



CAREER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND DELIVERY OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES BY EMPLOYEES IN LEVEL FIVE PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN UPPER EASTERN REGION, KENYA

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Abstract:

This study examined the influence of career management practices on healthcare service delivery among employees in Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya, with union practices considered as a moderating variable. The study focused on training and development, mentorship, career advancement opportunities, and professional growth support. A cross-sectional survey design guided by the positivist research philosophy was adopted. The target population comprised 1,484 employees from Meru Teaching and Referral Hospital, Chuka County Referral Hospital, Isiolo Level Five Hospital, and Marsabit County Referral Hospital. A sample size of 315 respondents was selected using stratified proportionate random sampling. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS Version 26. Descriptive findings indicated that employees generally perceived career management practices positively, particularly in relation to training opportunities, mentorship programs, career progression pathways, and organizational support for professional development. Correlation analysis established a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery ($r = 0.364$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis further revealed that career management practices significantly influenced healthcare service delivery ($B = 0.596$, $R^2 = 0.133$, $t = 6.446$, $p < 0.001$). The study concludes that effective career management practices enhance employee motivation, competence, commitment, and healthcare

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service delivery within public hospitals. The study recommends strengthening career development frameworks through continuous training, mentorship programs, clear career progression structures, and professional development opportunities to improve employee performance and quality healthcare service delivery.

Keywords: career management practices, healthcare service delivery, employee performance, training and development, mentorship, career advancement, public hospitals, Upper Eastern Region Kenya

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Human resources remain the backbone of healthcare systems because the quality of healthcare services largely depends on the competence, motivation, and commitment of healthcare workers (WHO, 2018). Consequently, career management practices have increasingly gained attention as important strategic human resource practices that influence employee motivation, job satisfaction, retention, and organizational performance (Wei *et al.*, 2018). Career management practices such as training and development, mentorship, career planning, succession planning, and promotion opportunities support employees' professional growth and enhance their ability to deliver quality services (Taheri, Miah & Kamaruzzaman, 2020). In healthcare institutions, effective career management is particularly important because healthcare professionals require continuous learning, specialization, and career advancement opportunities to remain competent and responsive to changing healthcare demands (Tumlinson *et al.*, 2019).

Globally, healthcare systems continue to experience workforce challenges, including staff shortages, burnout, migration of skilled professionals, and low employee morale, all of which negatively affect healthcare service delivery (WHO, 2018). Studies have shown that healthcare organizations that provide supportive career management practices experience improved employee commitment, increased retention, and better healthcare outcomes (Long, 2016; Rajapaksha, 2015). Conversely, inadequate career growth opportunities contribute to employee dissatisfaction, disengagement, and poor service delivery (Wei *et al.*, 2018). In Africa, limited professional development opportunities and poor retention strategies have further contributed to the migration of healthcare professionals to developed countries in search of better career opportunities and working conditions (Muathe, 2018; Walton-Roberts, 2015). In Kenya, the devolution of healthcare services following the Constitution of Kenya 2010 was intended to improve accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency in healthcare service delivery (Wanzala & Oloo, 2019). Despite these reforms, public healthcare institutions continue to face challenges such as inadequate professional development opportunities, delayed promotions, understaffing, and recurrent industrial unrest among healthcare workers (USAID, 2020; Okech, 2016).

Trade unions have therefore emerged as important stakeholders in advocating for fair remuneration, improved working conditions, career advancement opportunities, and implementation of collective bargaining agreements for healthcare workers (Nawakitphaitoon & Zhang, 2021; Van der Meer, 2019). Although industrial actions occasionally disrupt healthcare services, unions continue to play a critical role in promoting employee welfare and supportive work environments within public healthcare institutions (Wels, 2021). Level Five public hospitals in the Upper Eastern Region of Kenya, including Meru, Tharaka Nithi, Isiolo, and Marsabit counties, continue to experience workforce challenges such as staff shortages, high workloads, limited career growth opportunities, and employee dissatisfaction, which negatively affect healthcare service delivery (Barker *et al.*, 2014; Waithaka *et al.*, 2018). Despite the growing importance of career management practices in healthcare institutions, limited empirical studies have specifically examined their influence on healthcare service delivery within Level Five public hospitals in the region. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the influence of career management practices on the delivery of healthcare services by employees in Level Five public hospitals in the Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.

