



## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN LAW COURTS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to investigate the influence of performance management systems on employee performance in law courts within Nairobi County, Kenya. The motivation for the research stemmed from increasing concern over the declining responsiveness and efficiency of public service institutions, particularly the judiciary, despite the presence of structured performance management frameworks. Specifically, the study examined four core components of performance management systems—performance review, performance communication, and their impact on employee performance. The research adopted a descriptive research design and targeted employees drawn from various departments across selected law courts in Nairobi County. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, designed around a 5-point Likert scale, and pre-tested for validity and reliability. A total of 75 respondents participated in the study, resulting in a 90.4% response rate. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analysis, with the aid of statistical software. The findings revealed that all four performance management components had a positive and statistically significant influence on employee performance. Performance communication emerged as the most influential predictor, followed by performance review. Descriptive results showed that respondents agreed strongly with statements related to effective communication, structured reviews, access to training, and performance-based rewards. However, areas such as employee involvement in training needs assessment, fairness of reward systems, and integration of client feedback in performance evaluations were identified as needing improvement. The study concluded that performance management systems, when well implemented and aligned with employee needs, play a critical role in enhancing job commitment, output quality, and overall service delivery in the judiciary. Based on the findings, the study recommended standardizing review processes, strengthening two-way communication, adopting employee-centered training models, and improving transparency in reward mechanisms. The study also called for a more participatory approach to performance management, where employees are actively involved in shaping the systems that assess and influence their work. This research contributes to the broader discourse on human resource management in the public sector and offers practical insights for policymakers, judicial administrators, and HR professionals aiming to optimize employee performance through structured performance management systems.

**Key Words:** Performance Management Systems, Employee Performance, Law Courts, Performance Review, Performance Communication

## Background of the Study

Performance management system is an approach utilized by managers to establish clear performance expectations through which employees can easily understand what is expected of their job. It allows managers to reinforce on their employees, the individual accountability to meet their goals and evaluate their own performance (Martinez, 2025). According to McAfee and Champagne (2020) PMS is being used as management enhancer in cascading organization's vision, mission and objectives from the management to all employees. When done professionally it affords a meritorious assessment of employee performance that shows how they have individually contributed to the organizations overall goals. According to Rudman (2023), PMS is being gradually regarded as integration of HRM activities and organizational business objectives, in which HR activities and management are working together to impact collective and individual behavior and to support the strategy of the organization. It is prudent that PMS fits in the organizational culture since it is an integrated and completed cycle for managing performance (Rudman, 2023).

Performance management system unceasingly improves organizational performance, which is achieved by enhanced employee performance (Aguinis & Gottfredson, 2021). Similarly, Rowland (2021) suggests that the objectives of PMS are to motivate performance, enhance development of individuals and teams, build performance culture in communicating reviews, determine individual promotion, eliminate individual poor performance, and assist in implementing business strategies. Additionally PMS ensures that the work performed by employees accomplishes the goals of the company. In such a case, employees have a clear understanding of the quality and quantity of work expected from them; employees receive ongoing information about how effectively they are performing relative to expectations; awards and salary increases based on employee performance are distributed accordingly; opportunities for employee development are identified; and employee performance that does not meet expectations is addressed (Ferris, 2021). Macky and Johnson, (2000) are for the view that "performance management system is a kind of completed and integrated cycle for performance management. The emphasis of performance management systems is on continuously improving organizational performance, and this is achieved through improved individual employee performance". Some of the commonly utilized performance management system in organizations include and not limited to; General Appraisal (Interaction between the manager and employee all year round), 360-Degree Appraisal (Feedback from employees about other employees), Technological Performance Appraisal (Evaluation of an employee's technical proficiency), Employee Self-Assessment (Employee's self-appraisal as compared with that of his direct line manager), Manager Performance Appraisal (Evaluation of the manager involving feedback from both the team and clientele), Project Evaluation Review (Appraisal to ascertain the level of an employee's expertise on the job) and Sales Performance Appraisal (Judgment of a salesperson's goals versus results obtained via targets met).

## Statement of the Problem

In recent years, Kenya's Judiciary has undertaken several performance management reforms to improve efficiency, service delivery, and accountability. However, persistent challenges in the actual implementation of performance management systems (PMS) have continued to hinder employee performance outcomes. Despite having frameworks such as the Judiciary Performance Management and Measurement System (JPMMS) in place, performance inconsistencies, role ambiguity, and weak feedback mechanisms have been widely reported across law courts (Judiciary of Kenya, 2022).

According to the 2022 Judiciary Annual Report, case backlog stood at over 659,000 cases, with some unresolved for more than five years—an indication of productivity inefficiencies. The Judicial Performance Evaluation Report (2023) showed that only 54% of court staff met their

quarterly performance targets, and more alarmingly, 29% of judicial officers lacked clarity on how their performance was appraised. Additionally, a recent World Bank governance diagnostic report (2021) found that delayed feedback and top-down appraisal methods have led to reduced employee ownership of performance goals, particularly in public justice institutions.

