



Customized Training Practices and Job Performance at County Government of Nakuru, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

County governments in Kenya continue to experience persistent challenges in job performance within a dynamic and evolving administrative environment. Despite various initiatives aimed at improving public service delivery, operational inefficiencies remain a major concern, reducing both productivity and service quality. As a result, widespread administrative weaknesses continue to hinder effective job performance across the devolved units. The current study assessed the effect of customized training practices and job performance at county government of Nakuru, Kenya. The study was anchored on human capital theory. A descriptive research design was used. The target population included the 49 human resource officers working in various departments at County Government of Nakuru. A structured questionnaire was used in data collection. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed in data analysis. The Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) aided in the data analysis, and results were presented in tables. The study found positive and statistically significant relationships between customized training practices and job performance ($r = 0.586$; $p = 0.000$). The regression analysis showed that the coefficient of determination was $R^2 = 0.343$, meaning 34.3% of the variation in job performance was explained by these practices. There was a significant effect ($t = 4.517$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), implying that customized training practices influence the job performance at the County Government of Nakuru. The study concludes that customized training significantly enhances job performance by aligning learning with specific job roles, fostering technical competence, accountability, and innovation within the county workforce. It is therefore recommended that the County Government of Nakuru adopt a structured training policy guided by regular needs assessments to ensure continuous, evidence-based skill development aligned with departmental and organizational priorities.

Key Words: Customized Training Practices, Job Performance, Technical competence, Skill development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management has progressively advanced by embracing dynamism and aligning workforce capabilities with shifting organizational priorities (Kakepota & Atif, 2024). This transformation has been driven by the growing need for adaptability in human resource planning to ensure institutions remain resilient amid policy changes, technological disruptions, and socioeconomic fluctuations. In county governments, adaptive human resource planning is vital as it fosters agility in training, talent acquisition, competency development, and succession management (Onsongo & Juma, 2025). It enables counties to anticipate future workforce requirements and effectively manage resource constraints. Through data-driven forecasting and flexible deployment strategies, counties can enhance service delivery and promote institutional efficiency. Embedding adaptiveness in planning further allows governments to respond effectively to governance challenges and sustain performance (Ajgaonkar, Neelam, & Wiemann, 2022).

Training serves as a vital practice for enhancing employee competence and organizational capability (Latif, Mahmood, & Ali, 2020). It incorporates systematic learning interventions aimed at refining knowledge, skills, and professional behavior to meet evolving job demands. In adaptive human resource planning, customized training goes a step further by tailoring development programs to address unique organizational needs and individual performance gaps (Sadewa & Ridwan, 2024). This ensures employees acquire targeted competencies aligned with strategic objectives and operational realities. It also strengthens employee engagement and retention by demonstrating organizational commitment to professional growth. Ultimately, customized training transforms the workforce into a responsive and future-ready human capital asset.

Although human resources are widely recognized as a vital organizational asset, many counties Kenya continue to experience misaligned practices in training, budget allocation, and staff recruitment, which ultimately impede employee performance. The 2023–2024 Auditor-General’s Report on County Executives reveals a recurring pattern of irregularities in workforce management practices across several devolved units in Kenya. In Taita Taveta County, for instance, the recruitment of 201 personnel was conducted without an approved annual staffing plan or corresponding financial provision, reflecting a lack of procedural compliance in human resource management. Moreover, in Narok County, a total of KSh 14,596,631 was allocated to training interventions without any supporting analysis or assessment documentation, while 73 officers were hired outside the framework of a formal workforce plan, illustrating a persistent pattern of unstructured staffing practices. These actions expose weaknesses in internal controls and highlight a fragmented approach to personnel administration evident across multiple counties.

