains human mobility through economic rationality, suggesting that individuals migrate from areas with limited opportunities to regions offering better employment prospects and higher wages (King, 2013). The central premise is that migration decisions are driven by disparities in income, labor demand, and living standards across regions or countries. While initially developed to explain labor, migration linked to economic development, the theory also acknowledges that migration is influenced by costs such as relocation, language acquisition and social integration (Gurieva & Aleksandr, 2015). In the context of refugee settlements in Kenya, this theory provides a foundational lens to understand why displaced populations relocate and how they interact with local service structures.

The theory is salient to this study because it underscores the importance of structural conditions like economic imbalance and labor market needs in shaping migration and service dynamics. However, in humanitarian settings, the migration journey does not end with arrival. Refugees, while economically motivated, also face socio-cultural barriers that shape their access to services. The theory helps explain how perceived benefits and contextual realities such as cultural alignment and community support impact the reception and effectiveness of service delivery in refugee-hosting areas like Turkana County. Therefore, the neoclassical framework gives a baseline for understanding how refugee organizations can design culturally and economically responsive service models that align with the motivations and lived realities of displaced populations.

Conceptual Review
Socio-Cultural Factors

Socio-cultural factors including language, traditional norms, religious practices and community behaviors play a critical role in shaping the quality and accessibility of service delivery, especially in diverse humanitarian environments. As highlighted by Seldean and Troen (2021), cultural differences can affect how services are perceived and whether they are accepted by recipients. Similarly, Meyer, (2020) argue that organizations with culturally responsive frameworks are better positioned to build trust and enhance client engagement. Ababor *et al.* 2019) emphasize that socio-cultural understanding is integral to relationship building, negotiations, and international management, while Cetrez *et al*., 2020; Alcantar, (2017) stresses that language is essential for bridging cultural gaps, particularly in service delivery to migrant communities.

In the Kenyan context, The Cultural Atlas (2021) describes a highly collectivist society where social and familial obligations often shape interpersonal and institutional interactions. Such dynamics influence how refugee and host communities engage with service providers, with expectations around formality, respect for titles, and relationship-building directly affecting communication and access. These culturally grounded behaviors must be acknowledged and addressed in humanitarian service frameworks to avoid alienation, exclusion, or inefficiency. Therefore, service delivery in multicultural refugee settings demands culturally informed approaches that respect both host and refugee community values and norms.

Service Delivery

Service delivery is fundamentally tied to service quality, with scholars like Amerta and Madhavi, (2023) emphasizing that effective service interactions shape client perceptions and satisfaction. Organizations that understand and meet customer value needs, as noted by Gidage and Bhide, (2024) tend to outperform competitors by integrating customer focus into their core operations. Key quality indicators such as integrity, reliability, and responsiveness are influenced by governance structures (Meyer, (2020) and supported by systems that ensure timely, location-independent service provision (Idris, 2020). For refugee organizations, strengthening service delivery mechanisms is essential to meet both beneficiary expectations and institutional goals. Research by Cetrez *et al*., 2020; Alcantar, (2017) in Ethiopia's public service sector revealed general customer satisfaction, yet highlighted challenges like lack of accountability and poor integration, suggesting the need for structured collaboration and accountability to improve service consistency and effectiveness.

Empirical Review
Socio-Cultural Factor and Service Delivery

Socio-cultural factors significantly influence human resource (HR) management and service delivery in refugee organizations. Azemina (2018) emphasizes that culture, language, education, religion and societal attitudes impact the performance of multinational companies, highlighting the necessity for organizations to adapt to local socio-cultural contexts. In the refugee context, HR

departments must navigate diverse cultural backgrounds, language barriers, and differing societal norms among both employees and beneficiaries to ensure effective service delivery. Schneider and Barsoux (2018) support this by noting that understanding cultural nuances enables organizations to tailor programs to better meet the needs of displaced communities. Berry (2021) further underscores the importance of adapting HR policies to align with local socio-cultural environments, ensuring greater acceptance and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. However, Roberts and Kim (2020) argue that economic and political factors also significantly influence organizational performance, suggesting that refugee organizations must take a holistic approach in addressing both socio-cultural and structural challenges.

Workplace diversity is particularly relevant to refugee organizations, which employ individuals from diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. Cletus et al. (2018) highlight that a diverse workforce can foster innovation, enhance problem-solving capabilities, and improve service delivery by incorporating multiple perspectives. UNHCR (2019) also emphasizes that diversity within humanitarian organizations facilitates skills transfer and strengthens the overall capacity of teams. However, challenges such as cultural misunderstandings, language barriers, generational gaps, and discrimination can hinder teamwork and lower morale. Faith (2016) emphasizes that creating an inclusive work environment requires HR policies that promote respect, equity, and cross-cultural communication. In refugee organizations, HR strategies such as cultural competency training, multilingual communication initiatives, and inclusive leadership development can help mitigate these challenges, fostering a more cohesive and effective workforce. Ultimately, HR management in refugee settings must integrate socio-cultural awareness and diversity management to enhance organizational performance and improve humanitarian outcomes. Further research is needed to explore the specific impacts of these factors within refugee organizations, ensuring that HR practices are tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities present in such environments.

