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**Effect of Succession Planning and Employee Performance of Civil Registration Services in Eastern Region, Kenya**

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**ABSTRACT**

The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of succession planning on employee performance of civil registration services in Eastern Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to establish the effect of career management on employee performance of civil registration services in Eastern Kenya, determine the effect of training and development on employee performance of civil registration services in Eastern Kenya, establish the effect of delivery appraisal on employee performance of civil registration services in Eastern Kenya and examine the effect of diversity management on employee performance of civil registration services in Eastern Kenya. This study was based on career development theory, social exchange theory, talent management theory, and resource-based view theory to explain the relationship between the study variables. The population for the study was the 212 employees of civil registration services in Eastern Kenya. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and was cleaned, coded and analyzed for descriptive and inferential statistics by use of means, standard deviation, correlation and regression analyses using SPSS version 27. The data was analyzed through descriptive, correlation and regression analyses. The study summarized that succession planning practices, when considered collectively, have a significant positive effect on employee performance in Civil Registration Services of Eastern Region, Kenya. The study concluded that succession planning, when approached holistically through career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management, has a significant positive influence on employee performance in Civil Registration Services of Eastern Region, Kenya. The study recommends that Civil Registration Services should adopt an integrated succession planning approach by simultaneously strengthening career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management.

**Keywords:** *Succession planning, employee performance, career management, employee training, employee appraisal, diversity management, civil registration services*

**1. Introduction**

In the current era of globalization and heightened competition, employee performance has become a central determinant of organizational success, influencing productivity, innovation, adaptability, and service delivery outcomes. High-performing employees enhance operational efficiency and enable organizations to respond effectively to technological change, market dynamics, and customer expectations (Ali & Mehreen, 2020; Al Awadhi & Muslim, 2023). Their competence and commitment support the achievement of strategic objectives and strengthen institutional

competitiveness in increasingly complex business environments (Malokani et al., 2023). Consequently, organizations across sectors are placing greater emphasis on strategic human resource practices that enhance workforce capability and long-term performance sustainability.

Succession planning has emerged as a key strategic human resource practice aimed at identifying, developing, and preparing employees to assume critical organizational roles. Through systematic assessment of employee competencies and leadership potential, succession planning promotes smooth leadership transitions and reduces disruptions arising from retirements, promotions, or unexpected exits (Chapple, 2022; Allen, 2023). Empirical evidence from developed and emerging economies shows that integrating succession planning with career management, training, appraisal, and diversity management strengthens employee engagement, improves skill development, and enhances organizational resilience (Smalls, 2022; Brown, 2023; Kaliannan et al., 2023). These practices have been widely adopted sustain high levels of employee performance.

In the African and Kenyan contexts, succession planning has gained prominence as organizations seek to address leadership gaps, workforce diversity, and talent retention challenges. Studies indicate that African organizations increasingly rely on succession planning to build internal talent pipelines and improve employee productivity (Alhakeem & Qazi, 2022; Okwueze & Akanu, 2023). In Kenya, although succession planning is recognized as strategically important, implementation challenges such as political influence and nepotism have limited its effectiveness in some institutions (Mutunga, 2020). Nevertheless, public sector organizations are gradually adopting structured succession frameworks aligned with training, appraisal systems, and governance policies to improve professionalism, accountability, and service delivery performance (Kajwang, 2022; Itumbiri, 2022). Within Civil Registration Services in Eastern Kenya, succession planning is particularly critical due to the sector's responsibility for maintaining accurate population records and delivering timely citizen services. Increasing demand for digital transformation, service efficiency, and data integrity has intensified the need for skilled personnel and leadership continuity (Rajul, 2023).

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Numerous organizations globally have demonstrated the positive impact of effective succession planning on employee performance. For example, a study conducted by Al-Hussami and Abutayeh (2022) in Jordan found that succession planning significantly enhanced organizational performance, particularly when transformational leadership was present. Similarly, Li and Wang (2023) reported that succession planning in Chinese multinational corporations led to notable improvements in employee performance, showcasing a strong positive correlation. These examples underscore the importance of succession planning in driving organizational success and enhancing employee efficiency and effectiveness.