Nakuru County Government spent KSh 93,316,938 on training activities without an established policy or a training needs assessment. The employee compensation totaled Sh 6,901,543,528, while the payroll reflected Sh 5,752,880,855, showing an unexplained variance of Sh 1,148,662,673. The County had 478 permanent and 3,902 temporary staff without a proper recruitment plan, while its wage bill stood at 40% of the county budget, surpassing the 35% legal ceiling. The existing challenges limits the county’s ability to achieve adequate job performance. While previous studies have contributed valuable insights into human resource management, they have inadequately addressed adaptive human resource planning practices, customized training in particular and job performance in the context of county governments. For instance, Omosa, Mwangi, Igoki, and Muriithi (2024) evaluated the relationship between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction within the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya. Nyaguthii (2022) assessed the connection between organizational processes and employee performance in County Governments in Kenya. The present study assessed the influence of customized training practices on job performance in County Government of Nakuru, Kenya.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of customized training practices on job performance at County Government of Nakuru, Kenya.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptability in human resource planning reflects an institution’s strategic dexterity in aligning workforce competencies with evolving policy priorities, administrative reforms, and emerging service delivery models (Makhanya, 2024). Within government institutions, adaptability is manifested through agile workforce frameworks that anticipate rather than react to shifts in governance structures and public expectations. Customized training becomes a pivotal lever in this adaptive continuum, serving as an instrument for recalibrating employee capabilities in response to dynamic regulatory, technological, and socio-economic contexts (Olowu, 2024). By embedding continuous learning into the architecture of human resource planning, public institutions cultivate a resilient workforce capable of redeploying skills, reconfiguring roles, and sustaining institutional performance amid reform cycles.

Customized training enables organizations to proactively address evolving talent requirements and align workforce capabilities with strategic objectives (Sadewa & Ridwan, 2024). Such programs are intentionally structured to correspond with specific job roles, departmental priorities, and anticipated shifts in workforce composition. In environments marked by rapid technological, regulatory, and procedural transformation, customized learning

interventions help sustain workforce relevance and operational efficiency. Within an adaptive workforce framework, learning extends beyond formal sessions or initial onboarding; it evolves into a continuous, integrated process embedded in everyday work activities (Kisokola, Matimbwa, & Kamala, 2024). These tailored programs cultivate a culture of ongoing learning by targeting distinct developmental needs at different stages of the employee lifecycle. Consequently, this continuous learning approach enhances both individual capability and organizational agility, as knowledge becomes more widely shared and practically applied.

Integrating technical training within customized programs facilitates the effective adoption of emerging systems, tools, and operational processes essential for contemporary organizational performance (Haider, Bao, Larsen, & Draz, 2019). Instead of relying solely on external recruitment to bridge technical gaps, organizations can leverage tailored training initiatives to nurture internal talent in line with current and future operational requirements. These interventions are frequently guided by data derived from performance assessments, technological roadmaps, and industry standards, ensuring that skill development remains targeted, relevant, and timely (Kamola, 2025). This method enhances internal mobility, minimizes skill redundancy, and supports digital transformation across functional areas. Furthermore, customized training plays a pivotal role in career development by providing well-defined, role-specific learning pathways that facilitate both vertical and lateral progression (Haider et al., 2019). Employees gain greater clarity regarding the competencies and qualifications necessary for advancement or transition into new roles. As learning becomes increasingly personalized, it fosters stronger engagement by linking individual ambitions with organizational goals. This alignment enhances succession planning, boosts retention, and equips the organization to effectively meet future leadership and capacity demands.

According to Abutabenjeh, Rodriguez-Plesa, Alkadry, & Bruns-Ali, (2023) human capital theory posits that integrating professional development into organizational strategy ensures employees stay equipped with the evolving expertise necessary to adapt to industry changes. Practices like job rotation, customized learning paths, and data-driven workforce analytics support ongoing skill development and interdisciplinary knowledge. Additionally, companies that embrace this theory understand that maintaining employee engagement and loyalty requires clear career progression and lifelong learning opportunities (Preko, 2022). Human capital theory underpins the integration of customized training within adaptive human resource planning by emphasizing the strategic value of investing in employee development as a driver of performance (Abutabenjeh et al., 2023). In this context, customized training serves as a deliberate mechanism for enhancing the knowledge and competencies required to navigate evolving administrative priorities and operational complexities. Within government institutions, this theoretical grounding ensures that workforce planning remains proactive, aligning learning interventions with both current and anticipated skill demands (Makhanya, 2024). Thus, Human Capital Theory provides the intellectual foundation for embedding continuous, targeted capacity-building into adaptive HR systems, reinforcing the link between employee development, organizational agility, and sustainable job performance. The association between the customized training programs and job performance have been presented in Figure 1:

