

The Influence of Succession Planning on Staff Performance among County Government Employees in Kenya: A Study of Baringo County Government

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Abstract

Devolution of resources in County Governments was to ensure resources reach the citizens. However, staff performance has continuously been affected by the change in both leadership and senior successors in the County Governments necessitating the need to examine the influence of succession planning on staff performance in County Governments. The study sought to establish the effect of career development planning, selection planning and human resource planning on staff performance in Baringo County. Anchored on Scharmer's U-Theory, the study adopted descriptive research design on a target population of 14 executive employees and 57 middle-level managers through a questionnaire instrument. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data; descriptive statistics optimized mean and standard deviation while ANOVA was used to produce variables relationships. The study findings revealed the County Governments provided training through seminars and workshops. Benchmarking was often done to improve the skills of employees. It was also found that mentorship programs were also offered for staff to do new roles. These while preparing staff to take higher roles influenced performance of the staff. The selection planning through internal and external selection was also found to affect performance of staff. Similarly, human resource planning had a significant effect on staff performance. The County had policies that reduced the retrenchment of employees. The County did practice performance appraisals, promoted performing employees and had an independent County Public Service Board. Evidencing the existence of a somewhat abstract succession plan. The study recommended the county government should ensure the existence and operationalization of a robust succession management plan that anchors career development programs.

Keywords: succession planning, staff performance, county government

1. Introduction

The section contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, justification and significance. This examines succession planning on staff performance.

1.1 Background to the Study

Staff performance has become very important in both public and private organizations. This is because performing staff ensures customer satisfaction, high production, increase profitability, quality of work done and profitability. However, without good leadership organizational achievement can be negatively affected. According to Couch (2013), succession planning entails identifying an appropriate leader with leadership skills that can accelerate development in the organization.

Succession planning has been a challenge in the organization especially when a strong leader and manager leaves the office. For an organization to remain consistent in undertaking its mandate and ensure a smooth transition in public offices, there is a need to improve on succession planning. According to Akinyi (2017) identified that organizations that adopt equal

training opportunity, performance appraisal to identify training needs and plan human resources are tuned to develop appropriate succession plans in the process. Organizations can ensure no gap in human resources through the application of the strategic planning process as well as corporate policies that enhance success policies (Eshiteti, 2012).

Succession planning globally has been important in ensuring continuity of organization as well as management of human capital. In Lebanon, Latvia, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Korea, Kazakhstan and Jordan success plan is not well understood. However, in Canada there is inadequate talent management strategies affecting success plan which is a need in the transition of leaders to the younger generation (Rothwell, 2010). Hence, success plans remain very crucial while running both public and private organizations.

In Africa, most companies are suffering from poor succession plans. Succession plan plays an important role in ensuring the stability of the organization as well as a nation. This is because it reduces uncertainty and enables employees to gain a sense of self-esteem. In any succession process, it is necessary to build a sustainable candidate for succession based on skills, experience and individual character, since there is a shortage of skills, capability and knowledgeable managers. This can be enhanced through career development, selection plan as well as human resource development.

County Government in Kenya has existed for two-five years terms after the inauguration of the constitution in 2010. However, the County Government system is still new with the continuous development of legislation that would assist in improving the performance of staff (Nyanjom, 2011). As a result of the existence of elective position at the top position. The majority of employees are often affected when newly elected leaders are in place which has been seen to affect the performance of employees in County Governments. Baringo Government is among the counties that have been affected with change in leaders at elective positions, nominated as well as employed.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The current Kenyan civil service has an aging workforce. In the next 10 years, 47% of this workforce is expected to retire (Musyoki A., 2019). In 2019, civil servants who were above the age of 50 years were 43%. This was according to data from the directorate of public service management (DPSM). In 2020, those who were above 50 years of age were 35% while 53 percent were between 46 and 50 years. This presents a challenge since it indicates a massive loss of critical skills, competency and a lack of a well-defined career development policy. In 2009, the retirement age was changed from 55 to 60 years, a move that was meant to prevent the loss of critical skills and allow succession planning for continuity of service delivery. With the workforce skewed to the older group, the problem of succession planning is still in existence. Some civil servants, on attaining the age of 60 have been seeking waivers on retirement or re-engagement on contract. However, with effect from January 2021, these extensions ceased to be approved to encourage human resource departments to proactively engage in succession planning. To contain the ballooning wage bill, the Government has placed an embargo on new hiring until 2024 further worsening the situation.