Further compounding the issue is the inconsistency in linking employee performance with reward systems. A study by Chawinga et al. (2020) emphasized that only 31% of judiciary staff believed their performance evaluations influenced career progression or financial incentives. This disconnect demotivates employees and erodes the integrity of PMS tools. Moreover, a survey by Transparency International Kenya (2022) noted that the judiciary ranks among the top three institutions where public dissatisfaction with service delivery is linked to staff inefficiencies and bureaucratic inertia.

Performance communication is also notably inadequate. Ominde et al. (2021) reported that more than 40% of judicial officers receive performance feedback irregularly, and most court stations lack standardized feedback mechanisms. As a result, performance targets are often misinterpreted or inconsistently applied, resulting in fragmented implementation of performance strategies. Moreover, despite efforts to institutionalize digital court systems and automate case management, a recent report by the Kenya ICT Action Plan (2023) indicated that over 35% of court staff had not received formal training on the new performance tracking tools, highlighting a gap in performance-linked capacity building.

Taken together, these challenges underscore a critical problem: while the performance management systems in Kenya's law courts exist in form, they lack effective functional integration at the employee level. This study is thus motivated by the need to explore the actual influence of PMS components—namely performance review, communication,—on employee performance in law courts across Kenya. Addressing these gaps will provide insights for optimizing employee output and strengthening institutional performance within the judiciary.

## **Objectives of the Study**

### **General Objective**

The main objective of this study was to evaluate performance management system on employee effectiveness in law courts in Nairobi County.

### **Specific Objectives**

The study specifically sought to

- i. To determine the influence of progress review on employee performance in law courts in Nairobi County.
- ii. To evaluate the influence of performance communication on employee performance in law courts in Nairobi County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Expectancy theory**

Expectancy theory was proposed by Victor Vroom in 1964. It is based on the hypothesis that individuals adjust their behavior in the organization on the basis of anticipated satisfaction of valued goals set by them. This hypothesis is premised by four assumptions; one assumption is that people join organizations with expectations about their needs, motivations, and past experiences. These influence how individuals react to the organization. A second assumption is that an individual's behavior is a result of conscious choice. That is, people are free to choose those behaviors suggested by their own expectancy calculations. A third assumption is that

people want different things from the organization (example good salary, job security, advancement, and challenge). A fourth assumption is that people will choose among alternatives so as to optimize outcomes for them personal (Javadin, Sayeed Reza, 2021).

The expectancy theory based on these assumptions has three key elements; Expectancy, Instrumentality and Valence. Expectancy is a person's estimate of the probability that job-related effort will result in a given level of performance. If employees sees no chance that effort will lead to the desired performance level, the expectancy is low. On the other hand, if the employee is completely certain that the task will be completed, the expectancy high. Instrumentality is an individual's estimate of the probability that a given level of achieved task performance will lead to various work outcomes. For example, if an employee sees that a good performance rating will always result in a salary increase, the instrumentality value is high. If there is no perceived relationship between a good performance rating and a salary increase, then the instrumentality is low.

Valence is the strength of an employee's preference for a particular reward. Thus, salary increases, promotion, peer acceptance, recognition or appreciation by supervisors, or any other reward might have more or less value to individual employees. Unlike expectancy and instrumentality, valences can be either positive or negative. If an employee has a strong preference for attaining a reward, valence is positive. At the other extreme, valence is negative. And if an employee is indifferent to a reward, valence is zero. In summary a person is motivated to the degree that he or she believes that; effort will lead to acceptable performance (expectancy), performance will be rewarded (instrumentality), and the value of the rewards is highly positive (valence). According to this theory, individuals modify their behavior in such a way which is most likely to lead them to attain these goals. This theory underlies the concept of performance management as it is believed that performance is influenced by the expectations concerning future events (Salaman et al, 2025).

### **Goal Setting Theory**

This theory was a proposed by Edwin Locke in the year 1968. The theory suggests that the individual goals established by an employee play an important role in motivating him for superior performance. This is because the employees keep following their goals. If these goals are not achieved, they either improve their performance or modify the goals and make them more realistic. In case the performance improves it will result in achievement of the performance management system aims (Salaman et al, 2025). The theory revolves around setting the right and most appropriate goals at different levels in an organization which matches with performance management system which brings about objectives and goals which are set for different position.

Goal setting theory is a guide for PMS strategy because it enables managers to set the right goals and objectives for different positions that are used by employees to guide them on what they are supposed to do in their daily activities. The theory began with the early work on levels of aspiration developed by Lewin (1967) A goal is the aim of an action or task that a person consciously desires to achieve or obtain (Locke and Latham, 2022; Locke and Latham, 2022).

According to Locke and Latham (2022) motivational goals have the following dimensions: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and complexity. Goals need to be clear and measurable. This assists employees know exactly what they are supposed to do and their required outcome. Secondly, goals must be challenging, with achievement as the final payoff. Easy goals tend to demotivate employees when assigning individual tasks more challenging ones should be considered when coming up with a PMS. Thirdly, employees must feel as part of the goal-setting process to be committed to a clearly relevant goal. For a PMS strategy to be over rally accepted employee must be involved in the process of formulation Next, there must

be a program that involves feedback, recognition and progress reports. Lastly, the task must be complex but not overwhelming, with sufficient time and adequate resources available.

