

Journal of

# Business and Strategic Management

(JBSM)

Performance Management Practice and Employee Performance  
in City County Governments in Kenya



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## Performance Management Practice and Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya

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Accepted: 24<sup>th</sup> Aug, 2026, Received in Revised Form: 9<sup>th</sup> Sep, 2026, Published: 24<sup>th</sup> Sep, 2026

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The main objective of this study was to analyze the effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance in the City County Governments in Kenya. The study focused on system design and implementation of performance management system, performance measurement and results-oriented appraisal. AMO (Ability, Motivation and Opportunity) Theory underpins this study.

**Methodology:** The study is a cross-sectional survey research design of a descriptive nature, using stratified simple random sampling technique. The target population was the four (4) City County Governments in Kenya with the target group being the 434 management employees across the top, middle and lower management levels in the City County Governments. The study sampled 261 respondents for the study by using the Yamane (1967) formula for calculation. Self-administered questionnaires collected primary data, while obtaining secondary data from all related documents. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. T-statistics at 95% level of confidence, Pearson Moment Correlation with p-value <0.05> and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) through F-test tested the hypothesis.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that the Performance Management Practices on its own explains 46.3% of the variance in employee performance in City County Governments in Kenya. Regression analysis results showed that there was a positive and statistically significant effect of performance management practice on employee performance with the regression coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.703$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

### Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Theory

The study findings endorse the theoretical framework and strengthens the theory used to explain the variables. It also contributes to the theoretical literature by providing a basis through which the theoretical proposition used in the formulation of the research hypotheses is empirically tested. The study findings highlight the need of matching policy intentions to operational reality to avoid the disparities in implementation of Performance Management Practice. In practice, the study informs the HR professionals and practitioners on the importance of implementing a robust Performance Management Systems to improve employee performance and service delivery. The study contributes to knowledge and research by providing empirical evidence and a reference point for scholars.

**Keywords:** *Performance Management, System Design and Implementation, Performance Measurement, Results-oriented Appraisal*

**JEL Codes:** *M54; M12; J24; and H83*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Performance Management is an ongoing systematic process where managers and employees collaborate to set expectations, monitor progress and develop skills. Performance management frameworks remain important mechanisms for improving governance and employee performance in the City County Governments in Kenya (County Government of Kisumu, 2024). According to Hill and Plimmer (2024), the performance management systems are on assumptions about people and the organizations environment. The primary goal is to align individual employee contributions with broader organizational objectives while empowering staff to perform at their highest potential (Vulpen & Nemcova, 2023). Performance Management Practice not only benefits the employee and the employer but also the stakeholders (Hill & Plimmer, 2024), and effective implementation of these frameworks does not only strengthen transparency, improve service delivery, enhance employee accountability but also aligns county operations with strategic development goals. The purpose of performance management practice should be clearer with a stronger focus, attention to its goals and as Hill and Plimmer (2024) argue, strengthening managerial behaviours such as coaching, and feedback would not only improve the informal psychosocial system but also reinforce the legitimacy and scope for outcomes of formal administrative aspects. Giamos, Doucet and Lapalme (2024) argue that studies have shown that organizations with effective Performance Management Systems experience improved employee productivity, commitment and job satisfaction compared to organizations with ineffective Performance Management Systems. City County Governments in Kenya are facing challenges that affect the effectiveness of the performance management systems. Daritsu, Odiyo, and Ongeti (2024), in their study on “Performance contracting and service delivery in County governments: A case study of Kakamega County” observed inadequate implementation capacity, weak monitoring system, political interference, limited employee participation, inadequate training and insufficient technological infrastructure. The scholars opine that City County Governments in Kenya face resistance from employees due to perceived unfair evaluation, lack of feedback and reward systems linked to performance outcomes. The continued refinement of integrated Performance Management Systems by the Council of Governors demonstrates ongoing efforts to improve county governance and public service delivery.

Employee performance refers to how well an employee has accomplished the tasks and obligations delegated to them by their employer, as well as how well they have met or exceeded expectations in their role. This can include things like productivity, work quality, deadline adherence, communication skills, teamwork, and adherence to company policies and procedures (Grote, 2016; Kilika, Namusonge, & Kipkoech, 2018; Sharma & Garg, 2019). Several factors can influence employee effectiveness in Kenyan county governments. Individual, organizational, and environmental factors are the major categories for these components. Individual factors are related to the employee's personal characteristics, talents, and attitudes (Kihoro & Kariuki, 2018; Jepkemboi, 2020). An employee's level of education, experience, motivation, and job satisfaction, for example, can all have an effect on their performance. Organizational factors, on the other hand relate to the organization and its rules,

processes, and culture. Knies and Leisink (2018), decry the need for more research in developing countries public sector HRM. They argue that lack of human capacity; low salary levels; lack of practical performance standards; inability to dismiss people and to attract appropriately trained people; inadequate management by supervisors and ineffective HRM policies and practices inhibit service delivery and need reforms if public services are to be improved. Employee performance can be influenced by factors such as the clarity of work tasks and responsibilities, the availability of resources and support, the quality of training and development provided to employees, and managers' leadership styles (Gathogo, 2019; Miheso, Kibera, & Ndede, 2021). Finally, environmental factors are a significant contribution to organizational success. These include factors related to the broader socioeconomic, political, and cultural context in which the organization functions. Factors such as job market rivalry, current economic situations, and cultural values and customs influence employee performance (Birech, Kosgey & Tirimba, 2020; Kiprono, Rotich & Sitienei, 2018). According to Marchington, Wilkson, Donnelly and Kynighou (2016) workers with employment security and relatively harmonised workplace are more likely to be positive about problem-solving groups, show interest in team working if the organization rewards their efforts with performance-related incentives, share ownership, work life balance and access training opportunities. Miheso *et al*, (2021) noted the significance of leadership as a factor of employee performance in their study. The leadership style and actions of managers and supervisors significantly affect employee performance. Effective leaders set clear expectations, give feedback and support, inspire and motivate their teams, and foster a healthy work atmosphere. Contrarily, Kenyan scholars (Kinyanjui7 & Iravo, 2020; Miheso, *et al*, 2021) showed the extent to which leaders can demotivate workers, generate a toxic work environment, and promote disorientation and unpredictability. Employees who obtain the right training and development are likely to perform better in their jobs (Kariuki & Nyamwange, 2020; Ouma, Abere & Kituyi, 2020). Performance management systems that are fair, transparent, and consistent show a favourable impact on employee performance, according to Ombui, Karanja and Kimani (2021). Employees are typically more engaged and productive when they receive regular feedback on their performance, have defined goals and objectives, and are accountable for their job. Programs for recognition and awards based on performance can also inspire workers to work more (Githinji, Kinyua & Ngugi, 2020).

