
Training Practice and Employee Commitment in Selected County Governments in Kenya

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Jackson Kaskul Alale¹ • Prof Gregory Simiyu Namusonge² • Dr. Elizabeth Nambuswa Makokha³

Abstract:

Purpose: The main purpose of the study was to assess the effect of training practice on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.

Methodology: The study was anchored on Transformative Learning Theory and adopted a mixed research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Proportionate sampling was used to select five county governments out of the forty-seven. From a target population of 12,990 employees, a sample size of 384 respondents was selected through stratified sampling. A pilot test was carried out to reduce instrumentation errors such as design weaknesses, enhance the reliability of data collection, and check the internal consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings: Regression analysis revealed that training practice had a positive and significant effect on employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya ($R^2 = 0.124$, $\beta = 0.302$, $t = 6.375$, $p < 0.001$). The correlation analysis showed a moderate positive relationship between training practice and employee commitment ($r = 0.354$, $p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: The study concluded that training practice has a significant relationship with employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya. Training needs assessment, training goals, and training feedback significantly affect employee commitment.

Value: The study recommends that these county governments strengthen their training practices by incorporating training needs assessments, clear training goals, and structured training feedback to enhance employee competence, autonomy, and commitment. Effective training equips employees with the necessary skills and professionalism to perform duties with minimal supervision, ultimately improving productivity and service quality.

Keywords: Training Practice, Employee Commitment, County Governments, Human Resource

Paper Type: Research Article

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¹ PhD, Human Resource Management, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

² Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

³ Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

1. Introduction

Globally, employee commitment has emerged as a key concern for both developed and developing nations, with organizations recognizing that committed employees are essential for achieving development goals (Waktola, 2021). Employee commitment yields numerous organizational benefits, such as goal alignment, improved performance, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover (Ahmad et al., 2020). However, statistics show that only 15% of the global workforce is actively committed to their jobs, with countries like Malaysia and Thailand scoring 48% and the Netherlands recording 31% (Wang & Wang, 2022; Kalia, Signgla & Kaushal, 2023). These low levels of commitment have been linked to high costs associated with recruitment, training, and reduced productivity. Among the HRM practices associated with improving commitment, training has been widely acknowledged as a powerful tool when implemented effectively.

In Africa, training practices are recognized as instrumental in enhancing employee commitment across various devolved governments (Abozed & Salem, 2020; Nansamba et al., 2024). However, challenges such as training needs mismatch, misaligned training goals and limited training feedback continue to affect commitment levels (Kamila, 2022; Ingebedion, 2022). Studies indicate that when employees are inadequately trained, there is a resultant decline in productivity, job satisfaction, and retention (Kiarie, Korir & Wachira, 2021). Training approaches—such as training needs assessment, training goals and training feedback—play a vital role in empowering employees with the skills required to perform effectively (Armstrong, 2019). Emerging evidence shows that newly recruited staff whose training needs and goals are addressed adapt more quickly to job roles, boosting both performance and employee commitment (Musango, 2021).

Training is not only relevant for performance in the current role but also enhances career advancement and social interaction, all of which contribute to increased employee attachment to their organizations (Kiarie, Korir, & Wachira, 2021). Mulu, Achuora, and Kalei (2023) emphasized the importance of on-the-job training, noting its capacity to expose employees to real work environments, promote skill acquisition, and familiarize them with company procedures. These elements improve job performance and foster high levels of commitment. In Ethiopia and Nigeria, recognition, supervisor support, and job satisfaction were positively linked to commitment, while countries like Ghana and Uganda reported improvements in performance and productivity after investing in employee training (Donkor & Zhuo, 2020; Bizunesh et al., 2023). Still, the proportion of change attributable specifically to training practice remains under-researched.

