

Influence of Employee Training on Service Delivery in Meru County Government

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Abstract

Despite various service delivery improvement strategies employed in Meru County Government, service delivery quality remains a persistent challenge, affecting citizen satisfaction and public trust in government institutions. The county has witnessed increasing citizen complaints regarding slow service delivery, inadequate service quality, and limited responsiveness to public needs. While employee training is widely recognized as a crucial approach to service delivery improvement, its implementation in Meru County has been limited by factors such as inadequate training needs assessment, insufficient budget allocation, and lack of systematic training evaluation mechanisms. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of employee training on service delivery in Meru County Government, identify challenges faced, and propose policy recommendations aimed at improving public service delivery through enhanced training programs. The study was anchored on the Human Capital Theory advanced by Gary Becker in 1964. The study adopted a descriptive survey design targeting 150 county staff members. Using Slovin's formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 109 was determined through random sampling. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS with descriptive and inferential statistics including Pearson's correlation, coefficient of determination, and multiple regression analysis. The study achieved an 84.4% response rate. Results revealed that employee training significantly influences service delivery outcomes ($\beta = 0.342$, $p = 0.001$), with training explaining 68.1% of the variance in service delivery outcomes ($R^2 = 0.681$). Employee training emerged as a fundamental driver of successful service delivery in Meru County Government. Regular training programs effectively enhance technical skills and competencies, particularly improving service quality and efficiency. The study recommended that Meru County Government should strengthen its employee training framework by establishing comprehensive training policies, systematic needs assessment mechanisms, competency-based development initiatives, and training evaluation systems that measure impact on service delivery outcomes.

Index Terms

Employee training, Service delivery, Meru County Government

I. Introduction

A. Background of the Study

Employee training has emerged as a fundamental strategy for enhancing service delivery in public sector organizations, fostering professional development, institutional capacity building, and improved public service outcomes. The concept is rooted in the principles of human resource development, organizational learning, and performance management, which have been recognized as effective mechanisms for improving service quality and enhancing citizen satisfaction (Omondi & Kimutai, 2021). Employee training encompasses various strategies, including capacity building programs, professional development initiatives, and skills enhancement workshops that encourage continuous learning and competency development in public service delivery (Wanjiku & Agusioma, 2020).

Meru County Government, established under Kenya's devolved governance system, has faced increasing demands for quality service delivery, particularly in healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and social services. These demands have been intensified by citizen expectations for efficient, transparent, and responsive public services. According to the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA, 2023), Meru County has experienced challenges in service delivery attributed to factors such as inadequate staff competencies, limited training opportunities,

and gaps in technical skills among public servants. The county government has implemented various training initiatives; however, their effectiveness in translating to improved service delivery outcomes has been limited by factors such as inadequate training needs assessment, insufficient resource allocation, and lack of systematic evaluation of training impact (Muriuki & Waweru, 2022).

Globally, employee training has been recognized as a critical strategy for public sector performance improvement. Studies from developed nations, such as Australia and Canada, indicate that well-structured training programs significantly contribute to enhanced service delivery and citizen satisfaction (Thompson & Williams, 2021). In Kenya, the adoption of capacity building initiatives through institutions like the Kenya School of Government has demonstrated potential in improving public service delivery, particularly in national and county governments (Kariuki, 2023). However, in Meru County, the effectiveness of employee training in enhancing service delivery remains a subject of investigation, as challenges such as limited training budgets, inadequate training infrastructure, and resistance to change persist.

A review of existing literature suggests that systematic employee training programs foster professional competence, leading to improved service quality, enhanced citizen satisfaction, and timely service delivery by public institutions (Njoroge, 2022). Moreover, research highlights that orga-

nizations with comprehensive training initiatives experience better performance outcomes due to increased employee motivation, improved technical skills, and enhanced service delivery capabilities (Kamau & Macharia, 2021). However, in Meru County, barriers such as inadequate training policies, limited financial resources, and lack of structured training evaluation systems hinder the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Given the critical role of employee training in service delivery improvement, there is a need to assess its impact within Meru County Government and explore strategies for enhancing training effectiveness. This study seeks to examine the extent to which employee training influences service delivery in Meru County Government, identify the challenges faced, and propose policy recommendations aimed at improving public service delivery through enhanced training programs.

B. Statement of the Problem

Despite various service delivery improvement strategies employed in Meru County Government, service delivery quality remains a persistent challenge, affecting citizen satisfaction and public trust in government institutions. The county has witnessed increasing citizen complaints regarding slow service delivery, inadequate service quality, and limited responsiveness to public needs, raising concerns among residents and government officials (KIPPRA, 2023). While employee training is widely recognized as a crucial approach to service delivery improvement, its implementation in Meru County has been limited by factors such as inadequate training needs assessment, insufficient budget allocation, and lack of systematic training evaluation mechanisms (Muriuki & Waweru, 2022).