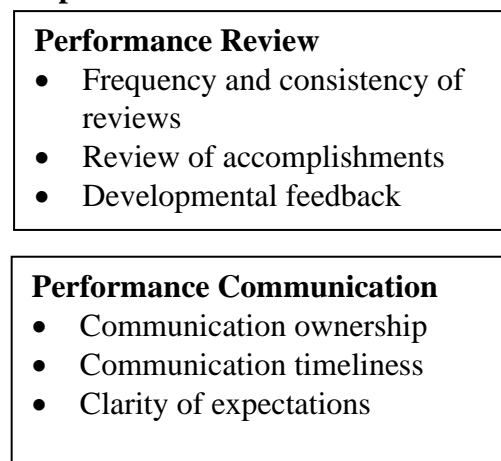
### Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is a tool used by researchers to develop awareness and understanding of the situation of scrutiny and to communicate (Kombo & Tromp, 2022). Mugenda (2020) define conceptual framework as a concise description of a phenomenon accompanied by a graphical or visual depiction of major variables of the study. The description of a conceptual framework emphasizes the researcher view on how variables interact or could be made to interact under conditions that can be manipulated.

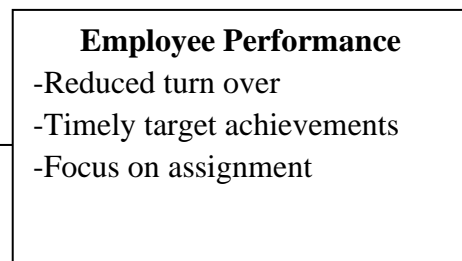
A conceptual framework is made up of variables. A variable is defined as a measurable characteristic that assumes different values among units of specific population (Mugenda, 2020). Kothari (2019) defines a variable as a concept that can take different quantitative value such as weight, height, or income. The key variables in this study were categorized as independent variables and dependent variable. Mugenda (2020) explain that the independent variables are predictor variables due to their ability to predict the amount of variation that occurs in another variable while dependent variable influences or is changed by another variable. A dependent variable varies as a function of the independent variable or variables changes in the study.

The conceptual frame work in this study sought to operationalize the study variables and explain the literature related to the study variables. The study acknowledges the fact that performance management system can be operationalized in different ways however for purposes of this study based on current research findings, the variables have been narrowed down to four aspects namely performance review, performance communication, and how they affect employee performance. This is illustrated in Figure 2.1 as shown below.

#### Independent Variables



#### Dependent Variable



**Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework**

#### Performance Reviews

This is a function in performance management which enables the organization to evaluate employees and communicate where they need to improve and how to make it possible (Kane & Lawler, 2019) posit that employees whose performance is frequently reviewed with timely feedback improve their performance are more likely to contribute to the organizational success. Performance reviews are generally annual or quarterly or even less than this. The general procedure of reviews is that the employees are first allowed to rate themselves which counts as self-evaluation and the report is sent to the manager. An important aspect of performance

reviews that has changed recently is, peer-evaluation: 360- degree feedback. 360 feedback and peer evaluations allow employees to evaluate their managers and help them understand where they can improve themselves and how. The process of rating one's manager can be complicated but once it becomes a practice, the overall team productivity increases.

Other strategies worth considering for improving employee performance reviews include rating-less systems and spot performance reviews, rather than formal annual appraisals. When correctly executed, a rating-less system allows time to be reinvested into better and more effective ongoing communication between employees and managers, because both are no longer focused on quantifying past performance and completing forms. Instead, they are focused on discussing what the employee has done well and how to build on that. In short, the elimination of ratings turns the appraisal process into one that is forward-looking and motivating. However, it is important to bear in mind that for a company to effectively adopt a rating-less system, managers will need training on how to objectively and consistently appraise staff in this manner.

### **Performance Communication**

Employees tend to be more engaged and perform better when they understand the wider significance of their tasks and are given responsibility over assessing their performance. Therefore improving communication between employees and management and giving employees a degree of ownership in the performance management process is a key motivation to employee performance. This can be achieved by ensuring managers sit down with employees to discuss and clarify key objectives, what they need (skills or resources) to be achieved, and to what extent have they been achieved. Another important communication is how often performance is assessed and results given. Performance communication plans should be well documented to provide evidence that both parties have agreed to the plan. Making a performance management system a two-way process, in which employees can request meetings and give suggestions about how to improve the way they carry out their tasks and are assessed, is vital because an employee is more likely to remain engaged in a collaborative process (Kaplan & Norton 2023).

Poor performance communication creates a mismatch between employee effort direction and organizational goal achievement driving employees into a feelings of discouragement (Brett & Atwater, 2021). Performance communication that directs the recipient's attention to the task is more effective than the one that directs the recipient's attention to the self and away from the task. Negative communication is often given to harass or punish the employees; it is typically misperceived or resisted. Caruth and Humphreys (2020) states that when performance communication is not fair, they are likely to ignore and this may lead to the reduction in the levels of productivity. Performance communication becomes least useful when it is inaccurate or untrue, biased due to favoritism or politics (Levy & William, 2024).

