

**AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE WORK PERFORMANCE IN
COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF MERU COUNTY
MANAGEMENT**

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is critical to achieving organizational objectives and being competitive. The general objective of this study was to assess the factors associated with workers performance in Meru County offices. This study adopted a descriptive research design. The study population consisted of all the 350 employees of Meru County government. A sample of 200 employees was selected based on stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected using an electronic questionnaire administered to sampled workers through an email via the HR department. Regression and Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the organizational culture, remuneration, training and work environment on employee job performance. The findings from the study confirm that a positive and significant association between organizational culture, remuneration, training, and work environment might all influence employee job performance and there is need for the organization to improve on training and leadership in order to achieve continual improvement. The findings have policy implications for organizational control design, the budgeting system, strategies for involving managers in budgeting, instilling their organizational commitment, and improving their performance.

Keywords: *Employee Work Performance (WP), Organizational Culture (OC), Training (T), Work Environment (WE) and Remuneration (R), County Government, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of public administration, performance of civil servants is critical to the success of government operations and the implementation of public policies. The Kenyan Civil Service is pivotal in the national development agenda via Kenya Vision 2030, a development blueprint which aims at having well-trained, developed and globally competitive workforce, to provide quality services to all. The effective functioning of government institutions, both at the central and regional levels, hinges on the competence and dedication of these civil servants. Despite this crucial role, there has been ongoing concern about the performance levels of county employees. Issues such as delayed meetings, inadequate administrative support, and inefficient execution of tasks have been observed, pointing to a significant gap in employee performance (Lenaiyarra, Bitok & Shirandula, 2024). This gap affects the county service Secretariat's operational efficiency and undermines public trust and satisfaction with county government services (Wambui and Nambuswa, 2024). The recent implementation of new performance management regulations under Presidential delivery unit aims at addressing these challenges by introducing systematic performance evaluations and accountability measures (Mahad & Muhindi, 2024). However, the effectiveness of these measures in improving county performance remains to be seen. Thus, there is an urgent need to investigate the factors that influence the performance of county employees, particularly in county with unique socio-political dynamics, such as Meru County, to develop targeted strategies for enhancing public service delivery (Mwangi & Muli, 2024). Furthermore, ethical considerations and discipline remain paramount in ensuring civil servants perform their duties effectively and uphold public trust.

Recent research has explored the factors affecting employee performance within the public sector, emphasizing on aspects such as the work environment, organizational culture, training, and compensation. According to Hamkar and Watanyar (2024), organizational culture plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee performance by fostering motivation to meet organizational objectives and improving service delivery to clients. Training programs are instrumental in developing employees' skills and competencies, bolstering their motivation to excel, and increasing their confidence in tackling challenging tasks (Wambui & Nambuswa, 2024). Furthermore, such programs promote teamwork, facilitate the sharing of experiences, and ultimately enhance overall performance. Evidence suggests that well-structured training initiatives can significantly elevate employees' effectiveness in fulfilling their responsibilities (Gange & Barongo, 2024; Wambui & Nambuswa, 2024). Compensation also serves as a vital motivational factor that impacts employee performance. Fair and adequate remuneration ensures that employees feel appreciated and motivated to contribute meaningfully to employees achieving organization's objectives (Mwangi & Muli, 2024).

The establishment of county governments in Kenya in 2010, following the enactment of a new constitution, marked a significant shift in governance. This new framework devolved central government functions to county governments, aiming to promote equitable resource distribution and accelerate national development while enhancing public participation in decision-making processes. This shift has fostered a greater sense of shared vision and mission, improved societal confidence, and increased public involvement (Kiilu & Wambua, 2017). The devolved governance system has also led to enhanced organizational autonomy, which is associated with increased ownership, commitment, empowerment, initiative, professionalism, motivation, and morale among employees. Approximately 20% of positions within the County Government are contract-based, while 80% are permanent. Consequently, this study aims to examine the factors influencing employee performance to facilitate effective employee retention and engagement.

Recent research has explored what affects employee performance in the public sector, focusing on the work environment, organizational structure, training, and pay. Hamkar and Watanyar (2024) state that a strong organizational culture boosts employee performance by motivating workers to meet goals and enhance service delivery. Training improves employees' skills and confidence, encouraging teamwork and sharing experiences. Studies show that well-structured training programs can greatly enhance employees' ability to

perform their tasks effectively (Gange & Barongo, 2024; Wambui & Nambuswa, 2024). Compensation also plays a vital role in motivating employees. Fair pay makes workers feel valued and boosts their commitment to achieving organizational goals (Mwangi & Muli, 2024). However, research findings on this topic can be inconsistent.

