

# Workforce Planning Practice and Employee Performance in County Governments in Kenya

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of workforce planning practice on employee performance county governments in Kenya. The study was anchored on the Blended Workforce Model. The study employed a descriptive design. The target population for this study was all 4631 employees in 9 selected counties. Using statistical formulae, a sample of 369 employees was obtained which was allocated proportionately. Simple random sampling was then be used on the sample obtained across county departments. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect primary data from the respondents. The data collection instrument was piloted on 37 respondents from Nyandarua, Kericho and Nyamira Counties who did not participate in the actual study. The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The results of the survey were presented in tables. The study established that workforce planning practice had weak positive correlation with employee performance. The study concluded that workforce planning practice was a significant predictor of employee performance. The study recommends the need for county governments to expand their demand forecasting mechanisms to cover competitive aspect of the type and quantity of labor that will be needed in the future and to consider realigning their supply forecasting which help determine future quantities and types of labor to be supplied with expected future technology-oriented job requirements.

**Keywords:** County Governments, Employee Performance, Workforce Planning Practice

## I. Introduction

Employee performance refers to measuring the actual results of employees in the organization against the organizational standards to identify the variations and take decision towards improving or sustaining the forces that arise from the variations (Ahmed, Bawa & Maku, 2020). Tanko, Bawa and Ramalan (2020) noted that the success of any system is usually determined by the performance of such system and likewise the failure of any system is determined by the performance of such system. Therefore, employee performance is normally looked at in terms of outcomes. Furthermore, employees' performance is measured against performance standards set by the organization in terms of various indicators timeliness, meeting targets, level of absenteeism, quality and compliance, standard outputs and prudent resource use among others. When it comes to evaluating performance, there are a variety of factors to consider. Productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and profitability are some examples (Swanson *et al.*, 2020). Setting goals and standards against which individual performance may be judged could help with this. As a result, organizations use employee performance evaluation to verify that their employees are contributing to the production of high-quality products and services. However, employee performance can only be guaranteed if the organization has the right number of employees with the right skills having the right talent in the right roles at the right time.

Workforce planning entails having the right number of employees with the right skills when they are needed with the main goal of having the right talent in the right roles at the right time (Aryal & Singh, 2022). Ebele *et al.*, (2024) argued that effective manpower planning is essential for organizations to optimize employee performance, productivity, and overall efficiency. Workforce planning aims to align an organization's people strategy with its evolving needs. It is a process in which an organization analyzes its current and future workforce needs based on its commitments, plans and objectives. It involves a system-wide review and analysis of the size and type of workforce that a company will need to

meet its goals. The key processes in workforce planning includes demand forecasting; assessing the likely type of employees needed in the future, supply forecasting; assessing the type of employees likely available in future; succession planning; developing structures that grows employees to take future management jobs and career planning; managing employee careers and guiding them to meet present and future needs. It allows for better control over staffing costs and numbers employed, and it enables employers to make more informed judgments about the skills and attitude mix in organizations. It therefore entails identifying and addressing the issue of workers as well as laying out new policies, procedures, and programs that will guarantee effective human resource management in light of shifting circumstances (Aryal & Singh, 2022).

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Devolution of the human resource function in Kenya aimed at bringing government services nearer to residents, increases straightforwardness and empowers local citizens to closely monitor government activities. However, the realization and accomplishment of these objectives depended on the effectiveness and efficiency of their human resources. Employee performance is thus a key component for any county that seeks to thrive. In order to enhance employee performance, counties must therefore put measures in place to build their human resource capacities. Consequently, building and managing HR capacity comes to the forefront in addressing employee performance gaps. However, county governments in Kenya have been experiencing various service delivery challenges which have led to inefficiencies, poor service delivery, high turnover, rampant corruption and massive losses (Osman & Bula, 2022). Furthermore, according to the World Bank (2020), 55% of employees absorbed from local government lack the requisite skills and capacity to tackle emerging challenges, over 40% of all county employees require enhanced capacity building and majority require re-orientation on work attitudes. Furthermore, According Nyaguthii (2022), various departments lack clear enforceable standards leading to disagreements between teams, hence hampering employee performance. Workforce planning lends itself as a viable solution to these challenges as it entails having the right number of employees with the right skills having the right talent in the right roles at the right time (Aryal & Singh, 2022). However, there is no evidence in literature indicating studies that have focused specifically on workforce planning practice and employee performance. Given the importance of county governments in enhancing devolution outcomes, it would be prudent to understand this relationship. This study seeks to fill this knowledge gap.