Effective performance management system of communication in an organization enhances information exchange framework helping the organization to create communication culture. It is always good to follow up the response of employees on the communication reports and gauging this against organizational achievement of goals. Frequent communication keeps employees motivated and eventually help them to improve themselves by giving them suggestions about their work, without having to wait till the next performance review (Kane & Lawler, 2019)

Islam (2022) ineffective communication in organizations may lead to lost opportunities, missed deadlines, significant drop in productivity levels, friction between employees, and non-achievement of organization goals. Many organizations realize the importance of effective communication and so take efforts to train their employees to communicate effectively. An effective communication is one where the person communicating and the person listening have

the same understanding of the matter that is communicated. Rasad (2022) employees in organization use both oral and written forms of communication as appropriate. So, effective communication is important in these methods.

Welch (2023) effective communication is one of the key factors for good employee performance. I have mentioned below when and why communication becomes vital for good employee performance. Organizations exist for a purpose and have their targets or goals. They then share these goals to employees, who work towards achieving the same. So it becomes extremely important that goals are communicated very clearly to the employees, so that they can work towards achieving the same. Jackson (2023) if goals are not clearly communicated, then obviously there are going to be performance issues. Wall (2024) employees who are not aware of what their goals are, will work based on some assumptions which might totally turn out to be not in sync with the organization goals. The problem exist because sometimes no clear distinction is made between job description of employees and performance goals and so managers fail to communicate the expectations clearly.

Setting SMART goals for employees and communicating them is vital for good employee performance. It is important for managers to provide feedback to employees on their performance on a continuous basis. Michie (2024) this would help employees to know where they are successful as well as where they are lagging behind. Continuous guidance and coaching would not only enable employees to perform well, but also would help in the overall employee skill development.

Effective communication of feedback to employees is important to achieve goals, employee skill development and improve employee performance. An appraisal meeting is where a manager and employee meet together to discuss employee performance. Heneman (2019) effective communication is very vital for a successful meeting. Managers would have to know how to appreciate the employee for good performance, and also know how to convey negative feedback or improvement areas. Greenberger (2019) managers should also be willing to patiently listen to employee's point of view and agree to points that are relevant.

Doty (2019) effective communication during appraisal meetings leads to higher employee satisfaction levels. For effective performance in a team setting, there needs to be a transparent and effective communication within the team members. Just like managers communicate goals and feedback, employees would also have to be effective communicators to improve their performance. Strasser (2019) when there are doubts on their performance expectations, they shouldn't hesitate to approach their managers for clarifications. Similarly, when they are stuck with any problem, they should effectively communicate the problem to the manager and obtain his or her guidance. They should be willing to communicate any improvement areas in the organization policies if any. It is important for the employer to facilitate an environment for employees to communicate without any inhibitions.

Communication covers all activities that an individual does when he wants to make a transformation in someone else's mind. This is a meaning bridge between an individual or individuals and organization. Communication is a process that contains expressing, listening and understanding (Delery, 2019). Similarly, emphasizing social aspect of communication, communication that takes part on the base of social life and forms the content of organizational structure is a process which aims at conducting good relationships between groups and organizations (Coens, 2025). March (2020) defined organizational communication as the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organization to its members and among members of the organization. Simon (2020) observed that communication is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. This is because the competencies and skills they possess will enable them to exhibit work behavior's appropriate and relevant to the performance of the job. It is further theorized that employees are likely to be more productive

if their performance is rewarded assuming that the reward received has value to them, as argued by the expectancy theory (Costello, 2024).

Communication is vital in organizations Jenkins (2025) argued that communication has a vital role in the failure or accomplishment of any organization, it is used for the purpose of resolving the contradictions in work organization in other that such organization may progress. People must come together, think together, work together, learn together and advance together. Human interaction allows man to forge new horizons and explore new possibilities. Thus, by meeting people, they can communicate in the language of themselves. The variety of communication aids/ techniques used in an organization depends on the nature of the organization, its kind and range of personnel that best suits the management and also the location of the workplace.

Employee communication is the dissemination of information which is related to the daily performance of an employer's job and also important if the worker is expected to be an effective member of staff. It connotes a consideration of human beings as a vital resource (Ashford, 2019). Communication is the transfer of information from a sender to a receiver, with the message being understood by the receiver. Aronoff (2021) defined organizational communication as "the central binding force that permits coordination among people and thus allows for organized behavior," and Rogers and Rogers (1976) who argue that "the behavior of individuals in organizations is best understood from a communication point of view." In many ways, organizations have evolved in directions that make the latter view more appropriate. Changes confronting organizations and the associated changes in organizational forms have made organizational communication increasingly important to overall organizational functioning.

### **Employee Performance**

Employee performance is referred to as individual's work achievement after exerting required effort on the job which is associated through getting a meaningful work, engaged profile, and compassionate colleagues and employers (Karakas, 2020). In order to utilize HR fully and augment organizational success, effective employee performance management system is imperative for an organization. The performance-driven objective is expected to be aligned with the organizational policies so that the entire process moves away from being event-driven to become more strategic and a people-centric perspective. Employee performance ensures that employee fulfills their job duties and executes their required tasks. It reflects employees' effectiveness, quality, and efficiency and behavior of their work output (Jena & Pradhan, 2024)

Employee performance is measured by the way the set targets are achieved and the way business offers good value to customers, minimizes waste and operates efficiently. The other measures of employee performance include: Punctuality; employees being on time to work and showing great dedication to their work by delivering on time and going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure deadlines are met. Employees who deliver their work late on a regular basis or are chronically absent may be showing signs of low motivation or a clear disregard for their work and are also not likely to meet performance objectives: Work quality; employees being in a position to complete tasks and projects on time and at par with the desired or required standards. The quality of your employees' work is an important indicator of their performance as well as a major basis for rewards or penalties/disciplinary actions (Kane & Lawler, 2019).