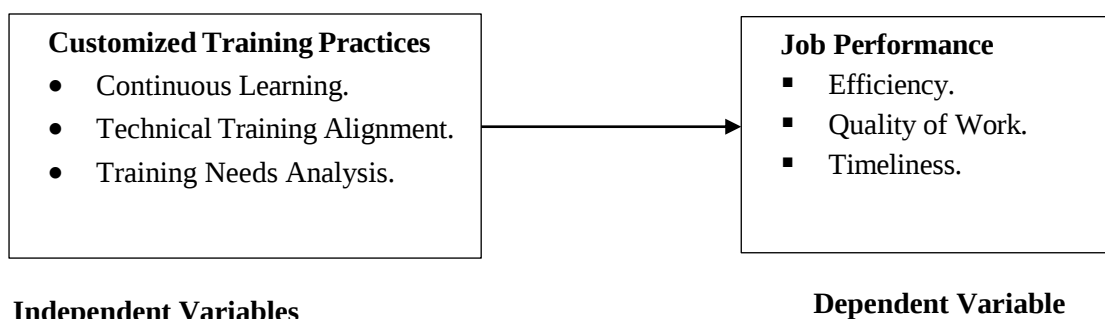


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical studies relate to the customized training practices and job performance. Munjogu and Kiiru (2024) assessed the influence of training on performance of employees in County Government of Laikipia, Kenya. The study adopted

a descriptive research design. The target population comprised 1,593 employees of the County Government of Laikipia. From this population, a sample of 159 respondents was selected. The findings indicated that training needs analysis, training design, training delivery, and training evaluation all had a significant positive effect on employee performance within the County Government of Laikipia. In conclusion, it was established that a thorough training needs analysis provides a strong foundation for identifying relevant training priorities, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the training provided. Ultimately, a well-structured training program contributes to improved employee performance and organizational productivity. Wachiuri and Makokha (2024) examined the influence of training and development on employee performance at County Government of Kiambu. This study employed a descriptive research design. The analysis revealed that training methods significantly influence employee performance within Kiambu County Government. Additionally, the results showed that development programmes also have a notable positive effect on employee performance in the same context.

Mulu, Achuora, and Kalei (2023) assessed the influence of training on performance of employees in Machakos County Government, Kenya. A descriptive research design was adopted as it facilitated a systematic, organized, and dependable description of the study variables, ensuring accuracy and validity. The study targeted a population of 520 employees from Machakos County government, including top-level, middle-level, and lower-level staff. The findings revealed that training, as a form of non-monetary incentive, has a significant impact on employee performance. The study concluded that organizations can achieve higher levels of efficiency by implementing employee training programs, which not only enhance job-related skills and understanding but also improve employees' confidence in their abilities. The findings showed that human capital had a statistically significant impact on performance ($p < .05$), with findings indicating a moderate positive correlation, $(191) = 0.486, p < .05$. Olonade, Omotoye, and Olalemi (2023) assessed the workforce planning and organizational effectiveness within the Osun State Civil Service in Osogbo, Nigeria. The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant linear correlation between workforce planning and organizational effectiveness at the 0.05 significance level. Additionally, workforce planning was found to have a significant impact on organizational effectiveness.

A critical review of existing literature revealed several research gaps that the current study sought to address. Previous studies did not adequately clarify how training needs are planned and prioritized, nor did they explore continuous learning and career pathing in depth. The current research bridged this gap by examining comprehensive training needs analysis, continuous learning, and career pathing within flexible workforce mechanisms. Earlier works also failed to establish clear alignment between training programs and job requirements or service delivery priorities; this study addressed that by analyzing skills mapping and its effect on job performance in county governments. Furthermore, the alignment of training initiatives with strategic organizational goals was insufficiently explored, prompting the present study to integrate robust needs analysis and career pathing to strengthen this linkage. Limited attention was given to skills mapping and contingency planning in prior studies, which the current research incorporated to reflect evolving workforce requirements. Overall, the study advanced understanding by contextualizing customized training practices through continuous learning, technical training alignment, and systematic training needs analysis to enhance job performance in county governments.

4. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used for this study. This design methodically and thoroughly describes characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena without manipulating variables, making it well-suited for examining customized training practices and job performance. It allowed the researcher to gather detailed data for thorough analysis. The target population consisted of 49 human resource officers working in various departments at County Government of Nakuru. These officers are directly involved in key human resource management practices, such as training, performance evaluation, and organizational development. A structured questionnaire was used. Its ease of administration, whether in-person or remotely, made it a practical choice for this research. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Descriptive analysis used percentages, means, and standard deviations, while inferential analysis applied Pearson's correlation coefficient and linear regression analysis. The Statistical

Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) aided in the data analysis, and results were presented in tables. The regression analysis was conducted using the following model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y = Job Performance

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Beta Coefficient

X_1 = Customized Training Practices

ε = Error of Margin

5. Results

This section presents both the descriptive and inferential results of the study. It focuses on examining the influence of customized training practices on job performance.

