



# **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COACHING AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN LEVEL -FOUR HOSPITALS OPERATING WITHIN THE SOUTH-RIFT REGION IN KENYA**

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## **Abstract**

*The health sector in Kenya is one of the key segments that provide essential services to the public. Unmatched skills set to job requirements are assumed to have a significant impact on the performance of employees and the sector in general. The effectiveness of employee training and development programs such as coaching can bridge the gap between job requirements and employees' ability to perform. However, it is not yet clear to what extent coaching techniques influence employee performance. Therefore, the study sought to assess the relationship between coaching and employee performance in Level Four Hospitals operating within the South-Rift Region in Kenya. It was anchored on human capital theory, knowledge-based theory of the firm and social learning theory. Correlational and survey research designs were employed with a target population of 663 medical personnel drawn from 13 Level Four Hospitals. A sample size of 249 was determined while stratified simple random sampling method used to pick the respondents. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaire whose reliability was tested through a pilot study where an average Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.7625 was obtained. Content, construct and face validity were ensured by carrying out a detailed literature*

*review and consultation with subject experts. Descriptive statistics comprising mean and standard deviation were used to categorize data while the study hypothesis was tested using correlation coefficient. The study established that coaching activities played an important role in establishing a positive and significant relationship ( $R = 0.623$ ,  $\beta_1 = 0.507$ ,  $R^2 = 0.388$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with employee performance. Meaning there was a significant relationship between coaching and employee performance showing that Level four hospitals in the South-Rift region in Kenya should invest in coaching activities to improve in their performance. The findings may be useful to hospital management, human resource departments, scholars and researchers in the field of human resources management and human resource development*

*Keywords: Employee; Training; Coaching; Health Sector; Performance*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Coaching is the art of giving career advice or instructions in a particular situation with the aim of improving performance of certain individuals, (Garner, 2012). A study by Mutua (2017) on assessing the influence of human resource management practices on employee performance in the health sector in Machakos revealed that training could be conducted through different techniques such as on-the-job training therefore equipping employees practically in a working environment. According to (Hassan, 2016), the techniques applied during training include job rotation, orientation, mentoring, coaching, and demonstration.

Iqbal, Ahmad, and Javaid (2014) study at Peshawar city in Pakistan results showed a significant strong relationship between employee training techniques and workforce performance contributing to an upsurge in personal and organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

From the Africa perspective, the formal education system does not adequately teach specific job skills for a given position in a given organization. Few employees have the skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies needed to work effectively in most countries. Therefore, most workers need extensive training to obtain essential skills that are potentially important to promote organizational performance (Garner, 2012). Motlokoa *et al.* (2018) study on the effect of training on workers' performance in Lesotho found that most Lesotho banking sectors did training to sharpen employees' skills, abilities, and knowledge. Training makes an employee feel motivated, confident, and satisfied with their job, which is linked to the improvement of the organization's overall performance.

Wachira and Smith (2013) linked development operations and training of workers to the growth of a business in Barclays Bank because training on the job made staff to support development activities leading to growth.

Githinji (2014), in anticipation to understand how training influences the performance of employees, training method adopted should be determined in its cost-effectiveness and practicality. Subsequently, the employee trainer must be more competent and have experience sharing and transferring practical knowledge in the easiest way possible.

A study by Onyango and Wanyoike (2014) on the influence of training on employee performance of health workers in Siaya county established that workshops, seminars, and conferences were the most preferred training methods. However, the study also established that even though these techniques attracted high cost, it takes a shorter period than the on-the-job training. Hence there was need to investigate specifically coaching training techniques for sustainable performance. There exist a contradictory concept of training and employee performance. This study therefore sought to investigate the relationship between coaching and employee performance in level four hospitals within South Rift Region in Kenya.