On a county level, the management is affected by the political cycle. County Governments' performance normally reduces when there is a restructuring of County Executive Committee Members, changes in County Public Service Board, election period and employment of new leaders. During the transition, some leaders tend to recruit new leaders and employees which affects the morale of people working with the County Government. As a result, the staff

normally stays in a dilemma where leadership has a direct influence on who is to be trusted and who can remain. Constraints budget allocations also affect succession planning. In this sense budget constraints leads to minimal allocation to recurrent votes which include promotion of staff and training expenses. The adequate budgetary allocation would support to cater for training and promotions of staff to succeed the seniors on their exit from the system. Some other senior officers do not adopt delegation of duties which is also a very important factor in developing the staff capacity for higher work responsibilities in the future. This affects the productivity of employees, quality of work and quantity of tasks done. These factors are associated with the succession planning process which needs to be examined. This has necessitated the need to examine the influence of succession planning on staff performance among employees in Baringo County.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the influence of succession planning on staff performance in Baringo County. Specific objectives are:

1. To establish the effect of career development planning on staff performance in Baringo County.
2. To determine the effect of selection planning on staff performance in Baringo County.
3. To assess the influence of human resource planning on staff performance in Baringo County.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are;

1. What is the effect of career development planning on staff performance in Baringo County?
2. What is the effect of selection planning on staff performance in Baringo County?
3. What is the influence of human resource planning on staff performance in Baringo County?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on Scharmer's (2007) Theory U based on the pioneer of the theory, it postulated that the top management team should embrace and act to implement succession planning. The U-shaped activities include Co-initiating, Co-sensing, Pre-sensing, co-creating and co-evolving in logical order. It is incumbent therefore upon management to institute a robust succession management plan through the U-stages

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains the relationships that exist between the variable. In the study, staff performance represents the dependent variable which was measured using productivity, quality of service delivery and quantity of work done. This was related to succession planning as the independent variable. Career development planning, selection planning and human resource planning were used as the indicators for succession planning. The relationship were represented in figure 1.