The City County status of a City County Government underscores its importance in governance, policy-making and administration as well as its economic significance. The four City County Governments (Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru) inherited the largest number of the defunct Local Authorities' employees (26% of the total County Public Service) and this study focuses on the effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance. Previous studies indicate that these City County Governments are grappling with various challenges of urbanization, infrastructure, deficits, traffic congestion, solid waste management and socio-economic inequalities contrary to what the Urban Areas and Cities Act stipulates (Agola, 2020). Although cities and towns have better services compared to the rural areas, the lack of social support and environmental ergonomics coupled with congestion, pollution and economic pressures, the residents are not happy with the services. The public

has recently increased pressure on their counties and cities to raise the quality of service delivery (Nduta & Wanjira, 2019). City County Governments in Kenya present more visible and measurable HRM challenges, making them suitable for empirical study. City County Governments in Kenya provide a suitable context for examining the effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance due to the complex administrative structures, large and diverse workforce and a high demand for service delivery. Unlike other County Governments, City County Governments experience intensified human resource management challenges including workforce diversity, promotion stagnation, and contractual employment pressures, which significantly influence Employee Performance. Furthermore, their central role in economic and governance activities enhances the relevance and applicability of findings to broader public sector reforms.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Kenyan County Governments have established formal Performance Management Practices, including performance contracting, performance appraisal, target setting and strategic performance measures, to enhance employee accountability and performance and ultimately improve service delivery. However, empirical evidence indicates persistent weaknesses in translating these formal frameworks into effective practice. Studies in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru City County Governments have reported deficiencies in performance appraisal, target setting, feedback, performance improvement planning, clarity of performance expectations and supervisory capacity (Munywoki & Kangure, 2023; Kisuke & Elly, 2023; Kisuke & Nyakundi, 2024; ; Marube, Ndungu, Njoroge, Madaraka & Omwega, 2023; Onyango & Bando, 2022; Apoll & Okonda, 2023; Ng'ang'a & Anyieni, 2023). These findings suggest that the existence of formal Performance Management Practices does not necessarily translate into effective implementation or improved employee performance. Existing studies have largely examined isolated aspects of performance management, such as appraisal, performance contracting, goal setting or talent management, and have provided limited empirical evidence on the extent to which formal Performance Management Practices translate into effective workplace practices and how this implementation influences employee performance in City County Governments in Kenya. City County Governments have not given sufficient attention to the mechanisms through which weaknesses in performance planning, appraisal, feedback, target setting and performance improvement affect employee performance. This study seeks to investigate the disparity between their formal provision and their effective implementation and the implications of this disparity for employee performance in City County Governments in Kenya.

### **1.2 Research Hypotheses**

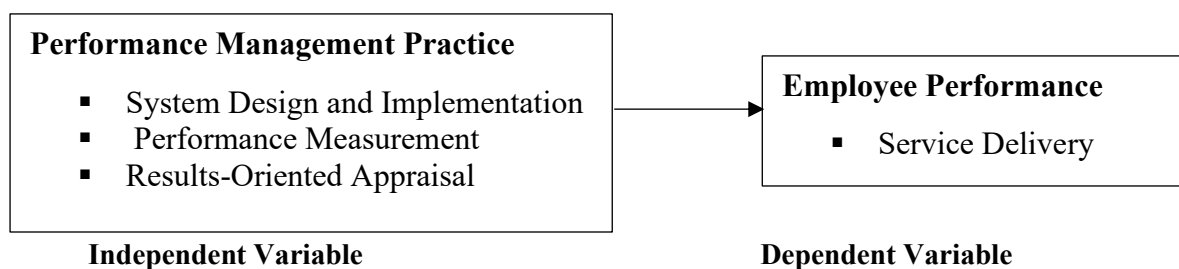
**H<sub>0</sub>:** Performance Management Practice has no significant effect on Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Theory, commonly referred to as the AMO Theory, explains that three major factors influence employee performance: employees' abilities, motivation, and opportunities to participate in organizational activities. The theory, advanced by John Appelbaum and colleagues in 2000 has become widely used in human resource management and organizational behaviour studies to explain how HRM practices influence employee performance. The AMO Theory argues that employees perform effectively when they; possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies (Ability); are motivated to perform through rewards, recognition, and supportive management (Motivation); and are provided with opportunities to participate, contribute ideas, and engage in decision-making processes (Opportunity). In relation to performance management practices, the AMO Theory explains how organizational performance management systems influence employee performance through these three dimensions. Performance management practices such as training, coaching, and performance feedback improve employee abilities by enhancing skills and competencies required for effective job performance. Employees who receive regular training and constructive feedback are better equipped to meet organizational expectations and achieve performance targets. The performance appraisal systems, reward mechanisms, recognition programs, and performance-based incentives all reflect the motivation component of the AMO Theory. Effective performance management practices motivate employees by recognizing achievements, providing fair evaluations, and rewarding high performance. When employees perceive appraisal systems as fair and supportive, they are more likely to demonstrate commitment, engagement, and improved job performance. The opportunity dimension relates to practices that allow employees to participate in goal setting, decision-making, performance discussions, and problem-solving activities. Performance management systems that encourage employee involvement and open communication create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and empowered. This enhances employee engagement, teamwork, innovation, and organizational commitment. Therefore, the AMO Theory suggests that effective performance management practices improve employee performance by developing employee capabilities, increasing motivation, and creating opportunities for participation and growth. Organizations that integrate these three dimensions into their performance management systems are more likely to achieve higher productivity, employee satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness.

### 2.2 Conceptual Framework



## 2.3 Empirical Review

Recent empirical studies indicate that performance management practices significantly influence employee performance through improved accountability, goal alignment, employee engagement, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. Contemporary research particularly emphasizes the role of Performance Management System (PMS) design and implementation, performance measurement, and results-oriented appraisal in enhancing employee outcomes.

