

**KNOWLEDGE RETENTION PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY
GOVERNMENTS IN WESTERN KENYA**

BY

SYDNEY NEKOYE MASINDE

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

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DECEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been previously submitted elsewhere for award of a degree. I also declare that this contains no material written by other people except where due reference is made and author duly acknowledged.

Name: SYDNEY NEKOYE MASINDE

Reg. No: 23/07917

Sign: 

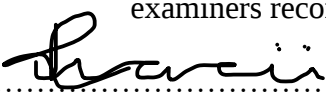
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I do hereby confirm that I have examined the master's dissertation of

SYDNEY NEKOYE MASINDE

And have certified that all revisions that the dissertation panel and

examiners recommended have been adequately addressed.

Sign:  Date: 17/10/2025

Dr. Rose Gathii

Dissertation supervisor

ABSTRACT

County governments in Western Kenya face persistent challenges in efficiency, accountability, and service delivery due to weak knowledge retention systems. This study examined the influence of knowledge retention practices on county government performance, focusing on documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship. Guided by the Knowledge-Based View and Organizational Learning Theory, the study adopted a descriptive correlational research design targeting employees from ten key departments in Bungoma, Kakamega, Busia, and Vihiga counties. A sample of 392 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and multiple regression, were employed. Findings revealed a strong positive relationship between knowledge retention practices and county performance ($R = .72$, $R^2 = .52$, $p < .05$), showing that 52% of performance variation was explained by documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship. Documentation ($\beta = .60$, $p = .001$) and coaching ($\beta = .55$, $p = .001$) had the strongest effects. The study concluded that institutionalizing structured documentation, archiving, and mentorship systems enhances operational efficiency and service delivery. It recommended that county governments adopt comprehensive knowledge retention policies, digitize archives, and integrate mentorship and coaching within human resource and performance management systems.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved family, whose unwavering support, prayers, and encouragement have been my greatest source of strength throughout this academic journey.

To my parent, my mother, thank you for instilling in me the values of hard work and perseverance. To my siblings and friends, your belief in my potential has been truly inspiring.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CoPs	Communities of Practice
HR	Human Resources
KBV	Knowledge-Based View (of the firm)
KCA	Kenya College of Accountancy
KMS	Knowledge Management System
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OLT	Organizational Learning Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Knowledge Retention	Refers to the systematic practices and strategies used by an organization to capture, store, and preserve both explicit and tacit knowledge for future use. In this study, it includes documentation, archiving, and on-the-job training.
Documentation Practices	The process of creating, updating, and maintaining written records of policies, procedures, decisions, and other institutional information to preserve organizational knowledge.
Archiving Practices	The systematic storage and retrieval of important records and data, either manually or digitally, to ensure institutional memory is preserved and accessible.
On-the-Job Training (OJT)	A form of experiential learning where employees acquire skills and knowledge through practical involvement in daily tasks, often supported by mentoring, coaching, or job shadowing.
County Government Performance	The effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of service delivery in county governments, measured by indicators such as project implementation rate, staff productivity, budget absorption, and timeliness of service delivery.
Knowledge Management System (KMS)	A digital platform or system used to collect, store, manage, and facilitate access to organizational knowledge for improved decision-making and performance.
Institutional Memory	The accumulated body of data, knowledge, and experience held by an organization, which can be drawn upon for decision-making and maintaining continuity in operations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Understanding performance in county governments requires examining how well they manage and apply the knowledge they already possess. Performance, in this setting, is reflected not only in how swiftly services are delivered but also how effectively budgets are absorbed, development plans are executed, and staff meet their goals (Wamundiya & Njeru, 2020). If both tacit and explicit knowledge isn't retained and used wisely, these performance benchmarks suffer.

In the context of county governments, performance refers to the extent to which devolved units achieve their constitutionally mandated functions of providing efficient, transparent, and accountable public services. It encompasses several tangible and measurable dimensions. First, service delivery efficiency captures how promptly and effectively counties provide essential services such as health care, infrastructure, and agricultural support (Mwangi & Ndiritu, 2021). Second, fiscal management performance assesses how prudently counties utilize and account for public funds often measured through budget absorption rates, financial reporting accuracy, and adherence to the Public Finance Management Act (Republic of Kenya, 2012; Ochieng & Kimathi, 2020). Third, development implementation performance focuses on the completion rate, timeliness, and sustainability of projects outlined in County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) (Ngugi & Wambua, 2022). Finally, human resource and administrative efficiency reflects how well counties manage staff productivity, reduce bureaucratic delays, and maintain institutional accountability (Wamundiya & Njeru, 2020).

When both tacit and explicit knowledge are not effectively retained and applied across these dimensions, counties face recurring inefficiencies such as duplicated efforts, poor

decision-making, and disrupted service continuity. Thus, knowledge retention serves as a foundational mechanism through which county governments sustain institutional learning, improve governance outcomes, and ensure that public resources are translated into measurable development results (Ngulube, 2012; Kimani & Oduor, 2021).

Documentation and archiving refer to the systematic process of recording, storing, and managing vital information and records within an organization. This includes creating written records of policies, procedures, decisions, and other relevant materials, ensuring that knowledge remains accessible for future use (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). In county governments, effective documentation helps preserve institutional memory, enabling current and future employees to reference past decisions, actions, and experiences, thereby enhancing organizational continuity and reducing knowledge loss (Kimani & Oduor, 2021).

Mentorship and coaching are informal knowledge transfer practices where experienced employees guide, support, and share their knowledge and expertise with less experienced staff. Mentorship involves a long-term developmental relationship, while coaching tends to be more focused on specific skills or tasks (Garvey et al., 2014). These practices are essential for transmitting tacit knowledge, which is knowledge that is difficult to codify or document but is critical for effective decision making and problem solving within the organization (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). In the context of county governments, mentorship and coaching contribute to staff development, improve performance, and ensure the continuity of knowledge despite turnover (Wamundiya & Njeru, 2020).

Globally, public institutions face similar challenges. In the United States, for instance, local governments have adopted mentorship programs and digital systems to address the knowledge gaps left by retiring staff. Cunningham & Kaur (2019) found that structured knowledge-sharing efforts improved service continuity and minimized disruption during leadership transitions. The United Kingdom has seen similar success: Moorhead et al. (2017)

noted that public institutions using KMS were able to streamline policy implementation and improve interdepartmental coordination.

Across Africa, the story is consistent. In Nigeria, Adeyemi (2016) reported that digitized documentation systems reduced knowledge loss and improved planning. In Uganda, Kajubi and Nalukwago (2020) highlighted mentorship as a vital tool for preserving critical skills in local governments. South Africa has also seen improvements where organizational learning is prioritized; Mhlongo and Ndlovu (2019) found that staff development initiatives helped institutionalize knowledge across departments.

In today's complex institutional landscape, Knowledge is not merely a byproduct of work; it is a strategic asset that significantly determines organizational performance. Knowledge retention, the act of deliberately capturing and preserving critical institutional insights, has emerged as a central pillar in sustaining effective governance, especially in public institutions like county governments. When staff leave without structured mechanisms in place to transfer their knowledge, the result is often fragmented operations, repeated mistakes, and stalled progress (Dalkir, 2017).

In the public sector, particularly within Kenya's devolved system of government, knowledge is not pursued for competitive advantage but for improved governance outcomes. County governments exist to deliver services efficiently, ensure accountability, and uphold constitutional mandates rather than to compete in markets. Thus, the retention and application of institutional knowledge directly affect their ability to plan, implement, and sustain public programs effectively (Ngulube, 2012; Kimani & Oduor, 2021).

From a governance perspective, knowledge functions as a strategic enabler of institutional efficiency and policy continuity, ensuring that administrative processes remain consistent even amidst leadership or staffing changes. According to Dalkir (2017), knowledge retention strengthens decision-making capacity, preserves institutional memory,

and minimizes operational disruptions caused by turnover or decentralization. In this sense, effective documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship form the backbone of sustainable service delivery in county governments (Wamundiya & Njeru, 2020).

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) and Organizational Learning Theory (OLT), when applied in a public governance context, emphasize that institutional performance depends on the ability of an organization to capture, store, and reuse knowledge for improved policy formulation and service execution (Argote, 2013; Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011). Within county governments, this means that knowledge retention enables departments to align policies with historical data, monitor implementation progress, and maintain accountability to the public. Hence, the concept of “knowledge as an asset” should be understood not in terms of competition, but as a driver of administrative resilience and evidence-based governance.

In Kenya, the implementation of devolution introduced new administrative and operational challenges related to knowledge loss. Frequent staff transfers, political changes, and leadership turnover often result in the erosion of institutional memory (Ngulube, 2020). Many counties still lack formal frameworks for documentation, digital recordkeeping, and mentorship, leading to fragmented knowledge systems (Muriuki & Kariuki, 2021). Critical decisions and project data are often stored informally in personal devices or undocumented verbal exchanges, making it difficult for successors to access vital institutional information. This weakens accountability, slows decision-making, and leads to duplication of efforts in county operations (Kimani & Oduor, 2021).

Cultural and technological barriers further complicate knowledge retention. Employees in many counties often treat information as personal property rather than a shared organizational asset, creating resistance to knowledge sharing (Mutuku, 2020). Limited investment in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure has also

hindered digitization of records and the establishment of centralized knowledge management systems. Moreover, a shortage of skilled information officers and archivists has made it difficult for counties to implement effective documentation and archiving systems (Mwangi & Kiragu, 2021). These factors collectively contribute to inefficiency, loss of institutional memory, and low employee productivity.

From a human resource management perspective, knowledge retention practices have a direct link to employee development, job satisfaction, and performance. Mentorship and coaching programs enhance skill transfer, foster innovation, and promote leadership development within organizations (Garvey et al., 2014). Studies have shown that organizations with structured mentorship programs experience higher employee engagement and performance (Muturi, 2020). However, in most county governments, mentorship and coaching remain informal and unstructured, limiting the potential for skill transfer and professional growth (Kariuki & Muraguri, 2021). This gap perpetuates inefficiency and hinders the realization of the counties' development goals.

In the Western Kenya region comprising Bungoma, Kakamega, Busia, and Vihiga counties these challenges are particularly pronounced. Reports from the Office of the Auditor-General (2022) reveal recurring inefficiencies in documentation, incomplete project records, and weak knowledge-sharing mechanisms. Staff mobility and lack of proper induction further exacerbate knowledge gaps, leading to service disruptions. Counties such as Kakamega, which have initiated digital record systems and informal mentorship frameworks, have shown relatively better performance outcomes compared to others still reliant on manual systems (Wamundiya & Njeru, 2020). This highlights the transformative potential of structured knowledge retention in strengthening institutional performance.

The growing recognition of knowledge as a vital strategic resource underscores its role in sustaining performance, innovation, and accountability in devolved units. Counties

that invest in structured documentation, archiving, mentorship, and coaching systems are more likely to sustain institutional memory and continuity even during administrative transitions (Kimani & Oduor, 2021; Ngulube, 2020). Despite this, there remains limited empirical research in Kenya—particularly in Western counties—examining the direct influence of knowledge retention practices on county government performance. Most existing studies have focused broadly on knowledge management in the public sector, without isolating the effects of specific retention practices or contextualizing them within devolved governance structures (Mutuku, 2020; Muriuki & Kariuki, 2021).

It is against this background that the present study sought to examine the influence of knowledge retention practices on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya, focusing on documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship. The study aims to bridge existing empirical gaps by providing evidence-based insights that can inform policy formulation, promote institutional learning, and enhance performance in devolved governance systems.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

County governments in Kenya are mandated by the Constitution to provide public services that are timely, efficient, and effective (Ong’ondo, 2021). However, many continue to face persistent performance gaps linked to the loss of institutional knowledge and the lack of structured systems to retain it (Muthoni & Ngugi, 2020; Otieno & Ombaka, 2022). Key challenges such as frequent staff turnover, poor documentation, lack of structured mentorship programs, and limited use of knowledge management systems have led to the erosion of organizational memory, thereby affecting continuity, decision-making, and service delivery (Barasa, Wanjiru, & Kinyua, 2020; Kang’ethe & Muriuki, 2023; Were & Gichuhi, 2022; Wekesa & Muturi, 2021).

Although knowledge is widely acknowledged as a strategic driver of organizational performance, many county governments in this region have yet to embed its retention into formal systems or practices. In Nigeria, Ogunyomi and Ojo (2017) observed that weak documentation processes and the absence of structured knowledge-sharing frameworks contributed to recurring administrative inefficiencies in public institutions. Similarly, Smit et al. (2018) found that South African local governments improved their operational performance after adopting digital knowledge management systems, while Kajubi and Nalukwago (2020) reported that structured mentorship programs in Uganda played a critical role in retaining both tacit and explicit knowledge. Despite these valuable insights, there remains a notable scarcity of empirical research specifically addressing knowledge retention practices within Kenya's devolved governance system. Most existing studies in Kenya have focused on the private sector or national government bodies, leaving a gap in understanding the unique dynamics of county-level governance.

This gap is particularly critical given the governance, resource, and capacity constraints that counties in Western Kenya face. International studies such as Cunningham and Kaur (2019) in the United States show that structured succession planning and knowledge documentation reduce service disruption during staff transitions. Yet, such practices are either absent or inadequately implemented in Kenyan counties. This knowledge gap limits the ability of county leadership and policymakers to make evidence-based decisions on institutionalizing effective knowledge retention mechanisms. Without addressing this, counties risk continued performance stagnation due to lost expertise, lack of continuity, and inefficient governance. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent to which knowledge retention practices influence the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

1.3 Research Objectives

General Objective

To investigate the influence of knowledge retention practices on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the effect of documentation practices on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.
2. To examine the effect of archiving practices on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.
3. To investigate the effect of coaching on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.
4. To determine the effect of mentorship on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Based on the specific objectives, the following null hypotheses (H_0) will be used:

HO₁: Documentation practices have no significant influence on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

HO₂: Archiving practices have no significant influence on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

HO₃: Coaching has no significant influence on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

HO₄: Mentorship has no significant influence on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Retaining knowledge was vital for maintaining continuity, improving efficiency, and driving performance in public institutions (Dalkir, 2017). In Western Kenya, county governments continued to grapple with challenges such as high staff turnover, weak institutional memory, and inconsistent service delivery (Wamundiya & Njeru, 2020). These recurring issues often disrupted governance processes, slowed down planning, and interfered with the consistent implementation of development programs.

