

International Journal of Management and Leadership Studies
2025; 6(1): 677-692
ISSN 2311-7575

ON-THE-JOB LEARNING AS A CATALYST FOR IMPROVED EMPLOYEE
PERFORMANCE IN DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS. A CASE OF THE
COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF MURANG'A

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined on-the-Job Learning as a Catalyst for Improved Employee Performance in Devolved Government Systems. A Case Study of County Government of Murang'a, Kenya. A descriptive research design was used, targeting 1,022 management-level employees. A sample of 287 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling, and data were collected through structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses were conducted using SPSS (Version 25). The results indicated that on-the-job learning significantly enhanced employee performance, with an overall composite mean of 3.64. Employees reported that on-the-job learning improved proactive communication (M = 4.46, SD = 0.92), skill utilization (M = 4.37, SD = 0.95), and problem-solving ability (M = 4.26, SD = 1.00). Correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between on-the-job learning and performance ($r = 0.543$, $p < 0.01$), while regression results revealed that on-the-job learning explained 29% of the variance in employee performance. The study concludes that structured on-the-job learning fosters adaptability, innovation, and efficiency in devolved government systems. It recommends institutionalizing workplace learning through formal programs, reflection workshops, and feedback mechanisms to enhance public sector service delivery. Future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative designs to assess the sustainability of on-the-job learning outcomes across counties and sectors.

Keywords: *employee performance, experiential learning, on-the-job learning, public sector, service delivery*

INTRODUCTION

The performance of public sector organizations is fundamental to achieving sustainable development goals and fostering economic growth. Countries with efficient and accountable public sectors tend to exhibit higher levels of development and citizen satisfaction. According to the World Bank (2023), the key to successful public sector performance globally lies in the integration of innovative technologies, transparency, and citizen engagement. Countries such as Singapore and New Zealand are often highlighted for their exceptional public sector performance, demonstrating high levels of efficiency

and public trust. In Asia, the performance of public sector organizations varies significantly across countries. China has made substantial strides in improving the performance of its public sector through extensive reforms and the adoption of digital governance. The government's focus on efficiency and rapid policy implementation has led to notable improvements in public service delivery (Liu, 2021). However, challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiencies and regional disparities persist. Malaysia has implemented the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) aimed at enhancing public sector performance. The GTP focuses on improving service delivery, accountability, and reducing corruption (Rahman & Aziz, 2022). These initiatives have shown positive outcomes, though more efforts are needed to sustain long-term improvements. India faces considerable challenges in its public sector performance, including bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption. Despite these issues, recent reforms aimed at digitalization and decentralization have started to yield positive results (Sharma & Sharma, 2022).

Germany is known for its efficient public sector, characterized by a strong emphasis on accountability and transparency. Recent reforms have focused on digitalization and the adoption of e-governance practices to enhance service delivery (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022). The United Kingdom has implemented various performance measurement frameworks to improve public sector efficiency. Initiatives such as the Government Digital Service (GDS) have significantly enhanced public service delivery and citizen engagement (Margetts & Naumann, 2022). France has focused on public sector modernization through digital transformation and administrative reforms aimed at improving service delivery and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2022). Both Italy and Spain have faced challenges related to fiscal constraints and political instability, which impact public sector performance. However, recent reforms aimed at improving public administration and reducing corruption have shown promising results (European Commission, 2022).

In the United States, public sector performance is closely monitored through mechanisms such as performance budgeting and the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Recent efforts have focused on enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in federal, state, and local governments. However, political polarization and budget constraints remain significant challenges (Kettl, 2022). In Africa, the performance of public sector organizations is crucial for development but often hindered by corruption, inadequate funding, and weak institutional frameworks. South Africa has undertaken initiatives such as the National Development Plan (NDP) to improve public sector performance. Despite these efforts, challenges such as corruption and service delivery issues persist (Molefe, 2021). Egypt has focused on public sector reform through digitalization and administrative restructuring aimed at improving efficiency and service delivery, although implementation challenges remain (El-Said & Zaki, 2020). Nigeria faces significant challenges in public sector performance, including corruption and inefficiencies. Recent reforms targeting transparency and accountability are crucial for

improving service delivery (Okeke-Uzodike & Sholanke, 2022). Ethiopia has made efforts to enhance public sector performance through capacity-building initiatives and governance reforms; however, political instability and resource constraints pose ongoing challenges (Tesfaye & Admassu, 2022).