The district governments in Kenya were founded in 2013 on the basis of the new constitution, which delegated certain responsibilities of the central government to the local authorities. This reform is intended to improve the fair distribution of resources and promote national development by promoting a stronger commitment of the community in the decision-making process (Makunyi et al., 2022). Such an approach promotes a collective vision and strengthens trust through increased participation (Kiilu & Wambua, 2017). The revised governance framework improves organizational independence, which in turn promotes a feeling of property, commitment, empowerment, motivation and general morality among employees. About 20% of the positions within the district government are occupied by contracts, while the remaining 80% are permanent roles. This study examines the factors that influence the performance of the employees in order to improve retention and overall effectiveness (Kiilu & Wambua, 2017). About 20% of the positions within the district government are occupied by contracts, while the remaining 80% are permanent roles. However, there is a remarkable shortage of research in which the various elements that affect the performance of employees within the district governments are examined. Kiilu and Wambua (2017) examined how the performance of the work environment and the behavior of the managers in Makueni County affected, and found that both have a significant impact on employee production. Munjogu and Kiiru (2024) examined the effects on the effects on the district government of Laikipia and found that the analysis of the training needs, the design of effective programs, the provision of training and the evaluation of the results have a positive impact. Wambui and Nambuswa (2024) examined the training and development in the government of Kiambu County and identified a strong connection between training methods and employee performance. Kamanja (2020) examined the effects of the workplace on the commitment of the employees in the ministries of the central government in Kenya, especially in the Meru district. These studies focus on individual factors that influence the performance of the employees. This research aims to close the knowledge gap by examining the connections between the work environment, organizational culture, training and payment of the performance of the employees in the district of Meru.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Literature

Empirical research on employee performance in the public sector has identified several key factors that influence how employees perform their duties. These include leadership, resource availability, professional development, and organizational culture.

Employee Development and Training

Yahuza and Suleiman (2024) argue that training is an act of providing individuals with necessary skills, knowledge, and competences in order to improve their performance as well as productivity within their existing job responsibilities. Regular training enhances employee job skills and knowledge that boosts their confidence in applying their talents, which improves their work performance in return enabling them to function with increased effectiveness and productivity in the workplace. Atatsi, Stoffers, and Kil (2019) conducted a systematic review and identified several factors affecting employee performance, including the significance of continuous professional development. According to Al-Sharafi et al. (2018), businesses that offer training and development program help programmers keep their competitive edge. Baporikar (2024) associates poor employee performance to shortage of skills, lack of motivation, and ineffective training and development. According to Arulsamy et al., (2023) training and development is an essential mechanism employed to optimize employee performance and foster their growth in terms of efficiency, productivity, job satisfaction, motivation, and innovation within the organizational context. Awoitau, Noch, & Khotimah

(2024) investigated the impact of motivation, training, and compensation on employee performance at the Secretariat of the DPRD of Jayapura Regency. They found that to create a motivated and productive workforce, organizational leaders and managers should focus on supportive leadership, continuous skill development, and fair compensation policies. Wambui and Nambuswa (2024) conducted a study on the influence of training and development on employee performance in county government of Kiambu.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture was also defined as what was communicated to the organization's employees, as well as what they experienced, believed, and displayed (Nadler & Nadler, 1998). Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping employee behavior and performance. Joseph and Kibera (2019) found that a positive organizational culture in microfinance institutions in Kenya significantly correlates with employee performance. Their study underscores the importance of embedding a culture of excellence and accountability to enhance performance. Additionally, Leso, Cortimiglia, & Ghezzi (2022) highlighted the interplay between organizational culture, structure, and leadership in the context of digital transformation, further illustrating how these factors can influence employee engagement and productivity. A critical aspect of corporate culture, specifically innovative culture, has a large and positive impact on employee performance (Nwakoby, Okoye, & Anugwu, 2019; Sikora & Ferris, 2014). According to Makunyi, et al., (2022), teamwork among employees, discipline, professionalism, competence, integrity, ethical conduct guided by accountability, transparency, and good rapport with the public are vital to creating a strong organizational culture in the county governments of Kenya.

