

**EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON  
ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF MERU COUNTY GOVERNMENT,  
KENYA**

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RESOURCE MANAGEMENT) OF KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Declaration

I declare this thesis is my original work that has never been presented in any other university for award of any degree.

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### Recommendations

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Jeremiah Murithi Iringo, and my daughters Clara  
Kendi Murithi and Chloe Kinya Murithi for their support and love.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## ABSTRACT

Low morale of the staff, which had negatively affected the organizational performance, caused by a lack of increment in budgetary allocations towards general staff capacity building and engagement programs. The general objective of the study was to examine the effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance of the Meru County Government, Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the effect of training programs, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, and employee involvement in decision-making on the organizational performance of the Meru County Government, Kenya. Human capital, social exchange, and participative decision-making, were the three theories of the study. Through a descriptive research design, 11 CECs, 11 directors, 11 administrators and 251 middle-level employees were included. The middle-level employees answered the questionnaires, whereas the senior-level management were interviewed. A pilot study was conducted in the Tharaka Nithi County Government. Additionally, the Cronbach alpha method was used to measure reliability. The study assessed content and criterion validity. SPSS software version 24 was used to analyze descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means. Additionally, inferential statistics such as model summary and ANOVA were developed. Thematic method was used in the analysis of interview responses. The correlation coefficient for training programs was  $r = 0.501$  at  $\alpha < 0.002$ ; wellness programs was  $r = 0.387$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$ ; employee feedback mechanisms was  $r = 0.653$  at  $\alpha < 0.003$ ; and employee involvement in decision-making was  $r = 0.476$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$ . It was found out that all the four, were vital towards enhancing the performance of the county government. On training, there is the need for the county government leadership to develop an adequacy policy framework that would increase the budget allocated to training and development programs. On wellness programs, the departmental managers need to be more supportive of current employee wellness programs. On employee feedback mechanisms, HR management should come up with clear patterns of offering feedback on the issues raised by the employees or at least acknowledge them. Future studies should expand the study to even private corporations to gain more insights on the employee engagement programs present within their contexts.

Key Terms: Employee Engagement Programs, Organizational Performance, Meru County Government, Kenya

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ANOVA</b>	Analysis of Variance
<b>APA</b>	American Psychological Association
<b>HR</b>	Human Resource
<b>ICT</b>	Information Employee feedback mechanism Technology
<b>KeMU</b>	Kenya Methodist University
<b>KIPPRA</b>	The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
<b>MCIDP</b>	Meru County Integrated Development Plan
<b>MPSHCD</b>	Ministry of Public Service and Human Capital Development
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PSC</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>PWC</b>	PricewaterhouseCoopers
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>VIF</b>	Variance Inflation Factor

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Organizational performance is the ability of the management staff to utilize public resources to achieve the laid-down objectives (Taylor, 2021). It was measured through employee productivity, retention rate, employee diversity, innovation, and job satisfaction. Productivity measures the individual output of each employee after they have utilized the resources of the organization within a specific duration of time. Furthermore, the provision of desired and timely services to the public within the shortest turnaround time is service delivery. Additionally, when customers are content with the service they have received within a particular timeframe, it is customer satisfaction (Caruelle et al., 2023). Further, implementing creative methods of delivering the assigned tasks, particularly through the adoption of information communication technology, is innovation. Public organizations have been experiencing challenges related to organizational performance from a global, regional, and local spectrum.

Globally, government-based organizations in America have been noted by Garrido-Moreno et al. (2024) to lack adequate information when making decisions, negatively affecting the scope of which employees can be engaged. European states like Belgium have reported poor teamwork between the management and the staff (European Commission, 2022). In Spain, inadequate managerial support has greatly slowed down the ability of the employees to become productive (OECD, 2024). In the United Kingdom, increased

bureaucracy within the management spectrum of government-based organizations has limited growth opportunities for staff (Koeswayo et al., 2024).

Regionally, unclarity of goals to be achieved when the employees are engaged by the management has resulted in a toxic work culture in South African public organizations (Govender & Bussin, 2020). Further on, Nigerian public servants have experienced limited promotional opportunities and hence lack general interest in any engagement with management (Abasili et al., 2023). In Tanzania, increased political divisions within the public organization have resulted in poor communication patterns between the staff and the management (Ngoye, 2023).

Locally in Kenya, poor work-life balance has resulted in demotivation of employees towards achieving the set objectives (Wafula et al., 2024). Additionally, delayed salaries and lack of employee commitment towards the organizational goals had caused public servants to underperform. Furthermore, limited resources to execute the assigned role have negatively affected the ability of the employees to bring forth novel ideas when engaged by the management (Neranto, 2022). These concerns have affected the employee engagements in public organizations such as in county governments.

Employee engagement is the constructive process of including a staff member in an organization as a valued team member (Bukonya, 2024). The employees are provided all necessary support and assigned realistic demands that add direct value to the organizational mission and vision, with the aim of making them happy and productive. This is in realization that employee engagement is vital towards enhancing sustainable growth and development in organizations. According to Fletcher et al. (2020), engaged employees

have a sense of being valued, motivated, and respected, which leads to enhanced customer satisfaction.

Employee engagement was measured through training and development, wellness programs, communication, and employee involvement in decision-making (Kippra, 2021; Langhof et al., 2023; Onduso et al., 2024; Schaufeli, 2021). This is because by focusing on these constructs, public organizations are able to derive employee satisfaction, a positive work environment, and the provision of a platform that supports regular feedback and constructive support. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC, 2024), employees tend to have a say when the organization engages them in the process of collaborative decision-making.

Training and development include plans established by the management to instill advanced knowledge and skills in employees as a way of promoting their capabilities to make informed and efficient decisions on the best possible way of delivering the set goals (Obuya et al., 2024). Therefore, the implementation of training and development programs attracts the attention of management in public organizations due to their ability to nurture talent in a dynamic business environment (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Therefore, employees value opportunities for growth and are more engaged when they see a clear career progression path, such as the one offered through training and development.

Wellness programs are arrangements by an organization to equip employees with necessary capacities that promote physical, emotional, and mental health. (Abasili et al., 2023). These arrangements are meant to ensure that employee well-being is maintained at all times through offering mental health resources, mental health days, stress management programs, and flexible working arrangements (Chang, 2024; Schaufeli, 2021). Therefore,

through the provision of such programs, employees are able to focus on their work, deliver the assigned task in the required timelines, and uphold institutional integrity throughout their job roles.

Communication is the process of exchanging ideas and opinions by members of an organization, with an aim of enhancing commitment to the values of the organization (Yegon & Kipkorir, 2023). Communication is the foundational factor towards establishing a cohesive working environment that supports growth and development. As the world evolves into the digital age, communication is even easier with the provision of ICT. According to Gallup (2024), feedback systems driven through technology platforms are widely adopted since the management and the employees expect real-time feedback rather than periodical reviews. Therefore, structured and formal communication channels encourage open-door policies to support ethical work-related cultures (Langhof et al., 2023).

Employee involvement in decision-making is the process of allowing the non-management staff to contribute their opinion and provide feedback on alternative opinions in regard to the policies and programs of the organization (Omolara, 2024). When a workforce is involved in the decision-making process, there is a tendency for increased dedication towards organizational goals since they are emotionally invested in the assigned roles. Therefore, this increases their motivation to higher levels and efficiency. Engaged employees feel a sense of loyalty, belonging, and commitment to their employers, which leads to longer tenures, job satisfaction, and overall performance of the county governments in Kenya.

The establishment of county governments was brought forth through the 2010 constitution that decentralized power from the national government to local levels (Onduso et al., 2024). There are 47 counties that have various leadership structures as guided by the constitution. In the county government of Meru, 4135 staff work within various departments through the devolution system. Therefore, for devolution to work, the staff employed to deliver the services to the citizens ought to feel valued by the management so that they become productive. However, as noted by Ntoiti and Makau (2022), departments in the Meru County Government had experienced performance struggles due to non-involvement of employees in decision-making by the management. As a result, there was a disconnect between the management and the staff. Additionally, Majau and Wanjohi (2019) revealed that there has been an increased workload and poor management skills among Meru County's public servants, which has been reported to hamper development in performance.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Organizational performance of public institutions is highly pegged on the productivity of its civil servants. They are expected to deliver quality services to the public through the support of a reliable employee engagement plan that fosters aspects like training, wellness programs, communication, and employee involvement in decision-making (LaMacchia, 2021). Through this, organizational performance would be enhanced due to increased dedication to various job responsibilities by the employees.

However, the low morale of the staff, which had negatively affected the organizational performance, was noted to be caused by a lack of increment in budgetary allocations towards general staff capacity building and engagement programs (County Government of Meru, 2023a). The Meru County Integrated Development Plan [MCIDP] revealed that the

county government undertook 400 training programs for all staff within a budget provision of Kshs 80 million in 2023/2024 (CGM, 2023a). However, the number of trainings (400) and budget (Kshs 80m) remained constant in 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 and were also expected to remain the same in 2026/2027 (CGM, 2023a). Comparatively, the number of capacity development and training programs on information dissemination to the public increased from 15 to 20 trainings in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, respectively, at budgets of Kshs 3 million to Kshs 3.5 million.

The inconsistency of fixed budgetary allocation and number of trainings on different training programs meant that the county leadership did not anticipate any changes in employee training needs and wellness programs (CGM, 2023b). Additionally, it also provided evidence that there was low employee involvement in decision-making and unacknowledged employee feedback on changing business demands that necessitated the increment of employee engagement programs and budgetary allocation. This was at least over the timeline the MCDIP would be effective. Failure to address the low motivation enigma may cause a surge of staff shortages due to abrupt turnovers, as has continually been experienced in critical departments such as health in the Meru County government (CGM, 2023a; Ntoiti & Makau, 2022).

Past literature at a global scale, such as Ali et al. (2022) and Ghani et al. (2024) noted that staff engagement improved their efficiency, ingenuity and inclined towards the organizational values. Other studies like Korzynski et al. (2020) noted that staff engagement programmes in organizations within the private sector, were different in comparison to the public organizations. A regional study like that of Nzimakwe and Biyela (2021), indicated that engagement of staff through various programmes was taking effect

within organizations coupled with increased competition, efficiency and innovation. Notably, there have been bureaucracy issues, poor leadership, limited resources in support to staff engagement programmes. This has caused declined number of such programs in many public and private organizations. However, studies like Fletcher et al. (2020) and Nzimakwe and Biyela (2021) did not consider the exploration of employee feedback mechanism, training, involvement in decision-making, and wellness programs especially from middle management staff in government institutions.

The studies present in the nation of Kenya like Komen (2024) have mainly been attracted to large private institutions while others like Neranto (2022), failing to focus on pertinent issues such as chain of commands, barriers of communication, political inclination and low availability of resources. Studies within the local context like Komen (2024) and Neranto (2022), presents high level strategies in advanced private organizations and not issues faced in governmental institutions like bureaucracy, challenging communication changes, politics, and scarcity of resources. These issues provide the baseline on the formulation and implementation of staff engagement programs in a public organization. Further, there were few empirical studies done in Meru County, particularly on the effect of employee engagement programs such as training, wellness programs, employee feedback, and employee involvement in decision-making on organizational performance. Therefore, this created a gap in assessing the effect of employee engagement programs on the organizational performance of the Meru County Government, Kenya.

### **1.3 General Objective**

To examine the effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.

#### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

- i. To determine the effect of training programs on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.
- ii. To investigate the effect of wellness programs on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.
- iii. To establish the effect of employee feedback mechanisms on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya
- iv. To examine the effect of employee involvement in decision making on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.

#### **1.5 Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant effect of training programs on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant effect of wellness programs on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no significant effect of employee feedback mechanisms on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.

H<sub>0</sub>4: There is no significant effect of employee involvement in decision making on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The leadership of the County Government of Meru would unequivocally understand how various policies related to training, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms,

and employee involvement in decision-making have been performing. This may inform policy practice and improvements needed to be done so as to encourage employee engagement. The study would be beneficial to the county government staff, whereby they may provide firsthand facts through the questionnaires on their inclusion in the decision-making process. The information could be relevant in pointing out the challenges they may have experienced while blending with the management and strongholds to uphold this kind of relationship.

The national government could use the study's findings to assess the collaboration measures taken by the management of county governments to create a rapport with the staff. This could be used to justify the escalating wage bill, hence enabling an increment of national revenue allocation to the county governments that have shown potential of involving staff in the strategy formulation strategies. Private organizations could also get additional information on the employee engagement strategies that have worked particularly in the context of training, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, and employee involvement in decision-making. They may choose to adopt similar strategies for a turnaround in their operations.

The study would contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into how engagement programs can be tailored to the unique needs of the public sector in Kenya, where limited research exists. The study would offer practical strategies to enhance employee engagement to HR professionals. Therefore, by understanding the effects of engagement programs on organizational performance, HR professionals could design and implement more effective programs that addressed the specific needs of public sector

employees. This, in turn, could help in creating a more motivated and productive workforce.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study was conducted in Meru where the headquarter of County government is located. This was to examine the effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance. Additionally, the study determined the effect of training programs on organizational performance; Investigate the effect of wellness programs on organizational performance; establish the effect of employee feedback mechanisms on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya; and examine the effect of employee involvement in decision making on organizational performance of Meru County Government, Kenya. The respondents were comprised of senior-level management and middle-level employees in different departments. The middle-level employees answered the questionnaires, whereas the senior-level management were interviewed. The study covered a duration of 3 months (June-August, 2025) in data collection and reporting.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The types of employee engagement programs are uniquely related to specific county governments hence concentration in Meru County government would not easily be generalized to other regions or counties. Further, the study also faced limitation on limited access to confidential employee data and potential reluctance by employees to provide honest feedback due to fear of victimization. The study's findings may also be affected by researcher bias and the subjective nature of some responses, which could influence the overall accuracy and generalizability of the results.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

The study addressed the first limitation by providing various recommendations that would be easier to generalize the results to other counties. Further, on accessing confidential data, the researcher ensured that the authorizing manager was informed on the purpose of the study. Support documentation was provided to prove that the study was indeed academic related. This enhanced the trust with the respondents and the researcher was able to access the required employee data as allowed by the public policy. Furthermore, the researcher assured the respondents that the study was academic and their identities would be concealed to minimize any chances of victimization.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

It was the assumption of this study that there were training and wellness programs going on in the county government of Meru. Further on, it was also assumed that there were clear strategic decisions made by the management that involved employees and other decisions that did not require employees to be engaged. It was further presumed that these programs and decision-making structures were well-documented, consistently applied, and aligned with the county's broader development objectives and human resource policies.

## **1.10 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Employee Feedback Mechanism-**This is the process of exchanging ideas and opinions by members of an organization, with an aim of enhancing commitment to the values of the institution (Garrido-Moreno et al., 2024).

**Employee Engagement-**The constructive process of including a staff member in an organization as a valued team member (LaMacchia, 2021).

**Employee Involvement in Decision Making-**The process of allowing the non-management staff to contribute their opinion and provide feedback on alternative opinions in regard to the policies and programs of the organization (Ngoye, 2023).

**Organizational Performance-** This is the ability of the management staff to utilize resources to achieve the laid-down objectives (Saipi, 2024).