Research Methodology

The study employed descriptive and explanatory research designs. The study targeted three hundred (300) employees of dominant Refugee Organizations operating in Kakuma Refugee camp in Turkana West Sub County, Turkana County, Kenya. The study employed mixed purposive sampling. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides. Validity and reliability of the data collection instrument was tested. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistical tools (Mokhtari *et al.* 2023). The results were presented in form of tables and figures. The following simple linear regression model was applied:

$Y = \alpha + \beta X + \varepsilon$ where;

α Constant

Y Represents Service Delivery (dependent variable)

X Represents Socio-Cultural (independent variable)

ε Represents error

β Represents regression coefficient

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were central to the integrity of this study, which focused on socio-cultural factors affecting service delivery in refugee organizations. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured ethical clearance from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the respective refugee organizations, ensuring compliance with institutional and national guidelines. Participants were provided with an introductory letter detailing the study's purpose, assuring them of confidentiality and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Anonymity was maintained by not linking personal identifiers to responses, fostering trust and encouraging honest participation. Informed consent was obtained after fully explaining the study's objectives and procedures,

upholding participants' autonomy and protecting their rights and well-being throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion
Response Rate
A total of 295 questionnaires were distributed out of which 269 were retuned. This represented a response rate of 91.18 percent with non-response rate at 8.81 percent which accounts for 26 questionnaires. This reinforces the assertion by Kathenya, Ndegwa and Oringo, (2020) who recommended that a response rate of 70% or more are appropriate for an effective data analysis and presentation.

Reliability Test Results

Table 4.1

Item Statistics

Variables	items	Cronbach Alpha Results	Remarks
Socio-Cultural Factors	6	.725	Accepted
Service Delivery	4	.760	Accepted

Source: Field Data 2025

The research assessed the internal consistency of reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. This formula was selected for its effectiveness in evaluating the reliability of the data collection tool. According to Daud, Mohammed Nawi, Aizuddin, and Yahya (2022), scales with a coefficient alpha score of 0.7 indicate acceptable reliability, while a score above 0.7 is deemed adequate for establishing reliability. The study achieved an Alpha coefficient of 0.750.

Descriptive results for Socio-Cultural Factor

Table 4.2 for Descriptive results of Socio-Cultural Factors

	5	4	3	2	1	M	S. D
My organization has employees from different nationalities, tribes, religion and origins	156 (58.0%)	82 (30.5%)	23 (8.6%)	8 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4.43	.773
People in my organization uphold and respect each other's culture, belief and norms for peaceful coexistence	145 (53.9%)	93 (34.5%)	22 (8.2%)	5 (1.9%)	4 (1.5%)	4.38	.831
My organization has developed its own identity and culture where employees are included into acceptable common way of behaving and relating to one another.	154 (57.2%)	70 (26.0%)	31 (11.5%)	12 (4.5%)	2 (0.7%)	4.35	.904
Organization decisions usually take into consideration the diversity that exists in the organization.	142 (52.8%)	73 (27.1%)	41 (15.1%)	13 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	4.28	.894
Socio-cultural factors among staff greatly affect organizational operation.	131 (48.7%)	60 (22.3%)	60 (22.3%)	18 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4.13	.982
I am motivated to continue working my organization by the way we embrace each other irrespective of our culture and social origins	153 (56.9%)	63 (23.4%)	38 (14.1%)	14 (5.2%)	1 (0.4%)	4.31	.926

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results revealed that the majority of respondents strongly agreed (58.0%) or agreed (30.5%) that their organizations comprised employees from diverse nationalities, tribes, religions, and origins. A significant portion (53.9%) also strongly agreed that staff respected each other's cultures, beliefs, and norms, promoting peaceful coexistence, with a high mean score of 4.38. Most organizations were found to have established a shared identity and culture, with 57.2% strongly

agreeing that employees were integrated into common behavioral norms. Additionally, over half (52.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that organizational decisions considered internal diversity. Importantly, 56.9% of employees strongly agreed that the inclusive and respectful environment motivated them to remain in their organizations. These findings support earlier studies by Cletus *et al.* (2018), Sadiku (2022), Seldean (2021), Mazur (2020), and Taras *et al.* (2021), which affirmed the positive influence of socio-cultural factors on service delivery.

Descriptive results for Service Delivery

Table 4.3: Descriptive results for Service Delivery

	5	4	3	2	1	M	S. D
My organization delivers its mandate in a timely manner	137 (50.9%)	78 (29.0%)	43 (16.0%)	11 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	4.27	.874
My organization has ensured it has its target this year	136 (50.6%)	90 (33.5%)	34 (12.6%)	9 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4.31	.819
The clients served by our organization are satisfied with our quality of service	112 (41.6%)	64 (23.8%)	58 (21.6%)	25 (9.3%)	10 (3.7%)	3.90	1.155
Clients served by my organization have no complaints regarding our service delivery	127 (47.2%)	58 (21.6%)	51 (19.0%)	31 (11.5%)	2 (0.7%)	4.03	1.092

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings indicate that most respondents strongly agreed (50.9%) or agreed (29.0%) that their organizations deliver services in a timely manner and successfully meet annual targets, as affirmed by 50.6% and 33.6% of respondents, respectively. Additionally, 41.6% strongly agreed and 23.8% agreed that clients were satisfied with the quality of services, with minimal complaints reported. These results align with studies by Hailu and Shifare (2019) and Atiku *et al.* (2023), which emphasize the importance of excellent service delivery and customer satisfaction in achieving a competitive advantage.