5.1 Descriptive Statistical Results

The descriptive statistical findings illustrating how customized training practices influence job performance are summarized in Tables 1 and 2:

Table 1: Influence of Customized Training Practices on Job Performance

	N	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean	Std. Dev.
Percentage (%)								
Tailored learning programs promote continuous skill development across job functions.	41	51.2	26.8	17	2.4	2.4	4.22	0.988
Training aligned with job roles enhances task performance and accuracy.	41	61	24.4	12.2	2.4	0	4.44	0.808
Training needs analysis helps identify performance gaps that can be addressed through targeted learning.	41	41.5	34.1	14.6	7.3	2.4	4.05	1.048
Role-based training plans match individual growth with organizational goals.	41	46.3	31.7	14.6	4.9	2.4	4.14	1.014
Data-driven assessment of training requirements ensures alignment between skills development and job demands.	41	39	34.1	17.1	9.8	0	4.02	0.987

According to the descriptive findings, 51.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and 26.8% agreed, making a total of 78.0% who at least agreed (Mean = 4.22; Std. Dev. = 0.988) that tailored learning programs promote continuous skill development across job functions. It was established that customized training practices play a vital role in enhancing employee competence by equipping staff with relevant and updated skills needed to handle evolving responsibilities. Tailored programs promotes a culture of lifelong learning, which strengthens employee confidence and enhances job performance across departments. Additionally, 61.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and 24.4% agreed, resulting in 85.4% overall agreement (Mean = 4.44; Std. Dev. = 0.808) that training aligned with job roles enhances task performance and accuracy. The alignment of training with specific job roles improves task mastery and overall work efficiency. This ensures that employees are adequately prepared for their assignments, reducing errors, improving

productivity, and contributing to superior job performance. 41.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 34.1% agreed, giving a combined 75.6% who concurred (Mean = 4.05; Std. Dev. = 1.048) that training needs analysis helps identify performance gaps that can be addressed through targeted learning. The identification of specific training needs allows the County Government to focus on priority areas that directly influence employee effectiveness. By addressing these skill gaps, the county enhances its human resource capacity, promotes efficiency, and improves overall service delivery.

Moreover, 46.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and 31.7% agreed, totaling 78.0% who were in agreement (Mean = 4.14; Std. Dev. = 1.014) that role-based training plans match individual growth with organizational goals. The findings demonstrate that role-specific training initiatives ensure employees' personal development aligns with institutional objectives. This alignment not only nurtures career growth but also drives organizational cohesion and long-term performance sustainability. 39.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and 34.1% agreed, resulting in a total of 73.1% who at least agreed (Mean = 4.02; Std. Dev. = 0.987) that data-driven assessment of training requirements ensures alignment between skills development and job demands. Therefore, the use of data analytics in identifying training needs promotes evidence-based decision-making in human resource planning. Such data-driven approaches enhance training relevance, maximize resource utilization, and ensure that employees possess the right competencies to perform effectively and increase job performance.

Table 2: Job Performance

	N	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
		5	4	3	2	1		
	Percentage (%)							
We are operationally efficiency in undertaking our tasks.	41	43.9	51.2	4.9	0	0	4.24	0.830
Our work consistently adheres to defined quality standards.	41	46.3	34.1	17.1	2.4	0	4.39	0.586
We meet deadlines without compromising task completion.	41	43.9	36.6	17.1	2.4	0	4.22	0.822
Our processes are optimized to enhance productivity and reduce waste.	41	43.9	48.8	7.3	0	0	4.37	0.623
Effective use of time enables balanced workload management.	41	26.8	53.7	12.2	7.3	0	4.00	0.837