### **Problem Statement**

Universal health care is among the governments' big four agenda and a key pillar for Vision 2030. The government has considered the health sector an area of priority in ensuring that it is efficient in delivering services. To ensure that the health sector functions optimally well, a health policy document was prepared in 2012 detailing the guidelines on achieving accessible and quality health care for the citizens. This was aligned to the constitutional requirements and global health commitments in the form of sustainable development goals. Since the adoption of the policy document, there has been very little change in the health sector in terms of service delivery, with WHO indicating that employee performance in the health sector was below 50%. This is largely attributed to the shrinking workforce in the sector coupled with poor job satisfaction and low employee motivation, among others which directly affect service delivery. Some of these issues have been linked with a lack of proper training and development techniques aimed at imparting the medical personnel with relevant skills to enable them to perform their duties well. Several studies have examined the relationship between training techniques and employees' performance. However, the findings were found to be inconsistent. The studies have also not exhaustively evaluated all the training techniques such as coaching consequently, the need to establish the relationship between coaching and employee performance of level four hospitals in the south rift region.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

The study was supported by the human capital theory developed by Becker (1993); the theory emphasizes that training and development are necessary and a worthwhile investment. Since the 1950s, researchers have examined this theory and its application in organizations, specifically assessing the value of human capital in the hospital setup. They have realized that there is no single model that organizations can use in empowering employees.

There is a new perspective on human capital that argues that the perfect motivation of the labor force leads to the theory of self-determination (Nemeth, 2017). Those motivated persons are always eager to acquire and learn better skills and employ special knowledge and integrate these outcomes into their working habits to enhance the company's effectiveness. Thus, the importance of this theory to the research involves the recognition of employees as important assets to the organization who should be given the right set of skills through various techniques for them to perform efficiently and effectively for optimum organizational output. Therefore coaching and employee performance (the study's dependent variable ) was supported by this theory.

Knowledge-based theory of the firm as advanced by Winters (1987) explored explicit knowledge claiming that it replicates faster, is less costly, and most importantly easier in comparison to tacit knowledge. He also added that the transfers of this knowledge could only be successfully achieved through an interaction involving face-to-face relations such as apprentices. The theory further talks about the efficient exploitation of knowledge in an organization and the creation of modern knowledge through training operations. Organizations are potentially powerful in transmitting tacit knowledge to different epistemic societies, which are occupational or functional clusters whose group members have similar experiences regarding professionalism and training. The expertise knowledge integrates mentors and coaches who have a critical task when it comes to enhancing employees' performance. Therefore, the theory supports the study in determining the relationship between coaching and employee performance in level four hospitals within the South-Rift region.

Social learning theory developed by Bandura (1977) encourages the development of a good learning environment for employees to build their skills and knowledge. It emphasizes that individuals learn through imitation, observation, and modelling from people they perceive to be knowledgeable or influence others. The theory is based on the assumption that learning can occur by observing other people's actions, emotional reactions, and attitudes. Observation enables persons to gain knowledge from the behaviour of others where they acquire new ideas about what could happen if they act differently or in similarity to them (Adenyo, 2016).

Chowdhury (2006) explores the theory of social learning, claiming that its model characteristics influence attention, and each learner should become aware of the behaviours and skills they should learn and observe. Learners can absorb the lessons they know, and their ability to retain these learning outcomes is influenced by retention. Motor reproduction refers to observing behaviours to determine if they have a similar effect in the established model underpinning. The potential ability to replicate similar skills and behaviours usually depends on the beginner's extent of remembrance of the behaviour or skill. In hospital set-up, the strategies used in training, including coaching, promote employees' ability to get skills relevant in the job. Therefore, this theory is significantly relevant to the research because it integrates the learning of important skills by individuals from the medical department as they perform their tasks. It supports the objective of establishing the relationship between coaching and employee performance of level four hospitals in south rift

### **Coaching and Employee performance**

Today's firms are developing their human capital skills to improve their performance and effectively compete in the market. Thus, by introducing coaching, they target employees in their corporations, hoping to improve each one's performance. Workplace coaching is well-defined as a mechanism used to effectively transfer knowledge imparted to an employee as an essential aspect to cultivate the workplace performance and workers' ability (Martin, 2005). Garner (2012) argues that coaching is valued for its capacity to enable managers and employees to learn, develop and enhance their personal and organizational effectiveness. Coaching influences employees' job satisfaction and interpersonal relationships with their seniors and themselves, thus promoting a better organizational culture and improving employee performance. Coaching enables an employee to develop under the supervision of the management, who motivates and assists the employee in achieving their full potential by learning more skills and experience regarding their job duties and tasks in the organization.