At the national level, county governments in Kenya have recognized the central role of human capital in achieving development goals, including Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (Njoroge, Kihoro, & Kosgei, 2020). However, studies show that many county employees are either unwilling to stay or are only committed due to systemic privileges (CoG, 2024). Ineffective or underfunded training programs have been identified as a key reason for this lack of commitment, with many employees feeling inadequately prepared for their roles (Mwaniki & Omuya, 2024). Although tools such as Balanced Scorecards and 360-degree feedback mechanisms have been introduced (Mwema, Were, & Ndeto, 2022), challenges persist due to bureaucratic

hurdles, limited skilled staff, and underinvestment in capacity-building. Moreover, counties have failed to integrate training into broader HR strategies, resulting in poor alignment with organizational goals (Awino & Korir, 2020; Auditor General, 2022).

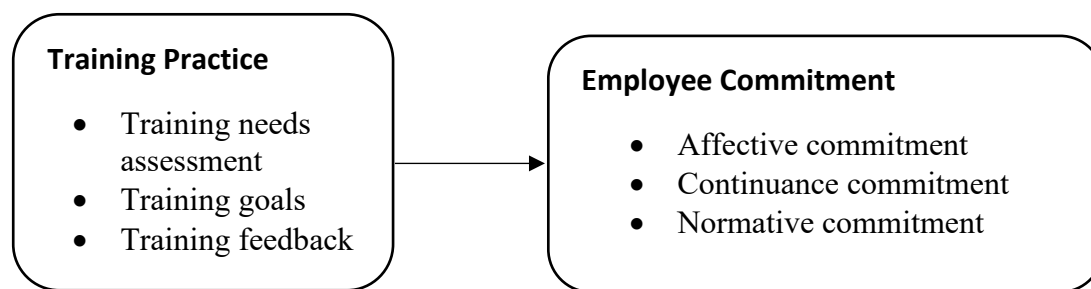
The persistent low levels of employee commitment in selected county governments have serious implications for development and service delivery. While previous studies in Kenya have examined HRM practices, they often suffer from contextual or methodological gaps, with limited focus on the critical role of training in shaping employee commitment (Obunga, Were, & Muchelule, 2024; Aden & Omuya, 2024). This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining how training practices specifically training needs assessment, training goals and training feedback to contribute to employee commitment in selected county governments. With mounting audit queries, critical skill gaps, and reduced budget utilization tied to staff turnover (Taiko, 2024; CoG, 2024), the need to investigate training as a strategic HRM for enhancing employee commitment has never been more urgent. Thus, the study hypothesized that:

H₀₁: Training practice has no significant effect on employee commitment in selected county government in Kenya.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The transformative learning theory, introduced by Mezirow (1991), provides a powerful lens through which to understand how training practices can foster employee commitment in organizational settings. At its core, the theory emphasizes the need to abandon outdated ways of thinking and embrace critical reflection, experiential learning, and rational discourse as the foundation for meaningful transformation. Within the workplace, transformative learning occurs when employees engage in structured learning opportunities—such as orientations, seminars, workshops, and on-the-job training—that allow them to reassess assumptions, develop new competencies, and adapt to evolving roles. This process not only equips employees with the necessary skills to perform their duties effectively but also fosters a sense of empowerment and ownership over their work. As employees begin to apply what they have learned and observe improvements in performance and decision-making, their commitment to the organization deepens (Senge, 2014; Bratianu & Orzea, 2013).

Organizational commitment is further strengthened when training is designed with clear goals, relevant content, continuous feedback, and alignment with employees' current and future roles. Transformative learning theory advocates for the creation of a learning culture where knowledge is continuously shared, mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, and employees are encouraged to challenge the status quo in pursuit of excellence (Alegre & Chiva, 2014; Fiorella, 2021). In this environment, employees feel valued, supported, and intrinsically motivated to contribute to organizational success. Training becomes more than a skill-building exercise—it becomes a catalyst for behavioral change, innovation, and sustained commitment. Therefore, by embedding transformative learning principles into their training practices, organizations can not only enhance employee performance but also nurture a loyal and engaged workforce that is responsive to change and invested in long-term organizational goals. The conceptualization of the study was illustrated by the conceptual framework in figure1.