### 2.3.1 System Design and Implementation and Employee Performance

Aguinis (2019) presents a detailed overview of performance management, covering its history, theoretical foundations, and current methods. According to the author, effective performance management necessitates a clear grasp of the organization's strategic objectives, the establishment of performance measurements that match with those objectives, and the use of feedback and coaching to improve performance. Jonyo, Jonyo and Manyara (2018) explain the design and implementation of Performance Management Systems (PMS). According to the authors, effective performance management necessitates a well-designed system with clear performance standards, precise measuring tools, and efficient feedback and coaching methods. They also emphasize the significance of building performance management systems with company culture, employee motivation, and other contextual elements in mind. Goal setting is a critical concept that entails defining clear and defined performance targets for employees. Studies to boost employee motivation, task performance, and work satisfaction demonstrate effective goal setting (Locke & Latham, 2019). Employees should receive feedback and support to help them reach their goals, and goals should be demanding yet doable. The level of involvement, understanding, support, alignment of goals, how SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) the goals are, and ability to give feedback, precipitate the implementation of the PMS (Jonyo *et al*, 2019). Performance management systems that are fair, transparent, and consistent show a favourable impact on employee performance, according to Ombui, Karanja and Kimani (2021). Employees are typically more engaged and productive when they receive regular feedback on their performance, have defined goals and objectives, and are accountable for their job. Programs for recognition and awards based on performance can also inspire workers to work more (Githinji, Kinyua & Ngugi, 2020). Recent studies show that the effectiveness of performance management largely depends on the design and implementation of the Performance Management System (PMS). A well-designed PMS includes clear performance standards, measurable indicators, continuous feedback mechanisms, employee participation, and alignment with organizational strategy. A study by Lewandowski and Cirella (2023) examined how PMS implementation influences organizational strategy development and employee behaviour. The study established that properly implemented PMS frameworks enhance employee trust, knowledge sharing, and performance outcomes. The researchers found that performance management systems improve employee performance when organizations integrate goal setting, performance review, rewards, and continuous feedback into organizational processes.

Mabasa and Flotman (2022), in their study titled *Employees' Experiences of Change Management in the Implementation of a Performance Management System* found that employee acceptance and successful implementation of PMS significantly affect employee performance and organizational effectiveness. The study revealed that employee participation, communication, leadership support, and training are not only essential for successful PMS implementation but also demonstrate improved commitment and productivity when organizations effectively manage change during PMS implementation. The study by Ong'injo, Komen, and Omondi (2025) examined performance management practices in Kenyan TVET institutions. The study found that structured PMS implementation through performance contracting, target setting, and employee appraisal improved accountability, service delivery, and resource utilization. However, the scholars noted that inadequate staff training, weak feedback systems and inconsistent implementation reduced the effectiveness of performance management systems in some institutions. Recent literature also demonstrates that innovative PMS designs improve organizational culture and employee productivity. Firdaus, Suryani, Nadlifatin and Tjahyanto (2024) in their study titled *Enhancing Organizational Culture and Productivity through Innovative Performance Appraisal* established that integrating Balanced Scorecard approaches, 360-degree feedback, and competency-based evaluation systems enhances employee productivity, competency development, and organizational performance.

Organizations that implement effective performance management systems, performance measurement practices, and results-oriented appraisal frameworks experience significant improvements in employee productivity, accountability, organizational efficiency, and strategic goal achievement. These practices help organizations align employee activities with organizational objectives while promoting continuous performance improvement and employee development. A good Performance Management System provides a structured framework for setting goals, monitoring employee performance, giving feedback, evaluating results, and supporting employee development. According to Aguinis (2019), effective performance management systems enhance organizational effectiveness by aligning individual performance with strategic organizational goals. Organizations with strong performance management systems are more likely to achieve higher employee engagement, improved productivity, better communication, and increased employee motivation.

One major benefit of a good performance management system is improved employee performance and productivity. Employees clearly understand organizational expectations, performance standards, and work targets, which helps them, focus their efforts toward achieving organizational objectives. A recent study by Giamos, Doucet and Lapalme (2024) found that development-oriented performance management systems positively influence employee engagement, learning, and job performance through continuous feedback, coaching, and employee development initiatives. Performance measurement systems also provide organizations with accurate information regarding employee progress, organizational efficiency, and achievement of strategic objectives. Performance measurement involves establishing key performance indicators (KPIs), monitoring results, and evaluating performance outcomes against predetermined standards.

### **2.3.2 Performance Measurement and Employee Performance**

Another important concept is performance measurement, which includes comparing employee performance to predetermined benchmarks. Cascio (2018) argues that trustworthy and valid measurements that accurately reflect work needs and performance objectives should be the basis of performance evaluation. Performance feedback should be timely and specific, indicating areas for improvement. Feedback and coaching are also key performance management elements. Coaching involves providing employees appropriate guidance and support in order to help them enhance their performance. The needs of the individual, with an emphasis on identifying areas for improvement and devising ways to meet them should be the target for coaching. Training and development are also significant aspects in performance management. Giving employees opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge can improve job performance and contribute to career growth (Noe, 2020). In summary, recognition and reward for individual success and contribution are crucial performance management elements, employee motivation and job satisfaction (Cameron & Pierce, 2019). Rewards must be relevant and related to performance outcomes. Goal setting, performance assessment, feedback and coaching, training and development, and recognition and reward are all important components of performance management. Beardwell and Thompson (2017) perceive performance appraisal as a representation of one tool in performance management toolkit that provides information on employee performance and allows comparison based on predetermined criteria. Cole and Kelly, (2019) posit that performance appraisal is the systematic description of an employee's job-relevant strengths and weaknesses that provides an analysis of a person's overall capabilities and potential, allowing informed decisions to be made in the process of engaging and managing employees. Performance measurement remains a critical aspect of performance management because it enables organizations to monitor progress toward organizational goals and evaluate employee contribution. Effective performance measurement systems use objective indicators, performance targets, and regular performance reviews to improve accountability and productivity. Partoip, Kamaara, and Ombui (2025), in their study titled *The Role of Performance Measurement in Enhancing Employee Performance: Evidence from Kenyan State Corporations* established a positive and significant relationship between performance measurement and employee performance. The study found that regular performance evaluation meetings, dialogue between supervisors and employees, and structured performance measurement systems improve employee productivity and accountability within Kenyan state corporations.

Similarly, a longitudinal study by Ehmann, Kampkotter, Maier and Yang (2024) titled *Performance Management and Work Engagement – New Evidence Using Longitudinal Data* examined the relationship between performance management and employee work engagement. The study found that performance appraisal interviews, target agreements, and performance-related reward systems positively influence employee engagement and performance. The researchers concluded that organizations with formal performance measurement and evaluation practices experience higher employee motivation and organizational commitment. A recent study by Bernstein & Li (2025) investigated the impact of providing employees with direct access to performance data. The study found that access to performance measurement

information reduced non-productive behaviour and improved employee accountability and productivity. The findings demonstrated that transparency in performance measurement systems encourages employees to self-monitor and improve work performance. Organizations that implement effective performance measurement systems experience improved accountability and service delivery because employees become more aware of expected results and organizational priorities. A study by Chen, Zhang, Zhou, Liu, Zhang, and Yu (2023) established that performance measurement and reward systems positively influence employee motivation and job performance by strengthening accountability and recognition of employee achievements.