**Training-**These are plans established by the management to instill advanced knowledge and skills in employees as a way of promoting their capabilities to make informed and efficient decisions on the best possible way of delivering the set goals (Apolot & Emuron, 2024).

**Wellness Programs-**An arrangement by an organization to equip employees with necessary capacities that promote physical, emotional, and mental health (Deepalakshmi et al., 2024).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Theoretical review is addressed in this chapter, whereby various theories such as human capital, social exchange, and participative management theory are described. Thereafter, the review of literature commences with studies based on each variable of the study being provided. The conceptual framework concludes the chapter.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Review**

The study had three theories, which included human capital, social exchange, and participative decision-making. Human capital theory informed training programs and wellness programs; social exchange theory informed the employee feedback mechanism; and participative management theory informed employee involvement in decision-making.

##### **2.2.1 Human Capital Theory**

Becker (1975) developed the human capital theory, which informed training and wellness programs. This theory stated that the productivity of people's skills in workplaces was enhanced through individual investments in training, formal education, and other methods. The main purpose of these investment mechanisms was to not only advance their skills but also knowledge as a means of improving their earnings. In relation to training, the theory suggested that it was a critical investment that enhanced employees' skills and competencies. By providing training opportunities, organizations increase employees' human capital, leading to better job performance, higher productivity, and greater employee engagement. According to Obuya et al. (2024), organizations that prioritized

training not only equipped their workforce with necessary skills but also fostered a culture of continuous improvement and engagement.

In relation to wellness programs, the theory noted that it was another form of investment in human capital. By promoting employees' physical and mental well-being, organizations enhanced their overall productivity and engagement. Healthy staff become productive, engaged, and dedicated to their job responsibilities. According to Omolara (2024), organizations that invested in wellness programs reduced absenteeism and enhanced job satisfaction, which ultimately contributed to improved organizational performance.

Human capital theory explained the variable on employee wellness programs as an investment in the health and well-being of employees, which in turn enhanced their productivity. Wellness programs that promoted physical, mental, and emotional well-being are considered a way to maintain and improve an organization's human capital. Healthy employees contributed more effectively to the organization, leading to higher productivity, reduced absenteeism, and lower healthcare costs. Therefore, training initiatives increased employees' skill levels and knowledge, enhancing their contribution to the organization. Well-trained staff tend to be productive, adopt quickly, and be creative in their roles, which strengthens the overall human capital in the organization.

Human capital theory was faulted by Marginson (2017) for overemphasizing the relations of education and income in the workplace while not including social factors in the determination of earning levels. For example, the theory did not address how social factors like workplace discrimination affect the overall productivity of the staff. Nevertheless, this weakness did not affect the current study since the County Government Act in sections

76(2) and 74 provides guidelines on anti-discrimination of the staff in the county governments' roles.

### **2.2.2 Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory was developed by Homans (1958) and informed the employee feedback mechanism construct. This theory hypothesized that the relationships between individuals were based on reciprocal exchanges, where they were motivated to engage in relationships that offered them the most benefit. In the workplace, an effective employee feedback mechanism created a sense of trust and reciprocity between employees and management. According to Obuya et al. (2024), an effective employee feedback mechanism ensured clarity in roles and expectations, leading to a stronger exchange relationship. Regular feedback reinforced this relationship by allowing employees to feel valued, fostering higher engagement levels.

In explaining employee feedback mechanisms, the theory posited that relationships were built on reciprocal exchanges of information, support, and resources. Zulkeifli et al. (2023) emphasized that when organizations communicated clearly and openly with their employees, it enhanced trust and reciprocity, fostering higher engagement. Therefore, a clear and open employee feedback mechanism across all levels of management was essential for operations to effectively run in organizations. According to Katelo et al. (2024), a consistent employee feedback mechanism was associated with enhanced job satisfaction among employees and improved organizational performance.

Furthermore, by communicating to employees on various types of participatory programs, organizations were able to cultivate a culture of collaboration, trust, and innovation (Frodouard et al., 2024). Also, staff became more adaptable and open to changes, making

the organization more agile in the face of external challenges. A consistent employee feedback mechanism led to sustained organizational development, with employees continuously contributing to the evolution and success of the organization.

Social exchange theory was noted by Zhang and Fei (2022) to have a weakness of extending selfish individual desires, but it did not affect the study since there were policy documents that guided employee feedback mechanism patterns within the jurisdiction of a county government. These guidelines provided the scope under which employee feedback mechanisms should be done, their content relating to the responsibilities within the county government set-up and frequency.

### **2.2.3 Theory of Participative Management**

The theory of participative management was developed by Likert (1961) and informed employee involvement in decision-making. This theory stated that there should be a leadership style that allowed employees at different levels to be involved in decision-making and hence provide their opinion on critical organizational issues. Through this system, collaborative culture would be implemented, hence making the employees feel respected and valued as key organizational members (Deepalakshmi et al., 2024). Therefore, involving employees in decision-making processes enhances their engagement, reduces burnout, and leads to improved organizational outcomes (Chukwuemeka, 2020). Moreover, the employees who were actively involved in decision-making felt satisfied in their work, innovative, timely in submission of their work, and felt part of the institution, hence making the organization become productive.

The theory explains involvement of the employees in decision-making increased their sense of commitment to the organization's values. This commitment fosters higher levels of engagement, which positively impacted overall organizational performance and registered good profits (Bukonya, 2024). Furthermore, participation in decision-making gave employees a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to greater loyalty and engagement. According to Wafula et al. (2024), involving employees in organizational decision-making processes leads to several positive outcomes, both for employees and the organization. For instance, it led to increased job satisfaction, better employee feedback mechanisms and feedback, improved decision quality, employee empowerment, and enhanced organizational performance (Njuguna & Minja, 2023).

The theory of participative management was criticized by Daudigeos et al. (2019) as being a cause for slower decision-making. This was because involving a huge number of decision-makers resulted in conflicts of ideas, slowing down the process of agreement. However, this weakness did affect the study since the human resource policy document and other relevant guidelines provided the timeframe needed to make decisions. Therefore, the timeframe was mainly predetermined even before the decision-making process began at the county government level.

### **2.3 Training Programs and Organization Performance**

Jinee et al. (2024) assessed how the employee performance in the local government unit, Solano, was impacted by the training benefits provided. A quantitative research approach was utilized in a bid to collect data through questionnaires. The various training metrics observed included attainment of set goals, teamwork, employee feedback mechanisms, efficient processes, and personal academic qualifications. Thirty-four staffers in the

municipal budget, treasurers, and accounting offices were included through inclusion criteria.

Jinee et al. (2024) found out that when there was training, the participants derived positive benefits to the government organizations they worked in. However, Jinee et al. (2024) noted that the training was not comprehensive, hence calling out for a training strategy that was comprehensive and more inclined towards empowering the staff. Notably, the study by Jinee et al. (2024) did not provide pilot testing of the questionnaire to assess their reliability status. Additionally, the study only included officers, their assistants, clerks, and aides, while not including the management to provide more information on how training was conducted. The current study conducted a pilot study in Tharaka Nithi County Government and included the leadership and the officers as well in the process of data collection.

Anas (2024) investigated the competencies of the employees in Nigeria's public sectors and how they were affected by reforms related to training. Structured questionnaires were used as the primary data collection tool employed on a sample size of six hundred and seventy-two participants. It was thus derived that attitude, skills, and knowledge acquisition were significant. This meant that the reforms established within the jurisdiction of the civil service enhanced the competency level of the staff, thus improving organizational performance in the long run. Nevertheless, Anas (2024) failed to describe the mentorship and coaching programs present as offered by the management and which enhanced the competencies of the staff. Therefore, the current study described various training programs provided in Meru County.

Apolot and Emuron (2024) examined the job performance of Uganda's local government in the Bukedea district and how it was affected by training offered to its staff. The main concentration was on assessment of the methods of training, examining the various programs implemented and their relevance in the organization. To ensure the success of the study, a cross-sectional descriptive survey design was used whereby one hundred and seventy-two staff answered both questionnaires and interview guides. The study also analyzed secondary data through various analyses of documents.

According to Apolot and Emuron (2024), there were gaps identified in training, such as nonexistent assessment tools to evaluate training needs and ineffective training initiatives. Therefore, the study recommended that the needs form a strong policy of training and applying mechanisms meant to enhance evaluation of training. Regrettably, Apolot and Emuron (2024) did not provide details on the contribution of government towards enhancing training. Therefore, the current study assessed the contribution made by the county government to support training.

Obuya et al. (2024) evaluated the employee performance in the Nyanza region's county government after orientation training. The various county governments assessed included Kisii, Migori, Siaya, Homa Bay, and Nyamira. There were three hundred and eighty-nine staff included through correlation research design. They were then grouped based on their respective counties through a stratified sampling method to have a sample size of one hundred and ninety-nine staff. Questionnaires were used to collect data, which revealed that when there were training programs meant to induct staff, practices that supported benchmarking, assigning job roles on a rotation basis, and communicating the specific responsibilities of these job roles encouraged the staff to perform exemplarily. Despite the

significant results by Obuya et al. (2024), training factors such as refresher courses were not considered, hence creating a gap for the current study. The current study thus assessed different types of courses offered in training programs.

Yegon and Mandago (2024) explored the performance rate of staff in Uasin Gishu County government and how they were affected by the training of employees. The training included on-the-job training, alignment of training with organizational goals and objectives, and financial resource provision to support employee training. Descriptive research design was used on a population of two hundred and seven staff. Among this population, 54% were staff from health, 25% from human resources, and 21% from finance departments. A sample size of one hundred and thirty-four participants was identified and sampled through stratified and simple random methods. Pre-testing of the questionnaires was done in Nandi County, and their reliability was tested through the Cronbach alpha coefficient. As noted by the study, employee training had a positive influence of performance of the organization. However, Yegon and Mandago (2024) did not address the non-financial support that the leadership had made towards ensuring that there were effective training programs. The current study ensured that both financial and non-financial support that the leadership of the county government of Meru had provided made it possible for effective training programs.

#### **2.4 Wellness Programs and Organizational Performance**

Ghani et al. (2024) assessed the wellness of the employees through a literature review. The study paid attention to how factors such as the physical energy and mental and emotional health of the staff enabled them to deliver the desired work-related goals as well as live quality lives. From the past studies, it was revealed that even though programs meant to

enhance wellness among the staff were critical, their implementation was anchored on the support the organization provided, financial capabilities, and ensuring that the initiatives of wellness were articulated on the staff's needs. Nevertheless, further description by the study on various staff needed warranting the wellness initiatives programs was not given by Ghani et al. (2024). Therefore, an aspect such as work-life balance was not mentioned, which is vital towards the articulation of a sustainable wellness program. Furthermore, the choice of literature review exposed the analysis and results to author bias rather than facts. The current study collected primary data through questionnaires and interviews to ensure that the results are free from bias. Furthermore, the study assessed work-life balance in the sustainability of wellness programs.

Abasili et al. (2023) conducted an analysis on civil service productivity and how it was affected by programs meant to support employee wellness in Nigeria. An approach of content analysis was used in the analysis and interpretation of data. Through a review of empirical data and based on a foundation of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, the study established that programs meant to support employee wellness promoted physical energy and mental and emotional health. This enabled the staff to balance work and life issues, leading to productivity. That notwithstanding, lack of time and negative attitudes negatively affected the implementation of the program. Notably, Abasili et al. (2023) did not give possible solutions to the negative attitude of workers in attending the wellness programs, such as incentives related to free counseling and health programs. The current study ensured that the solutions to the negative attitude of the workers were provided.

Makhanya (2021) evaluated the performance of staff in Kwazulu-Natal Municipality after undergoing a program meant to support employee wellness. 10 managers selected through

the purposive sampling method were interviewed while at the same time complimenting the empirical reviews done. Therefore, this study was a mixture of both primary and secondary data. Their knowledge of these programs, issues faced as they supported employee wellness programs, and benefits that the employees got.

According to Makhanya (2021), the managers were very knowledgeable about these programs. That is the marketing processes, orientation, and general operations involved in the programs. This was derived through years of participation experience. The managers were cognizant that these programs were meant to offer counseling to staff and support them in balancing work-life pressures. That notwithstanding, low confidence, trust, cultural beliefs, and fear of judgment were the most mentioned issues affecting the success of the programs. Therefore, since Makhanya (2021) considered the staff in KwaZulu-Natal Municipality, there was a dire need to extend the study to the Kenyan context and particularly to Meru County. The current study was conducted in Meru County Government.

Nyakomittah and Omwenga (2023) examined how the staff in Kisii County government performed due to programs developed by the administration to equip them with financial wellness. A cross-sectional research design was used in the study, with both questionnaires and organizational document review done. The various financial wellness programs assessed included educational, budget, and debt management plans. It was determined in the study that employee performance benefited directly from the implementation process of financial wellness programs. That notwithstanding, Nyakomittah and Omwenga (2023) did not provide the numbers of the respondents nor their job profiles for inclusivity. Additionally, since the study concentrated on financial wellness programs, there is a need

to extend the study and assess non-financial wellness programs such as employee counseling and work-life balance. The study provided explicitly the numbers of the respondents and considered different programs such as employee counseling.

Muema (2022) assessed the performance of the Makueni County government as a result of programs meant to enhance the welfare of the employees. These programs included retirement benefits, medical coverage, and employee allowances. There were three hundred and seventy-six respondents sampled using proportionate stratified random sampling whose opinions were gathered through questionnaires. The three programs (retirement benefits, medical cover, and employee allowances) had a 45.6%, 71.2%, and 35.9%, respectively, on organizational performance. They were thus important towards motivating the staff to deliver their best output in an organization. However, medical cover and staff allowances were impartial, whereas the retirement benefits were not extensively known by the staff. The current study explored the retirement benefits provided to the study by the Meru County Government.

## **2.5 Employee Feedback Mechanism and Organizational Performance**

Zulkeifli et al. (2023). Employee feedback mechanism as a strategy in enhancing an organization's performance. The study noted that workplace corporation was enhanced through adopting a concise employee feedback mechanism strategy. It was noted that it had been a desire for the management and staff to enhance the weak top-down employee feedback mechanism pattern within themselves. However, the cost attached to the implementation of an employee feedback mechanism in an organization caused conflicts between the two groups. A systematic review approach enabled the study to come to the finding that the employee feedback mechanism works as a strategy and has a positive

influence on performance. Nevertheless, Zulkeifli et al. (2023) did not consider the influence that the employee feedback mechanism pattern between staff had on performance. The current study assessed the effect that the employee feedback had on organizational performance.

Frodouard et al. (2024) examined the performance of the Rwanda's Auditor General of State Finances' office as influenced by strategies related to employee feedback mechanisms. An application of both descriptive and correlation design was adopted on a sample size of one hundred and fifty. They were grouped through the stratified sampling method and issued questionnaires, while others took part in answering the interviews. The strategies of employee feedback mechanisms assessed included open dialogue, performance feedback, number of employee feedback mechanism channels, and cohesiveness of employee feedback mechanisms.