Behavioral traits is another measure of employee performance which involves monitoring employees' personal habits. Perpetual bad habits and disruptive behavior can have great adverse effects on employees' performance as well as the general performance of their teammates. To prevent this bad habits are identified and action taken care of: Client feedback; Managers should conduct client satisfaction evaluation to gauge their attitude toward work and level of customer service. Client surveys are vital in determining whether or not employees are meeting expectations and representing the organization. Level of creativity is also another



important measure in evaluating employee performance. This is the level at which employees often question basic assumptions about a problem and come up with a new solutions. It involves thinking outside the box and successfully take the risks. By keeping track of the incidents of creative, well-informed risk-taking, high performers can be identified and rewarded in a meaningful way: Responsiveness to feedback; the ideal employee takes feedback and thinks critically, such that he/she understands the reason for change. There should be a two-way conversation about what is working and what is not(?????????).

Ability to take ownership; An employee who takes ownership of tasks and can figure out how to get things done is an asset. Employee ownership can help the organization to progress faster as they can overcome challenges and remove roadblocks: Timeliness; This indicates how fast work is performed. It may be the average customer's downtime or the number of units produced per hour (Jena & Pradhan, 2024).

## **Empirical Review**

### **Performance Review**

At a tactical level, the performance review process should take into account performance space length to allow employees to realize reasonable performance worth review otherwise the process becomes monotonous and nonobjective. Managers should continuously refresh the way in which performance is reviewed to keep it interesting and attractive. Although most of research has portrayed frequent performance reviews enhance employee performance, others hold divergent views (Jena & Pradhan, 2024). Latham and Mann (2022) suggest that employees often believe that performance reviews are done for wrong reasons, by the management, that is, the management is trying to use this process as a way to hold them account and subsequently much easier to discipline them, hence the perception that it is not fair. The position held by most of the management scholars is that the perceived lack of procedural fairness in performance review can have ranging negative implications in employee performance. A research conducted by Costello, (2024) found out that focus on impartial performance review promotes employees self-confidence. The results showed that 95% of HR leadership find performance reviews satisfactory and only 5% of managers are displeased with long-established performance management reviews. It further asserted that 51% of employees are of the opinion that annual reviews are grossly inaccurate. Considering the preponderance of events that occur within a space of six months to a year, it may not be out of place to say annual reviews may be less regarded. A singular review cannot adequately capture and cover all angles fairly. Therefore performance reviews should be continuous or in close proximities.

### **Performance Communication**

Martinez (2025) studying the knowledge of performance communication and personnel performance in European Electricity Supplier found that frequent communication of organizational performance positively influences employee work behavior. It promotes tolerance to failure, improved transparency of information and improved vertical and horizontal cooperation. As a result, the communication culture in the company is perceived to "move from a reactive and command-and-control culture to an open and proactive one". A successful implementation of a performance management system depends on understanding and accommodating performance communication channels which influence employee performance behavior.

Senior management needs to show leadership and set the tone for performance communication, building the right communication culture based on efficient delivery of service, organized and multidisciplinary teamwork, and effective communication at all levels. Organizational leadership also needs to provide and allocate tools for performance communication and improvement ( Wikina, 2020)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive design, this is because the technique is flexible and appropriate in terms of the data to be collected, the methods of collecting the data and the timing of the research. The descriptive design is faster and adequate in answering the research questions. According to Kothari (2023), a descriptive design describes phenomena as it exists at present.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2023), target population refers to all the members of a population to which the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research. The study focused on all judicial officers and staff working within the law courts in Nairobi County. The target population comprises of 832 judiciary officers and staff within the courts in Nairobi County. The study employed stratified simple random sampling to sample respondents from the six law courts; Supreme Court, Nairobi Court of Appeal, Milimani Law Courts, Milimani Commercial Magistrate Court, Makadara Magistrate Court and Kibera Magistrate Court targeting the the senior, middle and lower cadre employees. One of the real advantages of quantitative methods is their ability to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that would expensive to study (Fisher, 2023). Mugenda and Mugenda, (2023) argues that the sample must be carefully selected to be representative of the population.

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Category of staff	Frequency	Ratio	Percentage (%)
Supreme Court	56	0.10	5.6
Nairobi Court of Appeal	10	0.10	1.0
Milimani Law Courts	529	0.10	52.9
Milimani Commercial Magistrate Court	113	0.10	11.3
Makadara Magistrate Court	57	0.10	5.7
Kibera Magistrate Court	67	0.10	6.7
Total	832	0.10	83.2

The study collected primary data by use of questionnaires which was administered to the respondents. According to Kothari (2024), primary data is the data which is collected afresh and for the first time and thus happen to be original in character. Primary data in this study was collected. The questionnaire to be adopted in this study contained both open and closed ended questions with the quantitative section of the instrument utilizing both a nominal and a Likert-type scale format. The data collected from the field was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) 28 program. All questionnaires received were referenced and items in the questionnaire coded to facilitate data entry. The study generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive statistics data analysis method was applied to analyze numerical data gathered using closed ended questions. Descriptive analyses are important since they provide the foundation upon which correlational and experimental studies emerge; they also provide clues regarding the issues that should be focused on leading to further studies (Mugenda, 2020). Content analysis was used to analyses qualitative data while quantitative data was analyzed via Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was cleaned, coded, categorized per each of the research variables.