This study was justified on several grounds. First, it responded to the growing need for county governments to preserve valuable knowledge and experiences, especially in an environment where changes in leadership and staffing were common (Ngulube, 2012). By investigating how various knowledge retention practices influenced performance, the study offered insights into how counties could better safeguard institutional knowledge and enhance operational effectiveness.

Second, there was a noticeable research gap in this area. While many studies in Kenya had explored knowledge management broadly, few had focused specifically on how knowledge retention linked to performance at the county level. This study intended to close that gap, offering region-specific, evidence-based insights tailored to the realities of counties in Western Kenya (Kimani & Oduor, 2021).

Lastly, the findings of this study were expected to be useful to policymakers, county administrators, human resource managers, and other stakeholders by highlighting best practices and strategies to institutionalize knowledge retention. In doing so, it contributed to improved governance, accountability, and service delivery at the county level (Muchira & Kiambati, 2015).

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to multiple stakeholders involved in county governance, public administration, and knowledge management, as it offers both theoretical and practical contributions to improving performance within devolved units.

County government administrators stand to benefit directly from the findings, as the study provides actionable guidance on how to institutionalize knowledge retention practices such as documentation, archiving, mentorship, and coaching within daily operations. By adopting these practices, county executives and departmental heads can ensure continuity of service delivery, reduce the disruptions caused by staff turnover, and enhance decision-making through access to preserved institutional memory. The insights from this study will help administrators strengthen accountability systems and improve operational efficiency across departments.

Human resource and training officers would also gain valuable insights from the study, particularly in designing and implementing structured mechanisms for preserving critical organizational knowledge. The research underscores the importance of integrating mentorship and coaching into professional development frameworks, enabling staff to acquire tacit knowledge that may otherwise be lost through attrition or transfers. Additionally, HR officers can use the findings to develop comprehensive succession planning and induction programs that support sustainable institutional performance.

Policymakers and governance institutions at both county and national levels would find the study useful in informing the formulation and refinement of knowledge management and retention policies. By understanding the relationship between knowledge retention practices and performance, policymakers can design frameworks that foster learning-oriented

governance, promote transparency, and enhance service delivery effectiveness. This study provides empirical evidence to support the development of regulations and best-practice guidelines for managing public sector knowledge resources.

The academic community, including researchers, lecturers, and students, would benefit from the study's contribution to the growing body of literature on knowledge management and organizational learning in the public sector. It provides a contextualized understanding of how knowledge retention influences performance in Kenyan county governments, thus filling a research gap in public administration scholarship. Future researchers can build upon this work to explore emerging trends in digital knowledge systems, mentorship, and institutional learning.

Finally, development partners, non-governmental organizations, and civil society groups focusing on governance and institutional strengthening would find the study beneficial for designing targeted interventions. The findings offer a framework for supporting counties in building sustainable knowledge management systems that enhance governance capacity and accountability. These insights can guide donor-funded capacity-building initiatives and inform collaborative programs that promote efficiency, innovation, and citizen-centered governance across county administrations.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study was confined to investigate the influence of knowledge retention practices on the performance of selected county governments in Western Kenya. Specifically, the study focused on four key knowledge retention practices, namely documentation, archiving, mentorship, and coaching. These practices were examined in relation to their impact on organizational performance indicators such as service delivery, operational efficiency, employee productivity, and institutional continuity.

Geographically, the study covered a selection of county governments within the Western region of Kenya, including (but not limited to) Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, and Busia counties. These counties were chosen due to their representativeness of both rural and semi-urban administrative contexts within devolved governance structures.

The study targeted county government officials drawn from key departments such as administration, human resources, records management, and service delivery. To ensure balanced representation across various functions, a sample of approximately 356 respondents was selected using a combination of stratified and purposive sampling techniques, allowing the research to capture diverse perspectives from within the selected counties.

This investigation centered on knowledge retention practices implemented over the past five years, aligning with the most recent five-year development cycle of county development planning. While the findings offered useful insights for counties beyond the study area, the results were most directly applicable to the counties examined.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth review of literature relevant to the study topic: The Influence of Knowledge Retention Practices on the Performance of County Governments in Western Kenya. The discussion is structured around the study's core objectives, which explore how documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship affect county government performance. In addition to empirical findings, the chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that shape the research approach.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Knowledge-Based View (KBV) of the Firm

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) of the firm originally advanced by Grant (1996) and shaped by the earlier contributions of Nonaka (1994), positions that knowledge is the most valuable resource for any organization, more important than physical or financial capital. Applied to county governments, this theory suggests that the effectiveness of service delivery depends largely on how well the institution creates, retains, and applies knowledge. Retaining critical knowledge such as financial management practices, records of development projects, and policy guidelines prevents disruptions caused by staff turnover or political transitions. Counties that successfully manage knowledge are able to sustain institutional memory, reduce duplication of efforts, and ensure continuity of service delivery. Thus, KBV directly links knowledge retention to improved efficiency, accountability, and overall performance of county governments.

The KBV was criticized as it assumes that organizations can effectively capture and codify knowledge into explicit forms, yet in practice, much of the critical expertise within county governments remains tacit and embedded in individuals. This makes documentation a

partial solution at best, since important experiential insights may be lost when employees leave or retire.

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) of the firm emphasizes that knowledge is the most valuable resource an organization can possess, forming the foundation for long-term competitiveness and strong performance. Unlike tangible assets that can wear out or be copied, organizational knowledge—embedded in people, systems, and daily practices—remains distinctive and difficult to duplicate. From this perspective, organizations are encouraged to focus on generating, preserving, and applying knowledge as a way to improve outcomes.

Applied to county governments in Western Kenya, the KBV offers a useful lens for understanding how knowledge retention affects institutional performance. These governments often contend with challenges such as employee turnover, retirements, and staff transfers, all of which can disrupt service delivery when valuable expertise is lost. Establishing systematic approaches to knowledge retention through proper documentation, digital archiving, and well-managed record systems helps to protect institutional memory. In line with KBV, such practices elevate knowledge to a strategic asset that secures service continuity, strengthens efficiency, and informs better decision-making. Ultimately, the KBV underscores how knowledge retention directly supports the performance and sustainability of county governments.

In relation to Objective 1, which examines how documentation practices influence county government performance in Western Kenya, the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) provides a strong fit. KBV regards documentation as a means of capturing and preserving explicit knowledge—such as policies, procedures, and decisions—that can outlast staffing changes and administrative transitions. Properly maintained records serve as vital reference

points, supporting organizational learning, ensuring continuity, and sustaining performance within structured county bureaucracies.

Regarding Objective 2, which looks at the role of archiving, KBV continues to provide strong conceptual grounding. Archiving is more than just record-keeping. It is about maintaining a reliable reservoir of institutional memory, one that holds both operational data and historical insights. Through this lens, effective archiving not only protects valuable information but also makes it accessible when needed, helping to support timely decisions and operational efficiency. KBV suggests that organizations with well maintained, retrievable knowledge systems are better equipped to plan, adapt, and carry out their functions with consistency.

For Objective 3, which examines the impact of coaching on performance, KBV again emphasizes the strategic importance of knowledge especially when shared directly between individuals. Coaching facilitates the transfer of both explicit and tacit knowledge through personal guidance, feedback loops, and experiential learning. This type of hands on engagement fosters internalization of skills and work culture that are often difficult to document but essential for day to day excellence (Mariano et al., 2023). In this context, coaching becomes a powerful tool for building competence and agility within county staff, reinforcing KBV's claim that effective knowledge sharing drives organizational success (Dzenopoljac et al., 2021).

Finally, Objective 4 focuses on mentorship, which KBV regards as a key mechanism for sharing tacit knowledge insights gained through experience, intuition, and organizational familiarity. Unlike manuals or training guides, mentorship allows seasoned employees to guide their less experienced counterparts by sharing nuanced understanding, decision making strategies, and institutional values. According to KBV, these mentor mentee relationships preserve institutional memory, smooth transitions during staff changes, and support sustained

learning within the organization (Shujahat et al., 2022). When counties formalize mentorship as part of their operational culture, they build long term capacity and reinforce performance across departments, fully in line with KBV principles (Al-Omoush et al., 2023).

2.2.2 Organizational Learning Theory (OLT)

The Organizational Learning Theory (OLT), developed by Argyris and Schön (1978), proposes that organizations evolve and improve by learning from their past through experience, reflection, and adaptation. According to this theory, it emphasizes that organizations improve over time by acquiring, sharing, and institutionalizing knowledge. For county governments, this means that performance is enhanced when departments continually learn from past experiences, community feedback, and policy implementation outcomes. Knowledge retention mechanisms such as documentation, mentoring, and archiving facilitate this learning process by ensuring valuable lessons are not lost when staff leave or administrations change. By embedding learning into daily operations, counties become adaptive, innovative, and capable of responding effectively to emerging governance challenges. Therefore, OLT links knowledge retention to long-term institutional growth and improved governance outcomes in county governments.

One limitation of OLT, however, lies in its emphasis on continuous reflection and adaptation through institutional learning. However, in the public sector, bureaucratic culture, political interference, and resource constraints often slow or limit the use of documentation for learning purposes. Records may exist, but they are sometimes poorly utilized due to weak incentives, lack of technological infrastructure, or entrenched resistance to change. Thus, while OLT highlights the potential of documentation to guide decision-making, its effectiveness may be undermined by practical challenges in devolved governance systems.

Organizational Learning Theory (OLT) stresses that institutions improve performance by continually acquiring, retaining, and applying knowledge gained through experience. The

theory holds that learning takes place not only at the individual level but also collectively, allowing organizations to adapt to changing environments, innovate, and operate more efficiently. A central feature of OLT is the feedback loop, where lessons from both successes and failures are systematically examined and built into future practices.

Applied to county governments in Western Kenya, OLT highlighted the importance of embedding knowledge retention within governance processes. Practices such as mentoring programs, on-the-job training, archiving policy documents, and preserving records of community engagement helped counties capture and transfer institutional memory across successive administrations. By engaging in this ongoing learning process, counties were better equipped to design responsive policies, avoid repeating past errors, and address emerging governance challenges. In this way, OLT provided a strong theoretical basis for understanding how knowledge retention contributed to adaptability, innovation, and improved performance in county governments.

In the context of Objective 1, which examines the role of documentation practices, OLT provides a useful lens. Documentation preserves the experiences, decisions, and lessons that shape organizational operations. Beyond compliance, these records serve as active knowledge resources that inform policy decisions and prevent recurring mistakes. OLT thus highlights how institutional learning is strengthened when documentation is deliberately used to reflect, adapt, and improve public service delivery.

For Objective 2, which focuses on archiving practices, the theory again provides a solid foundation. Archiving functions as the memory bank of an organization, storing both administrative records and critical historical data. When archives are accessible and managed well, they enable employees and leaders to draw lessons from previous initiatives what worked, what failed, and why. OLT frames this kind of historical insight as essential for informed decision making and for shaping better outcomes moving forward.

As for Objective 3, which examines coaching, OLT strongly emphasizes the role of continuous, experience based learning in driving organizational effectiveness. Coaching provides a space where employees can gain real time feedback, learn new skills, and reflect on their roles within the organization. This kind of learning grounded in daily work and shaped by interpersonal interaction allows staff to grow in ways that align with organizational goals (Fiol & Lyles, 2020). When coaching becomes a formalized part of a county government's culture, it helps individuals develop, which in turn contributes to broader organizational adaptability and improved service delivery (Anshari et al., 2022).

Finally, with Objective 4, the link between mentorship and OLT is particularly strong. OLT views mentorship as a powerful mechanism for transferring knowledge across generations of employees. Through mentorship, experienced members share not only information, but insights, norms, and best practices that are often unwritten but deeply embedded in the organization's culture (Garvin & Edmondson, 2021). This structured sharing process ensures that critical knowledge is retained, even when members of staff leave, and new hires are brought up to speed more efficiently. By institutionalizing mentorship, county governments reinforce a culture of shared learning that promotes innovation, capacity building, and long-term performance sustainability (Zbuckea et al., 2023).

2.2.3 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT) formalized in the 1960s by economists Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz is an economic framework that regarded human beings as a form of capital. It proposed that an individual's skills, knowledge, education, and health were assets that could be enhanced through deliberate investment, much like a firm invests in machinery or technology. The central argument was that such investments in people improved productivity, generating benefits both for the individual, in the form of higher earnings, and for organizations or society more broadly, through stronger performance and economic growth.

Despite its wide application, Human Capital Theory (HCT) has attracted several criticisms. First, scholars have argued that the theory is overly simplistic and reductionist, as it reduces human beings to mere tools or assets for production. This perspective is often viewed as demoralizing because it ignores the broader human, social, and cultural dimensions of work (Marginson, 2019).

Second, critics have questioned the assumed direct relationship between education and productivity. Freeman (1976), for example, contended that education may function less as a means of increasing productivity and more as a signaling mechanism to employers, demonstrating attributes such as intelligence and ability. In this view, real productivity gains are achieved later through on-the-job training, workplace experience, and individual motivation rather than formal education alone.

Human Capital Theory provided a strong theoretical foundation for this study. It emphasized that the collective knowledge, skills, and experience of employees constituted the most valuable assets of an organization. For a county government to perform effectively and achieve its objectives, it needed not only to recruit skilled personnel but also to establish strategies that safeguarded and retained their knowledge.

The research assumed that knowledge formed a critical component of human capital. When employees left the organization, they carried their knowledge with them, resulting in the loss of valuable resources that could adversely affect government performance. Examining knowledge retention practices therefore offered an opportunity to understand how county governments in Western Kenya invested in and protected their human capital, ensuring long-term sustainability and improved service delivery.

Mentorship as the study objective is directly linked to Human Capital Theory (HCT). Mentorship is identified as a central human capital development practice, providing a structured mechanism for transferring knowledge, skills, and tacit expertise from more

experienced employees (mentors) to less experienced staff (mentees). Through this process, the human capital of the mentee was strengthened, enhancing both individual and organizational capacity.