## II. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on the Blended Workforce Model (BWM) which was proposed by Thompson in 2008. BWM is one where employees are able to work across various work sites (Mahato, Kumar & Jena, 2021). This mix of employees interacting and collaborating seamlessly together as a team despite geographical location, can lead to better efficiency and productivity as well as higher employee engagement and motivation rates. BWM is emerging as a way forward for many organizations forced to juggle employees who are in the office and those who work from various geographical location such as county governments in Kenya. These employees will have the expectation to be able to switch locations and schedules dynamically where it makes the most sense to drive both productivity and engagement. As a result, counties have to plan how and when to deploy their workforce effectively. Thus, the model can be used to explain workforce planning. A blended workforce comprises a layer of contingent workers such as independent contractors or freelancers, with a core of permanent, full-time, employees. In order to effectively manage a blended workforce, companies begin by re-evaluating their staffing models (Mahato *et al.*, 2021). Indeed, a major problem facing firms is how to decide on the right number of right people at the right time by appropriately weighing the pertinent tradeoffs. Several tradeoffs need to be weighted when managing a blended workforce: On one hand, fixed, full-time, workers are typically reliable and committed to the firm, and they usually have a number of required working hours. However, this control comes at the expense of a fixed and relatively steep labor cost. Moreover, a pool of regular full-time workers cannot be easily scaled to meet dynamic business needs. On the other hand, flexible, contingent, workers are recruited on a part-time basis. They tend to have high turnover rates and uncertain availabilities, mostly due to the flexibility that is inherent in their work contracts. However, a pool of flexible workers can be easily scaled to meet seasonal demand fluctuations. The model therefore seems well-suited to explain workforce planning.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

Studies have previously investigated workforce planning and employee performance with diverse findings. For example, Aryal and Singh (2023) investigated human resource planning and organizational effectiveness in the Indian cooperative sector. Their study targeted 54 cooperative employees and employed an exploratory research design. Furthermore, the authors targeted the firms using stratified sampling techniques and collected data using structured questionnaire. Their study findings indicated a significant correlation between human resource planning and organizational effectiveness. The authors recommended the need for cooperative sector firms to consistently conduct manpower audits and planning as this allows them to proactively assess the demand and supply situation in the labour market before proceeding with employee recruitment. Furthermore, Osazevbaru *et al.*, (2023) examined the relationship

between human resource planning and the organizational performance of telecom companies in Delta State, Nigeria. Their study employed a cross-sectional research design and targeted 169 human resources executives using questionnaires. The authors revealed that there is a significant relationship between human resources planning (workforce forecasting, recruitment and selection, training and development and employee retention) and organizational performance. The authors therefore recommended the need for HR managers to align their HR planning with organizational goals and to put up measures to retain their skilled employees as this would enhance organizational performance.

Kipngetch (2022) sought to expound on the impact of human resource planning on employee performance at Kenya's Judicial Service Commission. The author adopted a descriptive research design and targeted 228 personnel from the Judicial Service Commission using a semi-structured questionnaire. The study concluded that there was a strong, positive and statistically correlation between recruitment practices, selection practices, reward and compensation and communication training practices and employee performance. The author recommended the need for managers to offer regular training and capacity building to increase employees' occupation development of competencies and their perception towards proficiency and efficacy in carrying their tasks. Similarly, Chege *et al.*, (2022) sought to provide a guidance on best practices in workforce planning to all the organizations in Kenya. The authors undertook a literature review across different organizations. The authors indicated that some organizations had executed and implemented best practices in workforce planning. Furthermore, they found a positive relationship between good workforce planning practices and business performance. The authors therefore recommended the need for Kenyan organizations to take workforce planning to the next level if they are to compete in the digital economy. Furthermore, they noted that talent and workforce planning are the pillars that make governments and organizations competitive and sustainable.