### **2.3.3 Results-oriented Appraisal and Employee Performance**

Results-oriented appraisal is another important component of performance management that focuses on evaluating employees based on achievement of measurable goals, outputs, and organizational targets rather than merely assessing employee behaviour or routine activities. It is an approach to managing performance providing precise, measurable results or outcomes in performance management. A results-oriented appraisal is one positive way of influencing employees to achieve organizational goals by enhancing motivation and thus increasing organizational productivity (Dessler, 2020). Evaluating using this approach bases the appraisal on their contributions to attaining specified goals, rather than the fulfilment of ordinary tasks or activities. According to Cole and Kelly, (2019), the appraisal criteria are generally either personality (behaviour) or results-oriented and for effective appraisal interviews, managers must provide frequent performance feedback to employees and maintain comprehensive performance data of an employee. Results oriented appraisal stresses the establishment of clear and quantifiable performance objectives aligned with the organization's strategic goals, as well as providing employees with regular feedback on their progress toward reaching those objectives. Haile, Worku & Mekuria (2020) argue that it motivates employees and increases organizational productivity by eliminating performance deficiencies on real time basis as the capacity to deliver particular results rather than their compliance with organizational policies or processes determines the employee success in results oriented appraisal. The emphasis is on outcomes that are in line with the organization. Setting defined, measurable performance goals and evaluating individuals based on their ability to meet those goals are key components of this method. A result-oriented appraisal aims at motivating the person to eliminate performance deficiencies by encouraging desirable behaviour (Dessler, 2020; Cole & Kelly, 2019). The performance review should be rooted in the reality of the individual's performance so that it allows the manager and individuals jointly to look positively at how to improve performance in future and to resolve as many problems as possible in meeting performance standards and objectives (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Senior managers' commitment is key to the appraisal in ensuring that time, training and resources are available (Marchington *et al*, 2016). Performance appraisals serve as an employee development tool and when effectively used can result in increased employee engagement (Cole & Kelly, 2019). Haile *et al*, (2020) recommended creation of awareness about results-oriented appraisal with the human resources department providing training programs to supervisors to improve their appraisal skills. Mwandihi, Iravo and Sakwa (2018) point out that the appraisal form provides a basis for HRM

practices such as promotion, training and selection, confirmation of job appointments or referral for further training. The performance appraisal process is important for employee motivation and regular assessment of performance leads to employee motivation and consequently performance standards. Organizations should develop objective-oriented training needs assessment to provide a continuous training for better results-based management (Haile *et al*, 2020).

Results-oriented appraisal focuses on evaluating employees based on achievement of measurable targets, outputs, and organizational objectives. Recent empirical evidence suggests that results-oriented appraisal systems improve employee motivation, accountability, and productivity when organizations establish clear goals and provide continuous feedback. A study by Rashid and Henry (2025) on the effect of objective-based appraisal on workers' productivity in Mubende District Local Government found that departments with strong implementation of objective-based appraisal systems demonstrated significantly higher productivity levels compared to departments with weak implementation. The study established that clear objective setting; measurable performance indicators, regular review meetings, and employee participation in goal formulation positively influence employee productivity and service delivery. Similarly, Azah, Tarabinah, and Adeyemo (2024), in their study examined employee performance appraisal in local governments in Eastern Uganda. The study established that regular performance reviews, measurable targets, and results-oriented appraisal systems significantly improve employee accountability, job performance, and service delivery in public institutions. Mbambale and Mpungose (2025) found that effective performance appraisal systems support employee training, development, and productivity improvement. The study concluded that appraisal systems are most effective when organizations combine performance evaluation with employee development, feedback, coaching, and competency assessment.

A recent study by Lyu, Su and Xiao (2023) found that fair and goal-oriented appraisal systems positively affect employee job performance, organizational commitment, and work engagement. Employees are more motivated when appraisal systems are transparent, participatory, and linked to measurable performance outcomes. It improves employee accountability, efficiency, and goal achievement because employees' evaluation is according to clearly defined performance expectations. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2023), results-oriented appraisal systems enhance organizational productivity by encouraging continuous performance improvement, objective evaluation, and employee development. Organizations with effective performance management systems and results-oriented appraisal frameworks also benefit from improved employee development and career growth. Performance reviews help identify employee strengths, training needs, and areas requiring improvement, enabling organizations to design targeted training and development programs. Effective appraisal systems support promotion decisions, succession planning, compensation management, and workforce development.

Additionally, effective performance management practices improve communication and feedback between supervisors and employees. Continuous feedback and coaching strengthen employee understanding of performance expectations while encouraging collaboration, trust,

and problem solving. Employees who receive constructive feedback are more likely to improve work performance and organizational commitment. A study by DeNisi and Murphy (2017) concluded that modern performance management systems contribute significantly to employee development, organizational learning, and long-term organizational success when organizations focus on continuous feedback, coaching, and developmental appraisal rather than punitive evaluation. Overall, recent empirical studies demonstrate that Performance Management Practices significantly influence employee performance upon implementation of a well-designed PMS framework, effective performance measurement systems, and results-oriented appraisal approaches. Successful implementation requires clear performance standards, employee participation, continuous feedback, management support, training, and alignment between employee goals and organizational objectives. Contemporary organizations therefore continue to strengthen performance management systems in order to improve accountability, productivity, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness. Overall, organizations that integrate effective performance management systems, performance measurement frameworks, and results-oriented appraisal practices create supportive environments that improve employee performance, organizational effectiveness, and achievement of strategic objectives.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study is a cross-sectional survey research design of a descriptive nature, using stratified simple random sampling technique. The target population was the four (4) City County Governments with the target group being the 434 management employees across the top, middle and lower management levels in the City County Governments. The study sampled 261 respondents for the study by using the Yamane (1967) formula for calculation. Self-administered questionnaires collected primary data, while obtaining secondary data from all related documents. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. T-statistics at 95% level of confidence, Pearson Moment Correlation with  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) through F-test tested the hypothesis. Tables and graphs present the findings of this study.

### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The response rate is as shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Response Rate**

| Response     | Frequency  | Percent (%) |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Returned     | 201        | 76.92       |
| Unreturned   | 60         | 23.08       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>261</b> | <b>100</b>  |

Out of the 261 questionnaires distributed, 201 were correctly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 76.92%. A response rate above 70% is satisfactory for statistical analysis and enhances the credibility of research findings (Njenga & Wambua, 2021). According to Karanja and Mutiso (2022), a response rate of 50% is acceptable for data analysis and

publication, 60% is good, while rates above 70% are very good. In view of these ratings, the 76.92% response rate achieved in this study is excellent and adequate for subsequent data analysis.

#### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables**

This subsection covers the findings on analysis of the descriptive statistics focusing on the independent variable (Performance Management Practice) and the dependent variable (Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya). The analysis involved computing frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations to examine the extent to which respondents agreed with specific statements under each construct. A five-point Likert scale was used, with response options ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not Sure, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly Agree. The conclusions on the Likert responses were made by combining 1 and 2 to imply disagreement, 3 to imply neutral decision and 4 and 5 to imply agreement. For interpretation purposes, mean score range of 4.21 – 5.00 indicates a very positive response, 3.41 – 4.20 a positive response, 2.61 – 3.40 is a moderate response, 1.81 – 2.60 is a negative response while 1.00 – 1.80 is a very negative response. A mean score of 3.5 and above interprets as an agreement with the statements in this study. The two measures of central tendency, the mean and standard deviation, interpret the research results while the percentages indicate the frequency of each Likert's score under each item. High mean score is a positive indicator and the closer a score is to five on the 5point Likert scale the more it is an indication of an agreement or positively skewed results. A high standard deviation indicates the data points in a set are widely spread out from the mean (average). This suggests a lot of variability or dispersion within the data an indication that data is less consistent and more spread out. Low standard deviation indicates that the data points cluster closely around the mean suggesting less variability. The mean is the most common measure of central tendency while standard deviation is the most widely used and regarded as very satisfactory in the measure of dispersion in research studies (Cooper & Schindler, 2021). The study used tables and bar graphs to present the results.

#### **4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Performance Management Practice**

The objective of the study was to analyze the effect of Performance Management Practice on Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya. The results are as tabulated in Table 4.2

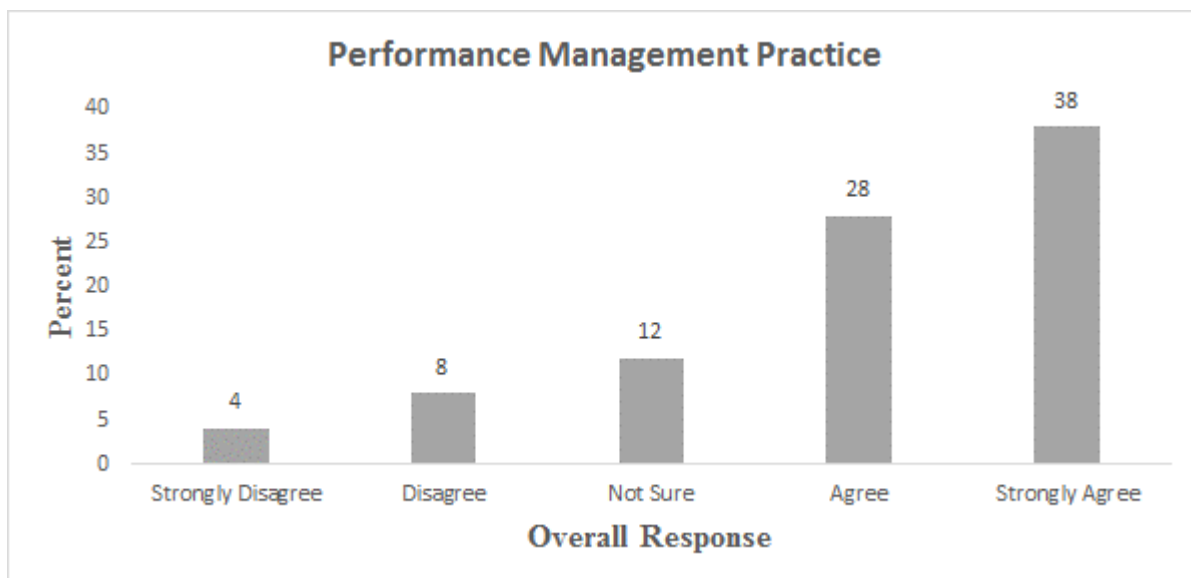
**Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics - Performance Management Practice**

| Indicators                                                                                                           | 1  | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | Mean        | S D         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------|-------------|
| Employees feel involved during the development of the PMS                                                            | 2% | 12% | 18% | 31% | 37% | 3.89        | 1.10        |
| Performance targets are cascaded to the management and staff of the county through the PMS                           | 6% | 11% | 14% | 28% | 41% | 3.88        | 1.22        |
| PMS processes and documentation are simple for managers and employees to make them part of their day-to-day practice | 4% | 8%  | 13% | 33% | 42% | 4.01        | 1.11        |
| Employee performance measurement is aligned to the organization goals and reflect work needs                         | 7% | 3%  | 8%  | 33% | 49% | 4.15        | 1.13        |
| Employees understand how their work contributes to the organizational performance                                    | 4% | 10% | 9%  | 33% | 44% | 4.04        | 1.14        |
| Employees are participate in setting performance parameters and targets                                              | 3% | 8%  | 13% | 32% | 44% | 4.06        | 1.09        |
| Our performance appraisal is based on delivery of particular results and focuses on the process                      | 2% | 7%  | 12% | 31% | 48% | 4.15        | 1.03        |
| Frequent performance feedback is provided and a comprehensive performance data maintained for each employee          | 5% | 7%  | 12% | 36% | 41% | 4.01        | 1.12        |
| Training programs are designed for continuous supervisors training to improve their appraisal skills                 | 5% | 7%  | 17% | 30% | 41% | 3.95        | 1.15        |
| <b>Average</b>                                                                                                       |    |     |     |     |     | <b>4.02</b> | <b>1.12</b> |

From the findings, 68% of the respondents agreed that employees are involved in developing the Performance Management System (PMS) (mean = 3.89  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.10), suggesting moderate engagement during system design. Additionally, 69% agreed that performance targets are effectively cascaded to both management and staff through the PMS (mean = 3.88  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.22), indicating a strong link between organizational goals and individual roles. Simplicity in PMS design emerged as a strength, with 75% of respondents agreeing that its processes and documentation are user-friendly, allowing managers and employees to integrate them into daily routines (mean = 4.01  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.11). Notably, 82% of respondents agreed that performance metrics are aligned with organizational goals and reflect actual work requirements (mean = 4.15  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.13), which emphasizes strategic alignment and relevance. Additionally, 77% reported understanding on how their individual contributions influence the overall organizational performance (mean = 4.04  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.14). Similarly, 76% of respondents indicated participation in setting their performance parameters and targets

(mean = 4.06  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.09), suggesting a participatory and transparent appraisal process. Regarding the appraisal mechanism, 79% agreed that evaluations are based on clear, results-oriented criteria (mean = 4.15  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.03). Additionally, 77% affirmed that feedback is regularly provided and performance data is well documented for each employee (mean = 4.01  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.12). Lastly, 71% of respondents agreed that continuous training is provided to enhance supervisors' appraisal competencies (mean = 3.95  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.15). The overall average mean across all items was 4.02 on a five-point scale, with a standard deviation of 1.12, suggesting that most respondents agree that robust performance management practices are in place and are positively influencing employee performance in City County Governments.