In East Africa, countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda have undertaken significant public sector reforms. Rwanda is often cited as a model for public sector efficiency and accountability in Africa, where strong leadership and a commitment to good governance have driven substantial improvements in public service delivery (Chemouni, 2020). Uganda has made strides in improving public sector performance through reforms aimed at decentralization and public accountability, though issues such as corruption and limited resources continue to impede progress (Nabaho, 2022). Tanzania has focused on enhancing public sector performance through initiatives aimed at improving transparency and reducing corruption, yielding positive outcomes despite ongoing challenges (Mgonja, 2021).

Looking at Kenya, the performance of public sector organizations, particularly at the county level, is a critical determinant of service delivery and development outcomes. The County Government of Murang'a, like other county governments, faces challenges such as resource constraints, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and accountability issues (Njiru, 2021). These challenges affect the ability of the county government to deliver essential services and foster local development.

On-the-job learning encompasses various dimensions that contribute to its effectiveness. One key dimension is experiential learning, which involves employees engaging in tasks that challenge them to solve problems and make decisions, fostering critical thinking and practical skill development (Kolb, 2015). Job rotation exposes employees to different roles and functions within the organization, broadening their understanding of the institution and enhancing their adaptability (McCourt & Eldridge, 2020). Shadowing allows employees to observe and follow experienced colleagues, providing a valuable learning experience without the immediate pressure of performing tasks independently (Lave & Wenger, 2018). Lastly, on-the-job training (OJT) involves structured programs conducted at the workplace, ensuring that employees acquire the necessary skills and knowledge required for their roles in a supportive environment (Noe, 2020).

Globally, governments recognize that employee competence and adaptability are critical drivers of public sector performance and service delivery. Countries such as Singapore, Rwanda, and Canada have demonstrated that strategic investment in workplace learning directly enhances efficiency, accountability, and innovation in government institutions (World Bank, 2023). In Kenya, the Vision 2030 Master Plan identifies a professional and results-oriented public service as the foundation for sustainable development (Government of Kenya, 2020). However, despite this recognition, most devolved units have not adequately embraced on-the-job learning (OJL) as a continuous capacity

development tool. According to Eraut (2022), on-the-job learning fosters employees' skills acquisition, adaptability, and problem-solving ability by allowing them to learn directly from their work experiences. Similarly, Kolb (2015) argues that experiential learning – an integral part of on-the-job learning – enables employees to transform knowledge into practical competence.

In Kenya's devolved systems, however, the implementation of structured OJL programs remains inconsistent. Njiru (2021) notes that counties like Murang'a face persistent challenges of low employee productivity and service inefficiencies due to inadequate exposure to practical learning experiences. Reports by the Kenya School of Government (2022) indicate that less than 40% of county employees have undergone formal workplace learning or job rotation programs within the last three years. This lack of systematic on-the-job learning contributes to skill stagnation, reduced motivation, and weak institutional performance. Moreover, most studies in Kenya treat training and capacity building as broad constructs, without isolating the specific effects of OJL on employee performance (Kariuki & Wanyoike, 2019). Consequently, empirical evidence explaining how on-the-job learning enhances performance in devolved government systems remains scarce.

This research, therefore, sought to address this gap by examining the effect of on-the-job learning on employee performance in the County Government of Murang'a. By focusing on the practical and experiential dimensions of learning within the workplace, the research aims to provide actionable insights for strengthening staff capability, improving productivity, and enhancing service delivery in county administrations. The study is guided by the research question: To what extent does on-the-job learning influence employee performance in the County Government of Murang'a?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

This study is anchored on the Human Capital Theory and supported by the Experiential Learning Theory and Social Learning Theory. These theories collectively explain how employees acquire, apply, and retain knowledge and skills through on-the-job learning (OJL) and how these processes translate into improved employee performance.