Ogunsola et al. (2024) espoused the changes experienced in staff performance of KwaZulu-Natal Municipalities as a result of promoted employee feedback mechanisms. The adoption of mixed methodology was used on a sample of eighty participants to answer the questionnaires and ten to be interviewed. The questionnaire respondents were sampled using a simple random method, while the interview respondents were sampled using a convenience method. The employee feedback mechanism method was noted to be suitable towards enhancing operational excellence, but what mattered was the accessibility of employee feedback mechanism channels. However, Ogunsola et al. (2024) noted that the management did not include staff in the policy formulation process and the staff were not allocated adequate resources. The current study included the officers to assess their involvement in the decision-making process by the management.

Katelo et al. (2024) assessed the performance of Isiolo County Government as influenced by employee feedback mechanism changes. Descriptive research design was used to include thirty-six directors, fifty managers, and two hundred and thirty-nine staff. This population was gotten through a simple random sampling method. It was noted that a clear employee feedback mechanism regarding change was effectively communicated to the staff by the management. However, there was no room for a feedback mechanism. Therefore, the study recommended the need to develop or amend policies that would promote feedback. However, Katelo et al. (2024) used one questionnaire to collect data from different categories of management and staff. They could have used two separate questionnaires or interviewed the management. The current study interviewed the management and issued questionnaires to the other staff.

Yegon and Kipkorir (2023) evaluated how service delivery was enhanced through an effective employee feedback mechanism in Bomet County Government. The study used an explanatory research design to include seventy staff of the management. They were given questionnaires to answer, and though the findings provided indicate that effective employee feedback mechanisms through accountability and performance were significant with each other. Therefore, there was the need to extend the study and explore how the employee feedback mechanism affected the Meru County Government's performance, which was done in the current study.

## **2.6 Employee Involvement in Decision Making and Organization Performance**

Deepalakshmi et al. (2024) examined how organizational performance was measured through engaging the staff in India. A synthesis of past studies done to determine how staff were engaged in recruitment exercises, training sessions, and management of performance.

Viewed from a personal-to-group engagement strategy, Deepalakshmi et al. (2024) indicated that when staff were included in organizational roles by the management, they were able to become satisfied with their jobs, remain in an organization for long durations of time, and implement creative methods of working that enhanced the satisfaction of customers and promoted the performance of the organization. Therefore, Deepalakshmi et al. (2024) emphasized the need for a culture of engagement within the scope of the organization as well as the implementation of HR strategies that are founded on evidence. However, Deepalakshmi et al. (2024) did not provide information on how the staff were trained to fit exclusively in the decision-making process, despite having low experience. The current study explored how staff were trained before being allowed to be involved in decision-making.

Bukenya (2024) explored the organizational performance of Mukono District Local Government from the impact perspective of engagement of staff. The study included HR staff, management, and reception staff who answered questionnaires implemented through the case study research design. The study noted that the channels of employee feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, focus groups, and meetings at town halls, promoted teamwork, enabled the staff to clearly understand the organizational objectives, and developed trust, which led to enhanced organizational performance. However, Bukenya (2024) did not provide the types of resources provided to enhance involvement of staff in the decision-making by the local government, nor did the authors provide the support issued to staff to carry on their duties. The various resource allocation mechanisms were assessed in the current study by the staff.

Chukwuemeka (2020) evaluated the performance of Nigeria's public organizations as influenced by the allowance of staff to take part in decision-making. The study was supported by subjective expected utility theory and also the survey research design. There were three hundred and fifty-seven employees included, but three hundred and thirty-eight answered the questionnaires. It was thus established that engaging employees promoted their commitment level to deliver on assigned tasks. This engagement was mainly on decision-making involvement, hence making them feel recognized. Nevertheless, Chukwuemeka (2020) noted that their involvement in decision-making was limited to operations and not in changing policies and procedures. In this line of thought, the study should have provided various solutions provided by diverse organizations to their staff to engage in policy change meetings. The study provided both recommendations that could be put into practice on how the staff could work together to ensure there was work cohesion in the decision-making process.

Wafula et al. (2024) assessed the performance of the county government of Kakamega as directly influenced by employee engagement. The study used a descriptive research design in its sampling of three hundred and fifty-two staff through a stratified method. Questionnaires were administered to the staff and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. It was revealed that engaging the employees was significant towards improving the performance of the organization. Nevertheless, Wafula et al. (2024) noted that despite employees being engaged, they were hardly rewarded for their contribution during the involvement but rather rewarded based on their job responsibilities. This caused the staff to be demotivated towards taking part in any engagements beyond their job

descriptions. The study by Wafula et al. (2024) needed to be expanded to other counties such as Meru County, which was the exposition of the current study.

Njuguna and Minja (2023) examined how Embu County Government was delivering its services as affected by the participation of staff. Questionnaires were administered to five hundred and ninety-three employees of the county government, as sampled through a simple random method. According to Njuguna and Minja (2023), frequent consultation with employees motivated them to deliver services and become more satisfied with their roles. However, this was hardly implemented, making working conditions un conducive for growth, nor were there any job rotations. Regrettably, Njuguna and Minja (2023) did not include the managers to provide their opinion through interviews on why the staff were not included in the decision-making process. The current study included the management through interviewing them to get their feedback.

## **2.7 Summary of Gaps**

The gaps identified in training programs include the fact that Jinee et al. (2024) did not provide pilot testing of the questionnaire to assess its reliability status. Additionally, the study did not include the management to provide more information on how training was conducted. Anas (2024) failed to describe the mentorship programs present as offered by the management and which enhanced the competencies of the staff. Therefore, the current study described various training programs provided in Meru County. Apolot and Emuron (2024) did not provide details on the contribution of government towards enhancing training. Therefore, the current study assessed the contribution made by the county government to support training. A training factor such as a refresher course was not considered by Obuya et al. (2024), hence creating a gap for the current study. The current

study thus assessed different types of courses offered in training programs. Yegon and Mandago (2024) did not address the non-financial support that the leadership had made towards ensuring that there were effective training programs. The current study ensured that both financial and non-financial support that the leadership of the county government of Meru had provided made it possible for effective training programs.

The gaps identified in wellness programs include the fact that Ghani et al. (2024) did not mention work-life balance, which is vital towards the articulation of a sustainable wellness program. Furthermore, the choice of literature review exposed the analysis and results to author bias rather than facts. The current study will collect primary data through questionnaires and interviews to ensure that the results are free from bias. Furthermore, the study will assess work-life balance in the sustainability of wellness programs. Abasili et al. (2023) did not give possible solutions to the negative attitude of workers in attending the wellness programs, such as incentives related to free counseling and health programs. The current study ensured that the solutions to the negative attitude of the workers were provided. Nyakomittah and Omwenga (2023) concentrated on financial wellness programs; hence, the need to extend the study and assess non-financial wellness programs such as employee counseling and work-life balance. The current study provided explicitly the numbers of the respondents and considered different programs such as employee counseling.

The gaps identified in the employee feedback mechanism include Zulkeifli et al. (2023) not considering the influence that the employee feedback mechanism between staff had on performance. The current study assessed the effect that the employee feedback had on organizational performance. Ogunsola et al. (2024) noted that the management did not

include staff in the policy formulation process and the staff were not allocated adequate resources. The current study thus included the officers to assess their involvement in the decision-making process by the management. Katelo et al. (2024) used one questionnaire to collect data from different categories of management and staff. They could have used two separate questionnaires or interviewed the management. The current study interviewed the management and issued questionnaires to the other staff.

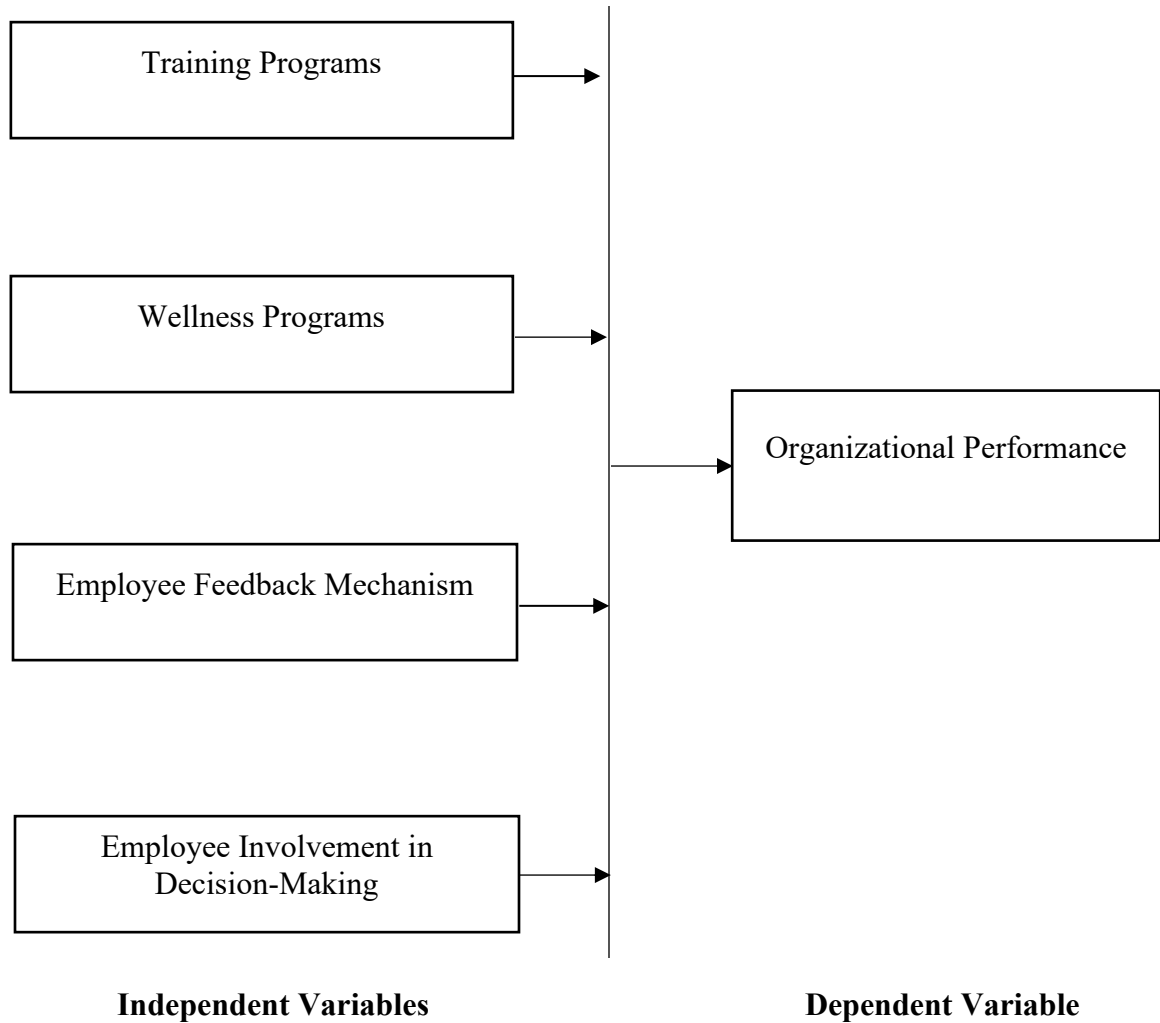
The gaps identified in employee involvement in decision-making include: Deepalakshmi et al. (2024) did not provide information on how the staff were trained to fit exclusively in the decision-making process, despite having low experience. The current study explored whether the staff were trained before being allowed to be involved in decision-making. Bukenya (2024) did not provide the types of resources provided to enhance involvement of staff in the decision-making by the local government, nor did the authors provide the support issued to staff to carry on their duties. The various resource allocation mechanisms were assessed in the current study by the staff. Njuguna and Minja (2023) did not include the managers to provide their opinion through interviews on why the staff were not included in the decision-making process. The current study included the management through interviewing them to get their feedback.

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

Organizational performance was the dependent variable, whereas training, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, and employee involvement in decision-making comprised the independent variables. According to Figure 2.1, the independent variables are located on the left, while the dependent variable is located on the right side.

**Figure 2.1**

*Conceptual Framework*



**2.8.1 Organizational Performance**

Organizational performance was important in determining the value of operations insofar as the vision and mission are concerned. Assessment of performance gave the employees a chance to derive meaning in what they did, how they were utilizing resources, and hence

strategizing future plans on how to make it even more appealing. In this study, organizational performance was measured through retention rate and employee diversity, employee productivity, innovation, and job satisfaction (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

### **2.8.2 Training Programs**

Having the capacity to instill advanced knowledge and skills in employees promoted their capabilities to make informed decisions that were efficient towards delivering the set goals (Obuya et al., 2024). Therefore, this kind of impartation of knowledge and skills could be done while working to ensure that time was not wasted (Anas, 2024). This gave the employees a chance to gain firsthand knowledge that was directly applicable to what they were doing. The only difference is that their skills had been improved. An organization also considered assigning mentors 'different employees to be mentored in specific fields (Njuguna & Minja, 2023). The mentors provided timely leadership opportunities, training, and character development that were suitable to the set goals. Further on, employees were also encouraged to gain training through refresher professional and academic courses that were relevant to their job responsibilities. The information gained was directly used to enhance their productivity at their workstations.

### **2.8.3 Wellness Programs**

It was the desire of the organization to have employees that were healthy in terms of physical, emotional, and mental capacities (Abasili et al., 2023). Therefore, this was made possible through wellness programs such as counseling, free health programs, and others that aimed at ensuring that the staff were able to balance between their roles and real-life living. Additionally, there were programs that aimed at providing crucial information on

retirement benefits (Ghani et al., 2024). The information was to enable the employees to begin to plan for their retirement age on time and also manage their finances.

#### **2.8.4 Employee Feedback Mechanism**

Exchange of ideas and opinions at an organization enabled the employees to be committed to the values of the institution. This was because it provided a chance for the employees to receive instructions and request clarifications needed (Yegon & Kipkorir, 2023). Therefore, aspects such as the open-door policy were one of the employee feedback mechanism factors that sought to encourage the staff to always speak their minds. According to Frodouarde et al. (2024), it was through the employee feedback mechanism and its frequency that staff were able to gain clear and transparent information, which encouraged quality feedback.