These findings are consistent with Okello and Wamwayi (2022) who emphasized that a participatory performance management system that aligns individual roles with organizational goals, incorporates feedback mechanisms, and supports supervisory training, significantly enhances employee accountability and performance in public service settings. Moreover, Nzioki and Ombui (2023) argue that performance systems rooted in clarity, fairness, and engagement cultivate a results-driven culture, ultimately improving service delivery within county governments. The current study concurs with Agmadige, Kirui and Njeru (2022) in their argument that the purpose of performance appraisal is to improve the performance of employees and ultimately the overall organization. Most of the city counties activated the performance appraisals processes during promotion.



**Figure: 4.1 Overall Response for Performance Management Practice**

Figure 4.1 demonstrates strong overall satisfaction with Performance Management Practices, with 66% of respondents expressing positive views (28% agree, 38% strongly agree) compared to only 12% showing disagreement (4% strongly disagree, 8% disagree) and 12% were not sure. This overwhelmingly positive response aligns perfectly with the detailed findings showing an average mean of 4.02 across all performance management indicators, reflecting consistent agreement that robust practices are in place. The data reveals particular strengths in

strategic alignment, with 82% agreeing that performance metrics align with organizational goals, and in the clarity of appraisal processes, with 79% confirming evaluations are on clear and results-oriented criteria. The relatively low standard deviation of 1.12 suggests a consensus among respondents. The high agreement rates across participatory elements indicate that the county government has successfully implemented a comprehensive and engaging performance management system that effectively bridges individual contributions with organizational objectives. Thus, supporting the conclusion that these practices are positively influencing employee performance in the City County Governments in Kenya. Performance management systems (PMS) in City County Governments demonstrated inconsistency in application. While data collected indicated that performance appraisal exists in all City County Governments, its utility is varied. In the four City County Government, appraisals were primarily for promotions, and staff involvement in target setting was limited. However, the HR Directors noted improvements in involving staff in PMS design and feedback loops.

**Table 4.3: Qualitative Descriptive Statistics - Performance Management Practice**

| Indicator                                | % Agree/Strongly Agree | Mean | SD   |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|------|------|
| Metrics aligned to organizational goals  | 82%                    | 4.15 | 1.13 |
| Staff participate in target setting      | 76%                    | 4.06 | 1.09 |
| Continuous performance feedback provided | 77%                    | 4.01 | 1.12 |
| PMS is easy to understand and use        | 75%                    | 4.01 | 1.11 |

Qualitative data (table 4.3) indicates that 82% of respondents agreed that performance metrics align with organizational goals. Additionally, 76% stated they participate in setting performance parameters, and 77% reported receiving feedback on performance. These findings echo those by Jonyo, Jonyo and Manyara (2018), who assert that the level of involvement, understanding, support, alignment of goals, how SMART the goals are and the ability to give feedback, precipitate the implementation of the performance management. According to Munywoki and Kangure (2023), devolved governments in Kenya often lack capacity among supervisors to implement the performance management system effectively and training was required for the appraisers on how to provide effective and constructive feedback. The findings by Mwandihi, Iravo and Sakwa (2018), also support allowing the employees to set their targets by involving them in the entire appraisal process. Performance management is a continuous process where continuous supervisory training is essential to embed a performance culture that enhances accountability and service delivery.

#### 4.3 Descriptive statistics for Employee Performance

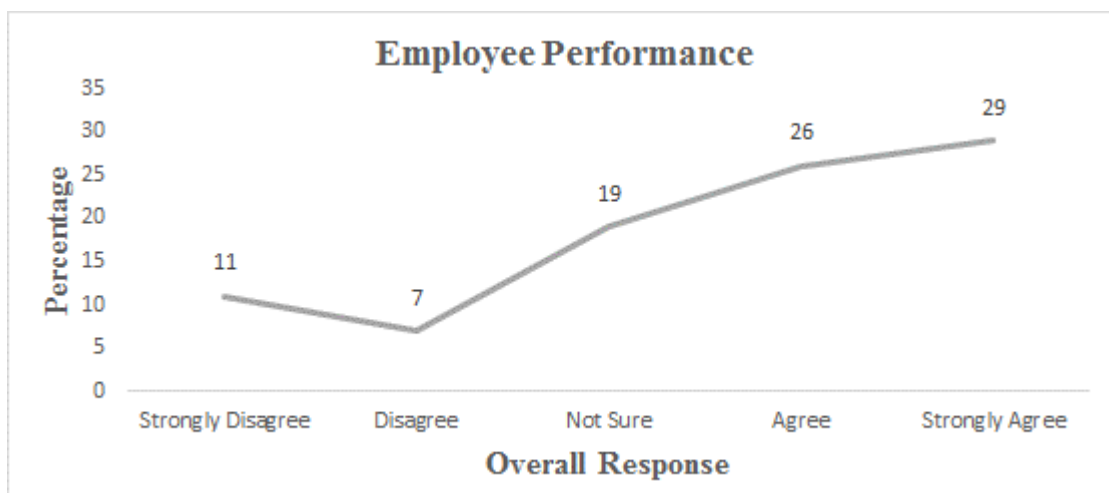
The study sought to establish the Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya. The results are as presented in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics - Employee Performance**

| Indicators                                                                                       | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | Mean        | S D         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------|-------------|
| Employees provide timely service to customers                                                    | 0%  | 3%  | 16% | 44% | 37% | 4.14        | 0.80        |
| We adhere to the service charter to provide services                                             | 0%  | 1%  | 11% | 49% | 38% | 4.25        | 0.69        |
| We have minimal customer complaints in our county                                                | 3%  | 11% | 16% | 38% | 32% | 3.86        | 1.09        |
| Our work culture emphasizes effective service delivery                                           | 6%  | 8%  | 10% | 31% | 46% | 4.03        | 1.17        |
| Employees are held accountable for achieving performance goals and meeting customer expectations | 3%  | 9%  | 37% | 37% | 14% | 3.50        | 0.96        |
| Employees ensure that quality services are provided to customers                                 | 36% | 18% | 27% | 9%  | 10% | 2.39        | 1.33        |
| We carry out customer satisfaction surveys twice a year                                          | 2%  | 3%  | 12% | 16% | 66% | 4.41        | 0.98        |
| Our customer survey feedback is always positive                                                  | 16% | 13% | 39% | 8%  | 24% | 3.10        | 1.35        |
| We use the customer survey feedback to improve our services                                      | 31% | 13% | 18% | 14% | 24% | 2.86        | 1.57        |
| <b>Average</b>                                                                                   |     |     |     |     |     | <b>3.62</b> | <b>1.10</b> |