Pearson R correlation was used to measure strength and the direction of linear relationship between variables.

Multiple regression models was fitted to the data in order to test the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study targeted a total of 83 respondents drawn from various cadres across six law courts in Nairobi County. Out of the questionnaires administered, 75 were successfully completed and returned, representing a response rate of 90.4%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda

(2023), a response rate of 70% and above is considered very good in survey research. The high response rate in this study indicates a strong willingness among judiciary staff to participate in the research and enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

### Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the descriptive statistics for the main variables of the study: performance review, performance communication and employee performance. Respondents rated their level of agreement with various statements on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean score for each item was computed and then aggregated to determine the overall mean for each variable. The interpretation of the means is directly guided by the Likert scale used: a mean of 1.00–1.49 reflects Strongly Disagree, 1.50–2.49 = Disagree, 2.50–3.49 = Neutral, 3.50–4.49 = Agree, and 4.50–5.00 = Strongly Agree. These scores provide a clear indication of respondents' perceptions regarding the extent to which performance management system components influence employee performance in law courts.

### Performance Review

This subsection presents the descriptive statistics on the influence of performance review on employee performance. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with four statements related to performance reviews, including their frequency, relevance, impact on self-development, and commitment. The aim was to establish whether performance reviews within the judiciary are structured, timely, and meaningful in improving individual performance. The findings are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Performance Review**

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Performance reviews are done to build confidence among employees	4.107	0.733
Performance reviews reflect on real-time feedback	4.040	0.692
Performance reviews enable employees to reflect on feedback for development	4.187	0.648
Performance reviews make me more committed to my job	4.267	0.572
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	<b>4.150</b>	<b>0.661</b>

The study examined how performance reviews influence employee performance using four carefully designed statements. The results revealed consistently high agreement levels across all items, demonstrating a strong positive perception of the role performance reviews play within the judiciary. The first item assessed whether performance reviews contribute to building confidence among employees. It recorded a mean score of 4.107 (SD = 0.733), indicating that most respondents agreed that performance reviews enhance their confidence to execute tasks successfully. This suggests that the review process is not only evaluative but also plays a motivational role, affirming employee contributions and strengthening self-belief. The second item focused on whether reviews incorporate real-time feedback. The mean score was 4.040 (SD = 0.692), showing that respondents generally agreed that performance evaluations are based on recent and relevant inputs. This finding implies that feedback is timely and context-specific, allowing employees to make necessary adjustments and continuously improve their performance.

The third item evaluated whether performance reviews enable employees to reflect on feedback for personal development. It received a mean score of 4.187 (SD = 0.648), reflecting a high level of agreement. This suggests that reviews are viewed as tools for growth, helping

individuals identify their strengths and developmental areas, and motivating them to pursue self-improvement aligned with organizational expectations. The fourth item examined the relationship between performance reviews and job commitment. This item yielded the highest mean score at 4.267 (SD = 0.572). It shows a strong consensus that reviews foster a sense of dedication and accountability among staff. Regular reviews appear to reinforce performance expectations and professional alignment, contributing to a more committed workforce.

The overall aggregate mean score for performance review was 4.150 (SD = 0.661). This indicates that respondents generally agree that performance reviews within the judicial sector are effective, timely, and developmental. The consistency of the scores suggests that performance review practices in the courts are well-established and perceived as beneficial across the board. These findings are strongly supported by existing empirical literature. Costello (2024) emphasized the importance of impartial and meaningful performance reviews in building employee confidence, which aligns with the responses in this study. The perception of real-time and actionable feedback supports the view that continuous evaluations are more effective than annual reviews, which are often criticized for being retrospective and disconnected from daily performance realities. This resonates with research by Jena and Pradhan (2024), who found that frequent performance reviews lead to improved engagement and performance. While Latham and Mann (2022) raised concerns about the perceived punitive nature of reviews, the present findings suggest that in the Kenyan judicial context, reviews are largely seen as constructive, affirming the system's developmental intent and positive impact on employee commitment.

### Performance Communication

This section presents findings on the influence of performance communication on employee performance. Performance communication refers to how effectively expectations, feedback, and performance-related information are shared between managers and employees. Respondents rated five statements related to decision-making involvement, individual and group communication, performance conversations, supervisory feedback, and the overall impact of performance communication.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Performance Communication**

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication enables me to be part of the decision-making process	4.093	0.710
Employees get performance communication at both individual and group levels	4.120	0.651
Managers and employees have meaningful conversations about performance and development	4.187	0.678
Constant performance communication from my immediate supervisor encourages me to perform well	4.267	0.590
Performance communication feedback improves my workplace performance	4.147	0.621
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	<b>4.163</b>	<b>0.650</b>

The first statement evaluated whether communication enables employees to be part of the decision-making process. It recorded a mean of 4.093 (SD = 0.710), indicating agreement that employees feel included in key discussions concerning their work. This suggests that communication flows are open and participatory, empowering staff and fostering a sense of ownership in performance-related decisions. The second item examined whether employees receive performance communication at both individual and group levels. The mean score was

4.120 (SD = 0.651), showing high agreement that communication is comprehensive and multi-level. This implies that the courts use structured mechanisms to communicate expectations and results not only to individuals but also collectively to teams or departments, enhancing alignment.