1.1.2 Statement of the Problem

The healthcare sector plays a significant role in promoting population well-being, improving labour productivity, and supporting socio-economic development within a country (World Bank Group, 2022). In Kenya, Level Five public hospitals serve as critical referral facilities that provide specialized healthcare services to large populations within counties (Wanzala & Oloo, 2019). The effectiveness of these hospitals largely depends on the competence, motivation, and commitment of healthcare workers responsible for healthcare service delivery (Wei *et al.*, 2018). Despite the critical role played by healthcare workers, public healthcare institutions in Kenya continue to experience workforce-related challenges such as inadequate training opportunities, delayed promotions, unclear career progression structures, understaffing, and recurrent industrial unrest among healthcare workers (USAID, 2020; Okech, 2016). Career management practices such as training and development, mentorship, promotion opportunities, and continuous professional development are important in enhancing employee motivation, competence, retention, and service delivery (Taheri, Miah & Kamaruzzaman, 2020). However, inadequate career advancement opportunities continue to contribute to employee dissatisfaction, low morale, burnout, and poor healthcare service delivery within public hospitals (Tumlinson *et al.*, 2019).

These challenges are evident in Level Five public hospitals within the Upper Eastern Region of Kenya, including Meru, Tharaka Nithi, Isiolo, and Marsabit counties, where healthcare workers continue to operate under increasing patient demands and limited professional growth opportunities (Barker *et al.*, 2014; Waithaka *et al.*, 2018). Although previous studies have examined human resource management practices and healthcare service delivery, limited empirical studies have specifically focused on the influence of career management practices on delivery of healthcare services within Level

Five public hospitals in the Upper Eastern Region of Kenya, thereby presenting contextual and methodological gaps (Oleribe *et al.*, 2019; Njeri & Kepha, 2021; Opio *et al.*, 2022). This study therefore sought to examine the influence of career management practices on delivery of healthcare services by employees in Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.

1.1.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To establish the effect of career management practices on employees delivering healthcare services in level five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.
- 2) To establish the moderating effect of union practices on the relationship between working environment and employee delivery of healthcare services in level five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.

1.1.4 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Career management practices have no significant effect on employee delivery of healthcare services in level five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya

H₀₅: Union practices have no significant moderating effect on the relationship between working conditions and employee delivery of healthcare services in level five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review: Abraham Maslow's Theory

Abraham Maslow (1943) developed the Hierarchy of Needs Theory to explain human motivation and the factors that influence individual behaviour and performance within organizations (Maslow, 1943). The theory proposes that human needs are arranged in a hierarchical order consisting of physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Mamokhere *et al.*, 2021). According to the theory, individuals are motivated to satisfy lower-level needs before progressing to higher-level needs that support personal growth, achievement, and fulfillment (Lussier & Hendon, 2019).

In organizational settings, physiological and safety needs are addressed through fair remuneration, job security, safe working conditions, and supportive work environments (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Social needs relate to teamwork, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within the organization, while esteem and self-actualization needs are achieved through recognition, career advancement opportunities, training, mentorship, and professional growth (Okechukwu *et al.*, 2021). The theory therefore suggests that employees become more motivated and committed when organizations create conditions that support both their personal and professional development (Mamokhere *et al.*, 2021).

The theory is relevant to this study because career management practices such as training and development, mentorship, promotion opportunities, and continuous

professional development directly address employees' esteem and self-actualization needs (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). In healthcare institutions, employees who are provided with opportunities for career growth, recognition, and skill development are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction, improved motivation, and stronger organizational commitment, which positively influence healthcare service delivery (Okechukwu *et al.*, 2021). Conversely, inadequate career advancement opportunities and poor professional development structures may lead to frustration, burnout, dissatisfaction, and reduced employee performance (Lussier & Hendon, 2019).

Despite criticisms that the theory does not always operate in a strict hierarchical order and may vary across cultures and contexts (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976; McLeod, 2020), Maslow's theory remains widely applicable in organizational and human resource management studies because of its relevance in explaining employee motivation and workplace behaviour (Mamokhere *et al.*, 2021). The theory, therefore, provides a suitable foundation for understanding how career management practices influence healthcare service delivery among employees in Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Career management practices have been widely recognized as important human resource management strategies that influence employee motivation, competence, retention, and organizational performance (Okpalaibekwe, 2022; Mwiti, Moguche, & Renter, 2021). These practices include training and development, mentorship, promotion opportunities, career planning, and continuous professional development, all of which support employees in achieving career growth and improved work performance (Deloitte, 2012). In healthcare institutions, effective career management practices are particularly important because healthcare service delivery depends heavily on skilled, motivated, and committed healthcare professionals (Al-Hanawi, Khan, & Al-Borie, 2019).