In line with HCT, investment in mentorship was expected to generate several positive outcomes. First, mentees who received guidance and acquired new competencies were likely to demonstrate higher levels of productivity. Second, mentorship served as an effective means of knowledge transfer, safeguarding institutional memory that could otherwise be lost when experienced employees retired or exited the organization. Finally, the overall improvement in the skills and knowledge base of the workforce was anticipated to translate into enhanced performance within county governments.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Documentation Practices and Performance of County Governments

Documentation practices refer to the structured recording of policies, procedures, decisions, and institutional history to ensure that critical information is readily accessible when needed. These practices are fundamental to promoting transparency, organizational continuity, and public accountability.

In the United States, Williams and Thornton (2021) conducted a quantitative study that explored how documentation systems affect audit compliance within city councils. Using structured questionnaires administered to 50 city council managers, the study revealed that well-maintained documentation significantly reduced audit errors. However, the study's scope was limited to financial documentation, leaving out administrative procedures, which are equally essential for effective governance and institutional performance. Moreover, the U.S. context is characterized by stronger institutional enforcement and digital infrastructure, making direct comparison with Kenyan county governments less applicable due to disparities in resources and bureaucratic cultures.

Similarly, Kintu et al. (2023) in Uganda examined how procurement documentation influences budget execution across district governments. The researchers gathered data from 100 procurement officers and found that clear and organized procurement records enhanced budget utilization and compliance. While the study offered valuable insights into fiscal accountability, it did not link documentation to the broader service delivery outcomes, such as the timeliness or quality of public services. This limitation underscores the need to explore how documentation contributes not only to compliance but also to holistic county government performance an issue central to the Kenyan devolution context.

In Malaysia, Rashid and Osman (2022) investigated documentation policies within provincial departments using a survey design. Their findings showed that regularly updated procedural manuals fostered improved adherence to service charters and internal consistency. However, the study failed to examine how documentation interacts with employee capacity-building or knowledge transfer initiatives, particularly for newly recruited staff. This omission is significant because documentation alone, without staff engagement and training, may not effectively support performance. Such gaps highlight the importance of studying documentation within a knowledge management framework that integrates training, record accessibility, and practical utilization key areas this study addresses.

In Kenya, Wekesa (2022) conducted a qualitative study on the role of documentation in service delivery among county government staff. The research concluded that counties with current and accessible policy manuals demonstrated better outcomes in citizen satisfaction and workflow efficiency. Nevertheless, the study's limited focus on only two counties restricted its generalizability. Furthermore, it did not examine documentation in relation to performance dimensions such as budget absorption, timeliness in service delivery, and accountability mechanisms. Therefore, a more comprehensive, region-wide study

focusing on Western Kenya can bridge this empirical gap by evaluating how documentation practices contribute to multiple performance indicators across departments.

Additional evidence from the County Budget Transparency Surveys (CBTS) between 2021 and 2023 supports this relationship between documentation and institutional performance. Counties that consistently published complete, timely budget documents—such as Annual Development Plans (ADPs), County Fiscal Strategy Papers (CFSPs), Budget Estimates, and Quarterly Budget Implementation Reports—demonstrated stronger public oversight and smoother budget execution, both indicators of improved performance (International Budget Partnership, 2023; Bajeti Hub, 2024). However, these surveys were primarily descriptive and did not empirically assess the internal administrative or human resource mechanisms that sustain such documentation practices. This gap reinforces the need for analytical studies that link documentation quality to broader performance metrics at the county level.

From the reviewed studies, it is evident that documentation practices play a critical role in promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency across both developed and developing countries. However, existing research is fragmented and often limited either by narrow focus on financial records or lack of connection between documentation and performance outcomes. Moreover, very few studies adopt a multi-dimensional approach that integrates documentation with knowledge retention, staff training, and organizational learning—factors that are particularly relevant in Kenya’s devolved governance framework. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by examining how documentation practices influence the performance of county governments in Western Kenya, emphasizing measurable outcomes such as service timeliness, fiscal efficiency, and administrative accountability.

2.3.2 Archiving Practices and Performance of County Governments

Archiving practices refer to the structured storage and retrieval of organizational records for legal, historical, and operational purposes. When implemented effectively, these systems support timely access to information and ensure compliance with statutory obligations.

In Australia, Green and Hall (2021) conducted a case study examining digital archiving within local councils. Drawing on document analysis and interviews with IT personnel, the study revealed that councils employing digitized record systems achieved faster response times to public information requests and experienced fewer instances of file loss. While this study underscores the efficiency of digital archiving, it overlooked the human capacity dimension, particularly whether staff had received sufficient training to navigate and use these systems effectively. This omission limits the applicability of its findings to developing contexts like Kenya, where capacity gaps among records officers often hinder digital transformation within county governments.

Mwakyusa and Mollel (2023) carried out a mixed-methods study focusing on public record archiving within Tanzania's regional secretariats. Their findings demonstrated that digital archives significantly improved transparency and accountability in public service delivery. However, the study failed to factor in infrastructural limitations, such as inconsistent internet access and inadequate equipment, which are critical barriers in low-resource environments. As a result, while the study provides a useful benchmark, its conclusions may not be fully transferable to Kenyan counties, where archiving efficiency is often constrained by unreliable power supply, limited technical expertise, and funding bottlenecks.

In China, Chen and Yang (2022) adopted an experimental design to investigate how metadata tagging influences data retrieval efficiency in urban administrative offices. Their results showed that metadata indexing improved access speed by up to 40%, demonstrating

the potential of structured archiving systems for enhancing administrative efficiency. However, the research did not consider user behavior or organizational culture, both of which are pivotal in determining how well staff adopt and use digital archiving systems. In contrast, Kenyan county governments operate within bureaucratic hierarchies and politicized work environments, making cultural and behavioral factors central to the success of any archiving reform.

Locally, Njuguna (2023) conducted an evaluative study comparing manual and digital archiving approaches across several Kenyan county governments. The study concluded that manual systems slowed access to essential records, delayed administrative decision-making, and negatively affected service delivery. Nevertheless, the research was largely descriptive, focusing on observable patterns rather than statistically testing correlations between archiving practices and performance outcomes. Consequently, it leaves open the question of how specific archiving variables—such as standardization, retrieval speed, or data security—quantitatively influence county government performance, a gap that the current study aims to address.

Complementary evidence further underscores the relevance of archiving to county performance. Digitization of land and administrative records, a core archiving function, has been linked to faster verification processes, reduced fraud opportunities, and improved citizen service in the Nairobi Metropolitan Region counties (UCL Discovery, 2024). Similarly, reports from the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service (KNADS, 2023) highlight that standardized retention schedules, metadata tagging, and searchable repositories form the backbone of efficient devolved records management. Counties that adopt such practices demonstrate higher audit readiness, better procurement traceability, and reduced data loss. Nonetheless, these reports remain policy-oriented rather than empirically validated, offering descriptive insights but lacking statistical evidence connecting archiving practices to

specific dimensions of county government performance. This gap justifies a focused empirical inquiry into how archiving practices enhance the operational efficiency, fiscal accountability, and service delivery outcomes of county governments in Western Kenya.

The reviewed literature affirms that effective archiving practices particularly digitization, metadata tagging, and standardized retention can significantly enhance institutional performance through better information access and accountability. Nonetheless, existing studies exhibit methodological fragmentation, contextual bias, and a lack of integration between technological, behavioral, and governance factors. Very few have operationalized archiving practices as measurable constructs linked to specific performance metrics in public sector settings. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge these gaps by empirically examining the influence of archiving practices on county government performance in Western Kenya, situating the analysis within the realities of devolved governance, infrastructural disparities, and administrative culture.

2.3.3 Coaching Practices and Performance of County Governments

Coaching is increasingly acknowledged as a powerful mechanism for enhancing both individual performance and overall organizational effectiveness. Through structured knowledge transfer, skills development, and behavioral support, coaching creates space for growth while fostering accountability. In the public sector, its role is particularly important, as it supports continuous learning and helps employees align with institutional goals.

Mariano et al. (2023) argue that coaching facilitates knowledge sharing by fostering direct, meaningful interactions between supervisors and subordinates. Their mixed-method study across public sector organizations in Brazil combined surveys and interviews, revealing that coaching enhanced adaptability through timely feedback and reflection. However, the study's limitation lies in its reliance on self-reported performance data, which may inflate perceived outcomes rather than objectively measuring service improvement. This highlights

the need for empirical validation within the public governance context where performance is often measured through externally audited indicators rather than internal perceptions.

Similarly, Dzenopoljac et al. (2021) emphasized the dual role of coaching in transferring both explicit and tacit knowledge within public institutions. Using a cross-sectional survey of civil servants in Serbia, the researchers found that coaching led to higher engagement and competence, contributing to better service delivery. Yet, their model did not account for institutional constraints common in developing countries, such as political interference and resource scarcity, which could limit the consistency of coaching practices in Kenyan counties. Thus, while their findings are valuable, their applicability to decentralized governance systems remains uncertain.

In the United Kingdom, Jones et al. (2021) employed a longitudinal approach to track the effects of coaching within local authorities. Their study found measurable improvements in leadership development and administrative efficiency over time, highlighting the role of coaching in promoting reflective practice and aligning employee goals with institutional objectives. Despite its methodological strength, the research was situated in a well-resourced governance structure with established accountability frameworks, limiting its direct comparability to Kenya's devolved context, where managerial autonomy and institutional maturity differ significantly.

Supporting this, Grant (2020) conducted a randomized controlled study in Australia's Department of Human Services and reported that coaching interventions led to stronger engagement and a culture of continuous improvement. However, while the study demonstrated causality, it overlooked contextual barriers such as hierarchical rigidity or cultural attitudes toward feedback factors that are particularly salient in Kenyan public institutions, where coaching may be misconstrued as corrective supervision rather than capacity development (Wekesa & Muturi, 2021).

Within Kenya, Mwangi and Wanjiru (2021) observed through a descriptive study that county governments with structured coaching programs experienced notable gains in technical proficiency and leadership capability. Nonetheless, their analysis did not statistically isolate coaching effects from other human resource initiatives such as training or mentorship, making causal inferences difficult. Additionally, much of their data was drawn from Nairobi and Mombasa counties, which may not reflect the resource constraints typical in Western Kenya.

Emerging local evidence further ties coaching to digital capacity-building initiatives. Studies on system rollouts, such as e-procurement and digital budgeting portals, have shown that embedded coaching-style capacity transfer enhances compliance, decision speed, and policy implementation quality (ResearchGate, 2025; KIPPRA, 2025). While promising, these studies often focus on technical coaching rather than holistic organizational learning, leaving gaps in understanding the broader behavioral and institutional impacts of coaching within county governance.

In contrast, Wekesa and Muturi (2021) warned that coaching can yield limited results when introduced in rigid bureaucracies where it is perceived as surveillance rather than empowerment. This suggests that coaching effectiveness is contingent on leadership commitment and an enabling organizational culture. Consequently, in Western Kenyan counties—where staff turnover and resource disparities are persistent—integrating coaching within a supportive learning framework becomes essential to unlock its potential for sustainable performance improvement.

The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that coaching enhances staff competence, engagement, and adaptability, ultimately influencing institutional performance. Nonetheless, most research particularly from developed countries relies on resource-rich and culturally supportive environments, which may not parallel Kenya's devolved governance

conditions. Empirical studies within Kenya remain largely descriptive, lacking causal clarity and regional representation. This gap underscores the need for context-specific analysis examining how coaching practices, when embedded within county structures and aligned with local realities, influence the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

2.3.4 Mentorship practices and Performance of County Governments

Mentorship is a structured developmental relationship in which experienced individuals (mentors) support the learning and professional growth of less experienced employees (mentees). The practice is central to the transfer of tacit knowledge, promotion of organizational learning, and enhancement of performance in both private and public sector institutions. Shujahat et al. (2022) noted that mentorship is a strategic knowledge retention tool that ensures organizational memory is preserved, especially in institutions facing high staff turnover. Through mentorship, critical skills, institutional history, and problem-solving approaches are passed on, thus strengthening organizational resilience.

In the United Arab Emirates, Al-Omoush et al. (2023) examined the impact of mentorship on employee performance and institutional knowledge continuity within public organizations. Using a longitudinal design, they found that structured mentorship programs significantly improved employee confidence, decision-making, and cross-departmental knowledge exchange. However, the study primarily focused on high-resource government institutions with well-established training budgets, neglecting how mentorship functions in resource-constrained environments. This limits its applicability to developing countries, such as Kenya, where mentorship initiatives in county governments often face funding and policy implementation challenges.

In South Africa, Mhlongo and Ndlovu (2019) conducted a qualitative investigation on mentorship programs in local government departments. Their findings indicated that sustained mentorship relationships enhanced employee competence, improved service

outcomes, and promoted leadership continuity, particularly during administrative transitions. Nevertheless, the study overlooked the structural constraints and political influences that frequently shape mentorship outcomes in devolved systems. Consequently, while the results are promising, they cannot be directly generalized to Kenya's county governments, where political patronage and administrative turnover can disrupt long-term mentorship continuity.

In Canada, Bryant and Allen (2022) analyzed mentorship as a capacity-building strategy in public administration. Their mixed-methods study showed that formal mentorship improved innovation, retention, and intergenerational knowledge transfer within public sector organizations. However, the study assumed the presence of stable leadership and policy frameworks conditions not always present in devolved or developing contexts. This oversight reduces the external validity of its conclusions for Kenyan counties, where human resource policies are still evolving and mentorship often lacks institutional anchorage.

In Australia, Grant (2020) explored coaching and mentorship initiatives within federal agencies and reported that structured mentoring relationships enhanced organizational learning and employee engagement. The study further observed that mentorship fostered accountability and alignment with institutional objectives. However, it did not examine how organizational culture or leadership attitudes mediate mentorship success. This omission is notable given that in public sector environments such as Kenya's county governments, hierarchical leadership styles and bureaucratic inertia often shape mentorship participation and outcomes.

Locally, Kimani and Oduor (2021) assessed mentorship in Kenya's county governments and found that counties with formalized mentorship frameworks such as Kisumu and Makueni experienced better knowledge retention, higher employee satisfaction, and more consistent performance outcomes. Their study, however, remained largely descriptive and did not statistically link mentorship dimensions (e.g., mentor-mentee

matching, frequency, or duration) to quantifiable performance indicators such as project completion rates or budget absorption. Similarly, Wanjala and Ombaka (2022) warned that mentorship in many Kenyan public offices tends to be informal or tokenistic, lacking systematic evaluation and alignment with knowledge management goals.