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory, proposed by Gary Becker (1964) and Jacob Mincer (1974), posits that an individual's productivity and contribution to organizational success depend on the level of investment made in their education, training, and experience. It argues that knowledge and skills constitute an economic value and that training is a key mechanism for enhancing such capital. In the context of the County Government of Murang'a, on-the-job learning (OJL) represents a critical investment in human capital, allowing employees to acquire job-specific competencies that directly influence their performance outcomes. The theory assumes that higher investment in practical learning

opportunities results in improved efficiency, innovation, and productivity (Becker, 1964). For example, through job rotation, task delegation, and exposure to real work processes, employees can build proficiency and confidence in their roles. Kariuki and Wanyoike (2019) found that county governments that continually invest in hands-on employee training achieve greater operational consistency and accountability. However, Human Capital Theory is limited by its assumption of equal access to development opportunities. It overlooks bureaucratic and political influences that may hinder training implementation. Despite these limitations, the theory remains relevant as it provides a conceptual foundation for analyzing how on-the-job learning fosters the growth of employee competencies that ultimately enhance service delivery and institutional effectiveness.

Experiential Learning Theory

David Kolb (1984) introduced the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which emphasizes learning through experience, reflection, and application. The theory asserts that effective learning occurs when individuals engage actively in tasks, reflect on outcomes, conceptualize lessons, and apply them in new contexts. This cycle – concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation is particularly applicable to OJL, where employees learn by doing and refining their approaches through continuous feedback. In the County Government of Murang'a, experiential learning explains how employees enhance their skills by engaging in real work assignments such as fieldwork, project participation, and problem-solving under supervision. These practical experiences improve both technical and behavioral competencies, leading to better performance. However, ELT assumes that all learners progress uniformly through learning stages, which may not always occur due to individual and organizational differences (Moon, 2013). Nonetheless, its relevance lies in its focus on how learning from experience strengthens performance outcomes within public service contexts.

Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1977), posits that individuals learn behaviors, attitudes, and skills through observation and imitation of role models within a social environment. It emphasizes that learning is not only a cognitive process but also a social one that involves attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Within an OJL setting, this theory explains how employees learn from supervisors and colleagues by observing best practices, receiving feedback, and applying observed skills to their roles. In Murang'a County, employees may learn through job shadowing, task demonstrations, or collaboration, where experienced workers model effective practices. Although the theory is limited by its underestimation of internal cognitive and motivational factors, it provides a useful framework for understanding how workplace interactions and observation foster skill transfer and performance improvement.

Empirical Literature Review

A study by Mabungela and Mbukanma (2023) explored the impact of on-the-job training (OJT) on employee performance at Walter Sisulu University, South Africa. Using a qualitative design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with twelve employees and analyzed thematically using Atlas.ti software. The study revealed that OJT significantly enhanced employee skills, motivation, and productivity by providing real-time learning experiences. The authors concluded that OJT is a practical and sustainable approach to improving employee performance in knowledge-intensive environments.

Tukunimulong (2016) adopted a descriptive research design to examine how OJT influences employee performance, task efficiency, and job satisfaction in manufacturing firms. A sample of 90 employees participated, with data analyzed using chi-square tests. The results indicated that structured OJT improved employees' ability to meet job requirements and boosted satisfaction levels. The study recommended continuous OJT programs to improve organizational profitability and workforce effectiveness.

A study by Giday and Elantheraiyan (2023) assessed the influence of training on employee performance among municipal staff in Mekelle City. The study applied a quantitative research design with data collected through surveys and analyzed statistically. Findings showed that training needs assessment and resource availability significantly affected employee performance. Well-planned OJT improved task completion rates and problem-solving capabilities, though limited resources constrained program effectiveness.