Inferential Statistics
Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson coefficient analysis was done to investigate the degree of association between socio-cultural factor and service delivery results shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Socio Cultural Factors	Service Delivery
Socio Cultural Factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.582**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	269	269
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.582**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	269	269

Source: Field Data 2025

The correlation coefficient between socio-cultural factor and service delivery was 0.582 with a significant level of 0.05 (2-tailed). This correlation never surpassed the critical threshold of 0.80 indicative of high multicollinearity.

Simple Linear Regression

Regression Analysis was done to sought out the Effect of Socio-Cultural Factors on Service Delivery of Refugee Organizations.

Table 4.5 Model Summary for Socio-Cultural Factor

"Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R	Std. Error of	Change Statistics

		Square	the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.582ᵃ	.338	.336	2.731	.338	136.429	1	267	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Socio Cultural Factors

Source: Field Data 2025

The results show a moderate to strong positive correlation (R = 0.582) between Socio-Cultural Factors and Service Delivery. About 33.8% of the variation in Service Delivery is explained by Socio-Cultural Factors (R^2 = 0.338), indicating a fairly strong model. The adjusted R^2 (0.336) supports this, showing the model remains reliable after adjusting for predictor count. The prediction accuracy, measured by the Standard Error of the Estimate, is 2.731.

Table 4.6: ANOVA for Socio-Cultural Factor

ANOVAᵃ

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1017.824	1	1017.824	136.429	.000ᵇ
	Residual	1991.938	267	7.460		
	Total	3009.762	268			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery
b. Predictors: (Constant), Socio Cultural Factors

Source: Field Data 2025

The ANOVA results indicate that the model is statistically significant (F = 136.429, p value 0.000), meaning Socio-Cultural Factors significantly explain variation in Service Delivery. The model accounts for a substantial portion of the variance (Regression SS = 1017.824), while the unexplained variance is 1991.938. The total variance is 3009.762. The high F-statistic confirms the model is a good fit.

Table 1. 7: Coefficients for Socio-Cultural Factor

Coefficientsᵃ

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.229	.940		5.565	.000
	Socio Cultural Factors	.431	.037	.582	11.680	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery"

Source: Field Data (2025)

The coefficient results reveled that when Socio-Cultural Factors are zero, the baseline Service Delivery score is 5.229. Each one-unit increase in Socio-Cultural Factors leads to a 0.431-unit increase in Service Delivery, with a strong standardized effect (Beta = 0.582). The relationship is statistically significant (t = 11.680, p value 0.000), indicating a meaningful impact. Thus, the equation $Y = \alpha + \beta X + \varepsilon$ becomes Y= 5.229 +0.431X1 and the null hypotheses stating **HO:** Effect of Socio-Cultural Factors has no significant effect on service delivery of refugees' organization: Evidence from selected refugees in Kenya is rejected since the socio cultural factors and service delivery is significant at 0.000 p value.

The findings align with existing literature conducted by Sadiku (2022); Taras *et al* (2021) and Wang *et al.* (2020) approving that there is a positive correlation between socio cultural factors and service delivery by highlighting that the socio-cultural factors, including societal norms, values, and beliefs, play a crucial role in determining how services are perceived and delivered within different cultural settings. Further, Kandjii, (2023) assert that, the right blend of an excellent organization service orientation and culture create competitive advantages to the organization. Therefore, organizations that prioritize socio cultural factors from within and outside the organization are likely to experience quality and efficiency of their service delivery.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates a significant and positive relationship between socio-cultural factors and service delivery. This indicates that socio-cultural elements such as norms, values, and beliefs play a meaningful role in shaping how services are delivered within refugee organizations. Emphasizing these factors can lead to improvements in both the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

Recommendations

Socio-cultural factors have shown the strongest positive effect on service delivery. Organizations should integrate socio-cultural considerations into their operational practices by tailoring services to meet the cultural and social needs of refugees, host communities, staff working in these organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. This alignment will improve service effectiveness and satisfaction among refugee populations. Organizations should implement inclusive service models that incorporate cultural sensitivity training for staff, establish feedback mechanisms from affected communities, and develop culturally adaptive service delivery policies to enhance effectiveness.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could explore additional socio-cultural factors beyond the ones considered in this study, such as the impact of specific cultural beliefs or societal norms on service delivery in different organizational contexts. Investigating the role of external socio-cultural influences, such as community or national culture, on organizational service outcomes could also provide deeper insights. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of socio-cultural factors on service delivery could offer valuable perspectives on how these relationships evolve over time. Finally, expanding the research to include diverse geographical settings or different sectors could help generalize the findings to a broader range of organizations and service types.

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