Work Environment

The workplace environment is another critical factor influencing employee performance. Mutiga (2024) argued that work environment encompasses the physical layout, surrounding environment, professional relationships, organizational culture, available resources, behavioral standards, and the actual work location, all of which significantly influence employees' job performance. Zhenjing et al., (2022) indicates that various environmental factors, including workstation design and safety measures, can substantially affect employee morale, productivity, and engagement. A conducive work environment is essential for motivating employees and fostering collaboration, suggesting that organizations should invest in creating safe and healthy workspaces to enhance performance. Further investigations reveal that both career development and a supportive work environment directly influence performance, with work motivation serving as a partial mediator (Yusuf et al., 2022). This suggests that organizations need to prioritize career development initiatives alongside environmental improvements to drive performance effectively. Mutiga (2024) applied the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, social exchange theory, spillover theory and Herzbergs's two factory theory to investigate the influence of work environment on employee performance in the county assembly of Meru focusing on physical environment, psychological factors, supervisor support and work-life balance. Kiilu, & Wambua (2017)

Theoretical Literature

Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory, which categorizes human needs into three core components Existence, Relatedness, and Growth provides a nuanced framework for understanding employee motivation, particularly within the context of government employees. Existence needs, which encompass basic physiological and safety requirements, are fundamental to employee motivation. Mafini and Dlodlo (2014) emphasized that extrinsic factors such as remuneration and quality of work life significantly contribute to fulfilling these existence needs among public organization employees in South Africa. Their findings indicate that when existence needs are adequately met, employees report higher job satisfaction and consequently improved performance.

Relatedness needs pertain to the social connections and relationships employees cultivate at work. Schwarz et al. (2016) examined how servant leadership addresses these needs, positing that leaders who prioritize employee well-being can significantly enhance public service motivation (PSM). The study revealed that servant leadership fosters a sense of connection among government employees, subsequently leading to improved job performance. This aligns with Alderfer's assertion that addressing relatedness needs can facilitate a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Furthermore, Caillier (2014) explored transformational leadership's role in fulfilling relatedness and growth needs, highlighting that effective leaders can significantly impact employee evaluations and performance through their ability to nurture these needs. The interplay between leadership styles and employee motivation underscores the importance of relational dynamics in public sector performance. The synthesis of existing research underscores the significance of addressing existence, relatedness, and growth needs to foster a more motivated and effective public sector workforce.

Frederick Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg (1959) two-factor Theory explains the work environment conditions that would cause satisfaction and motivation to employee to improve their job performance. Herzberg's theory posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction arise from two distinct sets of factors. Hygiene factors, such as salary, job security, and working conditions, are essential to prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily lead to high performance or job satisfaction (Aljumah, 2024). In contrast, motivators such as recognition, achievement, and the nature of the work itself are crucial for enhancing job satisfaction and performance (Jung & Moon, 2024; Abdullah et al., 2016; Jung & Moon, 2024). This distinction is particularly relevant in the context of government employment, where unique challenges can affect employee motivation and performance.

Forson, et al., (2007) studied Ghananian workforce and emphasized that while adequate salary and favorable working conditions are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction, they alone fall short in driving performance. This suggests that governments need to ensure these hygiene factors are met to stabilize employee morale but must also pay attention to motivators to enhance overall performance. Comparative studies have indicated that extrinsic factors, traditionally regarded as hygiene, can also positively influence job satisfaction (Rahman, Akhter, & Khan, 2017; Morais, & Galpothdeniya, 2023). This insight implies that government organizations may benefit from a more integrated approach that considers both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in performance management strategies.

Hypotheses Development

A critical aspect of corporate culture, specifically innovative culture, has a large and positive impact on employee performance (Nwakoby, Okoye, & Anugwu, 2019; Sikora & Ferris, 2014). Organizational culture positively correlates with employee performance (Joseph and Kibera, 2019) Additionally, Leso, Cortimiglia, & Ghezzi (2022) reports that the interplay between organizational culture, structure, and leadership in the context of digital transformation, influences employee engagement and productivity positively. Paaïs and Pattiruhu (2020) conducted a comprehensive investigation that highlighted the significant positive effects of organizational culture on employee performance, particularly when aligned with motivation. Their findings advocate for organizations to cultivate a supportive culture to enhance performance outcomes. This notion is echoed by other studies, reinforcing the importance of a coherent organizational culture in promoting employee motivation and engagement. A study by Shantz et al. (2016) further corroborates this viewpoint, providing empirical evidence that a positive organizational culture significantly influences employee performance. The authors identified key cultural variables such as communication systems and employee participation, which contribute to enhanced performance outcomes. Considering the previous statements in the literature, the following research hypothesis was derived:

- **H₁:** The coherent organizational culture is positively correlated with employee work performance.