Moreover, Selman (2012) argues that for a company to differentiate itself from others, it should have the capability to introduce and maintain suitable changes, develop competencies for creating and maintaining long-term relationships, and it should have integrity and consistency with people who reflect their responsibilities and values. These specifications form the basics of the coaching culture and the principles for employee and organizational effectiveness in this aggressive environment where tasks are gaining in complexity.

Neupane (2015) sought to establish the effects of coaching and mentoring on employee performance in the hotel industry in the United Kingdom. From the findings coaching was perceived as an efficient skills development approach that favorably impacts organizations and

aligns employees with organizational goals. When firms appropriately integrate coaching into their daily routine, the choice of the coach is essential. Selecting the right coach for the coaching sessions is the main determinant of the success of the coaching intervention. Coaching is significant to any organization that promotes employee job satisfaction and high performance. It was also established that coaching and mentoring exercise have a positive correlation with employee performance. The study established that coaching and mentoring had a positive statistical relationship with employee performance

The application of coaching techniques in enhancing employee performance is among the potential ways of building trust between the human resource system and the workers and thus high performance. Coaches with high-level expertise can assist in improving employee skills, procuring resources to enhance self-knowledge and endorse behavioral change, and encourage self-development and accomplishments (Allan, 2013).

Sufficient empirical literature validates workplace coaching and individual assessment tools to identify individual needs. Coaching has also been proved to have a positive statistical relationship with employee performance (Allsworth & Griffin, 2015). Downey, Dalidowicz and Mason (2015) examined the effectiveness of coaching as a learning method and established that coaching is a work-study training method with both on the job and classroom training. Before coaching, the employer authenticates those trained to have essential knowledge of the whole process and operation. Next, the person offering training demonstrates a key process level, accentuating key steps and safety issues. Senior employees offer the coaching a chance to perform all the processes successfully until the apprentice is fully satisfied safely and properly.

A study by Coutu and Kauffman (2012) on the realities of coaching established that majority of coaches use interviews as a tool to understand the needs of their clients; this was up to 86% of the reported cases. The coaches did the pre-diagnostic work, and assessments aimed at expanding the awareness of both the coach and client. This enabled them to articulate key areas where goals and policies on coaching are formulated. It was established that if coaching exercise is effectively carried out in an organization, employee performance improves, hence establishing a direct relationship between coaching and performance.

Budhoo and Spurgeon (2012) carried a study to assess the views and understanding of the health care practitioners, leadership attitude and role of coaching as a development tool for clinical leadership. The study recognized coaching as the most popular method used for leadership development in many organizations but less in the development of clinical leaders in healthcare. From the findings, it was established that the majority of the respondents felt that coaching was a useful tool in developing managerial leadership. However, the majority of them

had concerns on matters of confidentiality and the match between the coach and the coached. The findings further established that the respondents preferred a coach from outside the organization and one who had experience and healthcare background.

A study on the effect of coaching on workers' performance in commercial banks in Kenya by Muriithi (2016) established a positive relationship between the two variables. The findings established that coaching and the coaching environment affected employee performance to a large extent. The survey further revealed that effective employee appraisal feedback was important in informing the need for employee coaching.

From the above-reviewed literature, it is evident that coaching and mentoring programs positively affect employee and organization performance. This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between coaching and employee performance of level four hospitals within south rift region.