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Empirical Review

Empirical evidence across studies consistently underscores the critical role of structured training practices especially training goals in influencing employee commitment. Lorot (2024) revealed that the absence of well-defined training goals often leads to poor employee performance and frequent mistakes, ultimately reducing organizational productivity. Conversely, setting clear training goals equips employees with necessary skills, reduces resource wastage, and builds a more committed workforce. Mwangi and Munyua (2023) added that organizations with no goal-oriented training observed diminished performance, recommending tailored support for staff with limited skills. Gatayu and Kinyua (2020) emphasized the significance of organizational knowledge acquisition, indicating its strong, positive relationship with motivation, job satisfaction, and employee commitment. They argued that declining performance toward the later stages of employment often reflected wanting employee commitment, further linking it to ineffective training practices.

Complementing the discussion, Mire, Butali, and Ayora (2024) highlighted that training needs assessments are instrumental in identifying skills and knowledge gaps before they adversely affect productivity and retention. Proactively addressing these gaps not only enhances individual performance but also strengthens commitment to organizational goals. Gatayu and Kinyua (2020) concurred, stressing that needs analysis is a preventative strategy that builds loyalty by aligning employee development with performance expectations. Ndai and Makhamara (2020) pointed out that feedback mechanisms following training are equally important in maintaining commitment. Feedback ensures that training objectives are met and highlights areas for future improvement. Njoroge, Kihoro, and Kosgei (2020) reinforced the importance of scientific feedback mechanisms in improving group cohesion, managing workplace stress, and resolving relational challenges—all of which contribute to greater employee dedication.

Further empirical studies demonstrated that training outcomes such as skills acquisition, job security, and promotion opportunities significantly affect employee commitment. Lorot (2024) explained that employees are more likely to remain loyal to organizations offering structured learning opportunities and relevant technical training, especially when linked to career advancement. Chepkoskey, Namusonge, and Makokha

(2019), in a study of the telecommunications sector, found a strong link between employee commitment and perceived availability of training, as well as supervisor and peer support. Interestingly, they noted that motivation to learn and perceived benefits of training alone did not significantly influence commitment, signaling the need for more holistic training strategies. Similarly, Muli, Achuora, and Kalei (2023) found that training in Machakos County improved employee performance, and Mire, Butali, and Ayora (2024) confirmed this positive relationship in Garissa. However, both studies acknowledged that while training improved performance, its impact on commitment was indirect and complex, emphasizing the need for integrated training models.

Other Kenyan-based studies offered further insight into the nuanced relationship between training and employee commitment. Awino and Korir (2021) confirmed that career training significantly influenced employee commitment and that reward systems enhanced this relationship. Mwangi and Munyua (2023) established that training and development accounted for 79.3% of productivity among investment firms, a strong indicator of its importance. Musango (2021), however, cautioned that while on-the-job training is vital, it may result in increased employee turnover if not accompanied by promotions or improved working conditions. Ndai and Makhamara (2020) also emphasized that untrained or less-skilled employees showed low levels of commitment and were more likely to exit the organization. While most studies affirmed the connection between training and employee commitment, there remained a notable gap in examining training goals, needs assessments, and feedback mechanisms—dimensions critical to building sustained employee dedication and organizational performance.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopted a mixed research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine human resource management practices and employee commitment in selected Kenyan county governments. The rationale for using this design was to enhance reliability, credibility, and depth of understanding, as quantitative data revealed trends while qualitative data provided explanations and context (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013; Creswell, 2013).

4.1 Target Population and Sampling

The study focused on employees working in county governments in Kenya, specifically targeting 12,990 staff from five purposively selected counties—Elgeyo-Marakwet, Baringo, Trans Nzoia, West Pokot, and Bungoma—due to declining employee commitment, high turnover, and minimal budget allocations for human resource issues (CIDP, 2022; Taiko, 2024). Using Cochran's formula and a 95% confidence level, a representative sample of 384 respondents was calculated. Stratified sampling was applied across three employment categories middle-level management, supervisory, and operative staff to ensure proportional representation. This was followed by simple random sampling within each stratum. Additionally, purposive sampling was used to select the five counties, aligning with Mugenda and Mugenda's (2013) guidance that a 10% sample of the population is adequate. This mixed sampling approach enhanced inclusivity, relevance, and credibility of the findings regarding employee commitment in the selected county governments.