Research indicates that various environmental factors, including workstation design and safety measures, can substantially affect employee morale, productivity, and engagement (Zhenjing et al., 2022). A conducive work environment is essential for motivating employees and fostering collaboration, suggesting that organizations should invest in creating safe and healthy workspaces to enhance performance. Further investigations reveal that both career development and a supportive work environment directly influence performance, with work motivation serving as a partial mediator (Yusuf et al., 2022). Berberoğlu (2018) emphasizes the importance of a supportive organizational climate, specifically how supervisor support and respect contribute positively to employees' perceptions of their contributions to organizational performance. This emotional and psychological aspect of the work environment plays a vital role in enhancing employee engagement and productivity.

Nguyen et al. (2020) provide a broader perspective by exploring multiple factors influencing employee performance, including motivation, leadership, and organizational culture. They establish that the work environment is a significant variable affecting employee performance, suggesting that a focus on improving environmental conditions can lead to enhanced work outcomes. Hafee et al. (2019) investigate how physical and behavioral environmental factors influence employee productivity, revealing that improvements in the work environment lead to better employee health, which in turn enhances performance. Parashakti et al. (2020) demonstrate that a quality work environment significantly affects employee motivation, which directly correlates with performance. Lin et al. (2015) extend this discussion by examining the impact of workplace violence on job performance, suggesting that a safe and supportive environment is crucial for maintaining high employee performance. This underscores the necessity of addressing negative environmental factors to enhance employee outcomes. Randhawa and Kaur (2015) identify how a supportive organizational climate enhances employee performance through organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). This implies that improving the organizational climate is essential for achieving better performance outcomes, further reinforcing the correlation between quality work environments and employee work performance. This gives rise to the following research hypothesis:

- **H2:** The organization's quality of work environment is positively correlated with employee work performance.

Studies by Sutanto and Kurniawan (2017) and Agustiningsih et al. (2016) indicate that satisfactory remuneration significantly affects job satisfaction, which in turn influences employee performance. The findings suggest that organizations focusing on competitive salaries and effective compensation strategies can enhance employee satisfaction and productivity. This supports the premise that a positive correlation exists between satisfactory remuneration and employee work performance. Wei and Yazdanifard (2014) contribute to this discourse by discussing the impact of positive reinforcement on performance, highlighting that both extrinsic rewards (like salary) and intrinsic rewards (such as praise) can motivate employees. This dual approach reinforces the need for organizations to consider a comprehensive remuneration strategy that includes both financial and non-financial incentives to optimize employee performance. Accordingly, the following research hypothesis was derived:

- **H3:** The organization's satisfactory and commensurate remuneration is positively correlated with employee work performance.

Recent studies show that provision of training and development opportunities is crucial in enhancing employee performance (Atatsi, Stoffers, and Kil, 2019). Such insights suggest that investing in employee development can yield substantial benefits in terms of performance outcomes. According to Arulsamy et al., (2023), training and development is an essential mechanism employed to optimize employee performance and foster their growth in terms of efficiency, productivity, job satisfaction, motivation, and innovation within the

organizational context. Considering the previous statements and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is derived:

- **H₄:** The organization's investment in training is positively correlated with employee work performance