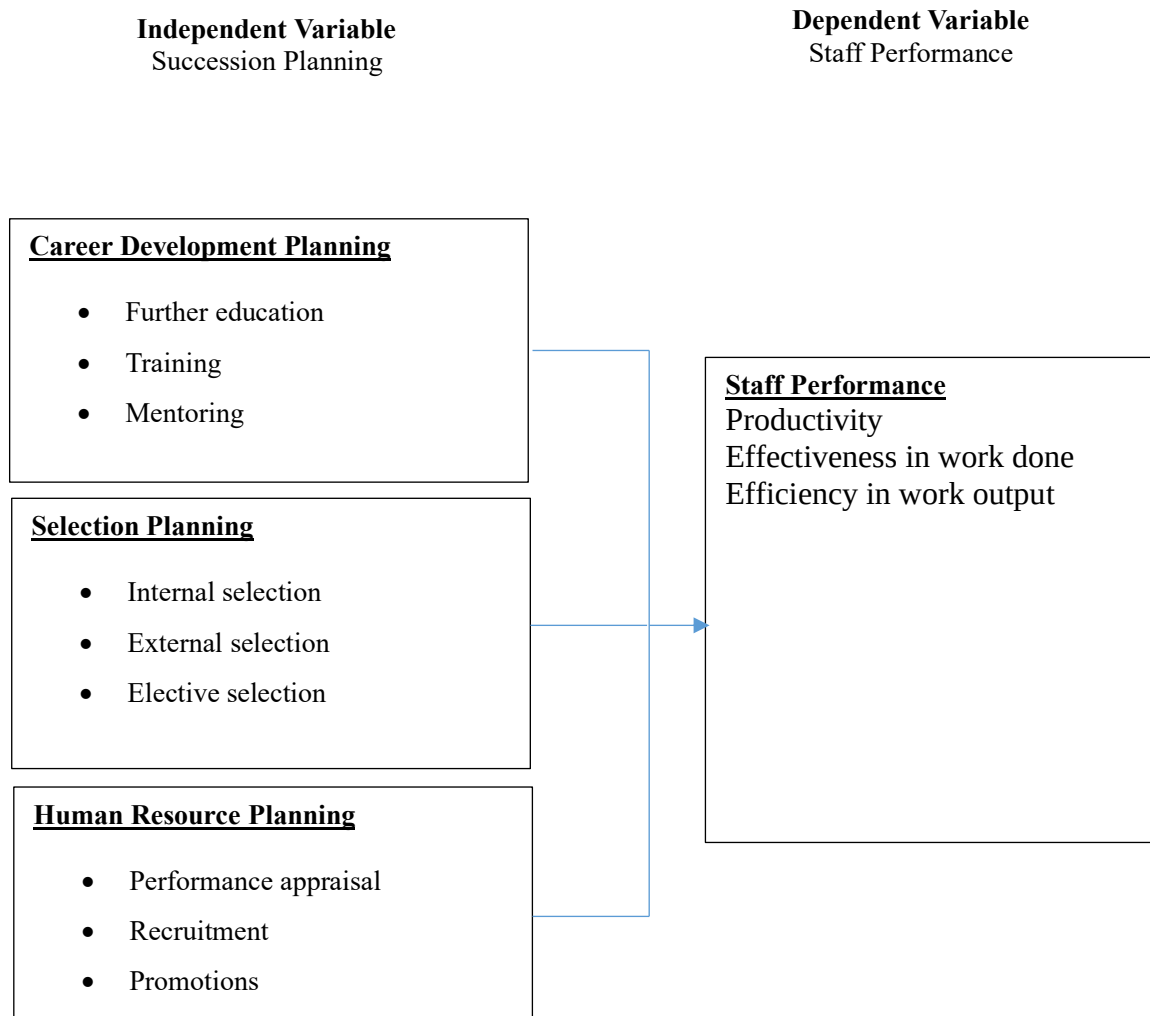


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

However, to measure career development education, training and mentoring were used. Internal, external and elective selection were used to measure selection planning. Finally, human resource planning was measured using performance appraisal, recruitments and promotions.

2.3 Empirical Review

The study reviewed the literature on career development, selection and human resource planning. A review of past empirical studies yielded the sections that follow.

2.3.1 Career Development Planning On Staff Performance

Optimizing survey research design, Garg and Van-Weele (2012) examined the contribution of succession planning on performance of small and medium enterprises in Johannesburg South Africa, data collected from a total of fifteen companies indicated a succession management an area of concern for such establishments; the study revealed a disconnect between the

implementation of actual and perceived succession management practices. There was no evidence of such enterprises institutionalizing plans to identify, train, groom and develop potential top management successors within the institutions instead of leveraging on external hires.

A study by Mohammadnoor et.al. (2014) on the association between HR Planning, training and development and organizational performance in Jordanian government ministries established a statistically significant correlation between HR planning, training and development and organizational performance

Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011) investigated succession planning as a necessary process in today's organizations. The study was premised on the argument that today's environment is changing rapidly making organizations face serious unpredictability and uncertainty. The study argued that, in this unstable environment, organizations need to rely on the most important assets their employees. The study noted that organizations need to strategize to motivate and connect their employees to create a competitive advantage and achieve higher profitability. The study further noted that organizations may consider methods like succession planning and management to promote their employees' knowledge, skills, talents, and capabilities to tackle problems created by the challenging environments. Succession planning can greatly reduce the skills gap within companies as management can identify potential skills gaps and develop employees accordingly.

Another nearly close study was undertaken by Ikechukwu and Adighije (2017). He focused on career growth and employee performance particularly amongst two thousand six hundred and thirty (2630) non-teaching members of staff deployed at Michael Okpara University in Nigeria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation indicated a significant and positive correlation between the performance of the university's non-teaching staff and their career growth.

2.3.2 Selection Planning on Staff Performance

Chenge (2016) in a review of preparing for top management changes with a special focus on the relationship between succession planning processes and succession outcomes established that companies that continually prepared their employees to take up higher roles and responsibilities were more likely to experience lower turnover rates among non-managerial employees. He further asserted that a firm would further reduce its labour turnover rate if it applied a non-discriminatory promotion policy to more employees across the organization. Similarly, in a study of the trends in leadership development and succession, Bernthal and Wellins (2013) asserted that effective succession management calls for organizations to adequately equip their core workforce with the necessary skills and competence required to assume managerial roles that may fall vacant. The internal recruitments of senior management staff increase worker motivation and commitment to the organization, reducing their tendency to think about other job opportunities.