Empirical studies have consistently shown that career management practices positively influence employee performance and healthcare service delivery outcomes. Al-Hanawi, Khan, and Al-Borie (2019), in a study conducted in Saudi Arabia, established that healthcare institutions that implemented structured career development and professional training programs experienced improved employee competencies, job satisfaction, and service delivery. Similarly, Oleribe *et al.* (2019), through a review of healthcare systems in Africa, identified inadequate career development opportunities as a major challenge affecting healthcare worker motivation, retention, and performance. The study noted that limited professional growth opportunities contribute to employee burnout, low morale, and reduced quality of healthcare services.

In Kenya, several studies have also demonstrated the importance of career management practices in enhancing employee and organizational performance. Njeri and Kepha (2021), in a study conducted at Aga Khan University Hospital, found that career development practices such as training, promotion opportunities, and structured career paths had a significant positive effect on employee performance. Similarly, Choge

(2020), while studying Kenyatta National Hospital, established that training and career development improved employee competence and healthcare service delivery. Wambui, Gachunga, and Karanja (2022) further found that promotion opportunities and professional development programs significantly influenced employee motivation and performance in public hospitals in Kiambu County.

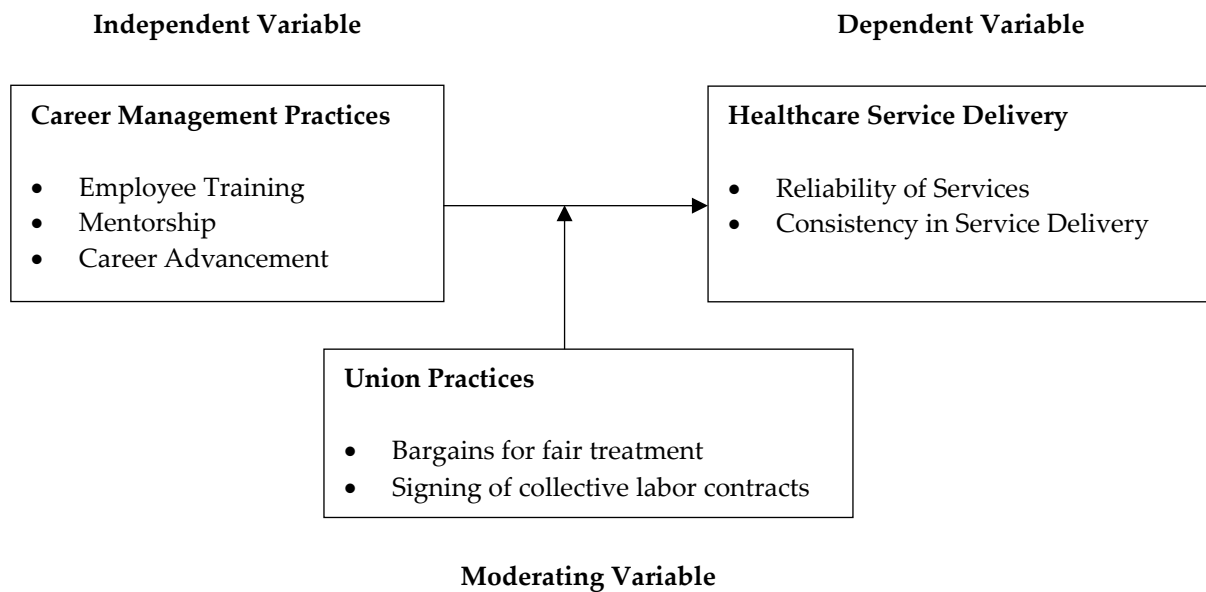
Other studies have emphasized the role of specific career management components in improving healthcare outcomes. Omondi and Wanyama (2020) established that continuous professional development enhanced employee competencies and service efficiency in public health institutions in Western Kenya. Similarly, Mutiso and Musau (2023) found that mentorship programs improved knowledge transfer, employee performance, and clinical competence among healthcare workers in Machakos County hospitals. At the international level, De Vos, De Hauw, and Van der Heijden (2019) established that structured career systems, including career counseling and internal mobility opportunities, significantly improved employee engagement, job satisfaction, and service quality within healthcare organizations across Europe.