Locally, Wanjiku and Karanja (2022) investigated the relationship between on-the-job learning and service delivery in Kenyan county governments using a mixed-method design. The study sampled 150 employees from three counties, collecting data through questionnaires and interviews. Findings indicated that OJL practices such as mentoring during work, job shadowing, and project assignments enhanced technical competencies and accountability. However, lack of structured follow-up reduced long-term performance impact.

These studies collectively indicate that on-the-job learning positively influences employee performance by improving skill application, adaptability, and motivation. Nonetheless, contextual gaps exist in understanding how OJL specifically affects employee performance within devolved governance systems like Murang'a County, where bureaucratic structures and limited resources often impede continuous learning.

Summary of Research Gaps

Existing literature consistently demonstrates that on-the-job learning enhances employee performance across sectors by improving skill application, confidence, and productivity.

However, several gaps remain. First, many studies (e.g., Mabungela & Mbukanma, 2023; Tukunimulong, 2016) have been conducted in academic or private institutions, leaving a gap in the public sector, particularly county governments in Kenya. Second, most studies employ cross-sectional designs that capture short-term outcomes but fail to assess long-term effects of OJL on performance sustainability. Third, contextual variables such as leadership support, institutional policy, and resource allocation—crucial in devolved settings—remain underexplored. This paper therefore sought to fill these gaps by examining the effect of on-the-job learning on employee performance in the County Government of Murang’a, focusing on practical, experience-based learning as a driver of public service efficiency.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework is structured around the dependent variable, which is employee performance in in County Governments in Kenya, and the independent variable is on-the-job learning. This framework helps in understanding how the independent variable influences the dependent variable (Maxwell, 2013).

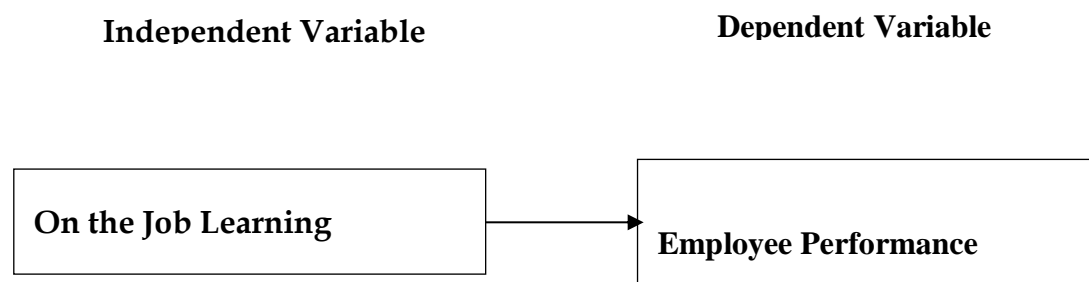


Figure 21: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of on-the-job learning on employee performance in the County Government of Murang’a. The study adopted a descriptive research design because it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data to describe existing conditions and relationships among variables. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive design is appropriate when a study seeks to assess the current status of a phenomenon within a defined population. This approach enabled the researcher to capture detailed information about how on-the-job learning practices, such as job rotation, task delegation, and job shadowing, influence employee performance in Murang’a County. The design further allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how experiential and social learning processes contribute to public sector performance improvement.

The study was conducted within the County Government of Murang’a, which has 1,022 management-level employees drawn from various departments, including administration, finance, human resources, and technical services. These employees

formed the target population since they are directly involved in implementing and benefiting from on-the-job learning initiatives. The unit of analysis was the individual employee because each respondent could provide firsthand information on how on-the-job learning affects their performance. This context was chosen because county governments in Kenya are increasingly focusing on employee capacity building as a strategy for enhancing service delivery and accountability.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation of different departments and hierarchical levels within the county. The population was first divided into distinct strata based on departmental roles, and then a random sample was selected from each stratum. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula, resulting in a sample of 287 respondents, representing approximately 28 percent of the total population. This sample size was considered sufficient to ensure reliability and generalizability of the findings while maintaining statistical precision at a 95% confidence level. Proportional allocation was applied to ensure that each department contributed respondents in proportion to its size.