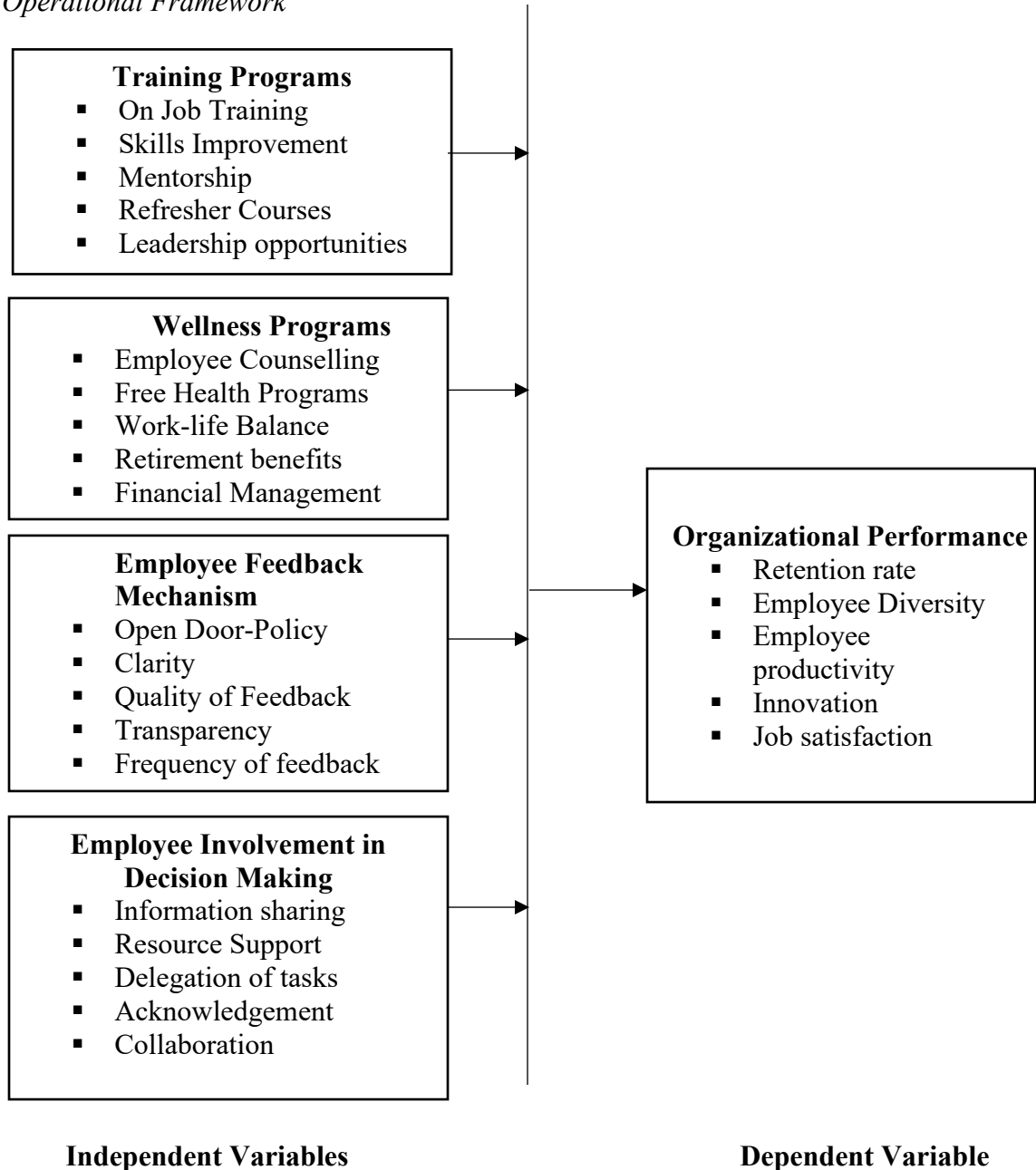
#### **2.8.5 Employee Involvement in Decision Making**

Involvement of the employees in making decisions at their workplace promoted inclusivity and objectivity. This was due to the fact that they felt wanted, hence getting satisfaction with their roles. When allocated different roles, employees got a chance to participate in actual decision-making, which affected the operations of the organization. Therefore, provision of resources needed to make sure that the decisions made were effective was essential. According to Omolara (2024), the involvement of the employees in the decision-making process and delegating some tasks gave the management a chance to nurture talents that dictated the future of the organization. This meant that timely acknowledgement of the contribution and collaboration was known.

## 2.9 Operational Framework

Figure 2.2

*Operational Framework*



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Methods for collecting, analyzing, and presenting data in the study are covered in this chapter. The study population, sampling method, sample size, research instruments, pre-testing, data collecting procedure, data processing, and analysis are all detailed and addressed in the chapter.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This is the procedural framework within which the research is conducted (Sharma et al., 2023). It dictates how the data is to be collected, what instruments are to be employed, and how the findings are to be analyzed. The study adopted a descriptive research design, which enabled assessment of the characteristics of the population without interfering with their operations (Siedlecki, 2020). The method was suitable to this research because it enabled collection of data relating to employee engagement without influencing the participants. The method was also suitable due to its wide application in research studies relating to HR practices. For example, in determining what training programs were present in the Meru County Government, how the wellness programs were implemented to ensure increased organizational performance, where employees were involved, especially when decisions were made, and what employee feedback mechanism channels were used to pass information effectively.

### **3.3 Target Population**

This is the unit of analysis that makes it possible for the data collection process from the respondents. The target population comprised 33 senior-level managers and 677 middle-level employees in 11 departments of the Meru County Government (County Government of Meru, 2023b). The senior-level management comprised 11 County Executive Committee [CECs], 11 directors, and 11 administrators in different departments of the county government. The senior-level management was included since they were responsible for decision-making and hence had the ability to allow or not allow other employees engagement in the process of coming up with various policies.

They thus provided the various policy adjustments made to accommodate the employees and the general outcome of decisions made through collaborations. The middle-level employees included officers in various departments and in charge of operations. They were considered relevant since they provided information on their inclusion in the decision-making process. They thus gave an account of their ability to improve individual productivity as a result of being involved in the decision-making processes. Table 3.1 indicates the target population.

**Table 3.1***Target Population*

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>CECs</b>	<b>Directors</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Middle Level Employees</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	Officer of the Governor	1	1	1	3	6
2.	Lands, Physical Planning & Urban Development & Public Works	1	1	1	13	16
3.	Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	1	1	1	58	61
4.	Youth, Sports and Social Development	1	1	1	8	11
5.	Roads, Transport and Energy	1	1	1	5	8
6.	Education, Science, Culture & Arts	1	1	1	20	23
7.	Finance, Economic Planning & ICT	1	1	1	18	21
8.	Health Services	1	1	1	486	489
9.	Trade, Tourism and Cooperatives	1	1	1	8	11
10.	Water, Irrigation, Environment, and Climate Change	1	1	1	16	19
11.	Legal Affairs, Public Service Management & Administration	1	1	1	42	45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>710</b>

### 3.4 Sampling Technique

Sampling techniques are the process of selecting a subset of a population to represent the overall population (Taherdoost, 2021). The study used the purposive sampling method to sample the 11 CECs, 11 directors, and 11 administrative officers, while the simple random method was used to sample middle-level employees. This was to ensure that each participant got an equal chance of being considered and selected for the data collection process.

#### 3.4.1 Sample Size

In determining the sample size of the middle-level employees, the Yamane formula was used to arrive at the samples as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n = sample size,

N = population size

e = margin of error (typically 0.05 for a 95% confidence level).

In calculating the sample size for the middle level employees

$$= 677 / (1+677(0.05^2))$$

= 251 middle level employees

Therefore, the sample size was 33 senior-level managers and 251 middle-level employees.

The sample size population is provided in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2***Sampled Population*

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>CECs</b>	<b>Directors</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Middle Level Employees</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	Officer of the Governor	1	1	1	2	5
2.	Lands, Physical Planning & Urban Development & Public Works	1	1	1	9	12
3.	Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	1	1	1	47	50
4.	Youth, Sports and Social Development	1	1	1	6	9
5.	Roads, Transport and Energy	1	1	1	4	7
6.	Education, Science, Culture & Arts	1	1	1	10	13
7.	Finance, Economic Planning & ICT	1	1	1	11	14
8.	Health Services	1	1	1	121	124
9.	Trade, Tourism and Cooperatives	1	1	1	5	8
10.	Water, Irrigation, Environment, and Climate Change	1	1	1	9	12
11.	Legal Affairs, Public Service Management & Administration	1	1	1	27	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>284</b>

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study through closed-ended questionnaires and interviews. The middle-level employees answered the questionnaires, whereas the senior-level management were interviewed. The structure of the questionnaires used an ordinal Likert scale that had options like 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree (appendix II). The questionnaires were structured and self-administered since the middle-level employees were considered literate and hence could easily read and write. There were different sections beginning with the background information section, whereby academic qualifications, work experience, and job positions of the respondents were inquired.

Thereafter, a total of five more sections were categorized as training, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, employee engagement in decision-making, and organizational performance. A total of five questions in each section were asked. Interview guides had similar sections as the questionnaires, but the only difference was that there was a total of three questions in each section (appendix III). It is important to note that the questions asked in both the questionnaires and interview guide were guided by the indicators and developed gaps from the literature review.

### **3.6 Piloting of Research Instruments**

There was a pilot study conducted in Tharaka Nithi County Government. This was because there have been existence programs meant to support employee engagement in this county. The pilot study's respondents comprised 1 CEC, 1 director, 1 administrator, and 25 middle-level employees from various departments. They were sampled using purposive and simple random methods similar to the main study. As noted by Kunselman (2024), selecting a

pilot population should include 10% of the sample size. This was to ensure that the population selected in the pilot study was adequate in relation to the sample size. The pilot study was essential since it provided a quality chance for the study to assess the reliability of the questionnaires and interviews as per scholarly thresholds.

### **3.6.1 Reliability**

Reliability is defined as the ability of a research instrument to be used more than one time and still be trusted to generate similar outcomes (Cooper & Schindler, 2018). The purpose of a reliability test is to examine the internal consistency of the questions. According to Cheung et al. (2023), Cronbach's alpha is a method used to measure reliability, and it comprises a range between 0 and 1. Reliability is ascertained when the value is above 0.7, and any other value lower than this point indicates unreliability.

### **3.6.2 Validity**

The ability of a research instrument to measure what it's supposed to measure is validity. The study assessed content and criterion validity (Surusu & Maslakci, 2020). On content validity, the accuracy of the questions as per the foundational concept was examined. Therefore, experts in the HR field were instrumental in ascertaining whether the questions satisfy its construct basis (Quintão et al., 2020). On criterion validity, the study compared the outcome with previous studies and assessed whether they correlated with each other.

## **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

All necessary requirements from the postgraduate that required the data collection process to commence were attained through a proposal presentation. Thereafter, the researcher sought research permits and approvals from NACOSTI and the Meru County Government.

Two research assistants were hired to assist the researcher in questionnaire distribution and collection of filled-in questionnaires. The role of the researcher was interviewing the management respondents.

During the data collection, the approval from the organizational manager was sought after, and when granted, data collection from employees and managers was concurrently undertaken. In the interview process, the managers were required to consent to being interviewed. Their approval immediately paved the way for the interviews, whose responses were noted down on paper by the researcher. In the questionnaire issuance, the employees also provided their consent and hence answered the questionnaires within an average time of 10 minutes. Immediately the data collection exercise ended, the respondents were thanked and the responses stored in a safe place.

### **3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation**

#### **3.8.1 Quantitative Data**

Submitted questionnaires were assessed to note any incomplete questionnaires. These types of questionnaires were eliminated, whereas the complete ones were coded into SPSS software version 24. The descriptive statistics that were analyzed in the study were frequencies, percentages, and means. Additionally, the inferential analysis that study analyzed were model summaries and ANOVA. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was developed to examine the influence of each employee engagement, such as training, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, and employee involvement in decision-making, on organizational performance. Thereafter, multiple regression was used to examine the overall influence of employee engagement on organizational performance.

Furthermore, regression weights were also determined as guided by the model of the study as indicated:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon.$$

This was where:

Y = Organizational Performance of Meru County Government

$\beta_i$  = Coefficients to be estimated

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$X_1$  = Training Programs

$X_2$  = Wellness Programs

$X_3$  = Employee feedback mechanism

$X_4$  = Employee involvement in decision making

$\varepsilon$  = Error term.

Tables and figure were used to present the findings.

### **3.8.2 Qualitative Data**

The interview responses were categorically analyzed through the thematic method, which enabled the study to derive meaning from various opinions of the respondents. This was identifying different topics that the respondents have provided to elucidate their quotes on a specific topic of discussion.

### **3.9 Diagnostic Tests**

#### **3.9.1 Normality Test**

A normality test was done to determine whether sample data has been drawn from a normally distributed population (Mishra et al., 2019). That is, it determines how well the data is modeled and whether it is symmetric around the mean; hence, any inclination towards the left or right is considered abnormal. The main method that the study used to test normality is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The p-values need to be more than 0.05 for normality to be ascertained.

#### **3.9.2 Autocorrelation Test**

Autocorrelation was tested to examine the strength of the engagement programs in maintaining their individual characteristics when they interrelate with one another. Determining the strength of growth strategies is critical since it gives assurance that they have stable traits that can be tested without manipulations. Notably, Schober et al. (2018) indicate that an autocorrelation test eliminates the chances for a data set from experiencing extreme statistical errors that could affect the quality of the results. Therefore, Durbin Watson was used to determine the autocorrelation. This is a metric that contains a range from 0 to 4, whereby 0 to 2 indicates positive correlation, 2 indicates no correlation, and 2 to 4 indicates negative correlation.

#### **3.9.3 Multicollinearity Test**

The multicollinearity test was used to examine if employee engagement programs had a direct influence on financial performance or if their uniqueness was influenced by the dependent variable (Shrestha, 2020). Notably, the independent variables are supposed to

influence the dependent variable, but due to the multicollinearity problem, the reverse can happen. Therefore, to ensure that the data set is free from multicollinearity problems, this test was done. In this study, the variance inflation factor [VIF] and tolerance level were used to conduct a multicollinearity test. According to Shrestha (2020), a data set is free from multicollinearity when the VIF is less than 5, whereas the tolerance level is greater than 0.2.

#### **3.9.4 Heteroskedasticity Test**

A heteroskedasticity test was also conducted to ensure that sensitive dissimilarities of the data set are eliminated to enhance the analyzed data. Therefore, scatter plots are used to provide assurance that the residuals are equally distributed in a given area, hence eliminating outliers. According to Berenguer-Rico and Wilms (2021), outliers, which are basically errors, reduce the efficiency of the dataset in addressing the specific objective it had of the study. Therefore, the variance of the errors from a regression is dependent on the values of the independent variables.

#### **3.9.5 Linearity Test**

This was another test that was undertaken to ensure that the relationship between each employee engagement parameter assessed in the current study and organizational performance is provided. That is the relationship between training, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, employee involvement in decision-making, and organizational performance. The linearity regression method was used whereby the significance value was more than 0.05 for the data to be considered to be linear. Linearity

provides the foundation for the study to undertake other regression analyses in determination of the general objective and regression weights.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The study ensured that the authorizations, such as from KeMU and NACOSTI, were obtained before commencing the process of data collection. These letters were used as supporting evidence to seek data collection approval from the Meru County Government. Additionally, the study sought consent from the participants before collecting data from them. The purpose of the study was clearly explained, and the perceived benefits were communicated. Furthermore, confidentiality was ensured in such a manner that there were no questions that revealed their names, contacts, or addresses. Notably, integrity was ensured through safeguarding the responded questionnaires and interview responses, even after the data collection and analysis process ended. Therefore, data was stored in a safe place that was tamper-proof for purposes of its safeguard. Furthermore, all cited works were referenced in a manner that connoted academic excellence and adherence to APA format.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the results on the effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance of the Meru County Government, Kenya. Therefore, this chapter includes response rate, reliability results, background information, diagnostic tests, descriptive statistics, interview results, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis.