4.2 Data Collection

The study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods to ensure comprehensive insight into training practice and employee commitment. Primary data was gathered using structured questionnaires, comprising both open- and closed-ended questions aligned with the study objectives, and designed in Likert scale format to facilitate quantification. Closed-ended questions provided measurable data, while open-ended ones allowed deeper understanding of respondents' perspectives. The questionnaires were administered to various staff categories, and open-ended interview schedules were directed at middle-level managers. Secondary data was sourced from published HRM journals, books, and county reports, enriching the study with theoretical and empirical insights. Data collection procedures began with ethical clearance, followed by fieldwork using a drop-and-pick method with the help of trained assistants. A pilot study involving 38 participants (10% of the sample) was conducted to test validity and reliability. Content validity was ensured through expert review, and factor analysis was applied to verify the significance of measurement items using eigenvalues and KMO. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, with constructs scoring above 0.7 deemed internally consistent. Together, these approaches ensured methodological rigor, enhanced reliability, and strengthened the validity of findings.

4.3 Data Analysis and Model Specification

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were computed using SPSS version 26 to summarize and present quantitative data, while qualitative responses were analyzed using content analysis to identify and interpret recurring themes. Correlation analysis was conducted using Pearson's r to assess the strength and direction of relationships between variables. To test the study hypothesis, regression analysis was applied. Hypothesis testing relied on t-tests and corresponding p-values at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was that t-values greater than 1.96 and p-values less than 0.05 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, while t-values below 1.96 and p-values greater than 0.05 resulted in failure to reject the null hypothesis. Additionally, the F-test and its p-value were used to evaluate the overall significance and goodness-of-fit of the regression model. A p-value below 0.05 indicated that the model was statistically significant and provided a good fit for the data. The model is as shown below.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y= Employee commitment, X_1 = Training practice, ε = Error term
 β_0, β_1 , are Regression coefficients to be estimated.

5. Research Findings and Discussion

This section presents the research findings and discussion. The study recorded a high response rate of 88.8%, with 341 out of 384 respondents completing the survey, surpassing the 70% threshold considered very good by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), largely due to the researcher's personal administration of questionnaires. Background information revealed that 53.4% of respondents were male and 46.6% female, indicating a fairly balanced gender representation across the selected county governments in Kenya. Most respondents were well-educated, with 47% having college education, 35% university degrees, 6% postgraduate qualifications, and only 12% with

secondary education, suggesting a knowledgeable respondent base capable of giving reliable feedback. In terms of work experience, 48.9% had served 10–15 years, 28.7% for 5–10 years, and 22.4% for-under 5 years, indicating strong institutional memory and long-term employee commitment among the majority, which enriched the study's insights into the relationship between Training practice and employee commitment.

5.1 Descriptive Results

The descriptive analysis focused on examining training practice in relation to employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya using a five-point Likert scale and statistical measures such as mean and standard deviation. The results revealed strong agreement among respondents on the importance and impact of training, particularly in areas such as training needs assessment, training goals, and feedback. Key findings showed that most respondents believed training needs assessment boosted confidence ($M=2.67$, $SD=1.4$) and prepared them for future tasks ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.9$), while also improving morale ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.95$). Additionally, training goals were seen as instrumental in enabling employees to handle challenging tasks ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.6$), and supervisors were perceived to assign duties aligned with acquired training ($M=4.04$, $SD=0.84$). Feedback from training was particularly valued, with employees agreeing it enhanced immediate work skills ($M=4.32$, $SD=1.8$) and helped them stay updated in managing difficult situations ($M=4.68$, $SD=1.7$). These results are supported by prior studies such as Kiarie, Korir, and Wachira (2021), Mulu, Achuora, and Kalei (2023), and Njoroge, Kihoro, and Kosgei (2020), affirming that targeted training strengthens employee competence and commitment while reducing turnover and fostering professional development.