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, which included both closed and open-ended items. The questionnaire was preferred because it allows for uniform data collection and facilitates quantitative analysis. It also ensures anonymity, which encourages honest responses (Kumar, 2020). The instrument was administered directly to respondents by the researcher with assistance from two trained research assistants. Before the main data collection, a pilot test involving 10 percent of the sample (29 employees from the County Government of Kirinyaga) was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. Expert opinions from the researcher's supervisor were sought to enhance content validity, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to assess internal consistency. All variables recorded alpha values above 0.7, confirming the questionnaire's reliability as recommended by Kothari (2014).

Data collection was carried out after obtaining an introductory letter from the Management University of Africa (MUA) and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Permission was also obtained from the Human Resource Department of the County Government of Murang'a before distributing questionnaires to employees. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and participation was voluntary.

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages were used to summarize respondents' views on on-the-job learning and employee performance. Inferential statistics were applied to test the study hypotheses and establish relationships among variables. Specifically, correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of associations between on-the-job learning and employee performance, while

multiple regression analysis tested the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

The regression model used in the study was expressed as:

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

Where Y represents employee performance,

X represents on-the-job learning,

β_0 is the constant,

β_1 is the regression coefficient, and

ε is the error term.

This model was applied to assess whether on-the-job learning significantly influences employee performance in Murang'a County Government. The statistical results guided interpretation and conclusion on whether effective on-the-job learning contributes to enhanced service delivery, efficiency, and accountability within the county. Findings were presented in tables, charts, and narratives to facilitate clarity and comprehension.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis of On-the-job Learning

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of on-the-job learning. The results show the mean and standard deviation for statements measuring key aspects such as skill application, problem-solving, and communication in the workplace.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of On-the-job Learning

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees consistently meet the quality standards set for their tasks after receiving on-the-job learning.	1.42	1.11
Newly acquired skills from on-the-job learning are applied by staff in their daily work.	3.40	1.35
Work output by staff exhibits a low rate of errors and inaccuracies after on-the-job learning.	3.91	1.97
Employees demonstrate improved problem-solving abilities when faced with challenges at work.	4.26	1.00
When facing potential delays, employees communicate proactively as a result of on-the-job learning.	4.46	0.92
Staff actively seek opportunities to utilize new skills gained through on-the-job learning.	4.37	0.95
Composite Mean	3.6	

The findings in Table 11 revealed that employees' ability to meet quality standards after on-the-job learning scored the lowest mean of 1.42 (SD = 1.11), suggesting that training

alone may not guarantee immediate adherence to expected quality levels. This outcome resonates with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which emphasizes that learning is most effective when new skills are reinforced through repeated practice and reflection. Therefore, although employees receive exposure to learning, sustained quality improvement may require longer-term engagement and follow-up support mechanisms. In contrast, the highest-rated statement was that employees communicated proactively when facing potential delays, with a mean of 4.46 (SD = 0.92). This indicates that on-the-job learning significantly enhances employees' interpersonal and communication skills, which are crucial in minimizing workflow disruptions. Similar findings by Eraut (2022) showed that workplace learning promotes adaptive behaviors that strengthen collaboration and responsiveness in dynamic environments. Such proactive communication is particularly relevant in county governments where service delivery often depends on teamwork and coordination.

Moreover, employees demonstrated strong problem-solving abilities ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.00$) and actively sought opportunities to utilize new skills gained from learning ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.95$). These results suggest that on-the-job learning fosters innovation and initiative among staff, enabling them to contribute positively to organizational goals. According to Mabungela and Mbukanma (2023), employees who are exposed to continuous workplace learning are more likely to adapt effectively to challenges and exhibit higher levels of creativity in their roles. This aligns with Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which posits that self-efficacy grows when individuals apply and test newly acquired competencies in real work situations.