Independent Variables

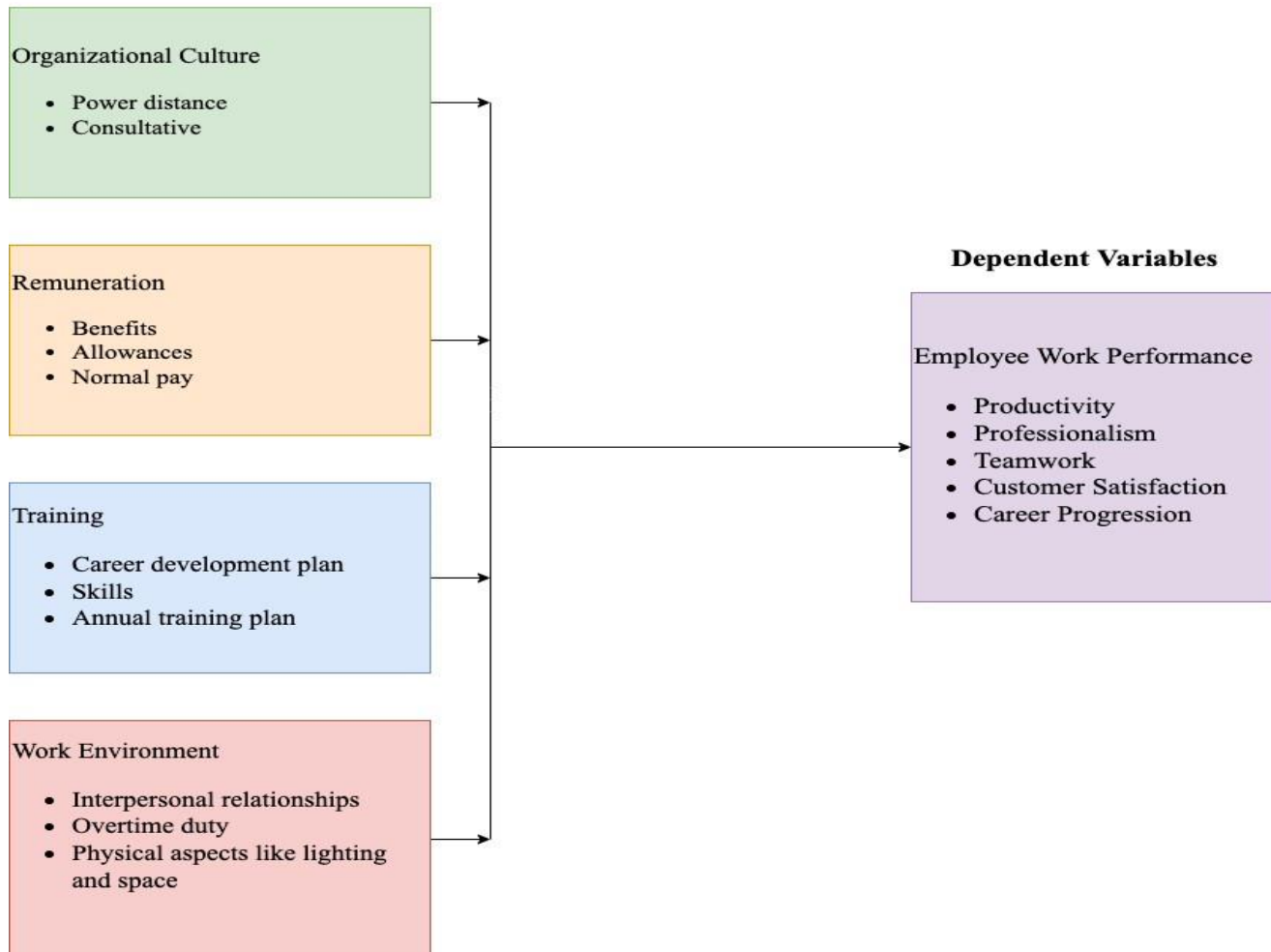


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design

A research design is a plan that is applied when conducting a project and it provides all the required information regarding the objectives of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). A design gives a firm foundation for the whole research product to be conducted and the development of accurate results, which meets the aims of the research (Mills et al., 2018). This study used descriptive research design. The descriptive survey design was suitable for this study since it allowed the researcher to study the phenomena, which do not allow for manipulation of variables. This design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data.

Target Population

In a research, target population is a sample used to explain the characteristics of the entire population and it aids the researcher to generate research findings, recommendations and conclusion that address the purpose and objectives of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2009). The target population in this case was be 185

departmental technical staff as recorded by the Human resource department of Meru county government who are spread out across twelve departments. These were considered since they are directly involved in project execution. This number was deemed sufficient to allow generalization on the determinants of employee performance in county projects within the County government of Meru.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The stratified random sampling technique will be used by the researcher. Researchers also employ this technique, according to Crossman (2019), when they wish to observe correlations between two or more subgroups, or when they want to look at the population's unusual extremes. A stratified sample ensures that individuals from each category are represented in the sample, making it a desirable choice. Stratified random sampling was adopted because it lowers sampling mistakes (Kothari, 2009). Members were picked at random from the various departments. It was presumed that all of the randomly selected members had the necessary knowledge to reveal or provide the required information. The research population will be employees of Meru County Government working at the Meru County Office. Sample size will be 200 employees ($n=200$). Strata of the sample by gender of the participants, academic qualifications, marital status, age, level of management, years of job experience and employment status (that is contract, part-time or permanent employment).