Table 1: Descriptive Results Training Practice

Statements on Training Practice	M	SD
Training needs assessment give employee confidence in handling their work	2.67	1.4
Training needs assessment enable employee prepare for future performance of the same job	3.68	1.9
Carrying out training needs assessment improve morale	3.65	.95
Training goals have transformed employees on handling challenging work	3.73	1.6
Supervisor assign duties related to training goals	4.04	.84
Training feedback help employee enhance skills related to immediate work	4.32	1.8
Feedback help employee stay up to date on in handling difficult situation	4.68	1.7
Training Practice	3.82	1.46

The findings, presented on a five-point Likert scale, evaluated employee commitment across several dimensions within selected county governments in Kenya. The results revealed that a majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that employees were likely to spend the rest of their careers with the county ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.87$), and that they were emotionally attached to their jobs ($M=2.57$, $SD=1.65$). Additionally, most employees were not likely to leave their jobs for others ($M=3.21$, $SD=1.99$), often

due to limited alternative opportunities ($M=2.24$, $SD=0.83$), a sense that it was not the right time to leave ($M=2.82$, $SD=1.80$), or a perceived obligation to the community ($M=2.15$, $SD=1.93$). Furthermore, many respondents indicated that commitment was driven by values like seniority, benefits, authority, and power ($M=2.32$, $SD=1.83$). Overall, the average mean score for employee commitment was 2.60 with a standard deviation of 1.7, implying moderate agreement and some variability in perceptions. These findings align with prior studies by Theresa and Vijayabanu (2016), Tugel and Kilic (2021), and Armstrong (2019), who emphasized that affective, continuance, and normative commitment are shaped by shared values, emotional attachment, and perceived obligations.

Table 2: Employee Commitment in Selected County Governments in Kenya

Statements on Employee Commitment	M	SD
Employees are likely to spend the rest of their careers with county government	2.90	1.87
Employees are emotionally attached to county jobs	2.57	1.65
Employees are not likely to jump the current job to another	3.21	1.99
One of the reasons for not leaving county job is scarcity of alternatives	2.24	.83
Even though it may be advantage to leave, employees feel it would not be the right time to leave	2.82	1.80
Employees are not leaving their jobs now since they have obligation to the people in the County	2.15	1.93
Employees are committed to their jobs because of certain values such as seniority, benefits, authority and power	2.32	1.83
Employee Commitment	2.60	1.7

The study sought to assess training practice and employee commitment in selected county government in Kenya. The responses in relation to how training affected employee commitment in the selected county government was recorded and analysed. The findings indicated that; through training county governments enable new, current and senior employees acquire the knowledge and skills they needed to perform their jobs. The study infers that employees who enhance their skills through training are more likely to engage fully in their work, because they derive satisfaction from mastering new tasks. The findings pointed out limited training to employees and in some circumstance training had not been conducted at all. This affected career advancement, and promotions and pay as employee stagnated in one job group for long. The secondary data sought to determine the number of employee trained during the financial years 2017/2018-2022/2023. The data detailed account revealing that in the financial year 2017/2018 (180), 2018/2019 (115), 2019/2020 (84), 2021/2022 (118), 2022/2023 (116). This showed that a total of 613 employees were trained and they were likely to be committed to their jobs. The study concluded that prioritizing training demonstrate a commitment to employee growth and development. This increased sense of value and encourage employees to stay with county governments. Providing opportunities for skill development and career advancement increase satisfaction and subsequently employee commitment.

5.2 Correlation Results

The correlation analysis in this study assessed the strength and direction of the relationship between human resource management practices and employee commitment using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r), following Collis and Hussey's (2013) guidelines. The results indicated a moderate positive and significant relationship between training practice and employee commitment ($r = 0.353$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$), suggesting that improvements in training practices are associated with increased employee commitment in county governments. This aligns with Mire, Butali, and Ayora (2024) and Muli, Achuora, and Kalei (2023), who found significant positive links between training and employee performance.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

		Employee Commitment	Training Practice
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Training Practice	Pearson Correlation	.354**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

5.3. Regression Results (Hypotheses Testing)

The regression analysis aimed to determine the effect of training practice on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. Employing simple linear regression, the study generated key statistical indicators: the coefficient of determination (R^2), F-statistic, beta coefficient (β), and t-test value to examine the predictive strength and significance of training practice on employee commitment. The model results showed that training practice had a statistically significant effect on employee commitment, with an $R^2 = 0.124$, suggesting that 12.4% of the variance in employee commitment was explained by training practice alone, while 87.6% of the variability was attributed to other factors not included in this particular model. The F-statistic = 40.646 with a p-value of 0.000 confirmed the overall model's goodness-of-fit at the 5% significance level.