Wang'ombe (2013) while examining the effects of succession planning strategy on the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya using descriptive research design established internal recruitment of senior management staff as a Strategic planning strategy had a positive relationship with the performance of the International Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya. The findings further indicated that internal hiring of required expertise as a succession planning strategy was a major contributor towards the performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya.

Ali et al. (2014) explored a conceptual model connecting succession planning and performance of employees in Pakistan's commercial banks that yielded a significant positive correlation amongst internal replacement of the banks' core staff and employee performance.

Odengo's (2016) case studying Kenya Power Limited Company; an electricity distributor in Kenya utilized data from 1000 public servants to investigate the influence of succession planning practices on employee performance indices, regression analysis established the company utilized a mix of internal and external employees in their succession planning pursuits.

2.3.3 Human Resource Planning On Staff Performance

Kakui and Gachunga (2016) focusing on another Kenyan parastatal, the National Cereals and Produce Board, administered their instrument on 100 to determine the association between career development on employee performance established that particularly on-job training affects the overall performance of public servants through enhancing their key competencies, skills knowledge and capabilities which in-turn enhances employee motivation while reducing intimidation it further supports employees to develop their approach and solutions to work-related problems.

Janes (2018) undertaking a comprehensive review of the empirical literature on aspects of succession management particularly objectives, the process and importance of human resource planning to the organization established a significant positive relationship between the practice of human resource planning and requirements of manpower in organizations a critical aspect in organizational effectiveness.

Zulqurnain, Babak, Saira and Sheikh (2014) interested in ascertaining the existence of empirical evidence of the relationship between Succession planning and Employees Performance in analyzed data from 127 banking professionals employed in Pakistan commercial banks through ANOVA established a significant positive relationship amongst the variables under study.

Ammad and Ghazal (2020) examined succession planning as a competitive strategy for attaining organizational growth amidst the modern world's globalization. Focusing on turnover, unavailability of the skilled workforce and gender variation with the growth of the organization. Optimizing interview data from 300 employees, Logistic regression revealed that effective succession planning support organization to meet their desired objectives in more than 2.5 times through accurate hiring and by retaining key personnel on key positions in the organizations.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a blueprint that provides a scientific guideline to ensure that the data collected are obtained accurately and explores the desired objective with the lowest cost while it holds reliability and validity (Oso & Onen, 2008). The study adopted a descriptive research design based on its ability to ask opinions by asking what, when, how, where and who questions. The descriptive design also supported both the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods in investigating succession planning and staff performance. Descriptive and inferential statistics are associated with descriptive research design hence fitting this study.

3.2 Target Population

Target population represents an item, group, or individual with specific characteristics that fit for extraction of information that answered the research questions. It assists the researcher to extract the desired sample size (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The target population consisted of selected employees of the Baringo County Government. A target population of 14 executive employees and 57 middle-level managers (directors and chief officers) was adopted. Hence a total of 71 employees within Baringo County was targeted.

Table 1. Target population

Level	Target Population
Executive	14
Middle-level managers	57
Total	71

Source: County Government employee records (2021).

3.3 Sampling Design

Mugenda and Mugenda (2018) alluded that sampling is a procedure through which some elements are selected from the population to be representatives of the whole group. A stratified sampling technique was used to collect data. Where the respondent then later applied simple random from if strata.

The sample size, n , for target residents with a known population, N , is calculated using Yamen formula as below

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

Where n is the desired sample size, e is the desired precision (e.g., 0.05 for 95% confidence level) and N is the total target population. The sample using the formulae makes the executive staff were 12 and the middle level were 48 making a sample size of 60 county staff as represented in table 2

Table 2. Sample size

Level	Target Population	Sample
Executive	14	12
Middle-level managers	57	48
Total	71	60

3.4 Data Collection

Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had closed-ended questions that assisted in obtaining relevant information that was used for generalization. The

questionnaire was segmented into sections that provided relevant information as per the objectives of the study. The questions used a Likert scale with 5- strongly agree, 4- agree, 3- neutral, 2- disagree and 1- strongly disagree.