From the table, 81% of the respondents agreed that employees provide timely services to customers (mean = 4.14  $\approx$  4, SD = 0.80), indicating a strong commitment to prompt service delivery. Additionally, 87% confirmed adherence to the county's service charter when delivering services (mean = 4.25  $\approx$  4, SD = 0.69), reflecting a well-established framework for guiding public service standards. A moderate 70% of respondents agreed that customer complaints in the county are minimal (mean = 3.86  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.09), which suggests relative satisfaction with service quality. Moreover, 77% agreed that the county's work culture prioritizes effective service delivery (mean = 4.03  $\approx$  4, SD = 1.17), showing a clear institutional emphasis on performance-driven values. However, only 51% of respondents agreed that employees are consistently held accountable for meeting goals and expectations (mean = 3.50  $\approx$  4, SD = 0.96), which may imply a need for more robust accountability mechanisms. Notably, the item regarding employee commitment to ensuring high-quality service received a low level of agreement, with only 19% affirming this statement and a mean of 2.39  $\approx$  2 (SD = 1.33), suggesting a significant gap in quality assurance practices. Encouragingly, 82% of respondents reported that the county conducts customer satisfaction surveys biannually (mean = 4.41  $\approx$  4, SD = 0.98), which is critical for evaluating public service effectiveness. Nonetheless, only 32%

indicated that the feedback from these surveys is consistently positive (mean =  $3.10 \approx 3$ , SD = 1.35), and an even lower 38% agreed that the feedback is used to improve services (mean =  $2.86 \approx 3$ , SD = 1.57). These results highlight disconnection between customer feedback collection and its application in performance improvement. The overall average mean score across the employee performance indicators was 3.62 with a standard deviation of 1.10. This indicates a moderately positive perception of employee performance within the City County Governments, with key strengths in timely service and adherence to service standards. However, there are areas that clearly need attention, particularly in quality assurance, accountability, and the effective use of customer feedback. These findings are consistent with Shuriye and Wambua (2020), who argue that while many county governments in Kenya have invested in service delivery structures; gaps in feedback utilization and employee accountability continue to hinder sustained performance improvements. Similarly, Agmadige, Kiriimi and Njeru (2023) contend that the best approach to improve performance is by dealing with real-time problems and real-time experiences at work while getting direction and feedback from the management.



**Figure: 4.2 Overall Response for Employee Performance**

Figure 4.2 reveals a moderate but positive response toward Employee Performance in City County Governments, with 55% of respondents expressing agreement (26% agree, 29% strongly agree) while 18% showed disagreement (11% strongly disagree, 7% disagree) and 19% were not sure. This measured satisfaction level corresponds directly with the detailed findings showing an average mean of 3.62, indicating that while basic performance standards are being met, there are significant opportunities for improvement in service delivery excellence. The data demonstrates notable strengths in foundational service elements, with 87% adhering to service charters, 81% providing timely services, and 82% conducting regular customer satisfaction surveys, suggesting a solid institutional framework for performance management. However, critical performance gaps emerge in key areas, particularly in quality assurance where only 19% demonstrated consistent commitment to high-quality service (mean

= 2.39), accountability mechanisms with just 51% reporting consistent goal accountability, and of most concern, feedback utilization where only 38% agreed that customer feedback is used for service improvement (mean = 2.86) compared to 32% receiving positive feedback. The standard deviation of 1.10 indicates considerable variation in performance experiences across the county, highlighting disconnection between the county's capacity to collect performance data through surveys and service charters and its ability to translate this information into meaningful service improvements. This suggests that while the structural foundations for good performance exist, the execution and continuous improvement mechanisms require substantial strengthening.

#### 4.4 Inferential Statistical Findings

The study used inferential analysis to examine the relationships between the study variables and test the research hypotheses. While descriptive statistics provided a summary of the data, inferential statistics allowed for generalization of the findings from the sample (Management employees) to the wider population (City County Governments). This section presents the results of regression models, and simple linear regression analysis. The study objective guided the analysis and employed a 5% significance level of confidence to determine the statistical significance of performance management practice on Employee Performance in the City County Governments. The study sought to investigate the causal effect of the independent variable (Performance Management Practice) on the dependent variable (Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya). The findings represent the model of fitness, ANOVA tests and the regression of coefficients.

#### 4.5 Effect of Performance Management Practice on Employee Performance

The objective was to analyse the effect of Performance Management Practice on Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya. The analysis used coefficients of the linear regression model between Performance Management Practice and Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya. The analysis started by testing the equivalent researchable hypothesis of the effect of Performance Management Practice on Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya.

**Hypothesis: H<sub>0</sub>:** Performance Management Practice has no significant effect on Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya.

**Table 4.5: Model Summary for Performance Management Practice and Employee Performance**

| Model of fitness |          |                   |                            |
|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| R                | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| .680a            | 0.463    | 0.460             | 0.315                      |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Management Practice

The regression results presented in table 4.5 indicate a strong and positive influence of Performance Management Practice on Employee Performance as shown by the correlation coefficient (R=0.680). The coefficient of determination (R square = 0.463) indicates that

46.3% of the variance in employee performance in the City County Governments in Kenya is attributed Performance Management Practice while the remaining 53.7% of the variance in employee performance is explained by other factors not included in this model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.460 confirms that after adjusting for sample size and model complexity, the model still explains 46% variation on employee performance, an indication that the model is a good fit and has a powerful explanatory power. The standard error estimate of 0.315 suggests that the prediction errors of the model were relatively small, an implication that the model was reliable in predicting employee performance. This means that almost half of the improvements in Employee Performance in the City County Governments links directly to how they manage their Performance Management. This indicates that almost half of the improvements in service delivery and operational efficiency within the City County Governments is a result of how the performance management system designed, implemented, planned, monitored, and evaluated.