#### 4.2 Response Rate

The sample size was 33 senior-level managers and 251 middle-level employees who would take part in interviews and answer the questionnaires, respectively. Their rates of participation in the study are as indicated in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

*Response Rate*

Respondents	Sampled	Response	Percentage
Senior level managers	33	25	76%
Middle level employees (Officers)	251	217	86%
Total	284	242	85%

The results in Table 4.1 illustrate that 25(76%) senior-level managers took part in the study, while 217(86%) middle-level employees responded to the study. This was a combined total of 242(85%). Based on their participation rates, the study gathered a high response since it

was above 80%, which was suggested by Wu et al. (2022). mainly because the inclusion of both senior and middle-level management resonated effectively since they were directly affected by the implementation pattern of employee engagement programs. According to Holtom et al. (2022), the inclusion of accurate respondents who are directly involved in the topic of the study sparks interest in them to fill out the questionnaires, take interviews, or use other methods effortlessly. Therefore, the presentation of the study tools gave them a platform that would capture their feedback, hence addressing their interests. Through such a system they were able to enhance their respective working experiences based on the final output of publishing the results in a university repository. Additionally, experiencing the transition of different county government leadership within a spectrum of two years, the study was a timely platform to share knowledge of the intricacies of training, wellness programs, employee feedback, and their involvement in decision-making.

### 4.3 Reliability Results

Table 4.2 shows the results of reliability tests conducted on data collection instruments to ensure that they can be trusted to provide similar results even when used more than once.

**Table 4.2**

*Reliability Results*

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha
Training Programs	0.852
Wellness Programs	0.864
Employee Feedback mechanisms	0.776
Employee Involvement in Decision Making	0.931
Organizational Performance	0.843
Average	0.853

According to Table 4.2, on average, the Cronbach coefficient is 0.853, which is comprised of individual coefficients such as training with a value of 0.852, wellness programs with a value of 0.864, employee feedback mechanisms with a value of 0.776, employee involvement in decision-making with a value of 0.931, and organizational performance with a value of 0.843. A consistent observation with the data was that the Cronbach coefficient value was greater than 0.7 in all the variables examined. This signifies that the data was reliable; hence, the instruments used by the study were considered consistent and complete to enable the users of the information to make human resource decisions that are factual. Cheung et al. (2023) proclaimed on the relevance of the Cronbach alpha to promote stability of the instruments through promoting internal consistency of the questions asked.

#### **4.4 Background Information**

The study gathered background information from interviews and questionnaires as described in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

##### **4.4.1 Background Information of Middle Level Employees**

The background information illustrates the diversity of academic qualifications, job positions, job descriptions, and length of time respondents had worked for the county government. The findings lay the groundwork for understanding how various employee engagement programs influence organizational performance by spotlighting critical characteristics in the demographic composition of the respondents, as provided in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3***Background Information of Middle Level Employees*

Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percent
Master's Degree	49	23
Bachelor's Degree	87	40
Higher Diploma	65	30
Diploma	16	7
Total	217	100

Work experience in the county government	Frequency	Percentage
Over 10 years	16	7
6-10 years	79	36
1-5 years	101	47
Less than 1 year	21	10
Total	217	100

Most respondents in Table 4.3, who were 87 (40%), had a bachelor's degree, 65 (30%) had a higher diploma, and only 16 (7%) had a diploma as their highest level of education. Notably, the majority of the middle-level employees, 101 (47%), had worked in the county government of Meru for a period of 1 to 5 years, 76 (36%) had worked for 6 to 10 years, and only 21 (10%) of them had worked for less than one year. It was notable that most of the middle-level employees had adequate educational backgrounds that would enable them to engage in various programs consistently for a turnaround in the organizational performance.

Furthermore, the results revealed that most of the staff had worked with a spectrum of 1-5 years, while others had worked more than that. Therefore, the combination of both

educational qualification and years of experience in service is an indicator that the middle-level management were not only qualified to handle specific job-related demands but also took very effective roles in ensuring that various departments attained organizational mission and vision.

According to Gallup (2023), it was considered more effective to attain organizational goals if the human resources implementing the policies were adequately trained and experienced in their roles. Therefore, having staff that had served for consecutive periods of years in different roles proves that they were more than willing to align their roles with the organizational mission and vision for a desirable change and service delivery. Notably, Govender and Bussin (2020) comprehensively provided information that public organizations were able to obtain employee loyalty from employees that had served for longer durations of time.

This means that having an indication that the staff in Meru County had served for an extensive period of time, their loyalty lay with seeing the entire county government succeed and serve the public. According to Komen (2024), academic background complemented the thinking capabilities of the staff in an organization, contributing novel ideas that would ensure effective utilization of public resources and management of public trust as bestowed upon them through the constitution.

#### **4.4.2 Background Information of Senior Level Managers.**

The managers answered three questions to capture their background, which included describing their job position, timeline of services, and educational qualifications, as described in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4***Background Information of Senior Level Managers*

Job Position	Response	Percentage
CECs	7	28
Directors	8	32
Administrative officers	10	40
Total	25	100
<hr/>		
Years of service		
<hr/>		
Above 20 years	1	4
15-19 years	4	16
10-14 years	3	12
5-9 years	2	8
1-4 years	9	36
Less than 1 year	6	24
Total	25	100
<hr/>		
Education Level		
<hr/>		
Post Graduate	5	20
Graduate	20	80
Total	25	100
<hr/>		

The results in Table 4.4 illustrate that administrative directors were the major respondents, with 10 (40%) of them taking part in the study. There were also 8 (32%) directors and 7 (28%) CECs comprising various interview respondents. It was also noted that 9 (36%) of the respondents had worked for 1-4 years, while 6 (24%) worked for less than 1 year. The minority was one staff member who had worked for more than 20 years but in different capacities. Further, 20 (80%) were graduates, while 5 (20%) had postgraduate

qualifications. The outcome reveals that the leadership of Meru County had experienced major changes, with most of the senior-level management having served for less than 5 years but with adequate educational backgrounds and in different capacities.

This is in line with the constitution that requires senior leadership to change after every 5 years; hence, since 2022, significant changes have been noted to take place. The implication of the results is that the county government of Meru had incorporated a series of new leaders from various professional backgrounds to serve in different capacities. They were thus considered well networked to international and local corporations, thereby facilitating easier benchmarking of current county government operations with those of other organizations. EC (2022) confirmed that despite most public office leadership members serving a tenure that was limited by the constitution, they were equally experienced and networked from their previous roles in the private and public sectors. Additionally, Katelo et al. (2024) revealed that a senior management role entails providing leadership to the entire organization with keen attention to employee growth and development.

#### **4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Performance**

Organizational performance of the Meru County Government was the dependent variable and was measured through the retention rate, employee diversity, employee productivity, innovation, and job satisfaction. The table used an ordinal Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2 representing disagree, 3 representing neutral, 4 representing agree, and 5 representing strongly agree. The descriptive results are provided in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5***Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Performance*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
N=217							
Employee engagement programs positively impact productivity at work	9 (4%)	10 (5%)	16 (7%)	110 (51%)	72 (33%)	4.18	0.88
There has been high retention rate of workers	7 (3%)	12 (6%)	101 (47%)	68 (31%)	29 (13%)	3.23	1.44
Engagement plans have increased diversity of staff	10 (5%)	13 (6%)	98 (45%)	74 (34%)	22 (10%)	3.14	1.52
Articulate solutions have improved work processes.	7 (3%)	9 (4%)	11 (5%)	89 (41%)	101 (47%)	4.36	0.73
There has been cohesion between the management and the employees	104 (48%)	83 (38%)	15 (7%)	8 (4%)	7 (3%)	2.35	1.89

As per the results presented in Table 4.5, 190 (88%) of most respondents were in consensus that the articulation of solutions as provided by the management had improved work processes (mean 4.36 and S.D. 0.73). In addition, 182 (84%) of most respondents were in consensus that employee engagement programs had positively impacted their productivity at work (mean 4.18 and S.D. 0.88). Nevertheless, 187 (86%) of most respondents disagreed on a mean of 2.35 that there had been cohesion between the management and the employees due to timely payment of salary and remuneration (mean 2.35 and S.D. 1.89).

The results imply that the ability of the management to make sound decisions in the county government had enabled the work-related processes to improve. The management had not only been exposed to controlling resources but also equipped with quality HR practices that were essential in making reasonable, actionable steps. One of the ways that this could have been implemented was through employee engagement programs. The potency of these programs immensely benefited the management and general officers of the county government. The benefits are related to improved decision-making processes, interactions, and knowledge of organizational processes.

An emphasis was placed on equipping the human resource with skills that would support them in handling changing business environments, particularly in the context of political structures (Muchui, 2025). Through such measures, the study noted a prolonged working relationship between the management and staff, resulting in increased organizational performance on the one hand. According to Neranto (2022), an emphasis on training and development sessions among the organizational staff motivated them to deliver more on their mandates due to enhanced trust they had perceived from the management. This could

be in terms of gaining more knowledge and being involved more in decision-making, prompting a quality solution suggestion process within the structures of the organization.

On the other hand, late payment of salary and remuneration, which was still a lingering issue, divided the working cohesion between the management and staff. The implication is that the personal goals of the workforce had to be delayed to gratify other development agendas of the county government. This outcome therefore failed to support the social exchange theory on the basis that the expectation of the middle-level 'HR of receiving their monthly payment on time was not met. This therefore demotivated them to utilize their skills and resources in building working relationships with the management.

Frequent and adequate payment of salaries to staff was linked by OECD (2024) to reduced work dissatisfaction and enhanced growth of interest in commitment to organizational goals and vision. Further, leadership engagement with the staff would be promoted through work-related engagement that encompassed role assignments, monitoring of performance, training of staff by the management on areas of weakness, and appropriate payment of salaries to compensate the employees for their time and skills commitment to the organization (Schaufeli, 2021).

#### **4.5.2 Interview Responses**

Further, there were interview responses collected in this section. The respondents were asked to explain how the management ensured that the employee productivity was monitored. They responded by noting that it was done through majorly two themes that were performance reviews and feedback mechanisms. On performance reviews, it was revealed that the managers set different organizational goals for the staff based on their

capacities. This led to task allocation to each staff member, and agreement was discussed with them on how performance would be measured and within what timeframe. After that time lapsed, the management took their time to provide information on how the employee had performed against the set objective (Chukwuemeka, 2020). This was to hold them accountable based on the performance metrics in place and what roles they were assigned. The employees also ensured that they also talked with the staff on possible career progression in a department to facilitate a smooth flow of operations and clear actionable assessment. Professional development not only entailed monitoring of assigned tasks but also ensuring that the employee competencies were improved by utilizing all available resources in the organization (Majau & Wanjohi, 2019).

On feedback mechanisms, the respondents noted that there were surveys provided to employees to make sure that they noted their professional strengths and weaknesses. This information was used by the management to provide critical support to improve the organizational performance. Additionally, the management also allowed peer reviews to facilitate departmental collaborations. Through such efforts, minor areas of weakness were amicably resolved within the department. According to Zhang and Fei (2022), departmental teamwork was crucial to ensure that employees are able to sharpen each other's skills in minor areas to avoid inefficiencies that may cause low performance.

Additionally, the respondents were asked to describe the various initiatives present to support employee diversity in the county government. The various initiatives mentioned by the respondents comprised promotion of gender equity by fostering equal roles and rewards; regional diversity through equally recognizing the contribution of every staff member despite where they come from; and inclusion of people with disabilities through

assigning specific roles within the county government. The response provided regarding gender equity by the respondents was that there was gender inclusivity as per the constitutional requirements. Both men and women were allocated equal tasks, and if not, 1/3 of the one gender was supposed to be present in all tasks and reward allocation processes. Regional diversity was also implemented through openly communicating and recognizing the efforts played by all employees despite where they came from. This method ensured that they were at least given a chance to express their interest and get an equal opportunity to express their talents. Further, it was also revealed that people living with disabilities were also allocated unique opportunities that would enable them to have an equal chance with other colleagues. A respondent, '06,' out of the 25 participants said that

*“We give equal chances to women, people living with disabilities, and staff living in marginal areas to take part in various county projects.”*

The other question asked was on how employee innovation had affected the organizational performance in the Meru County Government. From their responses, three themes, which include problem-solving, efficiency, and service delivery, are deduced. The interviewees noted that innovative employees were articulate in providing solutions to the issues facing the county departments. They were able to recommend local solutions that would reduce the time wasted in resolving specific problems. In support, Ali et al. (2022) found out that innovation in an organization is a determinant factor towards problem solving. Additionally, the interviewees spoke about efficiency with regard to quicker decision-making processes due to innovation.

They revealed that the departments were able to easily formulate and implement HR decisions due to quality innovation at both personal and corporate levels. Further, the interviewees noted that innovation also enhanced service delivery to the public through the incorporation of novel ideas and methods. These attributes made it easier to offer services to the public within the shortest duration of time. A respondent, '19' out of the 25 participants, said that

*“It becomes easier to interact with the public when the staff are innovative in their thinking and when executing HR policies within the county government.”*

According to Korzynski et al. (2020), being innovative does not necessarily have to be initiated by an organization but rather be based on the willingness and creativity of the staff to go an extra mile of learning something new that can make the processes easier to implement. Furthermore, in the digital era, the decision of an employee to become innovative requires a positive attitude to gain knowledge through available e-platforms (Garrido-Moreno et al., 2024).

In addition, the elaborate methods used by the county leadership to encourage employee retention in departments of the county government were noted to include a supportive working environment that sought to provide equal growth opportunities to all employees without discrimination. Furthermore, respondents revealed that when the payment system was competitive, it encouraged them to even consider working till retirement age. Through such a system, their skills and time were adequately compensated to make personal development. It was also noted that as long as the employees were assured of progression through promotions that were stipulated in HR policies, it enabled them to remain focused. In comparison, Govender and Bussin (2020) considered salaries and a positive working

environment as major factors that would enable employees to consider being interested in remaining long in a public organization.

#### **4.6 Descriptive Statistics of Training Programs**

Training programs were measured through on-the-job training, skills improvement, mentorship, refresher courses, and leadership opportunities. Table 4.6 shows the questionnaire outcome on this variable.

**Table 4.6***Descriptive Statistics of Training Programs*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
N=217							
I regularly participate in on-the-job training programs	8 (4%)	11 (5%)	98 (45%)	74 (34%)	26 (12%)	3.42	1.37
I have received many training programs provided	104 (48%)	89 (41%)	12 (6%)	7 (3%)	5 (2%)	2.21	1.80
I occasionally receive mentoring and coaching from senior staff	13 (6%)	10 (5%)	100 (46%)	70 (32%)	24 (11%)	3.15	1.42
Leadership opportunities have been helpful	5 (2%)	8 (4%)	15 (7%)	83 (38%)	106 (49%)	4.19	0.92
Refresher courses have updated me with new developments	6 (3%)	5 (2%)	10 (5%)	79 (36%)	117 (54%)	4.35	1.83

As per the results presented in Table 4.6, 196 (90%) of most respondents were in consensus that the refresher courses they had received from time to time have kept them up to date with new developments in their job (mean 4.35 and S.D. 1.83). In addition, 189

(87%) of most respondents were in consensus that leadership opportunities had been helpful in developing their career path and personal development (mean 4.36 and S.D. 0.73). However, 193 (89%) of most respondents disagreed on a mean of 2.21 that they had received many training programs provided by the county government and they had improved their job-related skills (mean 2.21 and S.D. 1.80).