The researcher was mainly concerned with views, opinions, perceptions, feelings and attitudes and such information can best be collected through the selected tools. To be able to collect data, questionnaires were prepared and before administering them the same was pretested to measure their effectiveness in collecting the required information.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

These are important measures that determine the accuracy and consistency of the data collected (Bell & Water, 2014). The collection procedure enables the study to have a primary rationale for the integrity of the data collected. Hence it is important to ensure quality control and assurance while collecting information. Data was collected using questionnaires and prepared for data analysis. The research was analyzed with the assistance of SPSS version 21 and excel where data was coded, tabulated and presented.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis enables the study to obtain information that acts as inference and is hence used to make inferences. The choice of analysis procedures depends on how well the techniques are suited to the study purposes and scale of measurement of the variable question (Kothari, 2004).

The study was analyzed with the assistance of SPSS version 21. Descriptive statistics that were used are mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics were used to interpret the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. ANOVA was used to produce the relationship. Data was presented using pie charts, bar graphs and frequency tables.

3. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Demographic Data

The study established respondents' gender, age, duration of working and highest qualification and established that males were 35(64.8%) and females 19(35.2%). There were 30% more male and female respondents in the County Government. Results also indicated that the majority of the employees were young, within the age bracket of 26-35 years with 23(42.6%). This was followed by 36-45 years with 17(31.5%), 18-25 years with 11(20.4%) and 46 years and above with 3(5.6%). Those who were younger than 35 years were 63% of the respondents. There were 29(53.7%) employees who had worked for less than 5 years. This was followed by 6-10 years with 22(40.7%) and 11-15 years with 3(5.6%). Hence, there was high employee turnover. The highest qualification was from undergraduate degree 38(70.4%). This was followed by a diploma from 13(24.1%) and postgraduate were 3(5.6%). Hence, there was high literacy among the respondents.

4.2 Career Development Planning and Staff Performance

Career development planning was examined using descriptive statistics where mean and standard deviation was used in the analysis. The summary of descriptive results was based on the Likert scale where 1 strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agrees. The results were presented in table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Career Development Planning

Instrument Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The county government provides education grants and support for the staff to develop their career.	54	4.0370	.67189
Training is conducted often through seminars and workshops.	54	4.6667	.47583
The county government has also gone for bench making in other areas to ensure that their employees gain the required skills.	54	4.0741	.69640
Staff is mentored so that they can be ready for new roles in the country.	54	4.6111	.65637
The county government provides employees with appropriate training programs that will ensure that there is low employee turnover and high performance.	54	3.8148	.61657

Table 2 revealed that the county government provided education grants and support for the staff to develop their career (mean of 4.0370). Its variation was low hence homogenous opinion (standard deviation of 0.67189). Findings revealed that training was conducted often through seminars and workshops (mean of 4.6667). A standard deviation of 0.47583 revealed that most respondents agreed that their seminars and workshop were used in career development planning.

The County Government also used benchmarking as means of improving the skills of the employees (mean of 4.0741). A low variation implied that the benchmarking was uniformly used in the County (standard deviation of 0.69640). Staff was sufficiently mentored so that to adapt to new roles in the County (mean of 4.6111). This was uniformly agreed upon by the respondents (standard deviation of 0.65637). Finally, the County Government provided employees with appropriate training programs that ensured that there was low employee turnover and high performance (mean of 3.8148) a standard deviation of 0.61657 was low implying a similar response across the respondents.

Analysis of variance was used to determine the relationship between career development and staff performance. The results were presented in table 3 using the f-test.

Table 3. Career Development Planning and Staff Performance

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Staff Performance * Career Development	Between Groups	(Combine d)	8.505	8	1.063	17.727	.000
	Within Groups		2.699	45	.060		

Planning	Total	11.204	53
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Table 4.2 indicated that there was a significant relationship between career development planning and staff performance ($F_{8, 45}=17.727$, $P<0.05$). Hence, career development planning affects staff performance.