The third item assessed whether managers and employees engage in meaningful conversations about performance and development. This received a mean of 4.187 (SD = 0.678), reflecting strong agreement. It indicates that the judiciary supports regular dialogue between supervisors and subordinates, which contributes to building trust, improving transparency, and ensuring that developmental goals are mutually understood. The fourth item focused on the encouragement offered by immediate supervisors through continuous performance communication. It scored a mean of 4.267 (SD = 0.590), the highest in this section. This shows that supervisors actively reinforce good performance through ongoing feedback, which serves as a key motivator for employees. It reflects a culture where recognition and correction occur in real-time. The final statement measured whether performance communication feedback improves workplace performance. The mean score was 4.147 (SD = 0.621), again showing high agreement. This suggests that employees perceive feedback as instrumental in refining their performance, clarifying their objectives, and enhancing their effectiveness at work.

The aggregate mean score for performance communication was 4.163 (SD = 0.650), which lies within the “Agree” category on the Likert scale. This indicates that performance communication within the judiciary is viewed positively, both in its frequency and its impact. The findings suggest that communication structures in the courts support a feedback-rich environment that motivates and guides employees toward improved performance. These results are supported by existing literature. Martinez (2025) emphasized that effective performance communication promotes employee engagement, transparency, and cooperation—outcomes that appear to be evident in the Kenyan judicial context. Wikina (2020) also pointed out the role of leadership in creating performance-based communication cultures, which aligns with the finding that supervisory encouragement plays a significant role. The emphasis on both individual and group-level communication reflects an organized and multidimensional communication approach that enhances clarity and teamwork, key attributes of a high-performance system.

### **Employee Performance**

This section presents the descriptive findings for the dependent variable — employee performance. It was assessed through seven statements measuring various dimensions such as goal setting, task completion, work quality, adherence to standards, personal traits, client satisfaction, and creativity. These indicators collectively reflect the perceived performance level of employees within the judicial system.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Performance**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
My organization sets performance targets to enhance employee performance	4.187	0.654
There is timely completion of tasks in my organization	4.173	0.661
Employees give quality work in my organization	4.120	0.620
Employees in my organization complete tasks at the required standards	4.053	0.642
Employees' personal traits are monitored in my organization	3.880	0.718
Client satisfaction surveys are done to assess employee performance	3.827	0.770
Employees display creativity in their roles	3.893	0.702
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	<b>4.033</b>	<b>0.681</b>

The first item focused on whether the organization sets performance targets to enhance employee performance. It recorded a high mean of 4.187 (SD = 0.654), suggesting strong agreement that goal-setting practices are established and drive performance expectations. The second item assessed the timeliness in task completion, with a mean of 4.173 (SD = 0.661), indicating that employees perceive themselves and their peers as consistently meeting deadlines. The third statement evaluated whether employees deliver quality work, which recorded a mean of 4.120 (SD = 0.620). This demonstrates that respondents believe that standards of work are upheld across departments. Similarly, the fourth item, which measured whether tasks are completed to the required standards, had a mean of 4.053 (SD = 0.642), affirming that the judiciary maintains expectations for performance quality.

The fifth item addressed whether employees' personal traits (such as discipline and responsibility) are monitored. It had a mean of 3.880 (SD = 0.718), slightly lower than the rest but still within the "Agree" range. This might suggest that while personal accountability is considered, it may not be formally assessed in all areas. The sixth statement measured the use of client satisfaction surveys as a performance metric, with a mean score of 3.827 (SD = 0.770). While employees agree that client feedback mechanisms are in place, the relatively lower score implies that this practice may not be consistently applied across units. Lastly, the item on employee creativity scored a mean of 3.893 (SD = 0.702), suggesting that innovation is encouraged, though possibly more informally than systematically.

The aggregate mean score for employee performance was 4.033 (SD = 0.681). This indicates that employees generally agree their performance is strong and supported by institutional practices such as target-setting, timely delivery, and quality standards. However, some areas like creativity, client feedback integration, and personal traits monitoring could benefit from more structured focus. These findings align with Deadrick and Gardner (1997), who viewed employee performance as the record of outcomes over a defined period, influenced by clearly set goals and managerial support. The study also echoes Salaman et al. (2025), who emphasized the importance of continuous goal tracking and feedback in improving performance outcomes. The moderately lower scores in creativity and client feedback integration suggest that while core performance is solid, strategic refinement in how performance is measured and supported could further enhance outcomes.