Mungania and Boru (2025) investigated the effects of planning on employees' performance in Isiolo County Government, Kenya. Their study deployed a descriptive research design and targeted 260 employees across seven county ministries using questionnaires. The authors indicated that employees frequently collaborate with their managers to set goals, and clear objectives are established during the planning process. Furthermore, they found that planning positively impacted overall employee performance. The study recommended the need for promoting inclusive and participatory governance through proper planning as this will integrate diverse stakeholder perspectives into policy making. Mwangi and Wanyama (2021) sought to determine the effect of human resource planning on organizational performance of Deloitte Kenya. The authors employed a descriptive survey design and targeted 116 respondents using structured questionnaires. The findings indicate that there is a positive and significant correlation between human resource planning and organizational performance. Furthermore, their study findings revealed that human resource planning has a significant effect on organizational performance. The authors therefore recommended the need for firms to strengthen their HR planning related factors such as supply forecasting, demand forecasting and action planning. The reviewed studies (Aryal & Singh, 2021; Osazevbaru *et al.*, 2023; Kipngetch, 2022; Chege *et al.*, 2022; Mungania & Boru, 2025; Mwangi & Wanyama, 2021) however have used a different approach and have not investigated the present variables amongst county government employees in Kenya.

### III. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study was thus 4631 employees from Makueni, Siaya, Baringo, Mombasa, Kakamega, Laikipia, Muranga, Isiolo and Trans Nzoia counties. Using statistical formulae, a sample of 369 respondents was obtained and which was allocated proportionately. This study employed probabilistic approaches using a mixed sampling technique. Firstly, proportionate sampling was used to allocate the sample across the counties. Secondly, the simple random sampling was then be used in targeting the said respondents in each of the counties. Finally, the researcher attempted to spread the random samples across the county departments. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions designed to elicit information from respondents. Before embarking on data collection, the researcher sought clearance from the university and obtained a research permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then sought clearance from the various county HR departments. The researcher then administered the questionnaires while assuring them that their responses from the respondents were to be kept confidential. The data collection instrument was done on 37 respondents which is 10% of target sample who are in similar positions in Nyandarua, Kericho and Nyamira Counties, Kenya. The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (version 23). Tables were then used to present the findings.

### IV. Research Findings and Discussions

#### 4.1 Descriptives on Workforce Planning Practice

The descriptive findings for skills training practice were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Workforce Planning

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	StdDev
Our county undertakes forecasting of future job demands needed	8	5.6	20.3	35.3	30.8	3.75	1.184
We forecast the type of skills that will be needed by future job demands	6.6	7	16.8	36	33.6	3.83	1.165
Our county undertakes forecasting of future supply of employees needed	5.6	11.2	18.9	40.9	23.4	3.65	1.122
We also forecast the type of skills that will be supplied by the market to meet future job positions	4.5	12.9	16.4	39.5	26.6	3.71	1.129
Our county has a well-documented succession plan.	8	16.1	15	34.6	26.2	3.55	1.258
All departments and positions are outlined in the organization structure with future plans for each job	1	8	10.5	44.1	36.4	4.07	.940
Our county has a plan of action about employee careers in line with individual employee needs	4.5	16.4	16.1	36	26.9	3.64	1.172
Our county also undertakes a needs analysis for all career paths and informs all employees about them	5.6	15	19.9	31.5	28	3.61	1.199
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.73</b>	<b>1.1461</b>