Experts on sample size have offered varying opinions, according to (Nisar Saleem, 2008). Some proposed 5%, while others proposed 10%. He subsequently adds that the greater the degree of precision necessary, the larger the sample size should be taken. According to (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003), the sample size should be 30% of the whole set. The researcher collected a sample representing 50% of the population, and this was deemed acceptable for the study in order to enhance the accuracy of the data. The research population will be employees of Meru County Government working at the Meru County Office. Sample size will be 200 employees ($n=200$). Strata of the sample = gender of the participants, academic qualifications, age bracket, level of management, years of job experience.

Data Collection Method and Instrument

To collect the data, a questionnaire was employed. It entailed sending questionnaires to Meru County employees via email and an internet network called WhatsApp, which is widely used in Kenya. The researcher provided the questionnaire link to the head of the HR department at the Meru County government office, and the link was thereafter circulated across the Meru County government office's various departments to allow employees to fill out the questionnaire. Because this is an empirical study, obtaining original data is essential. The data was then gathered over the course of a month and examined to draw conclusions on the study's objective.

Pilot Study

To achieve validity the instrument of the questionnaire was pre-tested through a pilot study, which was done to a section of the workers (10 in number) in a neighboring county of Tharaka Nithi. The acquired data from the 10 workers of the other county was then rapidly reviewed, and possible challenges in submitting the major bulky questionnaires were identified and remedied before the actual collection of data in the researchers target area which is Meru County.

Data Collection Procedure

Since all employees in the sample are based in Meru, Kenya, while the researcher is abroad, the questionnaires would be administered electronically via email link or through social media (e.g., WhatsApp which is widely used in Kenya). Participants will complete the questionnaire at their convenience. Data collected from secondary source consisting of employee appraisal from human resource department finding of surveys conducted in relation to working performance from previously conducted studies.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The statistics revealed that males made up 54.15 percent of the respondents. Females made up the remaining 48.85%. These results suggested that males make up the majority of the responders.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Male	111	54.15	54.15
Female	94	48.85	100
Total	205	100	

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Below 25 years	35	17.07	17.07
26 - 35 years	73	35.61	52.68
36 - 45 years	56	27.32	80.00
Above 45 years	41	20.00	100
Total	205	100	

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Certificate	49	23.90	23.90
Diploma	69	33.66	57.56
Degree	69	33.66	91.22
Post Graduate	18	8.78	100
Total	205	100	

Length of Employment	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Less than a year	19	9.27	9.27
1-3 years	41	20.00	29.27
3-5 years	55	26.83	56.10
Above 5 years	90	43.90	100
Total	205	100	

Department	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Administration	42	20.49	20.49
Operations	46	22.44	42.93
Finance	29	14.15	57.08
Sales and Marketing	36	17.56	74.64
Human Resource	18	8.78	83.42
Other	34	16.59	100
Total	205	100	

From the above tabulation, it was established that majority of the respondents were between ages 26-35 which is a representative of 35.61% of the total population. This was followed by respondents between 36-45 years, above 45 years and below 25 years representing 27.32%, 20% and 17.07% of the total population respectively.

From the findings, the administration department accounted for 20.49% of the total population. Operations department accounted for a majority of 22.44% respondents. Finance 14.15%, sales and marketing 17.56%, human resources department 8.78% and other departments 16.59%.

From the findings, it was established that majority of the respondents were both diploma and degree

holders totaling 33.66% of the total each. Certificate holders accounted for 23.90% of the total and post-graduates 8.78%.

Majority of the Meru County government employees have been working at the county government for more than 5 years tallying in 43.90% of the total followed by employees that have worked at the county government for 3-5 years which represents 26.83% of the total, 1-3 years representing 20% and less than a year representing 9.27% of the total.