Complementary evidence from government reports highlights that mentorship contributes to staff development and institutional resilience. The Kenya Public Service Commission (PSC, 2023) emphasized that mentorship is essential for succession planning and the preservation of institutional knowledge across county departments. Likewise, the Kenya School of Government (KSG, 2024) reported that structured mentorship frameworks enhance learning outcomes in county capacity-building programs, particularly in finance, procurement, and human resource functions. However, these reports remain policy-oriented and do not provide empirical data linking mentorship practices to measurable aspects of county government performance such as service timeliness, accountability, or fiscal management.

The reviewed literature collectively affirms that mentorship enhances knowledge retention, employee competence, and organizational learning key factors that underpin performance in public institutions. Nonetheless, the studies exhibit methodological fragmentation, contextual bias, and limited focus on devolved governance structures. Most existing research is descriptive and fails to operationalize mentorship variables (e.g., structure, duration, frequency, or institutional support) in relation to specific performance outcomes. Moreover, mentorship research in Kenya remains concentrated in health and education sectors, with little empirical exploration of its effect within county administrative settings. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by empirically examining how mentorship practices influence the performance of county governments in Western Kenya, focusing on their role in institutional knowledge retention, service efficiency, and accountability.

2.4 Summary of Literature and Identified Gaps

The reviewed literature clearly highlights the value of documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship in strengthening performance within public sector institutions. Globally, governments have adopted structured knowledge retention practices, often with encouraging outcomes. However, many of these studies are sector-specific or focus on national-level institutions, offering limited insight into how such practices function within decentralized governance structures like county governments.

In the Kenyan context, research remains fragmented, with most studies addressing isolated aspects of knowledge management or focusing on individual counties. Few have examined the broader relationship between knowledge retention and performance across multiple sub-national units. This study seeks to bridge that gap by exploring how documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship influence the performance of county governments in Western Kenya, offering a comprehensive and evidence-based perspective tailored to devolved governance.

2.4.1 Identified Research Gaps

Existing studies on documentation in Kenya emphasize budget transparency, e-government, and public accountability, but they rarely link documentation practices directly to measurable county government performance outcomes such as service delivery efficiency, accountability, or institutional continuity. There is also limited empirical work on how internal documentation routines (e.g., project reports, policy manuals, HR records) contribute to knowledge retention at county level.

While digitization of land and administrative records has been studied, little research investigates archiving comprehensively as a knowledge retention mechanism in counties. The gap lies in understanding how systematic archiving practices (classification systems,

retention schedules, digital repositories) influence organizational performance in devolved units.

County-level studies on capacity building often highlight training and workshops, but the role of on-the-job coaching as a distinct knowledge retention practice remains underexplored. Empirical evidence is particularly lacking on how coaching affects employee productivity, compliance, and innovation within county governments.

Although mentorship programs exist in some counties, most research either focuses on the health sector or youth mentorship rather than governance. A clear gap exists in examining how structured mentorship programs for county staff contribute to institutional memory, leadership continuity, and performance outcomes.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework depicts the relationship between knowledge retention practices namely documentation practices, archiving practices, coaching and mentorship (independent variables and the performance of county governments (dependent variable). It illustrates how these practices influence administrative efficiency, service delivery, and resource utilization within county governments in Western Kenya.

Independent variable

Dependent variable

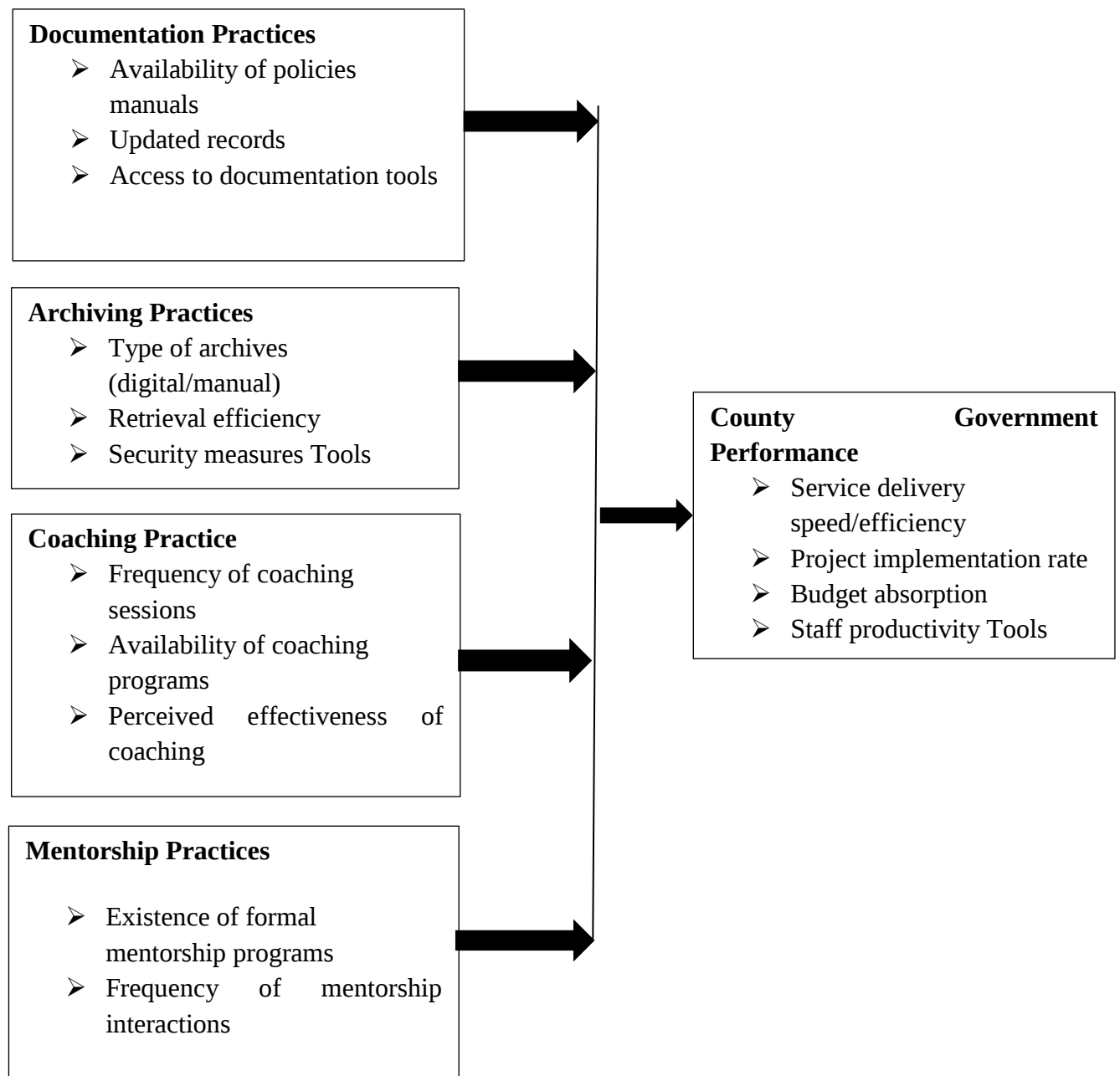


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

2.6 Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Type	Indicators	Measurement/ Scale	Data Collection Tools
Documentation Practices	Independent	Availability of policy manuals, frequency of documentation updates, accessibility of documented procedures	Ordinal (Likert scale: 1–5)	Questionnaires
Archiving Practices	Independent	Type of archive (digital/manual), retrieval speed, record security measures	Ordinal (Likert scale: 1–5)	Questionnaires
Coaching Practices	Independent	Frequency of coaching sessions, Availability of coaching programs, perceived effectiveness of coaching	Ordinal (Likert scale: 1–5)	Questionnaires,
Mentorship Practices	Independent	Existence of formal mentorship programs, Frequency of mentorship interactions, Nature of mentorship	Ordinal (Likert scale: 1–5)	Questionnaires
County Government Performance	Dependent	Project implementation rate, staff productivity, service delivery efficiency, budget absorption rate	Ratio (percentages, numeric scores), Ordinal (Likert scale)	Performance reports, Staff and citizen surveys and Questionnaires

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlined the methodology that guided the investigation into how knowledge retention practices affected the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. It detailed the overall research design, the target population, sampling strategies, data collection instruments, and the techniques that were used for data analysis. In addition, the chapter addressed the steps that were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, as well as the ethical considerations that were observed throughout the research process. The methodology was carefully structured to support the collection of accurate, trustworthy, and relevant data capable of answering the research questions and testing the study's hypotheses.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. This design was most suitable because the study sought to establish the nature of the relationship between knowledge retention practices—documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship—and county government performance without manipulating the variables. A correlational approach was appropriate since the researcher could not experimentally alter how counties managed documentation or mentorship but could statistically assess how these practices related to performance indicators such as efficiency, service delivery, and budget absorption (Kothari & Garg, 2020).

The descriptive element of the design was critical for capturing the prevailing status of knowledge retention practices across counties. Through structured questionnaires, the study generated detailed insights into patterns, perceptions, and trends in documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship. This descriptive evidence provided the contextual baseline needed for interpreting statistical relationships.

The correlational component allowed the researcher to go beyond description and determine whether strong, weak, positive, or negative associations existed between specific knowledge retention strategies and county government performance outcomes. This dual focus was well-suited to public sector research, where variables were naturally occurring and direct manipulation would have been impractical or unethical (Lindström & Marabelli, 2022). Overall, the combined descriptive-correlational design was ideal because it balanced depth and rigor: it described what was happening within counties while simultaneously testing how knowledge retention practices statistically related to organizational performance. This made it the most effective design for generating evidence-based recommendations for improving governance in a devolved context.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted employees working in selected departments within the county headquarters of Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, and Busia counties, which faced persistent challenges related to knowledge retention and service delivery (Kimani & Oduor, 2021; Ngulube, 2022). A stratified random sampling approach was adopted to ensure broad and representative participation from staff across ten key departments: Human Resource Management, Records and Archives, Administration, Finance and Procurement, Planning and Development, Health, Education, Agriculture, ICT, and Infrastructure. These departments were purposively selected because of their strategic importance in county operations and their reliance on institutional memory, knowledge retention, and sound knowledge management practices (Al-Omoush et al., 2023).

According to official records from the Council of Governors (2023) and the respective County Public Service Boards, the combined workforce across the four counties at their headquarter offices in Bungoma, Kakamega, Busia, and Vihiga stood at 3,200 employees.

The study focused on employees based at the headquarters because they were directly

involved in implementing county-wide policies, procedures, and decision-making processes central to knowledge retention and organizational performance. This focus ensured uniformity in exposure to strategic operations and reduced variability that might arise from departmental or sub-county differences.

The inclusion criteria consisted of permanent and contract staff, as well as managers and technical officers, who were stationed at the county headquarters and had served in their current departments for at least six months. These employees were directly involved in knowledge-intensive functions and were therefore well-positioned to provide insights into documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship practices.

By focusing on headquarters staff across strategically important departments and applying clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, the study ensured a targeted yet comprehensive analysis of knowledge retention practices that reflected the institutional realities of county governments in Western Kenya (Lindström & Marabelli, 2022; Mhlongo & Ndlovu, 2019).

3.4 Sampling Design and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sampling Design

The study adopted a stratified random sampling design to ensure proportional representation of employees across the ten selected departments within the county headquarters of Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, and Busia. Stratified sampling was appropriate given the heterogeneous nature of the target population, as staff from Human Resource, Records and Archives, Finance, Planning, and other departments had different experiences and exposure to knowledge retention practices.

Stratification was carried out by first dividing the total population ($N = 3,200$) into distinct, non-overlapping strata based on departmental affiliation. Within each stratum, participants were then selected using proportionate allocation, meaning the number of

respondents drawn from each department corresponded to that department's share of the total population.

Proportionate stratified sampling was particularly valuable in comparative governance studies, as it enhanced representativeness, reduced sampling error, and allowed for meaningful subgroup analysis (Kothari & Garg, 2019).

TABLE 3. 1
Distribution of Target Population by Department and County (N = 3,200)

County	HR Mgmt	Records Archives	Admin in	Finance & Procurement	Planning & Development	Health	Education	Agriculture	IC	Infrastructure	Total
Kakamega	120	100	130	90	100	150	160	100	80	90	1,120
Bungoma	100	90	110	80	90	130	140	90	60	70	970
Busia	90	80	90	70	80	110	120	80	50	60	830
Vihiga	70	60	80	60	70	90	100	60	40	50	680
Total	380	330	410	300	340	480	520	330	230	270	3,200

3.4.2 Sample Size

To ensure that the study results are statistically sound and reflective of the broader target population, determining an appropriate sample size was essential. The research focused on approximately 3,200 county government employees drawn from Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, and Busia counties. Given the finite nature of this population, the study applied

Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination—a widely accepted method in social science research for calculating representative samples in finite populations.

Using Yamane's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = the level of significance

1 = Constant

The level of significance (e) = 0.05

N=3200 (target population)

1=1

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} .$$

$$n = \frac{3200}{1 + 3200(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3200}{1 + 8}$$

$$n = \frac{3200}{9}$$

$$n = 356$$

Thus, the sample size will be 356 respondents.

Because the population is finite, the finite population correction (FPC) is inherently captured in Yamane's formula, which adjusts for the actual population size rather than assuming an infinite population.

To address potential non-response, the sample will be inflated by 10%. This yields:

$$n_{\text{adjusted}} = 356 \times 1.10 = 392$$

Therefore, the study will aim to collect data from 392 respondents.

Missing responses was handled through a combination of strategies:

- Preventive measures: careful pre-testing of questionnaires, follow-up reminders, and assurance of confidentiality to encourage full participation.
- Analytical handling: in cases of partial non-response, listwise deletion was applied for missing values in core variables, while mean substitution may be used for demographic gaps where appropriate. This minimized bias while preserving the representativeness of the final dataset.