Despite the growing evidence linking career management practices to employee performance and service delivery, existing studies reveal several gaps. Most studies have focused on isolated aspects of career management such as training, mentorship, or promotion opportunities without adopting a comprehensive perspective on career management practices (Omondi & Wanyama, 2020; Mutiso & Musau, 2023). Additionally, many studies have focused on private healthcare institutions or contexts outside the Kenyan public healthcare system, thereby limiting the applicability of their findings to public Level Five hospitals in Kenya (Njeri & Kepha, 2021; Al-Hanawi, Khan, & Al-Borie, 2019). Further, limited empirical studies have specifically examined the influence of career management practices on healthcare service delivery in Level Five public hospitals within the Upper Eastern Region of Kenya. This study therefore sought to address these contextual and empirical gaps by examining the influence of career management practices on delivery of healthcare services by employees in Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides a structured representation of the variables under study and explains the hypothesized relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Smith, 2015). According to Adom and Hussein (2018), a conceptual framework presents the key concepts of a study and demonstrates how the variables are expected to relate to one another. Similarly, Grant and Osanloo (2014) argued that a conceptual framework is developed from existing theories, concepts, assumptions, and empirical findings relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, the conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery among employees in Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The framework is grounded on the premise that healthcare service delivery largely depends on the competence, motivation, commitment, and professionalism of healthcare workers (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Career management practices such as training and development, mentorship, promotion opportunities, succession planning, and continuous professional development are expected to influence healthcare service delivery by enhancing employee competencies, motivation, and organizational commitment (Noe *et al.*, 2020). In healthcare institutions, employees who are provided with opportunities for professional growth and career advancement are more likely to remain motivated, satisfied, and committed to organizational goals, thereby improving the quality, efficiency, and reliability of healthcare services delivered to patients (Kumar *et al.*, 2019).

The relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery is primarily explained through skill enhancement and employee motivation mechanisms. Training and professional development programs improve employees' technical competencies, knowledge, and ability to adapt to changing healthcare technologies and patient needs (Ng *et al.*, 2018). Mentorship and career guidance further support knowledge transfer, confidence building, and continuous learning among healthcare workers, which positively influence employee performance and service quality (Mutiso & Musau, 2023). Additionally, clear promotion structures and career progression opportunities enhance employee job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions, thereby promoting continuity and stability in healthcare service delivery (Njeri & Kepha, 2021).

Conversely, inadequate career management practices may lead to employee dissatisfaction, low morale, burnout, and reduced organizational commitment, which negatively affect healthcare service delivery outcomes (Tumlinson *et al.*, 2019).

Employees who perceive limited opportunities for career advancement and professional growth are more likely to experience frustration and disengagement, thereby compromising service efficiency and patient care quality (Oleribe *et al.*, 2019). The framework therefore conceptualizes that effective career management practices positively influence healthcare service delivery through improved employee competence, motivation, commitment, and retention within healthcare institutions.

3. Research Methodology

This study was grounded in the positivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality is objective and can be measured and analyzed using scientific and quantitative approaches (Mohajan, 2018). Positivism emphasizes objectivity, hypothesis testing, and statistical analysis in examining relationships between variables (Snyder, 2019). The philosophy was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to objectively examine the influence of career management practices on healthcare service delivery using measurable indicators and statistical techniques (Newman & Gough, 2020). The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to collect data from respondents at a single point in time. Cross-sectional survey designs are appropriate for examining relationships among variables without manipulating the study environment and are widely used in organizational and healthcare research (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The design enabled the study to assess employees' perceptions regarding career management practices and their influence on healthcare service delivery within Level Five public hospitals in Kenya's Upper Eastern Region (Lee *et al.*, 2020; Cho *et al.*, 2020).