Results of reliability of the study instrument

The reliability of surveys with multiple Likert scale questions is assessed using the Cronbach alpha test. The goals of the questions are to evaluate latent variables. The following is a rule of thumb for interpreting alpha for dichotomous questions or explaining internal consistency: $\alpha \geq 0.9$ as excellent, $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ as good, $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$ as acceptable, $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$ as questionable, $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$ as poor, and $0.5 > \alpha$ as unacceptable (DeVellis, 2012). The Cronbach alpha estimates for the variables in the study are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Reliability and validity of the study constructs (Cronbach alpha- α)

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α
Quality of Work Environment	6	0.730
Satisfactory and Commensurate Remuneration	11	0.804
Coherent Organizational Culture	7	0.837
Investment in Training	7	0.787
Employee Performance	10	0.920

Correlation Statistics

Table 3 demonstrates the correlation between the variables to determine whether they have a relationship with each other. The results show that all variables Work Environment, Remuneration, Organizational Culture, and Training had a positive statistically significant relationship with employee work performance at $p < 0.05$. Remuneration demonstrated the largest correlation with performance $r = 0.468$, followed by Organizational culture $r = 0.455$, followed by Training $r = 0.405$. Work environment correlated the least $r = 0.227$ with employee work performance which was a low correlation definitely but a small relationship. All the four variables demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with employee performance, therefore hypothesis 1-4 were accepted.

Table 3: A correlation matrix with the dependent variables (Work performance) and the independent variables (Work-related characteristics) (N = 200).

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.GEN	1.55	0.50								
2.AGE	35.60	8.45	0.004							
3.DPT	3.21	1.74	0.016	-.268**						
4.EDU	2.27	0.93	-.105	0.100	-.052					
5.WE	3.96	0.72	-.194**	.208**	-.149*	.275**				
6.R	3.25	0.67	-.082	.117*	-.136*	.257**	.432**			
7.OC	3.26	0.94	-.275	.034	-.003	.217**	.529**	.487**		
8.T	3.82	0.86	-.205**	0.101	0.046	.284**	.342**	.328**	.487**	
9.WP	3.62	0.80	-.083	0.025	-.032	.227**	.426**	.468**	.455**	.405**

Note: ($n = 205$), GEN= Gender, DPT= Departmental Level, EDU = Educational level, WE= Work Environment, R= Remuneration, OC= Organizational Culture, T= Training, WP= Work Performance. Reliabilities are on the diagonal. ($*p < .05$; $**p < .01$)

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4 demonstrates the regression analysis between the various Remuneration, Training, Work

environment, Organizational culture on employee work performance. The dependent variable work performance was regressed on the independent variables Remuneration, Training, Work environment, and Organizational culture. The independent variables significantly explained the variance in work performance, $F(7,197) = 14.928$, $p = 0.000$. This demonstrates that the three variables have a significant impact on employee work performance. Moreover, the $R^2 = 0.347$ depicts that the model explains 34.7% of the variability in employee work performance.

Table 4: Regression analysis with employee work performance as the outcome variable.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Gender	.094	.097	.058	.964	.336
Age	-.007	.006	-.072	-1.219	.224
Educational Level	.032	.054	.036	.589	.557
Work environment	.209	.081	.187	2.591	.010
Organizational culture	.127	.067	.148	1.880	.062
Training	.181	.063	.194	2.852	.005
Remuneration	.305	.083	.255	3.697	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Work performance					

Regression coefficients were further assessed to ascertain the influence of each of the factors on employee work performance. Remuneration had the largest positive relationship with employee performance ($B = 0.305$) indicating that a unit increase in remuneration is associated with a 0.305, increase in performance. This relationship is statistically significant. Work environment also had a statistically significant positive relationship with performance ($B = 0.209$), indicating a unit improvement in work environment will result in associated 0.209 in improvement in performance. Training had a statistically significant positive relation with performance ($B = 0.181$), indicating that a unit increase in employee training will lead to 0.181 improvement in performance. Organizational culture did not explain a statistically significant amount of variation in employee work performance ($B = 0.127$, $p=0.062$).

Discussion

The aim of the study was to explore the relation between Remuneration, Training, Work environment, and Organizational culture and employee work performance at the Meru county government offices. The results indicated a low positive relationship between Organizational culture and employee work performance ($r = 0.455$, $P < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis 1. This aligns with previous research showing Organizational culture positively influences the performance of employees working at County government of Meru offices (Sikora & Ferris, 2014; Shantz et al., 2016; Joseph & Kibera, 2019; Nwakoby, Okoye, & Anugwu, 2019; Leso, Cortimiglia, & Ghezzi, 2022).

Work environment showed a low positive statistically significant correlation with employee work performance ($r = 0.426$, $P < 0.001$), affirming the Hypothesis 2. This shows that a quality work environment affects the employee motivation, which directly correlates positively with performance (Parashakti et al., 2020, Zhenjing et al., 2022).