The regression results indicates that training practice held to constant zero ($\beta_0=3.041$), employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya would be 3.041, while the unstandardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.302$) indicates that for every unit increase in training practice, there is a corresponding 0.302 unit increase in employee commitment in the selected county governments in Kenya. Therefore estimated regression is hereby expressed as $Y = 3.041 + 0.302X_1$. The t-value = 6.375, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96, and the p-value of 0.000, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}) that training practice has no significant effect on employee commitment. This implies that training practice interventions such as training needs assessments, training goals, and training feedback contribute to strengthening employee commitment in the selected County government in Kenya.

These findings support existing empirical literature that highlights the central role of training practice in enhancing employee attitudes, productivity, and loyalty. For

instance, Ndai and Makhamara (2020) emphasized that training initiatives positively affect employees' ability to meet personal and institutional goals, thereby enhancing their commitment. Similarly, Awiono and Korir (2020) observed that career-aligned training not only improves individual capabilities but also fosters long-term engagement with the organization. Moreover, Gatayu and Kinyua (2020) argued that organizations investing in consistent and structured employee training tend to experience higher levels of commitment, as trained employees feel valued and are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty and improved performance. Furthermore, the results align with transformative learning theory, which posits that adult learners engage more deeply with their roles when learning challenges their assumptions and leads to new perspectives (Mezirow, 1997). In the context of county governments, training fosters not just skill acquisition but also cognitive and emotional engagement with work, leading to higher levels of normative and affective commitment. This emotional investment is particularly crucial in public institutions, where job demands can be high and extrinsic motivators limited.

Table 4: Regression Model; Training Practices and Employee Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.041	.193		15.722	.000
	Training practice	.302	.047	.352	6.375	.000
	R Squared	.124				
	Adjusted R Squared	.121				
	F statistic	40.646				
	P value	.000				

a Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

6. Conclusions

The study generally concluded that training practice significantly had effect on employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya. From the findings it can be inferred that the dimensions of training practice (training needs assessment, training goals, and training feedback) significantly affects employee commitment in the selected county government in Kenya. In conclusion basing on the findings on the prediction that training practice has no significant relationship with the employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya; the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative. Therefore, the study concluded that training practice had a significant relationship with employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following managerial and policy recommendations were proposed in relation to each objective of the study.

7.1 Managerial Recommendations

Since training practice is preferred in enhancing employee commitment, the study recommends the selected county governments in Kenya to rethink on what constitutes training practice to avoid its ineffectiveness. To improve effectiveness of training practice county governments should improve training practice and should include training needs assessment, training goals and training feedback programs, this ensure that employees carry their duties and responsibilities without much supervision in the future. Training instills smooth transfer of technical know-how to the human resources, this increase their knowledge and skills enabling them do their work with professionalism. This would ensure an increase in productivity and the quality of work done by human resources in the selected county government in Kenya and in turn increases their commitment. The study recommends that the the selected county governments should provide training for more knowledge and skills to give employee confidence in handling their work.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

The study recommends that county governments should come up with a policy on training that emphasize training needs assessment, establish training goals, and ensure prompt training feedback as part of employee training; this would lead to achievement of individual and organizational goals. The study recommends establishment of training policy that enhances technical knowledge that develop pool of professionals within county governments.

8. Further Research

This study did not include all other human resource management practices and a further study is recommended to include other human resource management practices which may affect employee commitment among county governments in Kenya. This was informed by the result of the multiple regressions which revealed that training explained 12.1% of the variation in employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya, thus there remains 87.9% variation explained by other variables. The study was carried out among 5 out of 47, thus representing 10% of county governments in Kenya, there was need to carry similar research on the remaining 42 counties in Kenya. Thus 90% of the county government in Kenya lacked similar study. There is need to carry similar study so as to validating the results of this study because employees in different county governments may depict different levels of commitment.

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