Conversely, there are instances where succession planning has not yielded the desired improvements in employee performance. For instance, a study by Puri and Aggarwal (2022) on Indian manufacturing firms revealed mixed results, where some organizations did not experience significant improvements despite implementing succession planning. In another case, research conducted by Li and Liu (2019) on state-owned enterprises in China highlighted challenges in succession planning due to bureaucratic constraints, leading to suboptimal employee performance

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outcomes. These examples illustrate that the effectiveness of succession planning can vary significantly depending on the context and implementation quality.

The contrasting outcomes in the effectiveness of succession planning across different contexts highlight the complexity and context-specific nature of this practice. While some organizations have reaped substantial benefits from robust succession planning, others have struggled due to poor implementation or contextual challenges. In the case of Civil Registration Services (CRS) in the Eastern region of Kenya, employee performance has been consistently below par, characterized by delayed service delivery, inaccurate record-keeping, lack of transparency, and low morale (Itumbiri, 2022). A report by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government (2023) indicated significant inefficiencies, including an average processing time for birth registrations far exceeding government targets and a higher-than-average error rate in registration records. The discrepancies observed between effective and ineffective succession planning underscore the need for a thorough investigation into its impact within specific organizational contexts. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the effect of succession planning on employee performance in Kenya, focusing specifically on civil registration in Eastern Kenya.

### **3. Research Objectives**

#### **3.1 General objective**

The general aim of this research was to assess the effect of succession planning on employee performance of Civil Registration Services in Eastern Region, Kenya.

#### **3.2 Specific objectives**

- i. To establish the effect of career management on employee performance of Civil Registration Services in Eastern Region, Kenya.
- ii. To determine the effect of training on employee performance of Civil Registration Services in Eastern Region, Kenya.
- iii. To assess the effect of employee appraisal on employee performance of Civil Registration Services in Eastern Region, Kenya.
- iv. To examine the effect of diversity management on employee performance of Civil Registration Services in Eastern Region, Kenya.

### **4. Literature Review**

#### **4.1 Theoretical Literature Review**

Career Development Theory, particularly Donald Super's Life-Span, Life-Space model, explains career growth as a continuous process shaped by personal attributes, social context, and evolving life roles. The theory emphasizes that individuals progress through distinct career stages and that self-concept plays a central role in shaping career decisions and performance outcomes (Pinnington et al., 2022; Varma et al., 2022). Although critics argue that the theory may not fully capture cultural diversity and structural constraints in non-Western contexts (Athanasou, 2022; McMahan & Watson, 2022), it remains relevant to this study by providing a framework for understanding how career management practices, training opportunities, performance appraisal