From the findings, the respondents agreed that their counties undertook forecasting of future job demands needed (66.1%) and that they forecasted the type of skills that will be needed by future job demands (69.6%). The findings implied that counties through their HR departments undertook demand forecasting as part of their workforce planning. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that their county undertook forecasting of future supply of employees needed (64.3%) and that they also forecasted the type of skills that would be supplied by the market to meet future job positions (66.1%). The findings implied that counties undertook supply forecasting to ascertain the type and quantity of human resources that will be supplied by the labour market in future. Similarly, the respondents agreed that their county had a well-documented succession plan (60.8%) and that all departments and positions were outlined in the organization structure with future plans for each job (80.5). It can thus be suggested that most counties have plans geared towards succession and that these succession plans are documented and inbuilt in the county organizational structures. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that their county had a plan of action about employee careers in line with individual employee needs (62.9%) and that their county also undertook a needs analysis for all career paths and informs all employees about them (59.5%). The findings on employee careers in particular was significant since it outlines a structures approach by county governments to address the career paths and needs of its employees. The findings mirror those of Ikechukwu (2020) who established that elements of workforce planning were positively correlated with organizational performance. Furthermore, their findings indicated that succession planning had positive effect on the quality of service and leadership development had positive effect on the profitability. The study concluded that succession planning and leadership development had positive effect on the quality of service and profitability. The findings are also in agreement with those of Ajetomobi (2021) who indicated that workforce planning was moderately correlated with employee performance. However, their findings on workforce planning had a weak correlation on both productivity levels and employee commitment. It can therefore be suggested that capacity building is an indispensable tool in management; hence, it should not be taken lightly but seriously with tremendous efforts as it has the propensity to affect and influence to a large extent the stated objectives of an organization from time to time.

4.2 Descriptives on Employee Performance

The descriptive findings for employee performance were as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Employee Performance

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	StdDev
I normally start and complete all my work targets according to the set timelines	0	0	11.9	35.7	52.4	4.41	0.693
I consistently meet all my short-term and long-term work targets	0	4.2	18.2	42.7	35	4.08	0.833
I have a low annual level of absenteeism from my work duties	0	3.8	8.7	38.5	49	4.33	0.792

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I always ensure that my work outputs meet the quality standards set by management	0	2.4	7.3	40.2	50	4.38	0.728
I also ensure that I comply with rules and regulations set by management	1.4	1.4	2.8	33.2	61.2	4.51	0.748
I often deliver standard work outputs	0	1.7	6.6	44.8	46.9	4.37	0.687
In undertaking my work, I ensure prudent use of all county resources at my disposal	0	4.2	7.7	31.1	57	4.41	0.806
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>4.36</b>	<b>0.755</b>

Similarly, the respondents agreed with the statements that they also ensured that they complied with rules and regulations set by management (94.4%) and that they often delivered standard work outputs (91.7%). The findings on compliance to rules and regulations set by management suggested that employee discipline is fairly high amongst county government employees. Similarly, the findings on delivery of standard work outputs implied that employees rated themselves highly on their performance outputs. Furthermore, the respondents agreed with the statement that in undertaking their work, they ensured prudent use of all county resources at their disposal (88.1%). The findings on the prudent use of county government resources at the disposal of employees implied that on average county resources were prudently utilized viewed from employee perspectives.

### 4.3 Correlation analysis

Table 3 presents Pearson's correlation of workforce planning practice and employee performance in county governments in Kenya.

**Table 3 Workforce Planning Practice and Employee Performance**

		Workforce Planning Practice
<b>Employee Performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	.165**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	286

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

The correlation results show that workforce planning practice ( $r=.165$ ,  $p=.000$ ) had a weak and positive correlation with employee performance in county governments in Kenya. The findings tally with those of Ajetomobi (2021) who indicated that workforce planning was moderately correlated with employee performance. Furthermore, the authors suggested that workforce planning had a weak correlation on both productivity levels and employee commitment. Similar findings were reported by Ikechukwu (2020) who established that elements of workforce planning had a weak and positive correlation with organizational performance.