The target population comprised all employees working in Level Five public hospitals in the Upper Eastern Region of Kenya, including Meru Teaching and Referral Hospital, Chuka County Referral Hospital, Isiolo Level Five Hospital, and Marsabit County Referral Hospital. Both medical and non-medical staff were included in the study because they collectively contribute to healthcare service delivery processes within public hospitals. Based on County Integrated Development Plans and hospital human resource records, the total target population comprised 1,484 employees (Mishra & Alok, 2022). To obtain a representative sample, the study employed stratified proportionate random sampling, where employees were stratified according to job categories to ensure equitable representation of different cadres within the hospitals. Stratified sampling minimizes sampling bias and enhances representativeness of the study findings (Ketchen & Bergh, 2014). The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations with a 5 percent margin of error, yielding a sample size of 315 respondents, which was considered adequate for statistical analysis and generalization of findings (Mohajan, 2018; Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

Table 1: Stratification of the Sample Size

Cadre	Target Population	Sample Size	Proportion (%)
Nurses	549	117	37%
Radiographers	16	3	1%
Medical Officers	62	13	4%
Dentists and Dental Technologists	15	3	1%
Pharmacists	17	4	1%
Public Health Officers	58	12	4%
Clinical Officers	135	29	9%
Physiotherapists	20	4	1%
Occupational Therapists	11	2	1%
Medical Engineers	14	3	1%
Nutrition and Dietician Staff	20	4	1%
Pharmaceutical Technologists	27	6	2%
Laboratory Technologists	84	18	6%
Plaster Technicians	13	3	1%
Information Technologists	21	4	1%
Medical Social Workers	15	3	1%
Medical Clerks	26	6	2%
Non-Medical Staff	381	81	26%
Total	1,484	315	100%

Source: Author, 2026.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. Questionnaires were appropriate because they facilitate standardized data collection and efficiently capture respondents' perceptions regarding career management practices and healthcare service delivery (Rinjit, 2020). Reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, where coefficients of 0.70 and above were considered acceptable (Cronbach, 1951; Patel & Patel, 2019). Validity was ensured through content, face, and construct validity using expert review, pilot testing, and exploratory factor analysis, with factor loadings of 0.40 and above considered satisfactory (Dzwigol & Dzwigol-Barosz, 2018; Safsten & Gustavsson, 2020). Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the study variables, while correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery. Findings were presented using tables and figures for ease of interpretation.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine and summarize respondents' perceptions regarding career management practices before conducting inferential analysis (Pallant, 2020). In this study, descriptive analysis provided insights into how healthcare employees perceived various dimensions of career management practices

within Level Five public hospitals in the Upper Eastern Region, Kenya. The analysis specifically focused on key components of career management, including training and development, mentorship programs, career advancement opportunities, promotion structures, and support for professional growth. Measures of central tendency and dispersion, particularly mean scores and standard deviations, were computed to establish the general pattern and variability of responses across the study variables. The descriptive findings, therefore, provided an empirical basis for understanding the prevailing career management practices and their possible implications on healthcare service delivery.

**Table 2: Career Management Practices and Health Delivery
 in Level 5 Hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya**

Career Management Practices	N	Mean	SD
The organization offers relevant and up-to-date training programs to enhance employees' skills and knowledge	274	4.12	0.802
I am provided with sufficient opportunities to attend training sessions that align with my professional development goals	274	4.12	0.910
The training materials and resources provided are clear, comprehensive, and effectively support the learning objectives	274	4.18	0.872
Following training, I am given the opportunity to apply what I've learned in my job tasks and responsibilities	274	4.32	0.669
Overall, I am satisfied with the organization's commitment to employee training and development	274	4.27	0.705
The organization provides structured mentorship programs that help employees grow in their roles	274	4.23	0.697
I have access to experienced mentors who are willing to share their knowledge and guidance	274	4.23	0.778
The mentorship relationships within the organization are beneficial for both personal and professional development	274	4.16	0.893
The organization fosters a culture that encourages mentorship, making it easy to connect with mentors	274	4.29	0.791
Overall, I believe that the organization's mentorship practices contribute positively to my career growth and skills development	274	4.35	0.727
The organization provides clear pathways for career advancement and growth	274	4.33	0.799
I am aware of the skills and competencies required for progressing to higher positions within the organization	274	3.86	1.037
The organization supports employees' career development through opportunities for promotion and lateral movement	274	4.26	0.781
The performance review process includes discussions about employees' career aspirations and potential advancement	274	4.29	0.826
Overall, I believe that the organization's career advancement practices align with my professional goals and aspirations	274	4.01	0.957
Average	274	4.20	1.296

Source: Author, 2026.