## **Employee Performance**

Organizational development and growth are influenced by numerous factors, including training and development, which plays a considerable role. Professional development and training play an important role in enhancing employee service delivery and, ultimately, the organization's overall performance. Existing empirical literature offers evidence of the influence of training and development techniques on employee performance. Some studies have examined organizational performance resulting from employee performance (Alasadi & Al Sabbagh, 2015), while some have looked at it broadly as organizational performance (Adongo, 2013). The former is at the individual employee level, while the latter is at the organizational level. However, the focus of the present study is on employee performance.

Makhamara, Waiganjo and Kwasira, (2016) suggest that the competencies of workers change through development techniques and effective training. These techniques improve the general performance of workers in executing their duties and promote their skills, knowledge, and attitude towards meeting the future demands in the job, thus promoting the sustainable performance of the firm. If the training techniques are implemented performance of the organization appropriately will also improve (Garner, 2012). However, Hage (2017) argued that training might not be the only technique that can be used to improve employee performance, but it has a significant influence as compared to other techniques. Therefore, it is recommended that the organization constantly adopt new methods and techniques to improve the performance of the employees.

According to Al-Ahmadi (2009), training and development can positively impact medical personnel job performances. However, the author argues that for training and development to

impact medical personnel's job performance positively, it ought to address the personnel needs and the changing circumstances in the medical profession. Training and development may positively impact medical personnel's job performances, but it has a profound positive influence only in conjunction with other factors.

### Conceptual Framework

The interplay between coaching and employee performance is shown in the Figure 1.

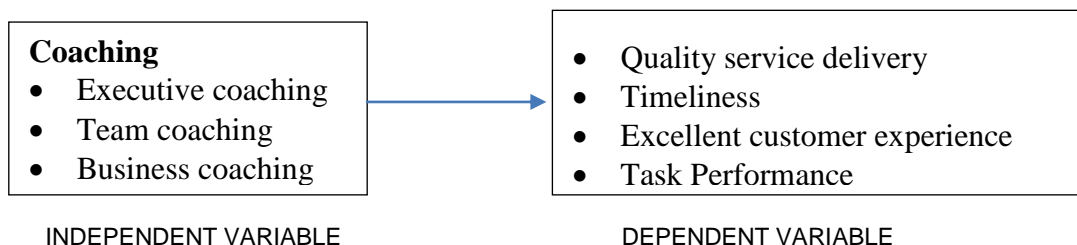


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Correlational and survey study research designs adopted was appropriate for the study in examining the relationship between variables under study. The study was carried out in the south rift region in Kenya in three counties; Kericho, Narok and Bomet. The area was selected for the study because of the large number(13) of level four hospitals where performance of majority of them is below average. The target population comprised of 663 health workers. A sample size of 249 was selected with Proportionate stratified sampling technique being employed to determine the sub-samples in each county. Simple random Sampling was then applied to select the respondents. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample size

County	Hospitals	Population	Sample
<b>Kericho</b>	Kericho District Hospital	92	34
	Sigowet Hospital	26	10
	Kapkatet Hospital	49	18
	London Hospital	34	13
<b>Bomet</b>	Longisa District Hospital	89	33
	Cheptalal Hospital	45	17
	Koiwa District Hospital	34	13
	Kapkoros District Hospital	49	18
	Sigor District Hospital	60	23



Narok	Table 1...	
	Kilgoris District Hospital	60
Narok District Hospital	75	28
Ololulung'a District Hospital	50	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>249</b>

Primary data on coaching and employee performance was obtained using a structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation analytical methods were used to summarize data while regression and correlation analysis employed to test the relationship between coaching and employee performance. Lastly before data was collected the respondents were informed about the procedures to be used in conducting the research and were requested for their consent. Respondents' opinions and ideas were respected and treated with utmost confidentiality. Generally, a highest degree of sincerity and openness regarding the aim and nature of the study was observed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Coaching and Employee Performance of Level four Hospitals