Interestingly, the application of new skills in daily work recorded a moderate mean of 3.40 ($SD = 1.35$), and work output accuracy was also moderately rated at 3.91 ($SD = 1.97$). These findings imply that while employees value the learning process, the transfer of knowledge into practical tasks is not always automatic. As noted by Maina and Kinyua (2022), public sector organizations in Kenya often face structural barriers such as resource constraints and bureaucratic procedures that can hinder the full application of newly acquired skills. Thus, managers need to create supportive environments that encourage skill utilization to realize the full benefits of training.

The overall composite mean for on-the-job learning and employee performance was 3.64, which reflects a generally positive influence of workplace learning interventions on performance outcomes. This finding supports earlier studies by Tukunimulong (2016) and Giday and Elantheraiyan (2023), which emphasized that employees who engage in structured on-the-job learning programs tend to perform better, particularly when such programs are well-integrated into organizational processes. Therefore, it can be concluded that while on-the-job learning significantly enhances communication, problem-solving, and initiative, greater emphasis is required on quality assurance and the consistent transfer of skills into routine tasks for sustainable performance improvement.

Descriptive Analysis on Employee Performance

The responses were analyzed to capture various dimensions of performance, including quality of work, timeliness, and problem-solving ability. The findings are summarized and presented in Table 14.

Table 2: Employee Performance Descriptive Analysis

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I achieve my project milestones within the scheduled timelines.	3.85	1.63
The customers I serve generally rate my performance highly.	3.63	0.29
I rarely make errors that require redoing my work.	3.64	0.46
My supervisor consistently gives me high scores in performance reviews.	3.21	0.24
I complete most of my tasks within the expected timeframe.	4.32	0.95
Both my supervisor and peers give me positive performance feedback.	4.02	1.03
Composite Mean		3.93

The analysis of employee performance pointed to generally favorable perceptions regarding work outcomes. A composite mean of 3.93 reflected agreement with expected standards, though opportunities for improvement remained evident. Drawing from Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, such perceptions align with the notion of self-efficacy, which influences how individuals approach and accomplish tasks. This suggests that county government employees demonstrate moderate confidence in their capabilities, with performance outcomes shaped by both individual belief and organizational context.

When considering specific indicators, task completion within expected timeframes attracted the strongest ratings ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.95$). This highlighted the significance of timeliness as an essential aspect of work delivery, linking effective time management to higher performance. Comparable evidence from Maina and Kinyua (2022) associated timely completion of responsibilities with enhanced training outcomes and organizational results in Kenyan counties, reinforcing the importance of efficiency in shaping positive performance trajectories.

In contrast, the weakest scores emerged from supervisory assessments during performance reviews ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.24$). This pointed to a gap between employee self-perceptions and external evaluations by supervisors. Kariuki and Wanyoike (2019) note

that such misalignment between internal and external assessments can reduce motivation and obstruct pathways to continuous improvement. The implication here is that although employees may perceive themselves as competent, formal validation processes may not fully reflect these perceptions, potentially straining confidence and growth opportunities. Peer and informal recognition, however, revealed stronger outcomes, with ratings averaging 4.02 (SD = 1.03). This illustrated the influence of collegial support and peer-based encouragement on sustaining workplace motivation. Biswal et al. (2024) similarly observed that peer recognition promotes consistency and motivation in professional settings, highlighting how social reinforcement can complement formal systems of evaluation. Such findings suggest that collective workplace dynamics contribute significantly to maintaining morale, particularly where supervisory reviews may not provide the same reinforcement.

Additional insights showed relatively positive outcomes regarding error minimization (M = 3.64, SD = 0.46) and customer satisfaction (M = 3.63, SD = 0.29). These dimensions underscored the presence of a performance culture that meets both internal standards and external expectations. Kihara and Muathe (2021) emphasized the role of continuous capacity-building in sustaining service quality and reducing costly errors in the public sector. Thus, while the general picture of employee performance remained favorable, greater alignment between supervisory evaluations and employee self-perceptions could serve as a strategic area for strengthening performance management across county governments.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between on-the-job learning and employee performance. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Employee Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)
On-the-Job Learning	0.751	0.045

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.751$, $p = 0.045$) indicates a strong and statistically significant relationship between on-the-job learning and employee performance. This implies that an increase in workplace learning activities directly enhances employee outcomes. The findings concur with those of Mabungela and Mbukanma (2023), who reported a significant positive link between continuous workplace training and productivity among public employees in South Africa.

Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was conducted to quantify the influence of on-the-job learning on employee performance. The model summary is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R
1	0.751	0.564	0.558	

The results show that on-the-job learning explains approximately 56.4% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.564$). This demonstrates a strong predictive capacity, implying that workplace learning initiatives play a major role in enhancing employee productivity and efficiency within devolved government systems. Similar findings were reported by Maina and Kinyua (2022), who found that county governments that prioritize continuous learning exhibit higher service quality.

Table 5: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	24.68	1	24.68	3.632	0.0069
Residual	45.29	20	2.265		
Total	69.97	21			

The ANOVA results ($F = 3.632$, $p = 0.0069$) confirm that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that on-the-job learning significantly predicts employee performance at the County Government of Murang'a. These results support findings by Wahome and Ogolla (2021), who established that structured in-service training programs substantially improve work quality in public sector institutions.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.057	1.681	2.30	0.040
On-the-Job Learning	0.068	0.232	0.623	0.040

The regression coefficient for on-the-job learning ($B = 0.068$, $p = 0.040$) indicates a statistically significant positive effect on employee performance. This finding implies that each incremental improvement in on-the-job learning practices leads to a corresponding increase in employee performance levels. The results align with Tukunimulong (2016), who emphasized that employees who learn through hands-on experience develop stronger problem-solving and adaptability skills. The hypothesis that on-the-job learning has a significant effect on employee performance is therefore confirmed ($p < 0.05$).

Summary of Findings

The study revealed that on-the-job learning positively affects employee performance within the County Government of Murang'a. The overall composite mean was 3.64, showing moderate adoption and perceived effectiveness. Employees reported that on-the-job learning enhanced proactive communication ($M = 4.46, SD = 0.92$), skill utilization ($M = 4.37, SD = 0.95$), and problem-solving ability ($M = 4.26, SD = 1.00$). However, maintaining consistent quality standards scored lowest ($M = 1.42, SD = 1.11$), suggesting gaps in structured quality reinforcement. The correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between on-the-job learning and performance ($r = 0.543, p < 0.01$), while regression results indicated that on-the-job learning explained 29% of the variance in employee performance. These results suggest that experiential learning contributes meaningfully to efficiency, adaptability, and service delivery outcomes, particularly among frontline employees.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that on-the-job learning is a vital component of employee development and performance improvement in devolved public institutions. By enabling employees to learn through experience, observation, and practice, it strengthens communication, skill application, and problem-solving ability. However, informal learning alone is insufficient to sustain high-quality performance. Without structured feedback, reflection, and quality monitoring mechanisms, experiential learning may not consistently translate into improved service standards. Therefore, structured reinforcement and systematic follow-up are essential for maximizing its long-term impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings reinforce Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory by confirming that performance improvement is achieved when employees actively engage in learning through experience and reflection. The study contributes to theory by highlighting the need to incorporate feedback loops and continuous assessment into experiential learning frameworks for public sector settings. County governments should integrate structured on-the-job learning programs into daily operations. Supervisors should be trained to guide learning, provide feedback, and document progress. Reflection workshops, job rotation, and performance coaching can help translate learning into tangible results. Clear quality benchmarks should be embedded in these programs to address gaps in service consistency.

Policymakers should institutionalize on-the-job learning as part of the human resource development policy. Policies should require departments to allocate time and resources for workplace learning and link these activities to measurable outcomes such as service quality, innovation, and efficiency. Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs to examine how sustained on-the-job learning influences long-term performance trends.

Comparative research across counties or sectors would also help identify contextual factors that enhance or hinder the effectiveness of on-the-job learning in public service environments.

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