Remuneration showed a positive statistically significant correlation with employee work performance ($r = 0.468$, $P < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 3. This suggests that satisfactory remuneration in terms of financial and non-financial compensation, increased salaries and wages affected employee work performance positively which is in agreement with findings of the previous studies (Agustiningsih et al., 2016; Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2017; Nyaga, Gakobo & Njuguna, 2020; Sitorus & Hidayat, 2023)

A positive statistically significant weak correlation was found between Training and employee work

performance ($r = 0.405$, $P < 0.001$), providing support for Hypothesis 4. This finding aligns with the assertions of Shanmugathan and Thirunavukkarasu (2023), who argue that such initiatives significantly elevate employee performance within organizations, as the primary objective of training is to bolster overall organizational effectiveness. Yimam (2022) further suggests that the learning experiences gained through training foster enduring changes in the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of staff in their current roles. Additionally, training equips employees with transferable knowledge that is vital for organizational growth, thereby improving staff performance and ultimately leading to enhanced productivity.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Like other studies, this study also has some limitations. This is just a tentative empirical study and the small sample size limits to some extent the generalization of the findings made in the study. Therefore, it is recommended to future researches to take more time and reach to a larger sample. Another limitation of the research is that a survey questionnaire was used to measure the independent and dependent variables. When doing the questionnaire survey, it is hard to get a perfect answer of the question because of the respondents' time constraints (Shanmugathan and Thirunavukkarasu, 2023).

Future research studies can be based on this to find more independent variables that explain employee work performance as there are many factors influencing performance in the literature. This study has faced a limitation because the number of respondents is small and the results may not be accurate. Future research should increase the number of respondents to get more accurate results, which help analyze root cause of the problem and possibly solve it.

The county government should ensure that the leadership style employed promotes employees' growth and development by enhancing the managerial skills of the supervisors to give employees a sense of belonging. Create a work environment that fosters a culture of creativity and innovation to improve performance. The county government remuneration policy should be flexible enough to accommodate employee needs that are essential to performance. Lastly, future researchers can re-evaluate and extend the theories and frameworks that investigators mention in their research. Future research can solve certain specific events and put forward new theories or arguments to influence the research problem.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that organizational culture, work environment, remuneration, and training have a positive effects on employee work performance in Meru County government offices. A positive work environment will promote employee performance within the organization. More specifically, a positive work environment provides a nurturing and pleasant environment, which further promotes employee commitment and employees tend to be loyal to their organizations. A suitable, friendly and welcoming work environment improves physical and mental capacity to complete everyday routine assignments. A conducive work environment gives satisfying experience to employees and enable them to actualize their abilities and potentials. Creating a healthy workplace helps to increase the job satisfaction, morals, boost the productivity and performance, lowers the absenteeism numbers, and creates better relationship and bond between the employer and the employee.

This study succeeded in establishing facts that organizational culture has a significant effect on employee performance using the following indicators: work routine, leadership style, organizational norms by looking at how it affects employee delivery on workload, employee commitment and employee effectiveness and efficiency. It cannot be overemphasized, as organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the behavior, emotions and productivity of employee in an organization to bring about the attainment of the overall objectives of the organization.

The findings underscore the importance of fostering a positive organizational culture and providing adequate training and development opportunities, as well as ensuring satisfactory remuneration, to boost employee morale and productivity. On remuneration, exchange tours & trips and developing responsibility at work were the reward systems strategies employed by the County Government of Meru to motivate its employees. The research provides valuable insights that can guide organizations in designing effective compensation strategies and improving employee performance, ultimately leading to increased organizational success. On training, the study established that training and development improved employees' skills and knowledge leading to better performance; it created job satisfaction and the county would be able to retain the qualified employees it employed and it improved performance thus achievement of targets.

Moreover, the results hold substantial policy implications for the county government in terms of enhancing training strategies and improving leadership practices to cultivate an environment conducive to high performance. As the county embarks on transforming its workforce, the insights from this study serve as a valuable guide for developing effective employee performance improvement initiatives. Ultimately, organizations must recognize and leverage these factors as they strive to optimize employee performance and achieve strategic objectives, paving the way for a more resilient and efficient public sector in Kenya. Therefore, it is imperative for policymakers and managers to prioritize these elements in their operational strategies for sustained success and improvement in public service delivery.

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