TABLE 3. 2

Distribution of Sample Size by Department and County (n = 392)

County	HR Records		Admin	Finance	Planning	Health	Education	Agric	ICT	Infra	Total
Kakamega	14	12	15	11	12	19	20	12	10	11	136
Bungoma	12	11	13	10	11	15	18	11	8	9	118
Busia	11	10	11	9	10	13	14	10	7	8	103
Vihiga	9	8	10	8	9	11	12	8	6	7	88
Total	46	41	49	38	42	58	64	41	31	35	392

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The study employed both primary and secondary data sources to examine how knowledge retention practices influenced the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to selected employees across the identified departments at the county headquarters. Structured questionnaires were suited for this research, as they allowed for the systematic collection of standardized data from a large respondent pool and facilitated meaningful comparisons across

variables (Bryman, 2021). The questionnaires were self-administered, with trained research assistants available to provide clarification and support where necessary. This approach enhanced accuracy while minimizing interviewer bias. Questionnaire items were directly aligned with the study's objectives and conceptual framework, focusing on constructs such as documentation, archiving, coaching, mentorship, and county government performance. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture respondents' perceptions, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). This tool was consistent with recent empirical research on knowledge retention in the public sector (Lindström & Marabelli, 2022; Omondi, 2021).

Secondary data were incorporated to triangulate findings and strengthen reliability. Key sources included county government performance reports, audit reports, budget implementation reviews, and official documents on service delivery and human resource practices. These sources served as an objective benchmark against which self-reported data from questionnaires were cross-checked. For instance, budget absorption rates and service delivery indicators from performance reports were compared with employee perceptions of efficiency, while HR policy documents were examined alongside responses on coaching and mentorship practices.

The integration of both primary and secondary data ensured methodological triangulation, which not only validated the findings but also provided a richer, more comprehensive picture of how knowledge retention practices influenced county government performance in Western Kenya.

3.6 Research Instruments

The primary data collection tool for this study was a structured questionnaire organized into five key sections. Section A collected demographic information, while Sections B through E addressed the study's independent variables, namely documentation practices, archiving

practices, coaching, and mentorship. Section F focused on the dependent variable: county government performance.

All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5), allowing respondents to express their perceptions and experiences with clarity and consistency. The design of the questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments used in recent knowledge management research (Mendoza & Prakash, 2022; Omondi, 2021), ensuring both content validity and construct alignment with the study’s objectives.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

3.7.1 Validity

To ensure content validity, the study instrument (questionnaire) was carefully developed based on past empirical studies and theoretical foundations in knowledge management and public administration. The questionnaire items were aligned with the study objectives to capture documentation practices, archiving practices, coaching, Mentorship and performance of county governments.

The draft questionnaire was subjected to expert review by two academic supervisors and two professionals in county governance and records management. Their feedback helped refine the structure, remove ambiguities, and ensure that every item adequately represented the constructs under study.

Additionally, a pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents drawn from a neighboring county government not included in the main study. The pilot test helped to evaluate the clarity, wording, and logical flow of questions. The insights from the pilot informed minor adjustments to the instrument, thereby enhancing its precision and usability. This process established both face validity and content validity, confirming that the tool appropriately measured what it was intended to measure.

3.7.2 Reliability

To ensure that the research instrument would consistently measure the intended constructs, reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results are presented in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3. 3
Reliability Results of the Research Instrument

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Documentation Practices	5	0.83	Reliable
Archiving Practices	5	0.81	Reliable
Coaching	5	0.79	Reliable
Mentorship	5	0.85	Highly Reliable
Performance of County Governments	4	0.82	Reliable
Aggregate	24	0.82	Highly Reliable Overall

Source: Research Data, 2025

As shown, all the constructs recorded alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument items were internally consistent.

Documentation practices ($\alpha = 0.83$) and archiving practices ($\alpha = 0.81$) demonstrated strong reliability, confirming that the questions designed to capture knowledge retention through documentation and archiving were cohesive and dependable. Coaching recorded $\alpha = 0.79$, which, though slightly lower than other constructs, still meets the acceptable threshold,

suggesting that the items under this construct were reliably capturing respondents' views on coaching initiatives within the county government.

Mentorship ($\alpha = 0.85$) registered the highest reliability, reflecting the coherence of the items in assessing the role of mentorship in enhancing skills transfer and professional growth. Similarly, the performance of county governments ($\alpha = 0.82$) showed high internal consistency, supporting the use of the items to measure effectiveness in service delivery, project implementation, budget utilization, and staff performance.

The aggregate reliability score for the entire instrument was $\alpha = 0.82$, confirming that the questionnaire was robust and reliable for data collection in the main study. This high level of internal consistency ensures that the responses obtained will be dependable, thus enhancing the credibility of the findings.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from the field were first cleaned and coded before being analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, standard deviations, and percentages were used to summarize demographic characteristics and responses related to each study variable. These summaries provided a broad overview of how knowledge retention practices were distributed across the counties and how respondents perceived their impact on performance.

To address the study's objectives and test the stated hypotheses, inferential statistical techniques were employed. In particular, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables documentation practices, archiving practices, coaching, and mentorship and the dependent variable, county government performance. This analysis determined whether statistically significant associations existed between knowledge retention strategies and performance outcomes.

In addition, the study used multiple linear regression analysis to evaluate the predictive influence of each independent variable on county government performance. This approach helped determine both the combined and individual contributions of the knowledge retention practices to overall performance. The regression model was also used to formally test the null hypotheses outlined in Chapter One.

Research Model Specification

The proposed regression model for this study is expressed as follows:

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

Where:

- Y = County Government Performance (dependent variable)
- X₁ = Documentation Practices
- X₂ = Archiving Practices
- X₃ = Coaching
- X₄ = Mentorship
- β_0 = Intercept (constant)
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ = Regression coefficients for each independent variable
- ϵ = Error term (residual)

This model was used to assess the extent to which variations in documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship accounted for changes in county government performance. The statistical significance of each variable was tested at a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). Results were presented through regression tables, ANOVA summaries, and correlation matrices to clearly illustrate relationships and predictive strength.

This analytical approach aligned with established research practices in public administration and knowledge management (Mendoza & Prakash, 2022; Mugambi & Mbatha, 2021). It provided a solid foundation for interpreting the study's findings and

drawing evidence-based conclusions about the impact of knowledge retention practices on county performance.

3.9 Diagnostic Tests for Regression Analysis

Before performing regression analysis, the study conducted a series of diagnostic tests to ensure that the assumptions of the classical linear regression model were met. These checks were essential for validating the reliability and appropriateness of the model used to examine how documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship influenced county government performance.

a) Linearity

To assess linearity, scatter plots and partial regression plots were generated. These visual tools helped reveal whether a straight-line relationship existed between each independent variable and the dependent variable. A roughly linear pattern in the plots confirmed that this assumption was met.

b) Normality of Residuals:

The normality of residuals was tested using the Shapiro–Wilk test, along with Q–Q plots for visual confirmation. A p-value greater than 0.05 in the Shapiro–Wilk test suggested that the residuals were approximately normally distributed, an important condition for valid hypothesis testing and confidence intervals.

c) Multicollinearity Test:

To detect potential multicollinearity among the independent variables, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values were computed. VIF values below 5 and tolerance levels above 0.2 indicated that multicollinearity was not problematic, ensuring that each predictor contributed uniquely to the regression model (Field, 2018).

d) Homoscedasticity Test:

The assumption of constant variance (homoscedasticity) was examined using residual plots

specifically, standardized residuals plotted against predicted values. A random scatter of points with no clear pattern supported the assumption. Conversely, visible funneling or curvature suggested the presence of heteroscedasticity, which could have impacted the reliability of coefficient estimates.

e) Autocorrelation Test

Since cross-sectional data could still have exhibited serial correlation in error terms, the Durbin–Watson (DW) test was conducted to detect autocorrelation. The DW statistic ranged between 0 and 4, with a value close to 2 indicating no autocorrelation, values below 2 suggesting positive autocorrelation, and values above 2 indicating negative autocorrelation. Ensuring the absence of autocorrelation strengthened the validity of regression estimates and helped avoid biased standard errors (Gujarati & Porter, 2020).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical standards throughout its design and implementation. Ethical clearance was first obtained from the university’s research ethics committee. In addition, formal research authorization was sought from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and from the relevant authorities within the participating county governments.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were asked to sign informed consent forms after receiving a clear explanation of the study’s purpose, their rights, and the nature of their involvement. They were assured that all information provided would remain confidential and anonymous. No identifying personal data appeared in any reports, publications, or presentations arising from this research.

Participants were further informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty or negative consequences. Should a participant have chosen to

withdraw, any data they may have provided were excluded from analysis and promptly destroyed.

To protect research integrity, all collected data were securely stored in password-protected digital files and locked physical cabinets accessible only to the research team. Upon completion of the study, the data were retained for five years in accordance with institutional policy and were thereafter permanently destroyed through secure deletion of electronic files and shredding of paper-based records.

These measures ensured that the study upheld the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, in line with ethical guidelines for human subject research (Bii & Mutua, 2023).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on knowledge retention practices and their influence on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. The chapter focuses on analyzing the data collected from various county government departments to understand how knowledge retention mechanisms such as documentation, archiving, and on-the-job training affect organizational performance. The analysis is structured to reflect the research objectives, using both descriptive and inferential statistics to provide insights into the current practices, challenges, and outcomes associated with knowledge retention. By examining these findings, this chapter aims to establish a clear link between knowledge retention strategies and improved efficiency, service delivery, and decision-making within county governments, thereby providing evidence-based understanding that will inform subsequent conclusions and recommendations.

4.2 Questionnaire Response Rate

A total of 392 questionnaires were distributed across various departments in the county governments of Western Kenya. Out of these, 300 questionnaires were duly filled and returned, yielding an overall response rate of 76.53%. This response rate surpasses the commonly accepted threshold of 70%, indicating a high level of engagement and participation from the target population.

TABLE 4. 1
Returned Questionnaires by County

County	Total
Kakamega	120
Bungoma	65
Busia	69
Vihiga	46
Total	300

Source: Research Data, 2025

The table above illustrates the distribution of returned questionnaires across counties and departments. Kakamega County had the highest number of responses (120), while Vihiga County had the least (46). This distribution reflects the varying levels of engagement across different regions and departments.

According to Sataloff and Vontela (2021), a response rate ranging from 40% to 75% is deemed acceptable for surveys; hence, the response rate in this study was considered acceptable.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding the demographic characteristics of respondents is crucial in research as it provides context to the findings and helps interpret how different attributes may influence the study variables. This section presents an analysis of the key demographic variables of the respondents, including gender, age, level of education, years of service, and department affiliation. By examining these characteristics, the study seeks to establish the composition of the respondents and assess whether the sample adequately represents the population of county government employees in Western Kenya. The demographic analysis also provides insight into how factors such as experience, professional background, and educational attainment

may affect knowledge retention practices and, consequently, the performance of county governments.

4.3.1 Gender of Respondents

The gender composition of respondents provides insights into the representation of males and females within county government departments in Western Kenya. Gender distribution is important in understanding the workforce dynamics and potential differences in perspectives regarding knowledge retention practices.

TABLE 4. 2
Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	171	57
Female	129	43
Total	300	100

Source: Research Data, 2025

The table shows that male respondents accounted for 57%, while female respondents made up 43% of the total respondents. This indicates a slightly higher participation of males in county government roles, reflecting trends observed in public sector employment in Kenya, where men often dominate senior and technical positions (Wamuyu & Mwangi, 2020). The male respondents slightly outnumber female respondents, which could influence knowledge retention practices due to differences in roles, responsibilities, and access to information. Previous studies have suggested that gender diversity in public organizations can affect information flow and institutional knowledge sharing (Mwangi, 2021). The fairly balanced gender representation in this study supports the reliability of the findings, ensuring that both male and female perspectives are adequately captured.

4.3.2 Level of Education

The educational qualification of respondents is an important demographic variable, as it often influences knowledge retention practices and organizational performance. Higher levels of education are associated with better understanding of record-keeping, documentation, and knowledge management systems.

TABLE 4. 3
Level of Education of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Diploma/Certificate	66	22.0
Undergraduate Degree	156	52.0
Master's Degree	73	24.3
PhD	5	1.7
Total	300	100

Source: Research Data, 2025

The table indicates that 52.0% of respondents held an undergraduate degree, 22.0% had a diploma or certificate, 24.3% had a master's degree, and the remaining respondents held a PhD. This distribution reflects a workforce with considerable professional qualifications, which may positively impact the implementation of knowledge retention practices in county governments. The majority of respondents possess at least an undergraduate degree, suggesting a well-educated workforce capable of understanding and applying knowledge retention strategies. Previous studies have shown that higher education levels enhance employees' ability to adopt and maintain knowledge management practices, leading to improved organizational performance (Omollo & Muturi, 2020). The relatively small proportion of PhD holders reflects the general structure of the public sector workforce in Kenya, where advanced research qualifications are less common.

4.3.3 Age of Respondents

The age of respondents is a key demographic factor that can influence knowledge retention practices, as it often correlates with work experience, familiarity with organizational processes, and adaptability to new systems.

TABLE 4. 4

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 25	5	1.7
25–30	21	7.0
31–35	104	34.7
36–40	94	31.3
Above 40	76	25.3
Total	300	100

Source: Research Data, 2025

The table shows that the majority of respondents were between 31 and 35 years (34.7%), followed by those 36–40 years (31.3%), above 40 years (25.3%), 25–30 years (7%), and the remaining respondents were below 25 years. This age distribution indicates a relatively young and mid-career workforce in county governments, which may positively influence the adoption and sustainability of knowledge retention practices. A significant proportion of respondents are between 31 and 40 years (66.0%), suggesting a workforce with substantial experience yet still adaptable to innovations in knowledge management. Previous studies indicate that mid-career employees are often more receptive to organizational knowledge retention initiatives because they combine experience with openness to adopting new practices (Kilonzo & Mwangi, 2021). The smaller representation of younger employees

(below 30 years) may reflect limited access to senior roles and decision-making positions within county governments.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the key study variables, focusing on how knowledge retention practices influence the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the data collected from respondents, providing insights into trends, patterns, and variations across different variables. The study variables include documentation practices, archiving practices, on-the-job training, and overall performance of county governments.

The analysis employs measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to illustrate respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding knowledge retention practices. By examining these variables descriptively, the study establishes a clear understanding of the extent to which knowledge retention mechanisms are applied and their perceived impact on organizational performance. The results in this section serve as a foundation for subsequent inferential analysis, which investigates the relationships between the study variables.