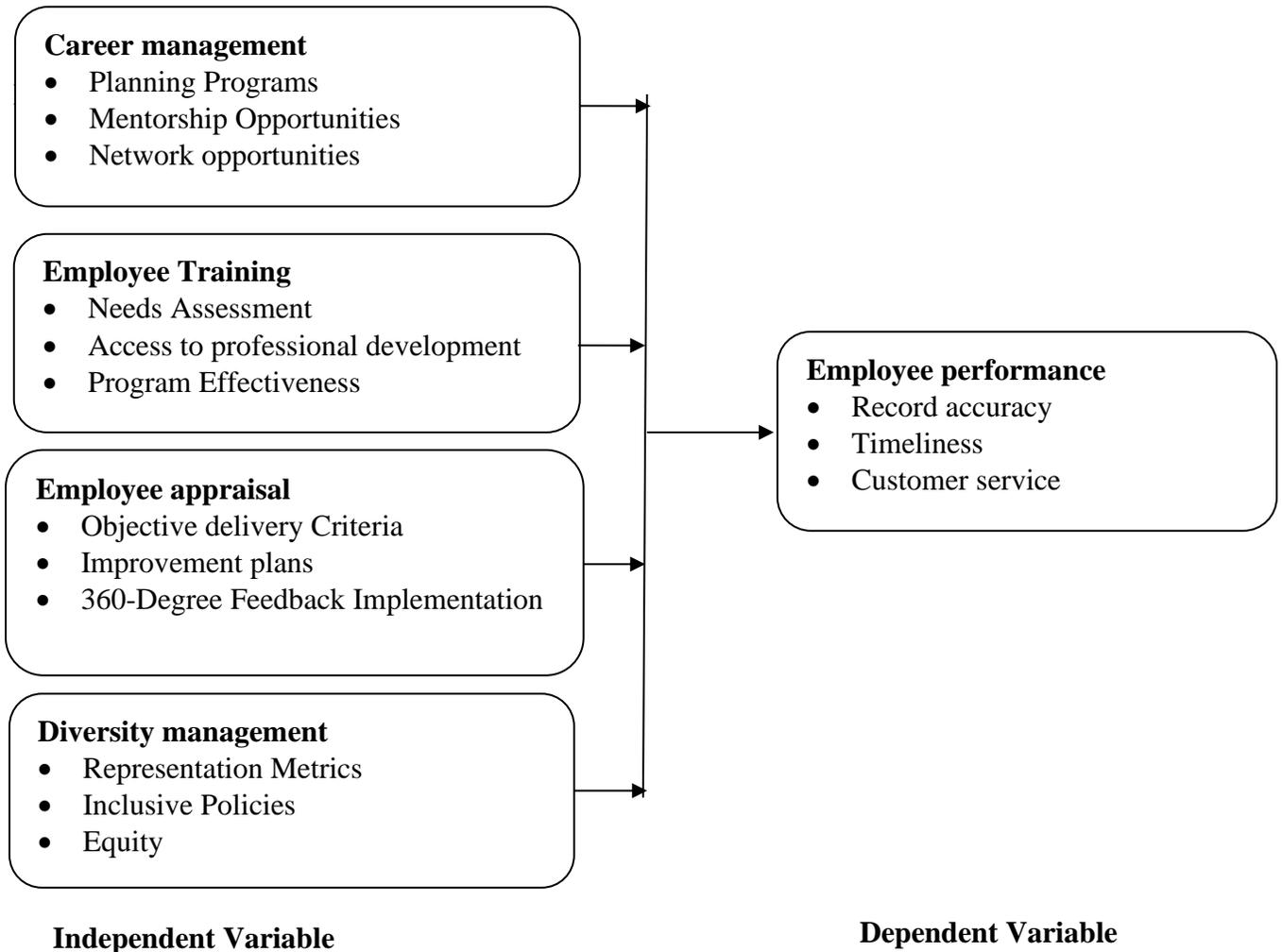


systems, and development pathways influence employee motivation, competence, and long-term performance in public sector institutions such as Civil Registration Services.

Social Exchange Theory explains workplace behavior as a reciprocal relationship in which employees and organizations exchange resources such as support, recognition, training opportunities, and job security for commitment, loyalty, and performance (Meira & Hancer, 2021). While the theory has been criticized for its assumption of rational decision-making and limited consideration of emotional and cultural factors (Chang, 2021; Kim et al., 2022), it offers useful insights into how organizational investments in career development, training programs, fair appraisal systems, and inclusive diversity practices generate positive employee responses. In the context of this study, employees who perceive organizational support through succession planning practices are more likely to reciprocate with improved performance, higher engagement, and stronger organizational commitment.

The Resource-Based View Theory posits that organizational performance and sustainability are driven by the effective management of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources, particularly human capital (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Although critics note challenges in operationalizing and empirically testing the VRIN framework (Zahra, 2021; Gerhart & Feng, 2021), the theory remains relevant by highlighting employees as strategic assets capable of generating long-term performance advantages. In this study, succession planning practices such as career management, training and development, performance appraisal, and diversity management represent strategic investments that strengthen employee capabilities, institutional knowledge, and service delivery capacity within Civil Registration Services in Eastern Kenya.

## 4.2 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## 5. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the relationship between succession planning practices and employee performance among Civil Registration Services employees in Eastern Kenya, targeting a population of 212 staff members who were purposively selected to participate in the study. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires based on a five-point Likert scale, with data collection preceded by a pilot study involving 10% of the target population to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient with a threshold of 0.7, while validity was ensured through construct and content validation procedures, expert review, and factor analysis. Data collection was conducted following ethical approval and respondent consent, with confidentiality and anonymity assured. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 to generate descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and multiple regression analyses, to

determine the effect of career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management on employee performance, as specified in the regression model.

## **6. Results and Discussion**

### **6.1 Descriptive statistics**

The descriptive results indicate that career management positively influences employee performance, with 64.9% of respondents agreeing on its effectiveness. Networking opportunities recorded the highest mean score ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ), while mentorship programs had the lowest rating ( $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ), suggesting uneven implementation of career development practices. Clear career progression plans showed moderate agreement ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ), indicating room for improvement in structured advancement pathways.