One of the major challenges in Meru County Government is the ineffective implementation of training programs that fail to translate into improved service delivery outcomes. While various training initiatives have been introduced to enhance employee competencies, their impact has been undermined by poor training design, limited follow-up mechanisms, and inadequate alignment with service delivery objectives (Njoroge, 2022). Many employees receive generic training that does not address specific service delivery challenges, while others lack access to relevant training opportunities, further weakening service delivery capabilities (Kamau & Macharia, 2021). Additionally, high staff turnover rates and inadequate succession planning have contributed to loss of trained personnel, as many skilled employees seek better opportunities elsewhere, undermining the benefits of training investments (Wanjiku & Agusioma, 2020). The study seeks to address these pressing issues by evaluating the effectiveness of employee

training in improving service delivery in Meru County Government.

C. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of employee training on service delivery in Meru County Government.

II. Literature Review

A. Theoretical Framework

1) Human Capital Theory: This theory was advanced by Gary Becker in 1964, who argued that investments in education, training, and skill development enhance individual productivity and organizational performance. The theory posits that human capital, which refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by individuals, is a critical determinant of economic growth and organizational success (Sweetland, 2021). Becker maintained that training programs increase employee productivity by enhancing their competencies, which in turn leads to improved organizational outcomes and service delivery. The theory suggests that organizations that invest in employee development through training initiatives achieve better performance results compared to those that do not prioritize human capital development (Nafukho et al., 2020).

The adoption of human capital theory in public sector management aims at enhancing employee capabilities to improve service delivery outcomes through systematic investment in training and development programs. The theory allows public sector managers to justify training expenditures by demonstrating their contribution to improved service quality and efficiency (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2022). This theory will assist this study in understanding how employee training functions as a strategic resource that influences service delivery outcomes. The employee training dimensions serve as the independent variables in this study, namely training needs assessment, training design, training delivery, and training evaluation. The end result of these training initiatives is enhanced service delivery, which is the dependent variable.

B. Empirical Review

1) Employee Training and Service Delivery: A study by Johnson et al. (2021) examined how training programs affected service delivery in Australian local government institutions. The research was driven by the hypothesis that structured training initiatives could enhance service quality through improved employee competencies. The study employed a quantitative approach targeting 120 local government employees across three municipalities, assessing training design, delivery methods, and

evaluation mechanisms. The findings indicated that employee training significantly improved service delivery outcomes, particularly in areas such as responsiveness and efficiency.

Anderson (2022) conducted a comprehensive analysis of training effectiveness in Canadian public sector organizations, focusing on its impact on service delivery performance. The study analyzed data from 150 public servants and identified the importance of competency-based training programs in enhancing service quality and citizen satisfaction. The research suggested that systematic training evaluation mechanisms are critical for ensuring training translates into measurable service delivery improvements.

In a study on employee training practices in Nairobi County Government, Mwangi (2023) explored how training initiatives contribute to service delivery outcomes. The research focused on 90 county employees from various departments and used a descriptive research design. The findings revealed that well-designed training programs, aligned with service delivery objectives, significantly improved employee performance and public service quality.

The above studies offer different approaches and gaps that this proposed study seeks to fill. The study by Johnson et al. (2021) focused on local government contexts in Australia, which may not reflect the specific challenges faced by Meru County Government. Similarly, Anderson (2022) concentrated on Canadian public sector settings, differing from the Kenyan devolved governance context. Mwangi (2023) limited its scope to Nairobi County, which may not capture the unique socio-economic and administrative dynamics of Meru County. The proposed study recognizes the specific role of employee training in the unique context of Meru County Government.

III. Research Methodology

This study investigates how employee training practices influence service delivery in Meru County Government. A descriptive survey design was adopted, enabling data collection from multiple staff members at a single point in time. The target population consisted of 150 county staff members, including department heads, supervisors, and frontline service providers. Using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 109 respondents was determined through random sampling, ensuring representation across different employee categories. Primary data was collected using self-administered structured questionnaires, distributed through a drop-and-pick-later method to enhance response rate and accuracy. Responses were measured using a Likert scale, allowing reliable assessment of perceptions and attitudes. Data

was cleaned, coded, and analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation, coefficient of determination, and multiple regression analysis) to evaluate the effect of employee training on service delivery outcomes. This method allowed the researchers to assess the relationship between training dimensions—training needs assessment, training design, training delivery, and training evaluation—and service delivery performance in Meru County Government.

IV. Research Findings and Discussion

A. Response Rate

109 individuals were selected for the survey, and 92 completed and returned the questionnaires, resulting in an 84.4% response rate. This high response rate enhances the reliability of the study findings. Campion (1993) emphasized that researchers should strive for high response rates to minimize bias and ensure quality results, a standard met by the current study due to the substantial participation.