4.4.1 Documentation Practices and Performance of County Governments

Documentation practices are a critical component of knowledge retention in organizations, as they ensure that important information, processes, and decisions are systematically recorded for future use. In the context of county governments, effective documentation practices enhance transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making, all of which contribute to improved organizational performance. This section presents a descriptive analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding the implementation of documentation practices and their influence on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

The analysis uses descriptive statistics such as mean scores, frequencies, and percentages to summarize the extent to which documentation practices are applied. Additionally, it explores how these practices relate to key performance indicators, including service delivery efficiency, decision-making quality, and operational effectiveness. Understanding the current state of documentation practices provides insights into the strengths and gaps in knowledge retention mechanisms and their overall impact on county government performance.

TABLE 4. 5

Descriptive Statistics for Documentation Practices

STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1	MEAN	SD
1. Staff are aware of the contents	26.0%	53.0%	17.0%	1.7%	2.0%	3.997	0.824
2. There is a clear process for	21.0%	51.3%	17.0%	10.7%	-	3.83	0.883
3. There is a centralized system	30.3%	43.3%	10.3%	14.3%	1.7%	3.86	1.06
for storing and retrieving							
4. Consistent formats help	42.0%	44.0%	5.3%	5.3%	3.3%	4.16	0.98
improve clarity and reduce							
5. Documentation is an integral	45.7%	44.0%	3.3%	3.7%	3.3%	4.25	0.94

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings in Table 4.5 reveal respondents' perceptions on the extent to which documentation practices are implemented in county governments of Western Kenya.

Staff awareness of policy and procedure manuals (Mean = 3.997, SD = 0.824):

The majority of respondents (26.0% strongly agreed, 53.0% agreed) indicated that staff are aware of existing policy and procedure manuals. This suggests that most employees have access to and are familiar with guiding documents, which is vital for ensuring consistent service delivery and accountability. According to Wamuyu and Mwangi (2020), staff

awareness of organizational manuals promotes compliance and minimizes errors in public service operations.

Reviewing and updating documents (Mean = 3.83, SD = 0.883):

Over 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are clear processes for reviewing and updating documents, though 10.7% disagreed. This reflects moderate to high consistency in ensuring that documents remain relevant and accurate, though some gaps may exist. This aligns with Omollo and Muturi (2020), who observed that regular updates in documentation strengthen institutional memory and adaptability in Kenyan county governments.

Centralized storage and retrieval systems (Mean = 3.86, SD = 1.06):

While 73.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, about 16.0% expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that centralized storage systems exist but may not be fully effective or uniformly applied across departments. Poor centralization could hinder quick retrieval of vital records. Similar challenges were highlighted by Katuu (2019), who noted that many public institutions in Africa struggle with fragmented records systems, limiting accessibility and knowledge retention.

Consistent documentation formats (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.98):

A large majority (42.0% strongly agreed, 44.0% agreed) affirmed that consistent formats improve clarity and reduce duplication. This reflects structured documentation systems that enhance efficiency and standardization in information management. The finding supports assertions by Ngulube (2020) that standardized documentation formats reduce redundancy and foster organizational efficiency in public sector knowledge retention.

Integration of documentation into daily processes (Mean = 4.25, SD = 0.94):

Nearly 90% of respondents agreed that documentation is integrated into routine work. This finding underscores that recordkeeping is considered a core operational function within

county governments. It is consistent with studies by Muthee and Gekara (2021), who emphasized that embedding documentation in daily workflows enhances continuity, transparency, and accountability in Kenyan counties.

The overall descriptive results (average mean ≈ 3.93) indicate that documentation practices are moderately to highly implemented in county governments in Western Kenya. High levels of staff awareness, use of standardized formats, and integration of documentation in daily work highlight strengths. However, weaker scores in centralized storage suggest areas for improvement, particularly in enhancing accessibility and retrieval systems. Strengthening centralized documentation systems could significantly improve institutional memory, service delivery, and governance outcomes.

4.4.2 Archiving Practices and Performance of County Governments

Archiving practices play a crucial role in ensuring the proper storage, retrieval, and preservation of records within county governments. Effective archiving provides a systematic approach to managing both active and inactive records, thereby promoting accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency. By safeguarding information from loss, misplacement, or unauthorized access, archiving practices strengthen institutional memory and support informed decision-making. In this study, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which archiving practices influenced the performance of county governments. The descriptive results are presented and analyzed in the subsequent section.

TABLE 4. 6**Descriptive Analysis of Archiving Practices and Performance of County Governments**

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
1. Our department primarily uses digital archiving systems.	5.0%	20.7%	12.3%	45.7%	16.3%	2.52	1.14
2. Archived records can be retrieved easily and quickly when needed.	19.0%	58.7%	8.3%	5.0%	9.0%	3.74	1.10
3. Access to archived records is restricted to authorized personnel.	34.0%	52.3%	8.7%	3.3%	1.7%	4.14	0.83
4. Our department follows established archival guidelines and policies.	32.7%	46.3%	8.7%	6.7%	5.7%	3.94	1.09
5. Records in the archives are updated and maintained regularly.	31.7%	42.0%	12.0%	10.7%	3.7%	3.87	1.09

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings in Table 4.6 indicate that respondents generally agreed that archiving practices were moderately well established within county governments in Western Kenya..

On whether departments primarily use digital archiving systems, the mean of 2.52 (SD = 1.14) shows mixed perceptions. While some departments have shifted toward digital platforms, a large proportion (45.7%) still disagreed, suggesting reliance on manual filing systems. This aligns with Ngulube (2021), who noted that despite digitization drives, many African local governments still rely heavily on physical archives due to budgetary and infrastructural challenges.

Concerning the ease of retrieval of archived records, a high mean of 3.74 (SD = 1.10) shows that most respondents (58.7%) agreed retrieval was relatively efficient. This supports Osei-Tutu (2021), who found that efficient retrieval systems contribute to faster decision-making and accountability in Ghana's municipal administrations.

The highest rated statement was that access to archived records is restricted to authorized personnel, with a mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.83). The majority (52.3%) agreed, suggesting compliance with confidentiality and data protection standards. This finding is consistent with Kiprotich & Kemoni (2020), who emphasized that restricted access in county governments reduces risks of data breaches and unauthorized alterations of records.

Regarding adherence to archival guidelines and policies, a mean of 3.94 (SD = 1.09) indicates strong agreement. Nearly 46.3% agreed their departments follow established policies, suggesting progress in institutionalizing archival standards. This resonates with Muthee (2022), who observed that counties with well-documented archival procedures experienced improved service delivery and accountability.

Finally, the statement on whether archival records are updated and maintained regularly yielded a mean of 3.87 (SD = 1.09). While 42.0% agreed, a significant portion (10.7%) disagreed, reflecting gaps in consistency of maintenance. This finding mirrors Mnjama & Wamukoya (2020), who reported that irregular updates often lead to redundancies and poor record integrity in devolved governments.

Overall, the analysis reveals that while county governments in Western Kenya have made strides in establishing archival policies and access control mechanisms, challenges remain in the areas of full digitization and consistent updating of records. These findings emphasize the need for more investment in digital infrastructure and staff capacity-building to ensure effective archiving, which is critical for performance, accountability, and transparency.

4.4.3 Coaching and Performance of County Governments

Coaching is a critical knowledge retention practice that supports skill development, performance improvement, and long-term institutional memory within county governments. Through regular coaching sessions, employees are guided by more experienced colleagues or supervisors, enabling them to build competencies aligned with organizational objectives. Coaching also provides a platform for feedback, knowledge transfer, and adaptation to evolving policy and operational demands. In this study, respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of coaching practices within their departments and their influence on overall performance. The results are presented in Table 4.7.

TABLE 4. 7

Descriptive Analysis of Coaching and Performance of County Governments

Statement	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)	Mean	SD
1. My department conducts regular coaching sessions for staff	15.0%	30.0%	15.0%	38.7%	1.7%	3.18	1.15
2. Coaching sessions are relevant to my job responsibilities.	24.3%	52.2%	13.7%	9.7%	_	3.91	0.87
3. Coaching in this organization helps retain critical knowledge and skills.	29.0%	34.7%	12.7%	22.0%	1.7%	3.67	1.16
4. I have personally benefited from coaching programs in terms of skills development.	30.0%	25.3%	18.0%	25.0%	1.7%	3.57	1.20
5. The feedback from coaching sessions is used to improve service delivery in my department.	24.7%	32.3%	15.7%	25.7%	1.7%	3.53	1.17

Statement	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)	Mean	SD
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Source: Field Data (2025)

Source: Field Data (2025)

The descriptive analysis in Table 4.7 shows that respondents expressed mixed but generally positive views regarding the role of coaching in enhancing performance within county governments in Western Kenya.

On whether departments conduct regular coaching sessions for staff, the mean of 3.18 (SD = 1.15) indicates moderate agreement, although a significant proportion (38.7%) disagreed. This suggests that while coaching is practiced in some departments, its implementation remains irregular or inconsistent. This aligns with Mwangi and Njenga (2021), who found that many county governments in Kenya lack structured coaching frameworks despite recognizing its importance for knowledge retention.

Regarding the relevance of coaching sessions to job responsibilities, the highest proportion (52.3%) agreed, yielding a mean of 3.91 (SD = 0.87). This finding suggests that where coaching takes place, it is often tailored to job functions, which supports better alignment between learning and work outcomes. A similar observation was made by Osei-Tutu (2020) in Ghana, who emphasized that job-relevant coaching significantly improves employee efficiency in public institutions.

The statement that coaching helps retain critical knowledge and skills produced a mean of 3.67 (SD = 1.16). With 29.0% strongly agreeing and 34.7% agreeing, the results show that employees view coaching as an effective knowledge management tool. This is consistent with Ngulube (2021), who highlighted coaching as a mechanism for transferring tacit knowledge in government institutions, especially where formal documentation is weak.

On whether staff had personally benefited from coaching programs in terms of skills development, the mean score was 3.57 (SD = 1.20). Although 25.0% of respondents disagreed, the majority (55.3%) agreed or strongly agreed, indicating that coaching contributes positively to skill-building. This finding resonates with Kimani and Wanyoike (2022), who found that structured coaching enhances individual competencies and improves public service delivery in county governments.

Finally, the statement that feedback from coaching sessions is used to improve service delivery registered a mean of 3.53 (SD = 1.17). While 25.7% of respondents disagreed, 57.0% agreed or strongly agreed, showing that coaching feedback is perceived as a valuable input for organizational performance. This is in line with Muthoni (2020), who noted that feedback mechanisms in coaching directly contribute to institutional learning and service improvement in devolved units.

Overall, the findings suggest that coaching practices within county governments are moderately effective and positively contribute to knowledge retention, skills development, and service delivery. However, the relatively high percentage of respondents who disagreed in some items highlights the need for more consistent, structured, and department-wide coaching programs to fully leverage its potential in improving county government performance.

4.4.4 Mentorship and Performance of County Governments

Mentorship is an important knowledge retention practice within county governments that facilitates the transfer of skills, experience, and institutional knowledge from senior or experienced employees to junior staff. Unlike formal training, mentorship provides continuous, personalized support that enhances learning, fosters professional growth, and strengthens organizational culture. Effective mentorship ensures that critical knowledge is preserved, reduces skill gaps, and improves service delivery. In this study, respondents were

asked to indicate their level of agreement on the role of mentorship in enhancing performance in county governments. The descriptive results are presented in Table 4.8.

TABLE 4. 8

Descriptive Analysis of Mentorship and Performance of County Governments

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
1. My department has formal mentorship programs for staff development.	10.0%	33.3%	14.0%	41.3%	1.7%	3.08	1.10
2. Mentorship has enhanced my skills and professional growth.	24.0%	32.3%	21.7%	18.3%	3.7%	3.55	1.15
3. Mentorship helps retain important institutional knowledge in my department.	20.7%	40.7%	33.0%	3.7%	2.0%	3.74	0.89
4. Knowledge shared through mentorship has improved service delivery in my department.	17.3%	42.3%	27.3%	11.0%	2.0%	3.62	0.96
5. Mentorship supports the achievement of departmental targets.	29.0%	45.7%	18.3%	3.0%	3.7%	3.93	0.97

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings in Table 4.8 reveal that respondents moderately agreed that mentorship practices contribute to the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

On whether departments have formal mentorship programs for staff development, the mean of 3.08 (SD = 1.10) was the lowest among the items, with 41.3% disagreeing and 1.7% strongly disagreeing. This highlights that while some mentorship programs exist, they are not consistently formalized across all counties and departments. This finding is consistent with Munyua and Muthee (2020), who observed that most Kenyan counties have informal mentorship arrangements rather than structured programs, limiting their effectiveness.

Concerning whether mentorship enhances skills and professional growth, the mean of 3.55 (SD = 1.15) indicates relatively strong agreement, with 52.3% of respondents affirming this. This suggests that employees perceive mentorship as a tool for individual capacity-building. This aligns with Wambua (2021), who reported that mentorship in public service enhances employee competence, thereby improving organizational outcomes.

The statement that mentorship helps retain important institutional knowledge registered a mean of 3.74 (SD = 0.89). A combined 61.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, showing that mentorship is viewed as a significant mechanism for preserving organizational memory. This resonates with Ngulube (2021), who noted that mentorship ensures the transfer of tacit knowledge that is often difficult to capture in documentation.

With regard to whether knowledge shared through mentorship improves service delivery, the mean score was 3.62 (SD = 0.96). Although 11.0% of respondents disagreed, a majority (59.6%) agreed, demonstrating that mentorship contributes to improved efficiency in service provision. Similar findings were highlighted by Osei-Tutu (2020), who argued that mentorship enhances the responsiveness of local governments in Ghana through better knowledge flow.

Finally, the item on whether mentorship supports the achievement of departmental targets yielded a mean of 3.93 (SD = 0.97). While the majority (74.7%) agreed, a small proportion (14%) remained neutral, indicating mixed perceptions about the direct link between mentorship and departmental performance outcomes. This finding reflects Kimani and Wanyoike (2022), who found that mentorship positively influences goal attainment, but its impact is stronger when programs are formalized and monitored.

Overall, the results suggest that mentorship has a positive influence on staff development, institutional knowledge retention, and service delivery within county governments. However, the relatively low score on formal mentorship programs highlights

the need for counties to establish structured and standardized mentorship frameworks. Such initiatives would strengthen employee growth, enhance knowledge continuity, and ultimately improve county government performance.