4.3 Selection Planning and Staff Performance

Selection planning was examined on staff performance. Descriptive results consisted of mean and standard deviation that was based on the Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree from one to five. The findings were summarized in table 4

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Selection Planning

Instrument Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The county government has procedures for the internal selection of employees that ensure the growth of employees.	54	4.2407	.64238
External selections are applied when specific skills of employees are not attained.	54	3.7593	.51157
Political election and selection are done with smooth transition ensuring that existing employees are not retrenched.	54	4.3519	.48203
There are existing policies that reduce the retrenchment of employees.	54	3.7778	.53787
The selection process is independent and is not interfered with by politics.	54	3.5741	.49913

Table 4 findings showed that the County Government has procedures for the internal selection of employees that ensured the growth of employees (mean of 4.2407). The variation of response opinion was low (standard deviation of 0.64238). External selections were moderately applied when specific skills of an employee were not attained (mean of 3.7593). According to the standard deviation of 0.51157, the variance was low implying a homogenous response.

The finding also revealed that political election and selection were done with smooth transition ensuring that existing employees are not retrenched (mean of 4.3519). A standard deviation of 0.48203 revealed low variation in opinion. There were somehow policies that reduced the retrenchment of employees (mean of 3.7778). Variation in policies was low (standard deviation of 0.53787).

The selection process was slightly independent and was not interfered with by politics (mean of 3.5741). The variation was low on independents with a standard deviation of 0.49913. This indicated that political interference was low with a slight independent selection of employees.

Analysis of variance was used to examine the relationship between selection planning and staff performance. The summary results were presented in table 5

Table 5. Selection Planning and Staff Performance

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Staff Performance * Selection planning	Between Groups	(Combined)	5.710	6	.952	8.142	.000
	Within Groups		5.493	47	.117		
	Total		11.204	53			

Table 5 indicated that selection planning significantly affects staff performance ($F_{5, 47} = 8.142$, $P < 0.05$). The results there explain the research quest that planning affected the performance of staff.

4.4. Human Resource Planning and Staff Performance

Human resource planning was examined on the performance of staff in the County Government. The results were based on the Likert scale where mean and standard deviation were adopted as descriptive statistics.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Human Resource Planning

Instrument Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance appraisals are done to examine the level of performance of staff in the County.	54	3.9074	.44588
There is the existence of a county public board that is independent of county government politics.	54	3.8333	.54079
Promotion is done for performing employees to ensure that the staff improves performance.	54	3.9444	.40825
The human resource department does its work according to set policies.	54	3.5926	.49597
Human resource planning is done county and vetted by the County Assembly.	54	4.0185	.49491

Table 6. revealed that the performance appraisal was used to evaluate the level of performance of staff in the County (mean of 3.9074). A low variation revealed that the response was homogeneous (standard deviation of 0.44588). It was found that there was the existence of the County Public Board that is independent of County Government politics (mean of 3.8333). A variation on the existence of an independent county public board was low (standard deviation of 0.54079).

Promotions were done for performing employees to ensure that the staff improved performance (mean of 3.9444). Its variation was found to be low with a standard deviation of 0.40825. Results revealed that the human resource department moderately did their work according to set policies (mean of 3.5926). A standard deviation of 0.49597 implied that most respondents had homogenous opinions. Human resource planning was done by County and vetted by the County Assembly (mean of 4.0185). A standard deviation of 0.49491 revealed that a similar view was held by the respondents.

To examine the effect of human resource planning on staff performance analysis of variance was used. The summary of the results used F-test with a 5% significance level as indicated in table 7

Table 7. Human Resource Planning and Staff performance

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squar e	F	Sig.
Staff Performance * Human resource planning	Between Groups (Combined)		6.976	6	1.163	12.928	.000
	Within Groups		4.227	47	.090		
	Total		11.204	53			

The results in table 7 revealed that human resource planning significantly affected staff performance ($F_{6, 47}=12.928$, $P<0.05$). This implies that human resource planning affects the performance of staff.

4.5 Staff Performance

The performance of staff was also evaluated using descriptive statistics. The analysis involved mean and standard deviation that was based on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The summary of the results was presented in table 8

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Staff's Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Productivity of employees has improved in the county.	54	4.2037	.45056
The staff provide quality service delivery	54	4.2407	.64238
Staff is a high quantity of tasks done in the county.	54	4.1667	.60657

According to table 8, the productivity of employees had improved in the County (mean of 4.2037). A standard deviation of 0.45056 indicated a low variation in productivity. It was further revealed that staff provided quality service delivery in the County (mean of 4.2407).

This had a low variation with a standard deviation of 0.64238 implying that it was agreed that there was quality service delivery. Finally, the staff was a high quantity of tasks done in the County (mean of 4.1667). Its variation was also low with a standard deviation of 0.60657.

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