The results imply that the essence of training programs through rolled-out refresher courses had enabled the employees to comprehend specific industrial trends. This enabled them to prepare adequately by gaining relevant skills and lobbying for personal resources that would equip them to handle any foreseeable work pressure. Comparing this specific finding to Wafula et al. (2024), there was an agreement that adequate preparation to counter the industrial developments was enhanced through training within an organization. In the long run, the employees also indicated that the essence of leadership was also a contributory element towards growth in professionalism. This could have been caused by consistent mentorship to ensure that tasks were delivered on time, thereby enhancing discipline that would be implemented in both professional and personal development.

According to Njuguna and Minja (2023), the impact that leaders have on employees extends beyond the organizational operations since the issuance of instructions, reprimands, and general exposure to growth opportunities enable the staff to develop their mental capacities to handle challenges in their lives. Therefore, the result supports human capital theory by revealing that the productivity of Meru County public staff was improved through undergoing training and leadership processes. Through these mechanisms, the

staff were able to learn and gain more skills that benefitted their professionalism and personal development.

It was also discovered that training programs provided to the staff were still too few to efficiently support them in improving their job-related skills. The implication was that the staff had to rely on personal efforts to gain advanced skills in their careers through training at external centers of learning, which was costly and required internal motivation. According to Jinee et al. (2024), focusing on training skills equipped the staff with a different set of skills that would build a progressive career that enhanced organizational performance. Nevertheless, when employees noticed that the organization was not committed to this cause, they slowly but surely detached their commitment level to go beyond their assigned tasks. Therefore, when organizations prioritized training, not only did it equip its workforce with necessary skills but also fostered a culture of continuous improvement and engagement (Obuya et al., 2024).

#### **4.6.2 Interview Responses**

Further, there were interview responses collected in this section. The respondents were asked to describe the various methods used to conduct training on employees. The training methods mentioned included mentorship and leadership programs, in-job training, online learning, and in-person learning through the help of an instructor. The mentorship and leadership programs were mainly meant for the employees who had shown great potential and interest in learning the organizational processes. They worked under the leadership of mentors who trained and motivated them to deliver their best. Furthermore, in-job training enabled the staff to gain skills necessary to undertake a specific task in the department through established systems.

It involves departmental managers training them to perform specific routine tasks or when an innovation was introduced in the county government. This form of training was considered relevant to ensure that organizational errors were minimized to the lowest level while taking advantage of scarce organizational resources (Obuya et al., 2024). Additionally, online learning was also another method through which training occurred, especially due to the digital evolution that has been recently witnessed in most organizations. Other forms of training included in-person training where an internal or external instructor offered training to the staff to ensure that they were able to comprehend organizational policies and procedures.

As also pointed out by Onduso et al. (2024), it was easier training employees when they were offered diverse methods through which they could gain meaningful skills. A respondent, '03,' out of the 25 participants said that

*“We offer various training to our staff using different methods such as on-the-job training, online training, and mentorship.”*

The interviewees also answered the questions about the mentorship programs present as offered by the management to enhance the competencies of the staff. They indicated that though the mentorship programs that directly benefitted the staff had no specific names, the staff were paired with a management member. The purpose of pairing was to ensure that the manager provided personal experiences in management through information sharing, training, and candid discussion on how the employee would be supported. This program promoted inclusivity, with most employees gaining insights on how management was carried out in the midst of a changing political environment. Other employees noted that the Meru Youth Service Mentorship and Employment Program, though not directly affecting the staff, provided an avenue for the youthful staff to gain mentorship from older staff in the county government. A respondent, ‘9’ out of the 25 participants, said that

*“We encourage the staff to work together with various managers through empowerment programs that randomly pair management teams and staff for mentorship.”*

The interviewees explained the non-financial support that the leadership has made towards ensuring that there were effective training programs in two themes that include time provision and an environment that supports growth. On the time provision, the management was very specific on the need for training to take place. They thus offered specific timelines needed for training to take place, and through such allocations, the employees were able to balance work and training without causing inefficiencies in service delivery. Notably, the leadership also encouraged the employee to undergo training by creating a conducive environment that would support this initiative. Such kind

of environment, which was either within the county government premises or a designated place, minimized distractions that would be normally associated with allocation of tasks and noise (Yegon and Mandago, 2024). Emphasis was placed by Apolot and Emuron (2024) on conducting training in a place that had the least movements to ensure that the concentration level of the staff was maximized.

#### **4.7 Descriptive Statistics of Wellness Programs**

Wellness programs were measured through employee counseling, free health programs, work-life balance, retirement benefits, and financial management. Table 4.7 shows the questionnaire outcome on this variable.

**Table 4.7***Descriptive Statistics of Wellness Programs*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
N=217							
Adequate employee counselling services.	5 (2%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)	107 (49%)	91 (42%)	4.16	0.95
Provision of free health programs	4 (2%)	7 (3%)	11 (5%)	82 (38%)	113 (52%)	4.47	0.32
Healthy work-life balance for employees in all sectors	12 (6%)	61 (28%)	98 (45%)	22 (10%)	24 (11%)	2.70	1.61
Training programs contribute overall well-being and personal development.	13 (6%)	9 (4%)	91 (42%)	83 (38%)	21 (10%)	3.50	1.36
Financial management, has improved work productivity.	6 (3%)	12 (6%)	16 (7%)	74 (34%)	109 (50%)	4.20	0.83

As per the results presented in Table 4.7, 195 (90%) of most respondents were in consensus that they had received sufficient free health programs, including health check-ups and wellness camps (mean 4.47 and S.D. 0.32). Notably, 183 (84%) of most respondents were also in consensus that the county government's wellness programs, like financial

management, had improved their productivity (mean, 4.20, and S.D., 0.83). Further, 198 (45%) of most respondents had a neutral opinion, while 43 (20%) were in disagreement that there was a healthy work balance in all departments of the county government (mean, 2.70, and SD, 1.61). The study's outcome implies that the county government of Meru was well prepared to ensure that the wellness of the employees was well catered to. This was through providing programs that would enable health professionals to conduct health checkups and counseling services for the county government's staff at no cost.

This initiative was aimed at laying a foundation of trust between the staff and management, as the latter proved that they were concerned with various ailments that affected employees' individual productivity. Issues to do with mental and physical health were of grave concern since they determine the concentration ability of an employee towards attaining organizational goals. If an employee was experiencing a certain ailment, it interfered with their clear reasoning and productivity (Abasili et al., 2023). Further on, the county government leadership also went to extremes of also providing financial management courses to the staff to support their abilities to manage their personal wealth. In support of human capital theory, the provision of health and training needs to staff to enhance their performance was an investment consideration done by the management of the county government of Meru.

According to Govender and Bussin (2020), poor financial management was among the causal attributes of increased stress of the staff in an organization. Therefore, being able to manage wealth does not mean that an employee ought to earn a high salary but rather live within a lifestyle that can be supported by a specific income level. Nevertheless, employee wellness did not sufficiently cover county government employees in all departments. There

were departments whose employees felt overwhelmed by the operations, mostly caused by poor work-life balance. According to Saipi (2024), the main causal factor for poor work-life balance in public organizations is mainly caused by employee shortages.

Therefore, the present staff are overworked, resulting in increased work fatigue and burnout. Critical departments such as health, administration, and finance in county governments are notable departments with poor work-life balance (Kasau, 2017; Mwenda, 2023; Wakhungu et al., 2020). Therefore, if these departments fell short of staff, the process of replacement of staff was rather long and tedious. Therefore, the present staff would be allocated additional roles without necessarily an increment of allowances. According to Onduso et al. (2024), poor work-life balance was one of the major impediments to performance in the county governments. This is because it denied the working staff a chance to take part in other roles that are important in life, leading to demoralized work patterns.

#### **4.7.2 Interview Responses**

Further, there were interview responses collected in this section. The respondents were asked to highlight how the management ensured that the negative attitude of workers towards attending the wellness programs was reduced if not eliminated. Through three themes, it was noted that the management provided timely communication on the purpose of the programs, encouraged the staff to contribute their skills towards the programs, and provided an environment that encouraged growth. On timely communication, the management ensured that they were able to let the staff know of any upcoming wellness programs. This enabled the staff to prepare both psychologically and in person to fully participate in the program.

According to Katelo et al. (2024), timely communication through common platforms that makes information easier to be transferred from the sender to the recipient makes it suitable for action. Additionally, the management also took time to allow the staff to contribute their skills in support of the program. These skills depended on each staff member's ability to accept or reject the offer. However, the important aspect was that the management wanted the staff to feel as part of the wellness program. Further, the wellness programs were carried out in a suitable environment that promoted inclusivity and growth of staff. If the wellness programs were related to personal health, they were required to be done in a confidential place to minimize distractions and maximize employee participation rate. In support of the results, Rosnani et al. (2023) revealed that wellness programs are meant to support work-life balance; hence, early communication for purposes of planning is essential for the workers to be ready.

The respondents highlight the various wellness programs present in Meru County Government, such as counseling, training on physical health exercises, and management of personal finances when actively working and during retirement. According to Makhanya (2021), programs such as counseling were so crucial since the staff were bound to experience life challenges that required clarity on how to make decisions. This was made through participating in a confidential conversation with a specialist for a better decision-making process. A respondent, '6' out of the 25 participants, said that

*“Wellness programs such as counseling on mental health have saved the lives of so many county officers who were on the brink of giving up.”*

A respondent, '23,' out of the 25 participants said that

*“I fully support the financial management wellness program since it provides information to staff on the realities of living in debt and how to plan for retirement.”*

A respondent, ‘20’ out of the 25 participants, said that

*“Wellness programs on how to accept your body and health as a county government staff reduce employee stress by half.”*

The last question in this section was on the challenges faced by management when ensuring the wellness programs match with the employee’s physical, mental, and emotional needs. The challenges mentioned by the management comprised inadequate resource allocation, whereby the budgetary allocations were not enough to cater for consistent wellness programs. This is despite the dire need for such programs to cater to the welfare of the staff. The managers also mentioned that some of the wellness programs were required to be carried on for long durations of time, which meant total commitment. However, at times, the political landscape changed, experts moved on to other staff, and the entire program advanced to other activities (McKinsey & Company, 2023). These concerns made it hard for the management to sustain any commitments that went beyond the average timeline.

As noted by some managers, poor program evaluation made it hard to convince the county leadership of its relevance and, particularly, previous performance in supporting employee growth and development in the county government. Abasili et al. (2023) noted that one of the major impediments towards the success of a wellness program was poor support from the management. The main causes noted included a lack of a clear measuring metric to assess its contribution towards the staff’s performance and increased costs associated with severe cases of wellness concerns among the staff (Nyakomittah & Omwenga, 2023).

#### 4.8 Descriptive Results of Employee Feedback Mechanism

Employee feedback mechanisms were measured through indicators such as open-door policy, clarity and quality of feedback, transparency, and frequency of feedback. Table 4.8 shows the questionnaire outcome on this variable.

**Table 4.8**

*Descriptive Statistics of Employee Feedback Mechanism*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
N=217							
Management encourages an open-door policy	14 (6%)	11 (5%)	103 (48%)	66 (30%)	23 (11%)	3.35	1.39
Frequent feedback on the issues raised by management.	120 (55%)	65 (30%)	17 (8%)	8 (4%)	7 (3%)	2.28	1.81
Clarity on quality of information provided by management	5 (2%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)	87 (40%)	115 (53%)	4.46	0.78
Reception of timely and constructive feedback	6 (3%)	5 (2%)	10 (5%)	89 (41%)	107 (49%)	4.13	0.94
High quality feedback from management	5 (2%)	8 (4%)	110 (51%)	79 (36%)	15 (7%)	3.52	1.36
There is a reward system established to encourage the staff	9 (4%)	10 (5%)	16 (7%)	110 (51%)	72 (33%)	3.37	1.42

As per the results presented in Table 4.8, 202 (93%) of most respondents were in consensus that the quality of information provided by management was clear and easy to understand (mean 4.46 and S.D. 0.78). Moreover, 196 (90%) of most respondents were also in consensus that they received timely and constructive feedback on their work and they were able to execute their roles well and performed better (mean 4.13 and S.D. 0.94). However, 185 (85%) of most respondents were not in agreement that they had been able to get frequent feedback on the issues raised with the management (mean 2.28 and S.D. 1.81). The study's outcome implies the county management team expressed proficiency in providing clear instructions to the staff for execution. The information provided was considered to be high quality due to its easy comprehension, timeliness, and allowance for constructive feedback.

Therefore, the county staff were able to perform their roles effectively since they were able to receive instructions on areas of contention. In comparison to Taylor (2021), having the ability to make a decision is based on sufficiency of information as well as frequency of communication to and from the management. Clarity of information by management members is an indication that they have taken the time to think about various operations and the best way to implement a human resource policy. That is, allocation of duties to staff within a medium they can easily access to minimize inefficiencies and delayed task execution. This is in line with the public service policy of provision of tasks in an efficient way that supports employee commitment and increased completion of tasks.

According to Njuguna and Minja (2023), employees' ability to receive instructions and execute them is based on operative policies that empower them to deliver on their mandate in support of organizational mission. Nevertheless, the study noted that not all issues raised

by the individual staff were responded to frequently by the management. This could be an indicator that some of the issues raised were either considered non-issues or lacked the capacity to effectively provide feedback on the type of commitment in resolving the concern. According to Ngoye (2023), feedback mechanisms have two perspectives, which include the staff and the management's points of view.

On the one hand, when management issues an instruction to staff, they expect execution of tasks and are majorly willing to respond to the feedback regarding the assigned task. On the other hand, when the employees raise a concern on a task not allocated to them but with regard to the general operations of the organization, most management teams may decide to resolve it at the time or later or fail to respond. Notably, Makhanya (2021) revealed that when the issues raised by the staff were politically orchestrated, requiring unbudgeted funding commitment, or were purposed to cause disunity in the departments, they were likely not resolved. However, it was the obligation of the management to provide solutions to all issues affecting the work performance of the staff in the organization (LaMacchia, 2021). In support of the findings, KIPPRA (2021) also noted that when the priorities of the employees did not align with the management's focus, their views were likely not to be heard.

#### **4.8.2 Interview Responses**

Further, there were interview responses collected in this section. The respondents were asked to describe the employee feedback mechanism patterns used between the employees and management in various departments. The interviewees indicated that they mainly considered the use of in-person meetings, phone calls, emails, memos, WhatsApp messages, and general text messages. These methods supported increased communication

for the issuance of instructions and provision of feedback on areas needing further clarification. According to Campbell et al. (2020), departmental interactions between the management and the staff required a common method of relaying information that was easily accessible to everyone. The purpose of such a method was to increase feedback patterns and clarity of information. Modern methods that incorporated digitization were considered by Frodouard et al. (2024) as the most effective towards implementing employee feedback mechanisms. A respondent, '15' out of the 25 participants, said that

*“When communicating, we allow the employees to use mainly phone calls or emails for purposes of relaying different information.”*

A respondent, '14' out of the 25 participants, said that

*“The choice to use a specific feedback mechanism is informed by the content of the intended message and whether it has file attachments.”*

The respondents were also asked to highlight how the management engaged the employees in policy formulation processes. The engagement methods were majorly explained in two themes, which were open communication and differences in informed opinions. With regard to open communication, the management allowed the employees, to some extent, to provide their feedback on what they thought were the best practices of formulating policy processes. Through this approach, the contribution of the employee was not only captured by a specific person in the management but by all the management team to encourage transparency in decision-making. Furthermore, the staff were also allowed to give their feedback, as long as it was supported by facts rather than hearsay. Through such a system, a culture of learning and continuous investigation on best policy practices was established

(Ogunsola et al., 2024). Additionally, it reduced the chances of making policy recommendations based on what a specific person thought was appropriate (Schaufeli, 2021).