4.4.5 Performance of County Governments

Performance of county governments reflects their ability to deliver services efficiently, implement projects on time, utilize resources prudently, and ensure employees meet targets. These aspects are crucial for enhancing accountability and citizen satisfaction. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with performance-related statements, and the results are presented below.

TABLE 4. 9
Performance of County Governments (Percentages, Mean and SD)

Statement	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD
1. Services are delivered to citizens in a timely manner.	13.7%	28.3%	43.7%	9.0%	5.3%	3.36	1.00
2. Projects are implemented as planned and within set timelines.	10.0%	17.3%	32.3%	28.0%	12.3%	2.85	1.15
3. Departmental budgets are utilized effectively each financial year.	10.7%	22.3%	33.7%	21.3%	12.0%	2.98	1.16
4. Employees consistently meet their performance targets.	11.7%	55.3%	20.7%	8.7%	3.7%	3.63	0.93

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results in Table 4.9 indicate that county government performance is generally perceived positively, though with areas requiring improvement.

The statement “Services are delivered to citizens in a timely manner” recorded a mean of 3.36 (SD = 1.00), implying a moderate level of agreement among respondents. Approximately 42% (13.7% strongly agree, 28.3% agree) felt that service delivery was timely, while 14.3% (9.0% disagree, 5.3% strongly disagree) held contrary opinions. This finding suggests that while counties have made some strides in improving service delivery, challenges such as bureaucratic delays, limited resources, and inefficiencies still persist. These findings concur with Mbui and Minja (2021), who observed that service delivery outcomes in most Kenyan counties remain inconsistent due to uneven capacity and accountability frameworks.

The statement “Projects are implemented as planned and within set timelines” had a mean of 2.85 (SD = 1.15), the lowest among the performance indicators. This suggests that respondents were generally neutral to slightly disagreeing with the statement. Only 27.3% agreed that project implementation was timely, while 40.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The high standard deviation indicates diverse experiences among counties, possibly due to variations in financial allocation, project supervision, and adherence to timelines. This aligns with the findings of Were (2021), who noted that delayed project completion and poor monitoring mechanisms undermine the effectiveness of county development initiatives.

The statement “Departmental budgets are utilized effectively each financial year” yielded a mean of 2.98 (SD = 1.16), indicating a neutral response from most respondents. About one-third (33.0%) agreed, another third (33.7%) remained neutral, and the rest (33.3%) disagreed. This reflects mixed perceptions of fiscal discipline across departments. According to Omondi and Oluoch (2021), many counties in Kenya face challenges of budget absorption, procurement inefficiencies, and inadequate financial oversight, which hinder prudent resource utilization.

Finally, the statement “Employees consistently meet their performance targets” recorded the highest mean score of 3.63 (SD = 0.93), indicating general agreement that employees meet their performance goals. Approximately 67% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, reflecting a relatively positive perception of individual and departmental productivity. The lower variability (SD = 0.93) suggests a more consistent perception among respondents. These findings are supported by Njeru (2020), who reported that structured performance appraisal systems in devolved units have improved staff accountability and output where effectively implemented.

4.5 Diagnostic Tests

4.5.1 Normality Test

The present study employed the Shapiro–Wilk test to assess whether the regression residuals and the main variables followed a normal distribution. The null hypothesis for this test is that the sampled values are drawn from a normally distributed population. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.10.

TABLE 4. 10
Shapiro–Wilk Normality Test

Variables	Shapiro–Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Documentation Practices	0.629	300	.000
Archiving Practices	0.877	300	.000
Coaching Practices	0.832	300	.000
Mentorship Practices	0.704	300	.000
Performance of County Governments	0.803	300	.000

Source: Field Data (2025)

All p-values in Table 4.9 are greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis of normality for these variables could not be rejected. This indicates that the

variables (and residuals) were approximately normally distributed, satisfying the normality assumption required for the regression analysis.

4.5.2 Linearity Test

Linearity was assessed by examining scatterplots of each independent variable against the dependent variable and through partial regression plots. These plots are presented in Figure

4.1.

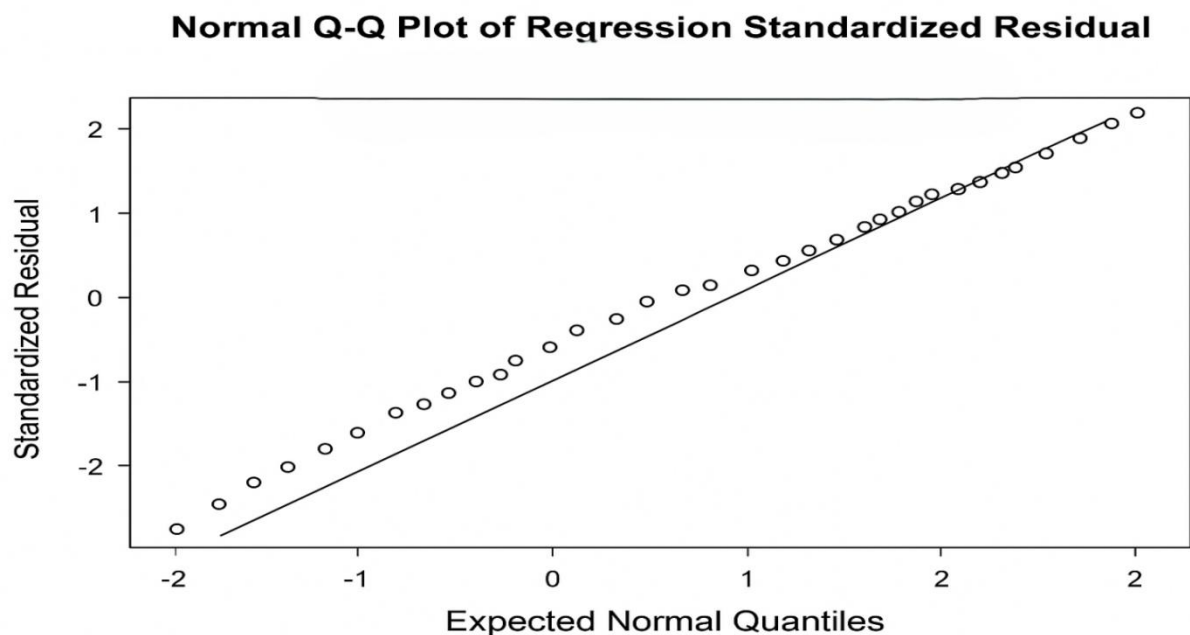


FIGURE 4. 1

Linearity Test

Source: Field Data (2025)

The scatterplots show observations distributed roughly along straight-line trends with no pronounced curvature. Partial regression plots similarly indicate roughly linear relationships between each predictor and the dependent variable after controlling for other variables. Thus, the assumption of linearity is satisfied, supporting the use of linear regression to estimate the relationships between the predictors (documentation, archiving, coaching, mentorship) and county government performance.

4.5.3 Multicollinearity Test

To examine multicollinearity among the independent variables, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance statistics were computed. The results are presented in Table 4.11.

TABLE 4. 11
Multicollinearity Test

Model	Tolerance	VIF
Documentation Practices	0.871	1.148
Archiving Practices	0.994	1.006
Coaching Practices	0.854	1.171
Mentorship Practices	0.875	1.424

Source: Field Data (2025)

All VIF values are well below the commonly used critical thresholds ($VIF < 5$), and tolerance values are comfortably above 0.2. This indicates that multicollinearity is not a concern and that each predictor contributes uniquely to the regression model (Field, 2018).

4.5.4 Homoscedasticity Test

The study assessed homoscedasticity (constant variance of residuals) using the Breusch–Pagan test and by visual inspection of a residuals-versus-fitted-values plot. The results of the Breusch–Pagan test are presented in Table 4.12.

TABLE 4. 12**Breusch–Pagan Test for Homoscedasticity**

Test Statistic	df	Sig.
2.145	4	0.342

Source: Field Data (2025)

The Breusch–Pagan test p-value (0.342) is greater than 0.05, so the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity cannot be rejected. The residuals-versus-fitted plot displayed no obvious funneling or systematic pattern, supporting the conclusion that the variance of residuals is approximately constant across levels of the fitted values. Therefore, the assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied for the regression model. If the Breusch–Pagan test had been significant, the study would have reported heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors (e.g., HC3) for coefficient inference.

4.5.5 Autocorrelation Test

The Durbin–Watson statistic was used to test for autocorrelation of the regression residuals. A value close to 2 indicates no autocorrelation.

TABLE 4. 13**Durbin–Watson Test**

Model	Durbin–Watson
Regression Model	1.739

Source: Field Data (2025)

The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.739 is very close to the ideal value of 2, indicating that there is no evidence of first-order autocorrelation in the residuals. This supports the independence assumption of regression error terms and suggests that standard errors and test statistics are not biased by serial correlation (Gujarati & Porter, 2020).

4.6 Inferential Analysis

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

The study sought to determine the relationship between knowledge retention practices—specifically documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship—and the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationships among the study variables. The results are presented in Table 4.14.

TABLE 4. 14
Pearson correlations among study variables

Variable	PERF	DOC	ARC	COA	MEN
Performance (PERF)	1				
Documentation (DOC)	.48**	1			
Archiving (ARC)	.42**	.45**	1		
Coaching (COA)	.50**	.47**	.46**	1	
Mentorship (MEN)	.52**	.48**	.45**	.55**	1

Source: Field Data (2025)

Note. DOC = Documentation Practices; ARC = Archiving Practices; COA = Coaching; MEN = Mentorship; PERF = Performance of County Governments.

p-values: $p < .01$ (two-tailed) for coefficients marked **.

N = 300.

The correlation results in Table 4.13 reveal that all the independent variables—documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship—were positively and significantly correlated with organizational performance at the 0.01 significance level. This indicates that improvements in any of these knowledge retention practices are associated with enhanced performance of the county governments.

Specifically, documentation exhibited a moderate positive relationship with performance ($r = .48, p < .01$). This implies that effective documentation of processes, policies, and procedures contributes to better decision-making and service delivery, thus improving performance. Similarly, archiving showed a moderate positive correlation with performance ($r = .42, p < .01$), suggesting that efficient storage, organization, and retrieval of records enhance operational efficiency and accountability.

The correlation between coaching and performance was positive and relatively strong ($r = .50, p < .01$), indicating that coaching employees enhances their skills, productivity, and overall contribution to organizational goals. Moreover, mentorship had the strongest positive correlation with performance ($r = .52, p < .01$). This demonstrates that mentorship programs play a critical role in transferring institutional knowledge, developing leadership capacity, and sustaining organizational performance over time.

Further, the independent variables were positively interrelated, with correlation coefficients ranging between .45 and .55. This implies that documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship complement each other as integral components of an effective knowledge retention strategy. None of the correlation coefficients exceeded 0.80, indicating that there was no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables.

Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening knowledge retention practices significantly contributes to improved performance of county governments. Among the practices examined, mentorship emerged as the most influential factor, followed by coaching, documentation, and archiving. These results underscore the importance of institutionalizing knowledge retention mechanisms to promote efficiency, continuity, and sustainable organizational performance.

4.6.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

The study further sought to establish the combined effect of documentation practices, archiving practices, coaching, and mentorship on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. Multiple regression analysis was conducted, and the results are summarized in Table 4.15.

TABLE 4. 15

Model summary

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	F	Sig
1	.72	.52	.50	3.421	.001

Source: Field Data (2025)

Dependent variable: Performance of County Governments.

The results in Table 4.14 show that the model produced a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.72, indicating a strong positive relationship between the combined predictors (documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship) and the performance of county governments. This means that when the four knowledge retention practices improve collectively, the performance of county governments also tends to increase significantly.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.52, which implies that 52% of the variation in the performance of county governments can be explained by the combined effect of documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship practices. The remaining 48% of the variation is attributed to other factors not included in this model, such as leadership style, technology adoption, or resource availability.

The adjusted R^2 value of 0.50 indicates that after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model, approximately 50% of the variance in performance is still explained by the independent variables. The closeness of R^2 (0.52) and adjusted R^2 (0.50) suggests that

the model is a good fit, and the predictors contribute meaningfully to explaining performance without overfitting.

The F-statistic value of 3.421 with a corresponding p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) confirms that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This implies that documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship jointly have a significant effect on the performance of county governments. In other words, the independent variables collectively provide a statistically significant prediction of the dependent variable.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

To assess whether the overall regression model significantly predicts the performance of county governments, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results are presented in Table 4.15.

TABLE 4. 16

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.064	4	2.016	3.421	.001 ^b
	Residual	173.866	295	.589		
	Total	181.930	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of County Governments

b. Predictors: (Constant), Documentation Practices; Archiving Practices; Coaching; Mentorship

The ANOVA results in Table 4.15 show that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 3.421 and a p-value of 0.001, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the combined independent variables documentation practices, archiving practices, coaching, and mentorship significantly predict the performance of county governments in Western Kenya.

The regression sum of squares (8.064) represents the amount of variation in the dependent variable (performance) that is explained by the four predictors. In contrast, the residual sum of squares (173.866) represents the variation that remains unexplained by the model. The total sum of squares (181.930) is the overall variance in performance.

The mean square for regression (2.016), when divided by the mean square for residuals (0.589), yields the F-ratio of 3.421, which confirms that the model significantly improves the ability to predict performance compared to a model with no predictors.

Thus, the ANOVA results validate that the regression model provides a good overall fit, and the selected knowledge retention practices collectively make a significant contribution to explaining the variance in county government performance.

TABLE 4. 17
Multiple Regression coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	1.50	.234	—	6.41	.001
Documentation Practices	0.60	.094	.24	6.38	.001
Archiving Practices	0.52	.091	.18	5.71	.0005
Coaching	0.55	.097	.12	5.67	.017
Mentorship	0.45	.083	.28	5.42	.001

Source: Field Data (2025)

The regression coefficients in Table 4.16 show the contribution of each independent variable to the performance of county governments, holding all other factors constant.

The constant ($\beta_0 = 1.50$, $p = .001$) represents the predicted value of performance when all independent variables are zero. This suggests that even in the absence of documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship practices, there is still a baseline level of performance in county governments.