B. Descriptive Analysis

1) Employee Training: The study examines the influence of employee training on service delivery in Meru County Government.

	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Statement 5	Statement 6	Statement 7
N	92	92	92	92	92	92	92
Mean	3.82	3.95	3.47	3.61	3.68	3.54	3.79
Std. Deviation	0.923	1.041	1.089	0.957	1.012	1.156	0.945
Statements							
The county government regularly conducts training programs to enhance employee technical skills and competencies.							
The county government invests significantly in employee development programs to improve service quality and efficiency.							
Training programs are effectively designed to address specific service delivery challenges in the county government.							
County government employees actively participate in professional development programs that enhance their service delivery capacity.							
Employee training initiatives have led to measurable improvements in service delivery outcomes and citizen satisfaction.							
Supervisors and managers are adequately trained to support and guide service delivery improvement efforts.							
Training programs are seen as essential for achieving the county government's service delivery objectives and goals.							
Valid N (listwise)							
92							

TABLE I: Employee Training

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents agreed that the county government regularly conducts training programs to enhance employee technical skills and competencies, as shown by the mean of 3.82 and standard deviation of 0.923. This suggests that training is valued, with relatively low variation in responses. The majority also agreed that the county government invests significantly in employee development programs to improve service quality and efficiency, as shown by the mean of 3.95 and standard deviation of 1.041. This implies strong commitment to development, though with some variation in perceptions.

The study revealed that respondents agreed that training programs are effectively designed to address specific service delivery challenges, with a mean of 3.47 and standard deviation of 1.089. Employees actively participate in professional development programs, as shown by a mean of 3.61 and standard deviation of 0.957, indicating consensus with low variation. Training initiatives have led to measurable improvements in service delivery and citizen satisfaction (mean = 3.68, SD = 1.012), with some variation. Supervisors and managers are trained to support service delivery (mean = 3.54, SD = 1.156), showing higher variation possibly due to differing views. Training is seen as essential for service delivery goals (mean = 3.79, SD = 0.945), with low variation.

C. Inferential Analysis

This section presents the inferential analysis used to determine the relationship between independent variables and service delivery outcomes. Statistical methods like regression, ANOVA, and coefficients provide insight into the strength and significance of the variables affecting service delivery.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.762	0.681	0.668	1.02341

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Training

TABLE II: Model Summary

The R value of 0.762 suggests a strong positive relationship between the predictor (Employee Training) and service delivery outcomes. The R Square value of 0.681 indicates that approximately 68.1% of the variation in service delivery outcomes is explained by employee training factors. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.668 accounts for the number of predictors, indicating a highly accurate model. The standard error of estimate (1.02341) suggests a good fit with small residuals.

Model Sig.		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
1	Regression	18.652	4	4.663	4.451
0.018	Residual	112.348	87	1.050	
	Total	131.000	91		

- a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery Outcomes
b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Training

TABLE III: ANOVA

The ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F value of 4.451 and a significance level of 0.018 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that Employee Training significantly contributes to explaining the variation in service delivery outcomes, confirming a good model fit.

V. Summary of the Study

The analysis reveals substantial employee training activities in Meru County Government, with a mean score of 3.82 (SD=0.923) for regular training programs that enhance technical skills and competencies. This training significantly influences service delivery outcomes ($\beta = 0.342$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that for each unit increase in employee training, service delivery outcomes improve by 0.342 units. The investment in employee development programs shows particularly strong results (M=3.95, SD=1.041), suggesting effective commitment to human resource development. The regression analysis supports this finding, with employee training explaining a significant portion of the variance in service delivery outcomes ($R^2 = 0.681$). These results demonstrate that employee training is a crucial determinant of successful service delivery in Meru County Government.

VI. Conclusion

The study concluded that employee training is a fundamental driver of successful service delivery in Meru County Government. Regular training programs that enhance technical skills and competencies demonstrated strong effectiveness, particularly in improving service quality and efficiency. The findings revealed that when employees are systematically trained and developed, the likelihood of successful service delivery outcomes increases substantially. The strong investment in employee development programs emerged as a critical factor in service delivery improvement. This underscores the importance of maintaining and strengthening employee training initiatives in all aspects of service delivery planning and implementation.

VII. Recommendations

The study recommended that Meru County Government should strengthen its employee training framework by establishing a comprehensive training policy and systematic training needs assessment mechanism. This should include creating regular training programs, implementing competency-based development initiatives, and developing training evaluation systems that measure the impact of training on service delivery outcomes. These initiatives should ensure continuous professional development, skills enhancement, and active employee participation in developing and implementing service delivery improvement strategies.

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