The interviewees were also asked to explain the causes of employee feedback mechanism-related conflict between the management and staff. The suggested causes included poor communication structures that either delayed or did not send the intended information to the recipients. Additionally, there was also misuse of the feedback mechanism whereby either the management or staff passed harsh criticism or negative comments that demotivated them, and their persistence sparked conflict. Further, the employee feedback mechanism that did not support clarity of information led to contradictory executed tasks. This meant that organizational resources had been wasted for a wrong purpose. According to Zulkeifli et al. (2023), failure of the management to communicate clearly causes the staff to either fail to accomplish an allocated task or, worse, implement the wrong task. A respondent, '12' out of the 25 participants, said that

*“Failure to understand each other’s perspective is actually one of the major reasons why the management keeps in conflict with staff.”*

In comparison, Sesay (2023) revealed that increased conflicts between the management and the staff were majorly caused by poor execution of tasks, failure to communicate feedback, and lack of a basic communication pattern that would support organizational performance. A respondent, '25' out of the 25 participants, said that

*“Employee feedback mechanisms face continuous conflicting concerns, particularly when there is minimal information provided on how a task is to be done.”*

#### 4.9 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Involvement in Decision Making

Involvement in decision-making was measured by information sharing, resource support, delegation of tasks, acknowledgement, and collaboration. Table 4.9 shows the questionnaire outcome on this variable.

**Table 4.9**

*Descriptive Statistics of Employee Involvement in Decision Making*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
N=217							
Management involves employees in the decision-making process	116 (53%)	81 (37%)	10 (5%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)	2.42	1.76
Regularly given opportunities to share information	5 (2%)	4 (2%)	7 (3%)	87 (40%)	114 (53%)	4.12	0.92
Adequate support and encouragement from management	3 (1%)	7 (3%)	110 (51%)	93 (43%)	4 (2%)	3.64	1.25
Provided with the necessary training and resources	11 (5%)	9 (4%)	100 (46%)	72 (33%)	25 (12%)	3.25	1.40
Delegation of tasks	3 (1%)	4 (2%)	5 (2%)	88 (41%)	117 (54%)	4.42	0.73
Acknowledged on the collaboration with the management	4 (2%)	5 (2%)	112 (52%)	81 (37%)	15 (7%)	3.41	1.37

As per the results presented in Table 4.9, 205 (95%) of most respondents were in consensus that they felt valued by the management through being delegated tasks (mean 4.42 and S.D. 0.73). Additionally, 201 (93%) of most respondents were in agreement that they were regularly given opportunities to share information that supported decision-making processes within their department (mean 4.12 and S.D. 0.92). Nevertheless, 197 (90%) of most respondents failed to agree that they were satisfied with how the management involved them in the decision-making process about issues that affected their job (mean 2.42 and S.D. 1.76). The results imply that the employees felt that the management valued them as vital county staff, whose contribution was evidenced by the tasks delegated to them. Therefore, delegation of tasks by the management to staff is positively interpreted, creating a motivating environment to work within (Bukenya, 2024).

Additionally, the professionalism portrayed throughout the career of a specific task enables them to be easily noticed by the management, hence getting frequently considered when a task delegation is required. According to Frodouard et al. (2023), the chances of an employee being delegated to undertake a specific task are based on their ability to instinctively follow instructions when tasked to do so and minimal work-related errors. Over time, perfection of a specific job role reduced organizational resource wastage and increased efficiencies in time management (Chukwuemeka, 2020). The findings also revealed that employees were accorded specific privileges that enabled them to share information with their departmental managers.

This information was subsequently utilized in supporting decisions in the county departmental meetings. This shows that the management valued the commitment of the staff members in their roles and even went overboard in the provision of useful information.

However, employees still felt that this was not enough and hence required to be fully involved in decision-making, particularly on areas that directly affected their job roles. According to Wilson (2023), poor satisfaction regarding how their perspectives were addressed caused employees not to trust that their related job roles were taken seriously by the management. This thus led to decreased organizational performance.

#### **4.9.2 Interview Responses**

Further, there were interview responses collected in this section. The respondents were asked to describe how employees were trained to fit exclusively in the decision-making process, despite having low experience. The major methods of training mentioned by the respondents are in three themes that include orientation training, continuous professional development, and team building. With regard to orientation training, the respondents noted that all new employees underwent specific training before joining the county government. This was to enable them to get acquainted with organizational processes through a formal channel of training.

The Public Service Commission (PSC, 2017) notes that the departmental representative was mainly allocated a specific orientation role to ensure that the new staff were briefed on all that happens in the county government. In addition, each staff member was required to ensure that they consistently underwent professional development as they progressed in various roles as assigned. This was to make sure they remain relevant in their field and hence easily adaptable to changes witnessed (Saipi, 2024). Lastly, team building was another way that employees got a chance to get training on specific verbal and non-verbal cues. These aspects were critical, particularly on the interaction pattern with their colleagues and the management (Daudigeos et al., 2019).

The second question required the respondents to name the types of resources provided to enhance the involvement of staff in the decision-making. The resources mentioned include committees that were involved in decision-making. These committees provided appropriate platforms for the employees to attend and learn about how decisions were made in the context of county leadership. There were also training opportunities given to the staff to enable them to advance their problem-solving skills as a means of empowerment towards the decision-making process. There were also resources such as communication systems that gathered their feedback, such as surveys, to enable them to air out any concerns regarding the decision-making process. A respondent, '4' out of the 25 participants, said that

*“The committees, trainings, and communication systems provided the employees with skills that would be crucial when involved in the decision-making process.”*

The last question to the respondents was to highlight the challenges experienced by the management when involving the employees in the decision-making process. The issue raised included organizational politics, which caused the decisions made to be skewed towards a specific intended direction that had a conflict of interest. It was also noted that some county employees had no interest in being involved in decision-making, particularly when it attracted no financial benefits. Therefore, convincing such staff to be involved in the process of decision-making was met with resistance (Lušňáková et al., 2022). Additionally, disconnect between the management and the officers was also another issue facing the decision-making process. This form of disconnect made the managers fail to adequately brief, train, and empower the officers to become future leaders. According to Al-Suraihi et al. (2021), the absence of an adequate policy framework that supported the

interaction pattern between the management and staff led to strained working relationships, especially within the public sector.

#### 4.10 Diagnostic Test

The study examined various linear regression assumptions through diagnostic tests such as normality, autocorrelation, multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity, and linearity.

##### 4.10.1 Normality Test

Normality test was conducted through Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z method as described in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10**

*Normality Test*

		Training Programs	Wellness Programs	Employee Feedback Mechanism	Employee Involvement	Organizational Performance
N		217	217	217	217	217
Normal Parameters <sup>a</sup>	Mean	14.58	14.53	17.68	17.90	14.31
	Std. Deviation <sup>b</sup>	2.892	2.972	3.550	3.199	3.167
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.099	.100	.083	.085	.093
	Positive	.099	.100	.069	.085	.067
	Negative	-.094	-.074	-.083	-.066	-.093
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.464	1.475	1.224	1.255	1.374
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.128	.246	.093	.186	.364

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Table 4.10 shows that the assumption value for training programs is 0.128; wellness programs is 0.246; employee feedback mechanisms is 0.09; employee involvement in decision-making is 0.186; and organizational performance is 0.364. Hence, since the

significance value was above 0.05, it shows that the data used in this study had a normal distribution. This meant that any inclination to the left or right was regarded as abnormal, as the data was symmetric around the mean when it was simulated (Mishra, 2019).

#### 4.10.2 Autocorrelation Test

To determine how well the employee engagement programs maintained their individual traits, autocorrelation was evaluated through Durbin Watson, as shown in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11**

*Autocorrelation Test*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.854 <sup>a</sup>	.730	.701	3.1640	1.424

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Involvement in Decision Making, Training Programs, Employee Feedback Mechanism, Wellness Programs

b. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Table 4.11 demonstrates that the Durbin-Watson value was 1.24, suggesting that it was between 0 and 2, implying a positive correlation (Schober et al., 2018). Therefore, it is an indication that the possibility of the process of data collection having gathered significant statistical mistakes that could degrade the quality of the findings was eradicated.

#### 4.10.3 Multicollinearity Test

The study used a multicollinearity test to determine the distinguishing features of employee engagement program variables against each other, as provided in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12**

*Multicollinearity Test*

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Training programs	.950	1.053
Wellness programs	.333	3.001
Employee feedback mechanisms	.476	2.103
Employee involvement in decision making	.876	1.141

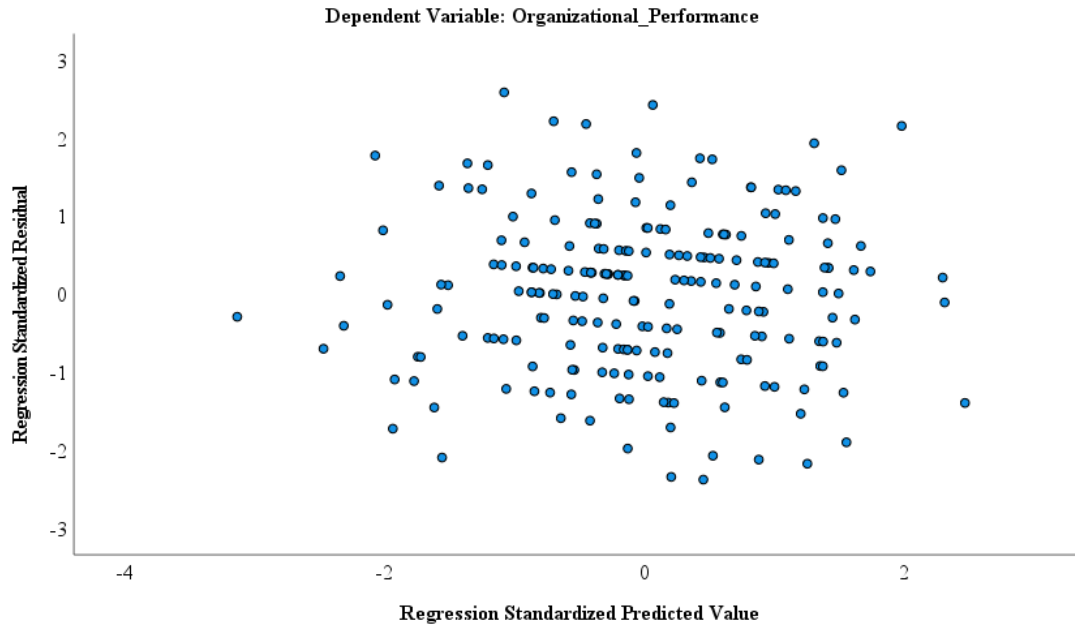
Table 4.12 indicates that training programs had a tolerance value of 0.950 and a VIF of 1.053, wellness programs had a tolerance value of 0.333 and a VIF of 3.001, employee feedback mechanisms had a tolerance value of 0.476 and a VIF of 2.103, and employee involvement in decision-making had a tolerance value of 0.876 and a VIF value of 1.141. Therefore, since all the variables had a tolerance value of above 0.1 and a VIF value of below 10, it shows that all the variables had a unique characteristic against each other.

**4.10.4 Heteroskedasticity Test**

A heteroskedasticity test was conducted to ensure that sensitive dissimilarities of the data set were eliminated to enhance analyzed data. Figure 4.1 provides the results.

**Figure 4.1**

*Heteroskedasticity Test*



As shown in Figure 4.1, the residuals were noted to be equally distributed within a given area. According to Berenguer-Rico and Wilms (2021), scatter plots are used to ensure that the residuals are evenly distributed in a given area, thereby removing outliers.

**4.10.5 Linearity Test**

The study conducted a linearity test to determine the relationship between employee engagement programs and organizational performance. The results are provided in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13***Linearity Test*

			Sum of	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
			Squares		Square		
		(Combined)	141.151	13	10.858	1.088	.371
Organizational Performance * Training Programs	Between Groups	Linearity	4.573	1	4.573	.458	.499
		Deviation from Linearity	136.578	12	11.381	1.141	.329
	Within Groups		2025.162	204	9.976		
	Total		2166.313	217			
		(Combined)	101.223	14	7.230	.707	.766
Wellness Programs	Between Groups	Linearity	30.742	1	30.742	3.007	.084
		Deviation from Linearity	70.480	13	5.422	.530	.904
	Within Groups		2065.091	203	10.223		
	Total		2166.313	217			
		(Combined)	203.236	16	12.702	1.294	.204
Employee Feedback Mechanis m	Between Groups	Linearity	2.046	1	2.046	.208	.649
		Deviation from Linearity	201.190	15	13.413	1.366	.167
	Within Groups		1963.077	201	9.815		
	Total		2166.313	217			
		(Combined)	190.367	16	11.898	1.204	.267
Employee Involvement in Decision Making	Between Groups	Linearity	5.128	1	5.128	.519	.472
		Deviation from Linearity	185.239	15	12.349	1.250	.237
	Within Groups		1975.946	201	9.880		
	Total		2166.313	216			

Table 4.13 shows that the significance values of all the variables were greater than 0.05, whereby the index for training programs was 0.329, wellness programs was 0.904, employee feedback mechanisms was 0.167, and employee involvement was 0.237. As a result, the significance value was above 0.05, indicating that there was a linear relationship between employee engagement programs and organizational performance.

#### 4.11 Bivariate Analysis

The study conducted Pearson correlation as a type of Bivariate analysis and its provided in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14**

*Pearson Correlation Analysis*

		Organizational Performance	Training Programs	Wellness Programs	Employee Feedback Mechanism	Employee Involvement
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	217				
Training Programs	Pearson Correlation	.501	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002				
	N	217	217			
Wellness Programs	Pearson Correlation	.387	.065	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.004			
	N	217	217	217		
Employee Feedback Mechanism	Pearson Correlation	.653	.047	.064	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.001	.000		
	N	217	217	217	217	
Employee Involvement in Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	.476	.304	.298	.101	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.002	.000	.003	
	N	217	217	217	217	217

The general results, as stipulated in Table 4.14, show that the correlation coefficient for training programs is  $r = 0.501$  at  $\alpha < 0.002$ ; wellness programs is  $r = 0.387$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$ ;

employee feedback mechanisms is  $r = 0.653$  at  $\alpha < 0.003$ ; and employee involvement in decision-making is  $r = 0.476$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$  and a 99% significance level. Since regression and significance level were greater than 1 and less than 0.05, respectively ( $r = 0.653$  at  $\alpha < 0.003$ ). Employee feedback mechanisms were thus noted to have the highest influence on organizational performance. Additionally, a regression and significance level greater than 1 and less than 0.05, respectively ( $r = 0.501$  at  $\alpha < 0.002$ ), revealed that training had an average influence on organizational performance. Further a regression and significance level that is greater than 1 and less than 0.05, respectively ( $r = 0.476$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$ ), is an indication that employee involvement in decision making had an average influence on organizational performance. Lastly, having regression and significance levels that were greater than 1 and less than 0.05, respectively ( $r = 0.387$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$ ) was an indication that wellness programs had the weakest influence on organizational performance.