### 4.4 Regression Analysis

The study undertook a univariate regression between employee performance and workforce planning practice and the model summary findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4 Model Summary**

Indicator	Coefficient
R	.165
R Square	.027
Adjusted R Square	.024
Standard Error of the Estimate	.52025

From the findings in Table 4, the R-square value of 0.027 indicates that workforce planning practice explains 2.7% of variation in employee performance in county governments in Kenya. Table 5 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA) findings.

**Table 5 ANOVA: Workforce Planning Practice and Employee Performance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.140	1	2.140	7.905	.005 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	76.869	284	.271		
	Total	79.008	285			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Workforce Planning Practice

The findings in Table 5 indicated a statistically significant model (F= 7.905, p=.005). The findings on the regression coefficients are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Regression Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.009	.127		31.616	.000
Workforce Planning Practice	.093	.033	.165	2.812	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

From the findings in Table 6, it was established that workforce planning significantly influenced employee performance (B=.093, p=.005). This implied that one-unit increase in the level of workforce planning practice would lead to an increase of 0.093 units in employee performance. Further, using the regression coefficients in Table 6, the following specific model was developed as:

$$Employee\ Performance = 4.009 + 0.093Workforce\ Planning\ Practice$$

The study further undertook hypothesis testing on the null hypothesis: **H<sub>0</sub>**: Workforce planning practice has no significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya. From Table 6, it was found that the calculated t = 2.812 and p=.005<.05 and thus the null hypothesis was rejected. The study therefore concluded that workforce planning practice has a statistically significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya. The findings tally with those of Ajetomobi (2021) who indicated that workforce planning was moderately correlated with employee performance. Furthermore, the authors suggested that workforce planning had a weak correlation on both productivity levels and employee commitment. Similar findings were reported by Ikechukwu (2020) who established that elements of workforce planning had a weak and positive correlation with organizational performance.

In comparison with local empirical studies, the findings on workforce planning also mirror those of Kipngetch (2022) who concluded that there was a strong, positive and statistically correlation between recruitment practices, selection practices, reward and compensation and communication training practices and employee performance. Similarly, the results tallied with those of Chege *et al.*, (2022) who indicated that some organizations had executed and implemented best practices in workforce planning and found a positive relationship between good workforce planning practices and business performance. Mungania and Boru (2025) also indicated that employees frequently collaborate with their managers to set goals, and clear objectives are established during the planning process. Furthermore, they found that planning positively impacted overall employee performance. Furthermore, the were in tandem with those of Mwangi and Wanyama (2021) who indicated that there is a positive and significant correlation between human resource planning and organizational performance which implied that an increase in aspects related to human resource planning results in an increase in organizational performance. Furthermore, their study findings revealed that HR planning has a significant effect on organizational performance.

## V. Conclusion

The study concluded that workforce planning practice was a significant predictor of employee performance. The study therefore concluded that county governments undertook demand forecasting to establish the type and quantity of labor that counties will need in the future which influenced the performance of their employees. The study also concluded that county governments undertook supply forecasting to determine future quantities and types of labor to be supplied in future which influenced the performance of their employees. The study also concluded that county governments undertook succession planning as means of cushioning their manpower pool incase strategic positions were left vacant, which influenced the performance of their employees. Finally, the study therefore concluded that county governments undertook career planning for its employees and undertook needs assessment so as to plan for career path and growth of employees which influenced the performance of their employees. The study recommends the need for county governments to expand their demand forecasting mechanisms to cover competitive aspect of the type and quantity of labour that will be needed in the future. The study also recommends the need for county governments to consider realigning their supply forecasting which help determine future quantities and types of labour to be supplied with expected future technology-oriented job requirements. The study also recommends the need for county governments to explore wide-ranging industry-based structures and approaches to succession planning as means of cushioning their manpower pool incase strategic positions were left vacant. Finally, the study recommends the need for county governments to widen their career planning systems so as to clarify career paths and opportunities for career progression beyond the static county government structures.

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