### **Correlation Analysis**

To establish the strength and direction of the relationship between performance management system components and employee performance, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Correlation Matrix**

Variable		Y	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>
Employee Performance (Y)	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	75		
Performance Review (X <sub>1</sub> )	Pearson Correlation	.682**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	75	75	
Communication (X <sub>2</sub> )	Pearson Correlation	.709**	.261	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.147	
	N	75	75	75

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The correlation coefficient between performance review and employee performance is  $r = .682$ , indicating a strong positive relationship. This means that as the quality and frequency of performance reviews improve, so does the level of employee performance. This relationship aligns with Jena & Pradhan (2024) who found that continuous performance assessment enhances employee clarity and effort. Moreover, Costello (2024) emphasized the importance of impartial reviews in building employee self-worth and work engagement. The findings of this study confirm that employees respond positively when reviews are consistent, fair, and focused on growth, and they perform better under such conditions.

Performance communication had the strongest correlation with employee performance, at  $r = .709$ . This demonstrates a very strong, positive relationship, meaning that employees perform significantly better when there is clear, open, and consistent communication from management. This supports the findings by Martinez (2025), who observed that open communication cultures in organizations encourage performance by enhancing transparency, encouraging feedback, and promoting participatory environments. Furthermore, performance communication helps to clarify expectations, align goals, and reduce ambiguity, leading to improved outcomes in employee behavior and task execution.

### Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the combined and individual influence of performance review, performance communication, on employee performance. Model summary was used to determine the amount of variation in dependent variable that can be explained by changes in the independent variables.

**Table 6: Regression Coefficients and Model Summary**

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-Value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	1.120	0.340	—	3.294	0.002
Performance Review	0.230	0.090	0.267	2.556	0.013*
Performance Communication	0.280	0.080	0.331	3.500	0.001*

**Note:** All variables are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$

Performance review had a positive and significant coefficient ( $B = 0.230$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ), indicating that as the effectiveness of performance reviews increases, so does employee performance. This result strengthens the position by Latham and Mann (2022), who argued that perceptions of fairness and clarity in reviews influence motivation and output. While they noted that distrust

can undermine this relationship, the current study suggests that reviews within the judiciary are generally seen as transparent and performance-enhancing.

Performance communication emerged as the strongest predictor ( $B = 0.280$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) with the highest standardized beta ( $\beta = 0.331$ ). This confirms that effective communication channels, including feedback loops and dialogue on development, are vital in driving performance. These findings reflect Wikina's (2020) assertion that leadership-led communication frameworks directly influence how performance management systems are embraced and internalized by staff.

### **Fitted Regression Model Equation**

$$\text{Employee Performance (Y)} = 1.120 + 0.230X_1 + 0.280X_2$$

### **Conclusions**

Performance review contributes meaningfully to employee performance by reinforcing a sense of direction, accountability, and self-reflection. The consistent agreement across all performance review indicators indicates that employees value structured, ongoing feedback and consider it essential in building their confidence and job commitment. It can therefore be concluded that performance reviews in the judiciary are not merely formalities but are seen as integral tools for motivation, growth, and aligning personal efforts with institutional expectations.

Performance communication emerged as the most influential component of the performance management system. The data shows that timely, transparent, and inclusive communication enhances employee engagement, clarifies roles, and promotes mutual understanding between staff and management. It can be concluded that when performance expectations, feedback, and developmental goals are effectively communicated, employees become more responsive, committed, and productive. Therefore, communication must be maintained as a central pillar in performance management.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Performance Review**

To further strengthen the impact of performance reviews, judicial institutions should formalize and standardize review processes across all departments to ensure consistency and objectivity. Reviews should continue to emphasize real-time, constructive feedback that focuses on strengths and areas for development, rather than merely administrative compliance. In addition, performance reviews should be more developmental in nature—incorporating personal goal-setting and career growth discussions. There is also a need to integrate follow-up mechanisms after reviews, ensuring that feedback results in concrete developmental actions, mentoring, or capacity-building programs.

#### **Performance Communication**

Given the significant role that communication plays in employee performance, it is recommended that the judiciary strengthens performance communication channels at all levels. Supervisors should be trained to engage in open, honest, and regular dialogue with their teams regarding expectations, performance status, and areas of support. Feedback should be multidirectional—encouraging not only top-down communication but also employee input and concerns. Organizational leadership should institutionalize performance review conversations as part of team meetings and create platforms for continuous performance dialogue. Clear communication of criteria for evaluation, promotion, and rewards will also enhance transparency and trust.



## Suggestions for Further Research

While this study successfully examined the influence of performance management system components on employee performance in law courts within Nairobi County, several areas remain open for further investigation. First, future studies could explore the longitudinal impact of performance reviews and training over time, particularly in capturing sustained behavioral changes and career development outcomes. Second, this study was limited to judicial staff within Nairobi County; expanding the geographical scope to include other counties or the national judiciary could provide broader insights and enhance the generalizability of findings.

Further research could also focus on specific employee categories, such as magistrates, registry staff, or support personnel, to assess how performance management systems influence distinct roles differently. Additionally, future studies might assess the role of organizational culture and leadership style as moderating variables in the effectiveness of performance management systems. Finally, qualitative studies involving in-depth interviews or focus groups could help uncover more nuanced employee experiences and attitudes toward performance management practices that structured questionnaires may not fully capture.

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