The analysis of Career Management practices, based on responses from 274 participants, indicates a generally high level of satisfaction with the organization's efforts to support

employee growth and development. The overall mean score was 4.20, reflecting positive perceptions across three main areas: training and development, mentorship, and career advancement. Respondents acknowledged the availability of relevant and up-to-date training programs, with a mean of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 0.802 with clear and effective training materials a mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.872 was recorded. They also reported being able to apply learned skills in their work, denoted by a mean of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.669, suggesting that training initiatives are both practical and impactful. Mentorship programs were also well-rated. Employees felt supported by experienced mentors, $M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.778$ and agreed that mentorship contributed positively to both personal and professional development, $M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.893$. A strong mentoring culture was also evident $M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.791$. Regarding career advancement, participants affirmed the presence of structured pathways $M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.799$, organizational support for promotions and lateral movements $M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.781$, and alignment with personal career aspirations $M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.957$. However, awareness of the competencies required for progression was comparatively lower $M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.037$, indicating a potential area for improvement. The findings correspond with study findings by Noe *et al.* 2017 who noted that effective training programs significantly enhance employee performance when learning is reinforced through opportunities to apply new knowledge on the job. The high score on post-training application in this study supports this assertion, indicating that the organization's training approach aligns with best practices in adult learning and employee development. Further, a study by Allen, Eby, and Lentz (2006) found that mentorship is strongly correlated with higher career satisfaction and progression. The positive feedback regarding mentorship programs in this study suggests that the organization's structured mentoring efforts are likely contributing to greater employee engagement and long-term retention.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The study employed Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to $+1$, where values closer to either extreme indicate a stronger linear relationship between variables. In social science research, an r value ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 is interpreted as a weak relationship, 0.30 to 0.49 as a moderate relationship, and 0.50 and above as a strong relationship between variables.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on
 Career Management Practices and Healthcare Service Delivery

Variable		Career Management	Health Care Service Delivery
Career Management	Pearson Correlation	1	0.364
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	274	274
Health Care Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	0.364	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	274	274

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

The findings revealed a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery ($r = 0.364$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that improvements in career management practices are associated with improvements in healthcare service delivery within Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya. The positive relationship suggests that healthcare employees who receive support through training and development, mentorship, career advancement opportunities, and professional growth are more likely to enhance the quality and effectiveness of healthcare service delivery. The relationship was statistically significant at the 0.05 level, implying that the observed association was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The findings are consistent with the study by Njeri and Kepha (2021), which established that career development practices positively influence employee performance in healthcare institutions in Kenya. Similarly, Allen, Eby, and Lentz (2006) found that mentorship and career growth opportunities contribute significantly to employee motivation, commitment, and productivity. The findings therefore infer that strengthening career management practices within public hospitals may enhance employee competence and commitment, ultimately improving healthcare service delivery outcomes.

4.3 Regression Analysis

To achieve the study objectives, linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the nature and magnitude of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The technique was considered appropriate because it enables the estimation of the extent to which changes in the predictor variable influence variations in the outcome variable. Through the analysis of regression coefficients, significance values, and model fit statistics, the study was able to assess the predictive ability of the independent variable and generate empirical evidence for testing the study hypothesis.

Table 4: Model Summary on Career Management Practices and Healthcare Service Delivery

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.364	.133	.129	8.703
a. Predictors: (Constant), Career Management				

Source: Author, 2026.

The regression analysis findings indicate that career management practices have a positive influence on healthcare service delivery. The model produced a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.364, suggesting the existence of a positive relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery. The coefficient of determination (R Square) was 0.133, implying that career management practices accounted for approximately 13.3% of the variation in healthcare service delivery among Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya. The Adjusted R-Square value of 0.129 further confirmed the stability of the model after adjusting for sample size and predictor effects.

The findings suggest that although career management practices contribute positively to healthcare service delivery, other factors outside the model may also influence service delivery outcomes within public hospitals. The results are consistent with Njeri and Kepha (2021), who found that career development practices positively influence employee performance within healthcare institutions in Kenya. Similarly, Noe *et al.* (2020) established that training, mentorship, and career growth opportunities enhance employee competence, motivation, and organizational performance. The findings, therefore, imply that strengthening career management initiatives may contribute to improved healthcare service delivery through enhanced employee capability and commitment.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance on Career Management Practices and Healthcare Service Delivery

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3147.313	1	3147.313	41.550	.000
	Residual	20603.245	272	75.747		
	Total	23750.558	273			
a. Dependent Variable: Health Care Service Delivery						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Career Management						

Source: Author, 2026.