The objective was to determine the relationship between coaching and employee performance in level four hospitals within the South-Rift region. Hypothesis **H0<sub>1</sub>** stated; There is no significant relationship between coaching and employee performance in level four hospitals within the South-Rift region. **Model 1** was presented as;  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$ ; **Where** **Y** = Performance of Employee;  **$\beta_0$**  = Constant;  **$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$**  = Beta coefficient; **X<sub>1</sub>** = Executive Coaching; **X<sub>2</sub>** = Team Coaching and **X<sub>3</sub>** = Business Coaching;  **$\epsilon$**  = Error Term

Table 2. Model Summary for Regression Analysis for Coaching and Performance

Variable	No. of Observations	Beta	Standard Error	t-Statistic	p-value
<b>Constant</b>	227	3.771	0.136	27.787	
<b>Coaching</b>	227	0.507	0.029	17.568	.000 <sup>b</sup>
R =0.623					
R <sup>2</sup> =0.388					
F = 49.109					
Durbin Watson =1.487					

\*p<0.05

Table 2 indicates the regression analysis on the relationship between coaching and employee performance employees in level four hospitals in Kenya's South-Rift region. The value for Durbin-Watson (D=1.487) is also within the established 1- 3, indicating the

absence of autocorrelation in the sample taken. The relationship between coaching and performance was established to be positive and significant ( $R = 0.623$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Meaning there was a significant relationship between coaching and employee performance. Whenever Level four hospitals in the South-Rift region in Kenya invested in coaching activities, there was a significant improvement in their performance. The regression results further indicated that coaching significantly predicted employee performance ( $\beta_1 = 0.507$ ,  $t = 17.468$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), which means a unit increase in coaching investment produced a 0.507 variation in employee performance. The R squared value showed that coaching accounted for 38.8% of variation in performance ( $R^2 = 0.388$ ,  $F = 49.109$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This demonstrates that a disparity in employee performance (61.2%) is explained by other factors not captured in the model. The alternate hypothesis  $H_{a1}$  that there is a significant relationship between coaching and employee performance of Level Four Hospital in the South-Rift region in Kenya is accepted.

These findings support Downey, Neupane (2015), Dalidowicz and Mason (2015) who established a direct relationship between coaching and performance. Neupane (2015) also opined that for coaching to be effective, organizations should apply coaching techniques to improve employee performance by building trust between the human resource system and the workers. However, the findings contradicted those of Tabiu, Pangil and Othman (2016), Tuei and Saina (2015), who indicated that there were chances of having a negative influence between coaching and employee performance unless some conditions were critically observed. Similarly, a study by Muriithi (2016), Coutu and Kauffman (2012) and Bono, Purvanova, Towler and Peterson (2009) indicated that the type of coaching adopted by the organization influenced the coaching outcome.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study established coaching was regularly carried out to the top level, middle level and lower-level personnel, respectively, on a regular basis. This, in turn, led to employees acquiring the necessary skills required for carrying out their duties. The study further established that coaching was the most effective training technique used by a majority of the level four hospitals. Correlation results indicated a positive statistical relationship between coaching and performance of level four hospitals. Coaching has been established to have relationship with performance in hospitals and is an effective technique. Due to Covid 19 pandemic outbreak (2020 -2021) physical meetings which enhance coaching was affected. It will be therefore prudent carry out some studies to examine the relationship between emerging virtual techniques of coaching and performance of employees in hospitals and in other service

provision institutions.. It will also be of great importance to carry out further study with the aim of comparing the efficacy of e-coaching and physical coaching in service provision organizations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From the current findings, it is recommended that level four hospitals in the south rift region should adopt and implement human resource policies that may help them improve the efficiency of the training techniques. On coaching training techniques, the study recommended that the hospital should carry out regular appraisal exercises to identify knowledge and skill gaps. The findings could enable the management to identify the most suitable technique to yield better results coaching being a suitable technique.

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