Findings on employee training revealed strong support for training as a performance driver, with 86.7% of respondents affirming its positive effect. Training needs assessments and relevant skills training recorded the highest means ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ ), while orientation training had the lowest mean score ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ), highlighting weaknesses in induction programs. Overall, continuous and targeted training emerged as a key contributor to employee competence and productivity.

Results on employee appraisal showed consistently high ratings, with 70.0% of respondents agreeing that appraisal practices enhance performance. Regular appraisals and provision of support during appraisal processes recorded the highest mean scores ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ ), while perceptions of fairness and transparency were slightly lower ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ), indicating some variability across departments.

Diversity management recorded the strongest level of agreement, with 91.8% of respondents affirming its positive influence on performance. Mechanisms for addressing diversity issues recorded the highest mean ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ ), while representation tracking was comparatively lower ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ). Overall, employee performance indicators showed high ratings for appraisal systems and motivational practices ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ ), confirming a strong positive association between succession planning practices and employee performance in Civil Registration Services in Eastern Kenya.

### **6.2 Correlation Analysis**

The correlation results in Table 1 show that all the independent variables—career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management—had significant positive relationships with employee performance at the 0.01 level. Career management and employee training both exhibited the strongest correlation with employee performance ( $r = .826$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that effective career planning and continuous training are highly associated with improved performance among employees of Civil Registration Services. Employee appraisal also demonstrated a strong positive correlation with performance ( $r = .707$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), while diversity management, though slightly weaker, still showed a meaningful positive relationship ( $r = .542$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings suggest that succession planning practices collectively contribute to better performance outcomes, though their strengths of association vary.



These results are consistent with prior empirical studies. Li et al. (2024) found that career management practices explained 43 percent of variance in employee performance in China, reinforcing the strong correlation observed in this study. Similarly, Salau and Nurudeen (2022) reported that structured training significantly enhanced employee skills and motivation, which aligns with the strong correlation between training and performance in the current findings. Chirchir and Koros (2021) also emphasized that regular and transparent appraisals improved motivation and alignment with organizational goals, supporting the positive link between appraisal and performance. Although diversity management had the weakest correlation, the results are still in line with Damer (2020), who noted that inclusive practices improve workplace collaboration and productivity. Collectively, these results highlight that effective succession planning practices, particularly career management and training, are critical drivers of employee performance in public sector organizations.

**Table 1: Correlation Results**

		Employee performance	Career management	Employee training	Employee appraisal	Diversity management
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Career management	Pearson Correlation	.826**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
Employee training	Pearson Correlation	.826**	.567**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
Employee appraisal	Pearson Correlation	.707**	.630**	.692**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
Diversity management	Pearson Correlation	.542**	.542**	.441**	.412**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=171

**6.3 Test of Hypothesis**

This section presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis. The analysis includes model fitness, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression coefficients to assess the strength, significance, and predictive power of the model.

**Table 2: Model Fitness**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.878 <sup>a</sup>	.771	.765	.20881

<sup>a</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Diversity management, Employee appraisal, Career management, Employee training



The model summary results in Table 2 show that the independent variables career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management jointly explained 77.1% ( $R^2 = 0.771$ ) of the variance in employee performance at Civil Registration Services. This demonstrates that the predictors used in the model are highly relevant in explaining variations in performance outcomes.

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.304	4	6.076	139.352	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7.238	166	.044		
	Total	31.542	170			

<sup>a</sup>. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

<sup>b</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), Diversity management, Employee appraisal, Career management, Employee training

The ANOVA results in Table 3 further confirm the robustness of the model. The F-statistic of 139.352 with a significance level of  $p < 0.001$  indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning that the independent variables collectively have a meaningful impact on employee performance. This implies that succession planning practices, when implemented together, significantly improve performance outcomes among employees.