**Table 4.6: ANOVA for Performance Management Practice and Employee Performance**

| ANOVA      |                |     |             |         |       |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------|
|            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.  |
| Regression | 15.255         | 1   | 15.255      | 153.463 | .000b |
| Residual   | 17.695         | 200 | 0.099       |         |       |
| Total      | 32.95          | 201 |             |         |       |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance in City County Governments in Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), Performance management practice

The ANOVA results further demonstrate that the regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 153.463$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The high F-statistic relative to the critical F-value ( $153.463 > 3.909$ ) confirms the model's goodness of fit. Since the value of the level of significance is lower than the conventional threshold of 0.05, the study concludes that Performance Management Practice has a significant effect on Employee Performance in the City County Governments in Kenya. We reject the null hypothesis that Performance Management Practice has no effect on Employee Performance in the City County Governments in Kenya.

**Table 4.7: Regression Coefficient Results for Performance Management Practice and Employee Performance**

| Regression of Coefficients      |                             |            |                           |        |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|
|                                 | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |        |
|                                 | $\beta$                     | Std. Error | $\beta$                   | t      |
| Constant                        | 1.248                       | 0.229      |                           | 5.444  |
| Performance management practice | 0.703                       | 0.057      | 0.680                     | 12.388 |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya

## b. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Management Practice

The regression coefficients results in Table 4.7 further support these findings. The constant value of 1.248 with a significance value of  $p=0.000$  implies that when Performance Management Practice is held constant at zero, employee performance would remain at 1.248 units. The unstandardized beta coefficient Kenya ( $\beta = 0.703$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) shows that Performance Management Practice has a positive and statistically significant effect on Employee Performance in the City County Governments in. This means that a unit increase in effective Performance Management Practice such as clear target setting, timely appraisals, feedback, and corrective actions results in an average 0.703-unit increase in the overall Employee Performance score in City County Governments, holding all other factors constant. The standardized beta coefficient ( $\beta = 0.680$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) further indicates Performance Management Practice had a strong positive influence on employee performance in the City County Governments in Kenya. The t-value of 12.388 and significance level of  $p=0.000$  confirms that the influence was statistically significant. This also confirms that Performance Management Practice is a major determinant of employee performance in the City County Governments in Kenya. The resulting regression equation is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \text{ (Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya = } 1.248 + 0.703 * \text{ Performance Management Practice)}$$

These findings underscores the importance of robust performance management systems for enhancing accountability, service quality, and staff productivity in the City County Governments. According to Gichuki and Ndiritu (2022), effective Performance Management Practice fosters a culture of responsibility and clear alignment of individual goals with institutional priorities. Similarly, Mutua and Karanja (2021) note that transparent performance appraisals build trust among employees, which motivates them to achieve higher standards of service delivery. Moreover, strong Performance Management Practices identifies and addresses underperformance proactively, thus promoting continuous improvement and learning within teams. Mwanzia and Kimani (2023) found that counties with structured performance review framework achieve faster policy implementation and better resource utilization. In addition, Otieno and Kiptoo (2024) argue that feedback and recognition mechanisms within performance management systems boost employee morale, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment. This positive relationship portrays the existence of broader public sector governance reforms in Kenya, which emphasize results-oriented management and evidence-based decision-making. Ndegwa and Wafula (2020) contend that performance contracting, a key component of devolved governance framework in Kenya, has significantly contributed to improved accountability and citizen-focused services when well implemented.

#### 4.6 Hypothesis Testing

The acceptance/rejection format is that, if the p value is less than 0.05, the study rejects  $H_0$  but if it is more than 0.05, the  $H_0$  is accepted. The null hypothesis  $H_0$  was that the effect of Performance Management Practice on Employee Performance in City County Governments in

Kenya is not statistically significant. The study rejects the null hypotheses, since all p-values were less than 0.05 and thus, the effect of Performance Management Practice on Employee Performance in City County Governments in Kenya is positively and statistically significant.

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

The study findings demonstrate the presence of Performance Management Practices in the City County Governments in Kenya. It is also evident from the study findings that City County Governments in Kenya have Performance Management Systems but only a few of the managerial staff were involved in its development. There was inconsistency in the execution of performance management processes with appraisals being primarily for promotion. Staff involvement and target setting was limited while there was partiality in the cascading of the performance targets. The findings of the descriptive statistics indicate that City County Governments in Kenya have not given sufficient attention to the internal mechanisms through which weaknesses in performance management practices affect employee performance and thereby service delivery. The inferential statistical findings revealed that a unit increase in Performance Management Practice such as clarity in target settings, timely appraisals, and feedback and corrective actions results in an average unit increase of 0.703 in the overall Employee Performance score in City County Governments in Kenya all other factors being constant. This is a clear indication that Performance Management Practice has a positive and statistically significant effect on Employee Performance.

### **5.1 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concluded that the strong descriptive and inferential statistical results underscore the strong relationship between Performance Management Practice and Employee Performance highlighting the role of participatory goal-setting, clear performance metrics, and timely feedback in driving organizational efficiency. A well-designed and properly implemented performance management system, clear performance measurements, and results-oriented appraisal directly contribute to Employee Performance and improved service delivery. The regression results clearly demonstrate that effective Performance Management Practice is a critical driver of Employee Performance in the City County Governments in Kenya. A robust Performance Management System is important in enhancing accountability, service quality and staff productivity. The findings confirm that Performance Management Practice is a major determinant of employee performance in the City County Governments in Kenya. While the structural foundations for good employee performance and service delivery exist, the execution and continuous improvement mechanisms require substantial strengthening.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

The study recommends that City County Governments in Kenya strengthen Performance Management Practice by embedding a performance culture that promotes accountability, effective resource utilization, and improved service delivery. This requires comprehensive performance management systems aligned with County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), supported by clear goal setting, timely appraisals, constructive feedback, and continuous performance monitoring. The study further recommends continuous training of

appraisers and greater use of digital technologies to facilitate real-time monitoring and evaluation. The findings support and strengthen the Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) theory by providing empirical evidence for its theoretical propositions. They also highlight the importance of aligning policy intentions with operational realities to minimize implementation disparities. Practically, the findings inform HR professionals on the value of robust performance management systems in enhancing employee performance and service delivery. The study also contributes empirical evidence to existing knowledge and provides a reference point for future researchers.

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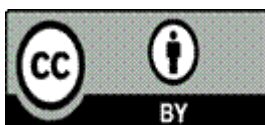
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