#### 4.12 Multivariate Analysis

The study conducted multivariate analyses to examine the effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance. A model summary was used to determine the percentage effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance as displayed in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15**

*Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.854 <sup>a</sup>	.730	.726	3.158

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Involvement in Decision Making Process, Training Programs, Employee Feedback Mechanism, Wellness Programs

The model summary result presented in Table 4.15 shows that R was 0.854 and R square was 0.730. This implied that employee engagement programs had a 73.0% effect on organizational performance, while the other 27% were factors not included in this study. Employee engagement programs included significant motivators for staff to achieve targeted results in the Meru County Government. Notably, Chukwuemeka (2020) found out that when the Nigerian public servants were involved in decision-making, it positively affected organizational performance by 32.7%.

Further, Nyakomittah and Omwenga (2023) established that employee performance increased by 20.5% when there were financial wellness programs in the county government of Kisii. Additionally, Wakhungu et al. (2020) found out that the performance of Kenyan county government was affected by the work-life balance of staff at 41.2%. Notably, employee engagement was noted to be a crucial determinant of organizational performance. Organizations with high engagement levels report up to 23% greater profitability compared to those with lower engagement levels (Gallup, 2023).

Additionally, the study also used ANOVA analysis to determine if there was a positive or negative effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance, as revealed in Table 4.16.

**Table 4.16***Analysis of Variance*

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1580.673	4	395.168	39.43	.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2123.640	213	9.970		
Total	2166.313	217			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Involvement, Training Programs, Employee Feedback Mechanism, Wellness Programs

Table 4.16 shows that the significance was 0.01 at an F-statistic of 39.43. As a result, since the significance level was less than 0.05, the study concluded that employee engagement programs positively affected Meru County Government's organizational performance. In comparison, Ali et al. (2022) revealed that the Chinese millennials' work behavior was positively affected by the staff engagements. Additionally, Bukenya (2024) found that Mukono District's local government performance was increased due to positive engagements from the employees.

Deepalakshmi et al. (2024) similarly discovered that the performance of the organizations was positively affected by the engagements made by the recruited employees. In South African corporations, the performance management metrics were noted to be positively affected by engagements made by employees (Govender & Bussin, 2020). In addition, Kenyan organizations were seen to improve their performance as a result of various engagements from staff. In Meru County government, staff performed as required due to taking part in engagement programs that had a positive effect (Majau & Wanjohi, 2019).

Furthermore, regression weights were also determined as guided by the model of the study as indicated:  $Y = \beta_i + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + e$ . This was where  $Y$  = Organizational Performance of Meru County Government;  $\beta_i$  = Coefficients to be estimated;  $C$  = Constant;  $X_1$  = Training Programs;  $X_2$  = Wellness Programs;  $X_3$  = Employee feedback mechanism;  $X_4$  = Employee involvement in decision making; and  $e$  = Error term.

**Table 4.17**

*Regression Weights*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.512	2.125		2.602	.000
Training Programs	.243	.075	.239	3.279	.011
Wellness Programs	.330	.073	.322	4.551	.002
Employee Feedback Mechanism	.113	.041	.109	2.763	.001
Employee Involvement in Decision Making	.220	.068	.211	3.246	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

According to Table 4.17, the coefficient for constant is 5.512, the training program' coefficient is 0.243, the wellness program' coefficient is 0.330, the employee feedback mechanism is 0.113, and the employee involvement in decision-making's coefficient is 0.220. The meaning is that one unit of organizational performance was added through  $5.512 + 0.243X_1 + 0.330X_2 + 0.113X_3 + 0.220X_4$ . Additionally, since the significance level of all the variables was less than 0.05, the study concluded that training programs,

wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, and involvement in decision-making were significant towards organizational performance.

According to Yegon and Mandago (2024), training and development provided plans established by the management to instill advanced knowledge and skills in employees. This was a way of promoting their capabilities to make informed and efficient decisions on the best possible way of delivering the set goals (Obuya et al., 2024). Therefore, the implementation of training and development programs attracts the attention of management in public organizations due to their ability to nurture talent in a dynamic business environment (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Notably, employees value opportunities for growth and are more engaged when they see a clear career progression path, such as the one offered through training and development.

Wellness programs are arrangements by an organization to equip employees with necessary capacities that promote physical, emotional, and mental health. (Abasili et al., 2023). These arrangements are meant to ensure that employee well-being is maintained at all times through offering mental health resources, mental health days, stress management programs, and flexible working arrangements (Chang, 2024; Schaufeli, 2021). Therefore, through the provision of such programs, employees are able to focus on their work, deliver the assigned task in the required timelines, and uphold institutional integrity throughout their job roles.

Employee feedback mechanism is the process of exchanging ideas and opinions by members of an organization, with an aim of enhancing commitment to the values of the organization (Yegon & Kipkorir, 2023). It is the foundation factor towards establishing a cohesive working environment that supports growth and development. As the world

evolves into the digital age, communication is even easier with the provision of ICT. According to Gallup (2024), feedback systems driven through technology platforms are widely adopted since the management and the employees expect real-time feedback rather than periodical reviews. Therefore, structured and formal communication channels encourage open-door policies to support ethical work-related cultures (Langhof et al., 2023).

Employee involvement in decision-making is the process of allowing the non-management staff to contribute their opinion and provide feedback on alternative opinions in regard to the policies and programs of the organization (Omolar, 2024). When a workforce is involved in the decision-making process, there is a tendency for increased dedication towards organizational goals since they are emotionally invested in the assigned roles. Employee involvement in decision-making was thus noted to have a positive influence on organizational performance. Therefore, this increased the employee's motivation to higher levels and efficiency. Engaged employees feel a sense of loyalty, belonging, and commitment to their employers, which leads to longer tenures, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance transformation.

#### **4.13 Hypothesis Test Results**

The study had research hypotheses that stated that training programs, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, and employee involvement in decision-making had no effect on organizational performance. Regression coefficients were used to test the hypothesis as a means of either rejecting or failing to reject it. Table 4.17 provides that the significance value of training programs is  $0.011 < 0.005$ ; wellness programs  $0.002 < 0.005$ ;

employee feedback mechanisms is  $0.001 < 0.005$ ; and employee involvement in decision-making is  $0.003 < 0.005$ .

Therefore, on the first hypothesis, the study rejected the null hypothesis that training programs had no effect on organizational performance. This decision was arrived at since significance level was less than 0.05. Training was thus noted to have a positive influence on organizational performance. In comparison, Anas (2024) established that when the Nigerian public servants were trained, they were able to attain skills at a positive correlation of 0.59.

On the second hypothesis, the study rejected the null hypothesis that wellness programs had no effect on organizational performance. This decision was arrived at since significance level was less than 0.05. Wellness programs were thus noted to have a positive influence on organizational performance. In comparison, Saipi (2024) noted a negative correlation of 0.047 between practices that encouraged work-life balance as part of wellness programs and the performance of staff at NHIF.

On the third hypothesis, the study rejected the null hypothesis that the employee feedback mechanism had no effect on organizational performance. This decision was arrived at since the significance level was less than 0.05. Employee feedback mechanisms were thus noted to have a positive influence on organizational performance. In comparison, Muema (2022) explored and found a positive correlation of 0.892 between the welfare programs of staff and the performance of the county government in Makueni. On the fourth hypothesis, the study rejected the null hypothesis that employee involvement in decision-making had no effect on organizational performance. This decision was arrived at since the significance level was less than 0.05.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The main objective of the study was to investigate the effect of employee engagement programs on organizational performance of the Meru County Government, Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the effect of training programs, wellness programs, employee feedback mechanisms, and employee involvement in decision-making on the organizational performance of the Meru County Government, Kenya. The target population comprised 36 senior-level managers and 685 middle-level employees in 12 departments of the Meru County Government. The purposive sampling method was used to sample the senior managers and interview them, whereas the simple random method was used to sample the middle-level managers and issue them with the questionnaires.

#### **5.2 Summary of Results**

After the process of data collection, the study analyzed and reported the following on each variable.

##### **5.2.1 Training Programs and Organizational Performance**

The findings suggest that the employees were able to understand some industry trends due to the training programs' core component of refresher sessions. This made it possible for them to push for personal resources and acquire pertinent skills that would enable them to cope with any anticipated work strain. Additionally, it was found that there was still not enough training programs offered to employees to effectively help them advance their job-related abilities. Further, the various methods used to conduct training on employees

related to mentorship and leadership programs, in-job training, and online learning. Additionally, the non-financial support that the leadership has made towards ensuring that there were effective training programs in two themes that include time provision and an environment that supports growth. Notably, the correlation coefficient for training programs was  $r = 0.501$  at  $\alpha < 0.002$  and a 99% significance level, which enabled the study to reject the null hypothesis.

### **5.2.2 Wellness Programs and Organizational Performance**

According to the study's findings, the Meru County government was ready to make sure that workers' well-being was taken care of. This was accomplished by offering programs that would allow medical experts to provide free health examinations and counseling services to county government employees. The goal of this effort was to establish trust between management and employees. Additionally, the management ensured that the negative attitude of workers towards attending the wellness programs was reduced through timely communication on the purpose of the programs, encouraging the staff to contribute their skills towards the programs, and providing an environment that encourages growth. The various wellness programs present in the Meru County Government included counseling, training on physical health exercises, and management of personal finances when actively working and during retirement. Notably, the correlation coefficient for wellness programs was  $r = 0.387$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$ , which enabled the study to reject the null hypothesis.

### **5.2.3 Employee Feedback Mechanism and Organizational Performance**

According to the study's findings, the county management team demonstrated competence in giving staff members precise directions to follow. The information was deemed to be of excellent quality because it was timely, easy to understand, and allowed for constructive criticism. However, the study pointed out that management did not always address every concern brought up by individual employees. This can be a sign that some of the concerns expressed were either dismissed as unimportant or that the ability to adequately comment on the level of dedication to addressing the issue was lacking. The correlation coefficient for the employee feedback mechanism was  $r = 0.653$  at  $\alpha < 0.003$  and a 99% significance level, which enabled the study to reject the null hypothesis.

### **5.2.4 Employee Involvement in Decision Making and Organizational Performance**

According to the findings, the workers believed that the management regarded them as essential county employees whose contributions were demonstrated by the assignments they were given. As a result, management's task delegation to employees is seen favorably as fostering an inspiring workplace. The management thus made an effort to train the employees on how to fit exclusively in the decision-making process through orientation training, continuous professional development, and team building. Nevertheless, the challenges experienced by the management when involving the employees in the decision-making process included organizational politics, lack of employee interest in being involved in decision-making, disconnect between the management and the officers, and an inadequate policy framework that supported the interaction pattern between the management and staff. The correlation coefficient for employee involvement in decision-

making was  $r = 0.476$  at  $\alpha < 0.001$  and a 99% significance level, which made the study reject the null hypothesis.

### **5.2.5 Organizational Performance**

The outcome suggests that improvements in work-related procedures were made possible by the management's capacity to make wise choices for the county government. In addition to having access to control resources, the management was also armed with high-quality HR procedures, which were necessary for them to take rational, practical action. Employee engagement initiatives were one way this could have been put into practice. Notably, the management and staff's ability to work together was hampered by the persistent problem of late wage and compensation payments. It is implied that in order to satisfy other county government development agendas, the employees' personal objectives had to be postponed. The feedback discovered in interviews revealed that the management ensured that the employee productivity was monitored. Through performance reviews and feedback mechanisms. The county government was also cognizant of employee diversity through promotion of gender equity, regional diversity, and inclusion of people with disabilities through assigning specific roles within the county government.

### **5.3 Conclusions of the Study**

It was concluded that training programs were vital towards enhancing the performance of the county government. Their contribution made it possible to transfer skills and knowledge from the management to the staff with reasonable time and environment. The skills transferred enabled them to remain relevant in their industries and professions. That

notwithstanding, the number of trainings offered to the staff was still few as compared to the training needs placed by business demands.

Wellness programs were essential towards enhancing the performance of the county government. The county government of Meru understood its worth and hence incorporated support for the employees to undergo various life and professional milestones while maintaining mental and physical health. However, wellness programs were not provided equally to all of the county departments due to poor support by the management. There were thus traces of poor work-life balance, with staff in departments such as health and administration providing their services more than what was required of them due to worker shortages. This led to increased burnouts and frequent employee turnover.

The existence of an employee feedback mechanism in the county government of Meru was noted to be present and had a significant positive effect on its performance. The management was noted to have the ability to provide clear information to the staff. This enabled the staff to offer their services efficiently within the required timelines in the county government. There were also structures developed to sustain the safety of information flow and reduce external party leakages. Nevertheless, not all issues raised by the individual staff were responded to frequently by the management, hence affecting the process of the feedback mechanism.

Involvement of the employees in decision-making was considered an important factor towards improving the organizational performance. The employees were valued and hence allowed to handle some delegated tasks based on their work potential. They were also permitted to offer information that would support the decision-making process in their departments. Nevertheless, there were roles that the employees were not involved in due

to organizational politics, disconnect with the management members, and an inadequate policy framework to support their inclusion in decision-making.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

On training, the study recommends the need for the county government leadership to develop an adequacy policy framework that would increase the budget allocated to training and development programs that can support employees. Additionally, the departmental managers should encourage the employees to collaborate with their colleagues in gaining peer-related training on operations. The employees are also encouraged to develop proactiveness with regard to seeking information and knowledge from the internet and other external sources so as to become innovative in their roles. They do not necessarily have to wait for formal trainings in the county government to take place in order to gain work-related insights.

On wellness programs, the county leadership is recommended to increase the number of workers undertaking specific tasks. This will enable the staff to have work-life balance as well as get time to work on personal goals. Additionally, the departmental managers are recommended to be more supportive of current employee wellness programs. This could be enhanced through strengthening the supporting framework that stabilizes wellness program activities.

On employee feedback mechanisms, the study recommends that HR management should come up with clear patterns of offering feedback on the issues raised by the employees or at least acknowledge them. This would build more organizational cooperation between the management and the staff since the latter would feel that their feedback is being accorded the necessary support. The county employees are also recommended to conduct a thorough

background check on the issues that they are raising to the management. If the raised concern is supported by facts, it would hardly be ignored. There is also the need for departmental managers to develop local working policies on how issues are to be raised by the staff.

On training, the study recommends the need for the county government leadership to establish more interactive sessions between the management and staff. This is to ensure that a working rapport is established in facilitation of more involvement of staff in decision-making. The study also recommends that the county government management strengthen the current interaction policy framework. The purpose is to ensure that the staff and management get an understanding of the scope of their interactions, with attention being on increased information sharing.

### **5.5 Suggestion for Future Studies**

The study assessed the employee engagement programs within the context of Meru County government. It involved senior and middle-level management but not low-ranking employees. Therefore, future studies could consider this group of respondents to ascertain the various training programs and wellness programs provided by the management to support their performance. There is also the need to expand the study to even private corporations to gain more insights on the employee engagement programs present within their contexts.

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