**Table 4: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.119	.494		-2.265	.025
	Career management	.239	.057	.333	4.164	.000
	Employee training	.333	.081	.334	4.109	.000
	Employee appraisal	.383	.093	.214	4.096	.000
	Diversity management	.353	.126	.126	2.816	.005

<sup>a</sup>. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

The multiple regression model used is illustrated below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon,$$

$$Y = -1.119 + 0.239X_1 + 0.333X_2 + 0.383X_3 + 0.353X_4$$

The results in Table 4 show that all four variables have positive and statistically significant coefficients at the 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ ), meaning that improvements in any of these succession planning practices are associated with corresponding increases in employee performance. The negative constant  $-1.119$  indicates that in the absence of succession planning practices, employee performance would be low, implying that baseline performance in Civil Registration Services is largely dependent on the presence of effective succession planning initiatives. Among the predictors, employee appraisal ( $B = 0.383$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and employee training ( $B = 0.333$ ,  $p = .000$ ) emerged as the strongest contributors, followed by diversity management ( $B = 0.353$ ,  $p = .005$ )

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and career management ( $B = 0.239$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The positive coefficients imply that enhancing appraisal transparency and feedback systems, investing in structured training programs, fostering diversity and inclusion, and strengthening career development initiatives are all critical in improving performance outcomes. In conclusion, the study sought to establish if succession planning contributes to employee performance of Civil Registration Services in the Eastern Region of Kenya.

At a 95% confidence level, the findings confirm that succession planning practices have a significant positive impact on employee performance, underscoring their strategic importance in public sector institutions. The results concur with the study by Ali and Mehreen (2020), who emphasized that effective career management enables employees to plan and navigate their career paths, leading to improved job satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Salau and Nurudeen (2022) found that structured training and development programs significantly enhance employee productivity and motivation. In addition, Chirchir and Koros (2021) observed that transparent and fair appraisal systems strengthen employee commitment and accountability, while Li et al. (2024) highlighted that diversity management fosters inclusivity and collaboration, which in turn improve overall organizational performance. Collectively, these studies support the conclusion that succession planning practices through career development, continuous training, fair appraisals, and inclusive diversity initiatives—are critical drivers of employee performance in public sector organizations such as Civil Registration Services.

## **7. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The integrated results demonstrated that succession planning practices, when considered collectively, have a significant positive effect on employee performance in Civil Registration Services of Eastern Region, Kenya. While individual dimensions such as career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management each contribute to performance outcomes, their combined influence is more impactful in sustaining efficiency, consistency, and quality service delivery. The findings indicated that organizations that simultaneously invest in fair appraisal systems, structured training programs, inclusive diversity initiatives, and clear career development pathways are better positioned to enhance employee commitment, motivation, and productivity. The study summarised that succession planning was not merely an administrative function but a strategic tool for improving organizational performance in public service institutions.

The study concluded that succession planning, when approached holistically through career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management, has a significant positive influence on employee performance in Civil Registration Services of Eastern Region, Kenya. The integrated results revealed that while each practice contributes individually, their combined effect is more powerful in enhancing commitment, efficiency, and service delivery. This underscores that succession planning is a strategic human resource practice that drives sustainable employee performance and should therefore be institutionalized across public service organizations.

The study recommended that Civil Registration Services should adopt an integrated succession planning approach by simultaneously strengthening career management, employee training, employee appraisal, and diversity management. When implemented collectively, these practices

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create a comprehensive system that enhances employee commitment, motivation, and productivity. Management should therefore institutionalize succession planning as a strategic human resource practice, ensuring that appraisal systems are fair and transparent, training programs are continuous and aligned to organizational needs, diversity policies are inclusive, and career development pathways are well defined. This holistic approach will sustain employee performance and improve service delivery across the Civil Registration Services in the Eastern Region.

## 8. Recommendations for Further Research

Future studies should adopt designs that strengthen causal inference and broaden measurement. Longitudinal or panel designs could track how succession-planning interventions translate into performance changes over time, while quasi-experimental approaches can isolate policy effects. Methodologically, mixed-methods studies that pair administrative service data with employee surveys would reduce common-method bias. Advanced analytics multilevel modelling for unit effects, structural equation modelling for latent constructs, and endogeneity remedies would clarify directionality and the size of effects.

There is also scope to unpack the mechanisms and boundary conditions through mediators and moderators not examined here. Mediators could include employee engagement, psychological safety, perceived fairness, learning culture, and knowledge sharing; moderators might involve leadership style, HR capacity, digital maturity/HRIS use, workload and case complexity, budget constraints, and unionization. Focused studies could evaluate the design and ROI of specific practices mentorship architectures, competency-based career paths, orientation/induction models, 360-degree feedback while intersectional diversity work could examine how gender, disability, and age interact with advancement opportunities and performance outcomes.

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