The findings indicate that 43.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and 51.2% agreed, making a total of 85.1% who at least agreed (Mean = 4.24; Std. Dev. = 0.830) that employees at the County Government of Nakuru are operationally efficient in undertaking their tasks. Similarly, 46.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and 34.1% agreed, resulting in 80.4% overall agreement (Mean = 4.39; Std. Dev. = 0.586) that their work consistently adheres to defined quality standards. In addition, 43.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and 36.6% agreed, giving a combined 80.5% who concurred (Mean = 4.22; Std. Dev. = 0.822) that they meet deadlines without compromising task completion. Moreover, 43.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and 48.8% agreed, totaling 92.7% who were in agreement (Mean = 4.37; Std. Dev. = 0.623) that their processes are optimized to enhance productivity and reduce waste. Furthermore, 26.8% of the respondents strongly agreed and 53.7% agreed, resulting in a total of 80.5% who at least agreed (Mean = 4.00; Std. Dev. = 0.837) that effective use of time enables balanced workload management. The overall descriptive findings reveal that adaptive human resource planning practices have a substantial influence on job performance at the County Government of Nakuru. The results indicate that employees generally perceive these adaptive practices as instrumental in enhancing operational efficiency, ensuring timely task completion, maintaining quality standards, and promoting productivity through optimized processes. Flexible workforce mechanisms were shown to enhance employee adaptability, enabling staff to efficiently respond to dynamic work requirements and organizational changes. This flexibility fosters a supportive work environment where employees can adjust their roles

and schedules to meet emerging priorities without compromising performance standards. Customized training practices were also found to contribute substantially to job performance by equipping employees with relevant skills and competencies aligned with their specific job demands. The provision of targeted training not only boosts individual productivity but also strengthens institutional capacity and overall service delivery.

5.2 Inferential Statistical Results

The inferential results included both correlation and regression analyses used to examine the relationships among the study variables. These analyses offered valuable insights into the strength, direction, and predictive influence of customized training practices on job performance.

5.2.1 Correlation Statistical Results

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between customized training practices and job performance. The findings are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Correction between Customized Training Practices and Job Performance

		Job Performance
Customized Training Practices	Pearson Correlation	.586 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	41

According to the correlation coefficient results, there was also a positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.586$; $p = 0.000$) between customized training practices and job performance. In particular, continuous learning through training fosters a culture of professional growth, enabling employees to stay updated with emerging practices and technologies. Technical training alignment ensures that employees possess the requisite skills for their specific job functions, enhancing task precision and accuracy. Conducting regular training needs analyses helps identify performance gaps that can be addressed through targeted learning, leading to improved efficiency and productivity. The positive correlation signifies that increased customized training practices promote higher levels of employee productivity, job performance consistency, and output quality.

5.2.2 Regression Statistical Results

A regression analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between the study variables. Specifically, the analysis sought to evaluate the impact of customized training practices on job performance. The corresponding results are summarized in Tables 4, 5, and 6:

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.586 ^a	.343	.327	.31891

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customized Training Practices

The linear regression model summary results show that there exists a strong relationship between independent and dependent variable. The coefficient of determination was $R^2 = 0.343$, implying that 34.3% of the variation in job performance was explained by customized training practices. This demonstrates that the customized training practices significantly influence job performance at County Government of Nakuru.

Table 5: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.075	1	2.075	20.399	.000 ^b
	Residual	3.966	39	.102		
	Total	6.041	40			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Customized Training Practices

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results indicate that the F-value ($F = 20.399$; $p = 0.000$) was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This implies that the linear regression model was a good fit for the data and that customized training practices have a significant influence on job performance.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.664	.353		7.541	.000
Customized Training Practices	.378	.084	.586	4.517	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The regression coefficients indicate that the model can be expressed as: $Y = 2.664 + 0.378X_1 + 0.353$. One-unit increase in customized training programs leads to a 0.378 unit increase in job performance. There was a significant effect ($t = 4.517$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), implying that customized training practices influence the job performance at the County Government of Nakuru.

6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that customized training practices enhance job performance by embedding learning into daily operations. Training initiatives tailored to specific job roles promote technical competence, accountability, and task mastery. The targeted training approach empower county workforce to meet contemporary challenges with confidence and innovation. Overall, the conclusion drawn is that such continuous and evidence-based training systems cultivate a culture of excellence where skill development translates directly into improved job performance.

7. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the County Government of Nakuru implement customized training practices that are systematically aligned with departmental functions and competency needs. They should develop a county-wide training policy that emphasizes continuous learning and skill renewal guided by regular training needs assessments. This policy should integrate performance data to identify skill gaps and match learning outcomes with organizational priorities. By institutionalizing targeted and demand-driven training, the County will strengthen employee competence, accountability, and service quality.

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