Documentation Practices ($B = 0.60, \beta = .24, p = .001$)

Documentation has a positive and statistically significant effect on performance. A one-unit increase in documentation practice is associated with a 0.60-unit increase in performance, holding other variables constant. This implies that effective documentation enhances record accessibility, decision-making, and operational efficiency.

Archiving Practices ($B = 0.52, \beta = .18, p = .0005$)

Archiving practices also have a significant positive effect on performance. A one-unit improvement in archiving systems leads to a 0.52-unit increase in performance. This highlights that proper record storage, classification, and retrieval contribute to improved accountability and continuity in county operations.

Coaching ($B = 0.55, \beta = .12, p = .017$)

Coaching has a positive and significant effect on performance. A one-unit increase in coaching activities results in a 0.55-unit rise in performance. This suggests that structured coaching programs enhance employee capability, productivity, and alignment with institutional goals.

Mentorship ($B = 0.45, \beta = .28, p = .001$)

Mentorship was also found to have a positive and significant influence on performance. A one-unit increase in mentorship initiatives is associated with a 0.45-unit improvement in performance. This implies that mentorship plays a critical role in knowledge transfer, staff development, and long-term organizational learning.

Based on the unstandardized coefficients (B values), the multiple regression equation for predicting the performance of county governments is expressed as:

$$Y = 1.50 + 0.60X_1 + 0.52X_2 + 0.55X_3 + 0.45X_4$$

Where:

- Y = Performance of County Governments

- X_1 = Documentation Practices
- X_2 = Archiving Practices
- X_3 = Coaching
- X_4 = Mentorship

4.6.3 Hypothesis Testing Analysis

This section presents the hypothesis testing results on the effect of knowledge retention practices documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance using the multiple regression results presented in Table 4.13. A null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the predictor and the dependent variable.

Hypothesis One (H_{01}):

Documentation practices have no significant effect on the performance of county governments.

The regression results revealed that documentation practices had a coefficient (B) of 0.60, a t-value of 6.38, and a p-value of 0.001, which is less than the significance threshold of 0.05. This finding indicates that documentation practices have a positive and statistically significant effect on performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected. The study concludes that documentation practices significantly enhance the performance of county governments. Proper documentation facilitates the accessibility and continuity of organizational information, thereby improving decision-making, transparency, and service delivery.

Hypothesis Two (H_{02}):

Archiving practices have no significant effect on the performance of county governments.

The findings indicated that archiving practices had a coefficient (B) of 0.52, a t-value of 5.71, and a p-value of 0.0005, which is below 0.05. This result implies that archiving practices exert a significant positive effect on performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected. The study concludes that proper archiving systems enhance performance by ensuring effective storage, retrieval, and preservation of vital records, which supports organizational efficiency and accountability.

Hypothesis Three (H_{03}):

Coaching has no significant effect on the performance of county governments.

The regression results showed that coaching had a coefficient (B) of 0.55, a t-value of 5.67, and a p-value of 0.017, which is less than 0.05. This demonstrates that coaching has a positive and statistically significant effect on performance. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected. The study infers that coaching contributes significantly to enhancing performance by equipping employees with relevant skills, increasing motivation, and improving task efficiency within county governments.

Hypothesis Four (H_{04}):

Mentorship has no significant effect on the performance of county governments.

The results revealed that mentorship had a coefficient (B) of 0.45, a t-value of 5.42, and a p-value of 0.001, which is below the 0.05 significance level. This finding shows that mentorship has a positive and statistically significant effect on performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) was rejected. The study concludes that mentorship enhances performance by promoting knowledge transfer, leadership development, and institutional learning across departments.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the analysis of data presented in Chapter Four. The study sought to examine the influence of knowledge retention practices on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. Specifically, the study focused on documentation practices, archiving practices, coaching, and mentorship as key determinants of organizational performance. The chapter synthesizes the results from descriptive and inferential analyses, discusses their implications, and proposes recommendations categorized under policy, practice, and theory to enhance the understanding and implementation of knowledge retention in public institutions.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study aimed to determine how knowledge retention practices affect the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. Data were collected from 300 respondents drawn from four counties: Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia, and Vihiga. The major findings are summarized below according to the study objectives.

5.2.1 Documentation Practices and Performance of County Governments

The findings revealed that documentation practices are moderately to highly implemented in the county governments of Western Kenya, with an overall mean score of 3.93. Most respondents agreed that staff are aware of policy and procedure manuals and that documentation is integrated into daily operations. However, gaps were noted in centralized storage and retrieval systems, which hinder the timely accessibility of critical information. These findings imply that while counties have embraced documentation as part of their

operational culture, there is a need to standardize and digitize documentation systems across departments.

5.2.2 Archiving Practices and Performance of County Governments

Archiving practices were also found to be moderately established, with an aggregate mean of 3.95. The results indicated that most departments adhere to archival guidelines, restrict access to authorized personnel, and maintain reasonable retrieval systems. However, a significant proportion of respondents reported reliance on manual filing systems and inconsistent updates of archived records. The findings suggest that counties are transitioning toward better archival management but face challenges related to digitization, infrastructure, and training. Effective archiving emerged as an important factor in enhancing accountability, decision-making, and service delivery.

5.2.3 Coaching and Performance of County Governments

Coaching was found to play a significant role in skill development and performance improvement, with an aggregate mean of 3.92. Respondents agreed that coaching enhances knowledge retention, supports professional growth, and improves service delivery. However, coaching practices were not consistently implemented across departments, and in some cases, lacked formal structure. The findings underscore the need for institutionalized coaching programs supported by policy frameworks and regular feedback mechanisms to enhance learning and performance outcomes within county governments.

5.2.4 Mentorship and Performance of County Governments

The study established that mentorship positively contributes to knowledge retention and service delivery, with an aggregate mean of 3.73. Respondents recognized mentorship as a critical avenue for transferring institutional knowledge, improving skills, and achieving departmental targets. Nonetheless, mentorship programs were found to be largely informal

and inconsistent across counties. This finding highlights the importance of formalizing mentorship frameworks to ensure structured learning, accountability, and sustainability of institutional knowledge.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

Documentation practices significantly contribute to the performance of county governments by ensuring consistency, transparency, and ease of access to information. However, inadequate centralized and digital systems hinder optimal utilization of documented knowledge.

Archiving practices enhance organizational performance by safeguarding institutional records and facilitating quick retrieval. Counties that adhere to archival policies experience improved decision-making and accountability, though gaps in digitization persist.

Coaching serves as an effective knowledge transfer mechanism that promotes employee competence and service delivery. However, the lack of structured and department-wide coaching programs limits its overall impact on performance.

Mentorship supports the retention of institutional memory and employee development, yet its informal nature in most counties reduces its potential benefits. Formal mentorship programs are essential for sustaining organizational knowledge and improving long-term performance.

Overall, knowledge retention practices collectively have a positive and statistically significant influence on the performance of county governments in Western Kenya. Counties that institutionalize these practices are more likely to achieve higher levels of efficiency, accountability, and citizen satisfaction.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

County governments should develop and enforce comprehensive knowledge retention policies that integrate documentation, archiving, coaching, and mentorship within the human resource and performance management frameworks.

The Council of Governors (CoG) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) should spearhead the establishment of national guidelines on knowledge retention to standardize practices across all counties.

Counties should allocate budgetary provisions for digitization of documentation and archival systems to improve accessibility and reduce record loss.

Policies should require each department to establish a mentorship and coaching policy that outlines objectives, procedures, and evaluation mechanisms.

5.4.2 Practical Recommendations

County departments should adopt centralized and digital records management systems that ensure secure, efficient, and quick access to information.

HR departments should institutionalize structured coaching and mentorship programs, pairing experienced staff with junior employees to promote knowledge continuity.

Regular training and capacity-building sessions should be conducted to enhance staff competence in documentation and archiving systems.

Performance appraisals should integrate knowledge retention indicators, such as participation in mentorship and coaching, to reinforce a culture of learning and innovation.

Counties should promote collaborative knowledge-sharing forums, including inter-departmental workshops and peer-learning sessions, to strengthen institutional memory.

5.4.3 Theoretical Recommendations

The findings support the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) of the firm, affirming that knowledge is a key organizational resource that enhances performance. Future studies should expand this theory by examining how specific retention mechanisms interact to produce synergistic effects on performance.

The results also align with Nonaka's SECI Model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization), emphasizing that knowledge creation and retention are continuous processes. Researchers should apply this model to assess how counties can better integrate tacit and explicit knowledge in governance processes.

Further research could test a mediated model where knowledge retention acts as an intermediary between capacity development and performance, extending theoretical understanding of organizational learning in the public sector.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could explore the role of technology adoption in enhancing knowledge retention and its impact on county performance.

A comparative study between urban and rural counties could be conducted to determine contextual differences in the implementation of knowledge retention practices.

Researchers may also investigate the barriers to effective mentorship and coaching in public institutions and propose practical frameworks for overcoming them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: KCA Approval Letter



Thika Road, Ruaraka
P.O. Box 56808-00200 Nairobi Kenya
Pilot Line: +254 20 8070408/9
Tel: +254 20 3537842
Fax: +254 20 8561077
Mobile: +254 734 888022, 710 888022
Email: kca@kca.ac.ke
Website: www.kca.ac.ke

KCA UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC & ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

REF: KCAU/SERC/SOB0283

Date: 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2025

TO: SYDNEY NEKOYE MASINDE (23/07917)

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: THE INFLUENCE OF KNOWLEDGE RETENTION PRACTICES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN WESTERN KENYA

This is to inform you that the KCA University Scientific Ethics Review Committee (KCAUSERC) has reviewed and approved your research proposal. Your application approval number is **KCAUSERC/SOB0283**. The approval period is **8th September, 2025 – 8th September, 2026**. This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements.

- i. Only approved documents, including informed consents, study instruments, and MTAs, will be used.
- ii. All changes, including (amendments, deviations, and violations), are submitted for review and approval by **KCAUSERC**.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events, whether related or unrelated to the study, must be reported to **KCAUSERC** within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise, that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **KCAUSERC** within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days before expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **KCAUSERC**.

Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Caroline Ntara,
Chairperson,
KCA University Scientific & Ethics Review Committee.



Appendix II: NACOSTI Approval Letter

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 184724	Date of Issue: 16/September/2025
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Miss.. Sydney Nekoye Masinde of KCA University, has been licensed to conduct Research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega, Vihiga on the topic: Knowledge Retention Practices and Performances of County Governments in Western Kenya for the period ending : 16/September/2026.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/25/4179726	
184724	
Applicant Identification Number	Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION	
Verification QR Code	
	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix III: Questionnaire

Introduction

This questionnaire is aimed to seek information about research on the influence of knowledge retention practices on the performance of county governments in western Kenya.

You have been selected to participate in the study and your responses will be used for educational purposes only.

Kindly answer the following questions by ticking appropriately in the space provided.

SECTION I: Personal information.

Gender

Male [] Female []

Level of education

PhD [] Master's [] Undergraduate degree [] Diploma/Certificate []

Age of the respondent

Below 25 years [] 25-30 years [] 31-35 years [] 36 - 40 years []

Above 40 years []

SECTION II: Documentation Practices and Performance of County Governments

Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding documentation practices in your department. Key: 5 – Strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – Don't Know, 2 – disagree and 1 – Strongly disagree

STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
1. Staff are aware of the contents of the policy					
2. There is a clear process for reviewing and					
3. There is a centralized system for storing and					
retrieving documented information					
4. Consistent formats help improve clarity and					
5. Documentation is an integral part of our daily					

SECTION III: Archiving Practices and Performance of County Governments

Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding archiving practices in your department. Key: 5 – Strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – Don't Know, 2 – disagree and 1 – Strongly disagree

STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
1. Our department primarily uses digital archiving					
2. Archived records can be retrieved easily and					
quickly when needed.					
3. Access to archived records is restricted to					
authorized personnel.					
4. Our department follows established archival					
5. Records in the archives are updated and					

SECTION IV: Coaching and Performance of County Governments

c) Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding coaching in your department by ticking the appropriate box. Key: 5 – Strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – Don't Know, 2 – disagree and 1 – Strongly disagree

STATEMENTS	5	4	3	2	1
1. My department conducts regular coaching sessions for					
2. Coaching sessions are relevant to my job					
3. Coaching in this organization helps retain critical					
knowledge and skills					
4. I have personally benefited from coaching programs					
5. The feedback from coaching sessions is used to					

SECTION V: Mentorship and Performance of County Governments

d) Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding mentorship in your department by ticking the appropriate box. Key: 5 – Strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – Don't Know, 2 – disagree and 1 – Strongly disagree

STATEMENTS	5	4	3	2	1
1. My department has formal mentorship programs for					
2. Mentorship has enhanced my skills and professional					
3. Mentorship helps retain important institutional					
knowledge in my department					
4. Knowledge shared through mentorship has improved					
5. Mentorship supports the achievement of departmental					

SECTION VI: Performance of County Governments

Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding the performance of your county government. Tick as applicable using the filling Likert scale where 1 = No, 2 = little extend, 3 = Moderate extend, 4 = Great extend and 5 = Very great extend

STATEMENTS	5	4	3	2	1
1. Services are delivered to citizens in a timely manner.					
2. Projects are implemented as planned and within set timelines.					
3. Departmental budgets are utilized effectively each financial year.					
4. Employees consistently meet their performance targets.					

Receive my heartfelt gratitude for your Cooperation

Appendix IV: Research Budget Estimates

Item	Number of units	Unit cost	No. of items x price	Total cost
Research Assistants in Data collection	3 persons for 7 days	10,000/=	3×7×10,000	210,000/=
Transport in supervising data collection	Researcher in the one week	12,000/=	1×12,000/=	12,000/=
Accommodation for 4 people	1 weeks	2,500	4×7×2,500/=	70,000/=
Data entry and editing	3 people	8,000/=	3×8,000/=	24,000/=
Data analysis	1 statistician	30,000/=	1×30,000/=	30,000/=
Secretarial support and printing	1 person	10,000/=	1×10,000/=	10,000/=
Drafts and reproduction of the Final Report	Binding six books hard cover and photocopy	2000/=	3×6×2000	36,000/=
Grand Total				392,000/=

Appendix V: Work Plan

Activity	Jan-March 2025	April-May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	August- September 2025
Problem Identification					
Proposal Writing					
Corrections					
Proposal Defense					
Data Analysis and Project Submission					