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model with Career Management Practices as the independent variable is statistically significant in predicting Health Care Service Delivery. The model produced an F-statistic of 41.550 and a p-value of 0.000. This outcome confirms that the variation in health care service delivery is significantly associated with career management practices, and the model provides a meaningful explanation of that relationship. Therefore, the hypothesis H02: Career management

practices have no significant effect on employee delivery of healthcare services in level five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya was rejected.

Table 6: Regression Analysis on Career Management Practices and Healthcare Service Delivery in Level Five Public Hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	21.455	5.842		3.673	.000
	Career Management	.596	.092	.364	6.446	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Health Care Service Delivery

Source: Author, 2026.

The regression coefficients indicate that career management practices have a positive and statistically significant effect on healthcare service delivery. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.596) implies that a one-unit improvement in career management practices is associated with an increase of approximately 0.596 units in healthcare service delivery, holding other factors constant. The relationship was further supported by a t-value of 6.446 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the effect was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In addition, the constant value of 21.455 represents the estimated baseline level of healthcare service delivery in the absence of career management practices.

The findings suggest that effective career management practices, such as training and development, mentorship, promotion opportunities, and professional growth support, significantly contribute to improved healthcare service delivery. The results are consistent with Noe *et al.* (2020), who established that employee development and career growth initiatives positively influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Njeri and Kepha (2021) found that career development practices significantly enhance employee productivity and performance within healthcare institutions in Kenya. The findings, therefore, imply that strengthening career management systems within public hospitals can enhance employee competence, motivation, and commitment, ultimately improving the quality and efficiency of healthcare service delivery.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The study sought to examine the effect of career management practices on the delivery of healthcare services in Level Five public hospitals in the Upper Eastern Region of Kenya. Descriptive findings revealed that employees generally perceived career management practices positively, particularly in relation to training and development opportunities, mentorship programs, career progression pathways, and organizational support for professional growth. Employees indicated that the hospitals provided opportunities for skill development and continuous learning, while mentorship and coaching programs supported both personal and professional growth. Career

advancement pathways were perceived as reasonably clear, and employees acknowledged that the organizations supported promotions and career development initiatives. These findings suggest that effective career management practices create a supportive work environment that enhances employee motivation, competence, and commitment toward healthcare service delivery.

Correlation analysis established a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery ($r = 0.364$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that improvements in career management practices are associated with better healthcare service delivery outcomes. Regression analysis further revealed that career management practices explained approximately 13.3% of the variation in healthcare service delivery ($R^2 = 0.133$, $B = 0.596$, $t = 6.446$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that career management practices significantly influence healthcare service delivery within Level Five public hospitals in Upper Eastern Region, Kenya. Although the predictive effect was moderate, the findings demonstrate that career development initiatives contribute meaningfully toward improving employee effectiveness and service quality.

The findings are consistent with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, which emphasizes that opportunities for growth, recognition, and self-actualization enhance employee motivation and performance. The results also align with Noe *et al.* (2020), who established that employee training and career development programs positively influence organizational performance and employee productivity. Similarly, Njeri and Kepha (2021) found that career development practices significantly improve employee performance within healthcare institutions in Kenya. The findings therefore imply that strengthening career management systems through mentorship, training, professional development, and clear career progression structures can enhance employee motivation, competence, and commitment, ultimately improving healthcare service delivery outcomes within public hospitals in the Upper Region of Kenya.

5.1 Scope for Further Studies

Despite the significant contribution of this study in explaining the relationship between career management practices and healthcare service delivery, several areas remain open for further scholarly inquiry. Future studies may undertake comparative analyses across different categories of healthcare institutions, including county referral hospitals, sub-county hospitals, and private healthcare facilities, in order to establish contextual variations in the influence of career management practices on service delivery outcomes. Additionally, further empirical studies could extend the scope of investigation to other geographical regions and sectors such as education, manufacturing, and public administration to determine the applicability and consistency of the observed relationships across diverse organizational and institutional settings.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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