

# **Effect of Awareness Raising on the Preferred Mode of Learning in the Public Service in Kenya: A Study of Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus**

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## **Abstract**

Learning institution administrators face challenges in fully integrating awareness raising into the design and delivery of learning modes for public servants, largely due to varying levels of awareness regarding continuous professional development and the availability of diverse learning options. This situation undermines the development of cohesive and inclusive learning strategies. This study sought to determine the influence of awareness raising on the preferred mode of learning among program participants at the Kenya School of Government Embu Campus. The study was anchored on self-determination theory. A cross sectional design was adopted, targeting 40 program participants. Data was collected using online structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed high levels of awareness of institutional programs, with the majority of respondents (94.6%) indicating awareness of the Senior Management Course. Further, 94.6% of the respondents had undertaken the Senior Management Course. Referrals emerged as the primary source of awareness about Kenya School of Government Programs (35%). Further, face to face mode

of learning emerged as the most preferred mode of learning with 55%. The results further established that awareness levels significantly influenced participants' preferences for different modes of learning and uptake of the programs on offer. The study concluded that awareness raising plays a critical role in shaping the preferred mode of learning among participants, influencing both program uptake and engagement. The study recommends that the institution leverage technology and social media platforms to enhance program visibility and awareness. Additionally, strategic partnerships with government institutions should be strengthened to support systematic sensitization of public servants and improve participation across diverse learning modes.

**Keywords:** Awareness Raising, Mode of Learning, Awareness of Programs Offered, Source of Information about Programs, Programs undertaken

### **Introduction**

The global commitment to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasizes the need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020). Despite this commitment, projections indicate that by 2030, approximately 84 million children and young people will remain out of school, while nearly 300 million learners will lack basic literacy and numeracy skills (UN, 2024). These challenges have prompted education systems worldwide to adopt innovative and flexible approaches to learning, particularly through the integration of technology.

Awareness raising plays a critical role in influencing learners' perceptions and choices of learning modes (Benavot et al., 2022). When learners are adequately informed about different learning options such as online platforms, hybrid systems, and modular approaches, they are better positioned to select modes that align with their needs, preferences, and circumstances (Lin, 2021). Conversely, limited awareness may result in underutilization of available learning opportunities or resistance to adopting alternative modes of instruction.

In Africa, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has emerged as a key strategy for expanding access to education, enhancing flexibility, and supporting lifelong learning (Butcher et al., 2011, as cited in Simiyu, 2021). Institutions such as the University of South Africa (UNISA) have demonstrated the potential of distance education models in increasing accessibility and inclusivity. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, ODL has been instrumental in addressing educational disparities, improving teacher training, and strengthening conventional education systems. However, the success of these initiatives often depends on how well learners and stakeholders are sensitized to their benefits and usage.

In Kenya, the adoption of blended and online learning approaches has been driven by the need to enhance resilience in the education sector and ensure continuity during disruptions. Institutions have increasingly invested in digital infrastructure and capacity building to support flexible learning environments (Simiyu, 2021). Despite these efforts, the extent to which learners prefer specific modes of learning is influenced not only by access and technological capability but also by their awareness and understanding of these modes. As a key institution responsible for capacity building in the public sector, Kenya School of Government (KSG) offers various learning modes to accommodate diverse learner needs. However, differences in awareness levels among participants may influence their preferences

for face-to-face, online, or blended learning approaches. This study therefore, sought to examine the influence of awareness raising on the preferred mode of learning among participants at KSG, Embu Campus.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The global commitment under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Similarly, Kenya's development blueprint, Vision 2030, identifies Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) as a key pillar for national transformation. In response to rapid technological advancements, education and training institutions have increasingly adopted diverse learning modes, including face-to-face, online, and blended approaches to enhance accessibility and flexibility for learners seeking to upgrade skills, acquire new competencies, and refresh knowledge. Despite these efforts, access to and effective utilization of diverse learning modes remain uneven. While Kenya has made notable progress in literacy, with a youth literacy rate of 82.6% as of 2022 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics), disparities persist in access to quality and flexible learning opportunities. These disparities are more pronounced in professional training environments, where adult learners must balance work, learning, and other commitments. Choosing an appropriate learning mode is critical.

The establishment of the Kenya School of Government in 2012 aimed to centralize and enhance capacity building for public servants through structured and standardized training programs. While KSG has made significant strides in expanding training delivery through multiple learning modes, challenges remain in ensuring optimal utilization and effectiveness of these modes. However, insufficient attention has been given to the role of awareness raising in influencing learners' preferences for different modes of learning.

Therefore, this study sought to bridge the gap by investigating how Awareness Raising influences the Preferred Mode of Learning among participants at Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus.

### *Objective of the Study*

The main objective of the study was to determine the influence of Awareness Raising on the Preferred Mode of Learning among program participants at Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus.

### *Research Questions*

What is the influence of Awareness Raising on the Preferred Mode of Learning among program participants at Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study makes a contribution to institutional knowledge by highlighting how Awareness Raising affects the participant's choice of their learning mode particularly in public service training institutions such as Kenya School of Government. The findings provide actionable insights for policy makers by allowing them to understand the challenges and inefficiencies in the training of public servants, as well as the factors influencing the mode of learning. This would inform the development of policies aimed at improving the effectiveness and accessibility of training programs.

Further, the study is beneficial to Institution administrators since it provides valuable insights into the factors influencing the mode of learning for public servants and highlights areas for improvement. The administrators can use the information to refine curriculum offerings, enhance teaching methodologies, and streamline administrative processes to better meet the diverse learning needs of public servants.

Moreover, to the scholars, the study provides a basis for further investigation into the dynamics of public service training and capacity building in Kenya and other contexts. Scholars can build upon the findings of this study to conduct more in-depth research on specific aspects of public service training, such as the impact of different learning modalities on learning outcomes, the effectiveness of training interventions in addressing skill gaps among public servants, or the role of organizational culture in shaping learning behaviors within public service institutions.

### Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualized that Awareness Raising influences the Preferred Mode of Learning among program participants. The relationship is shown in Figure 1.

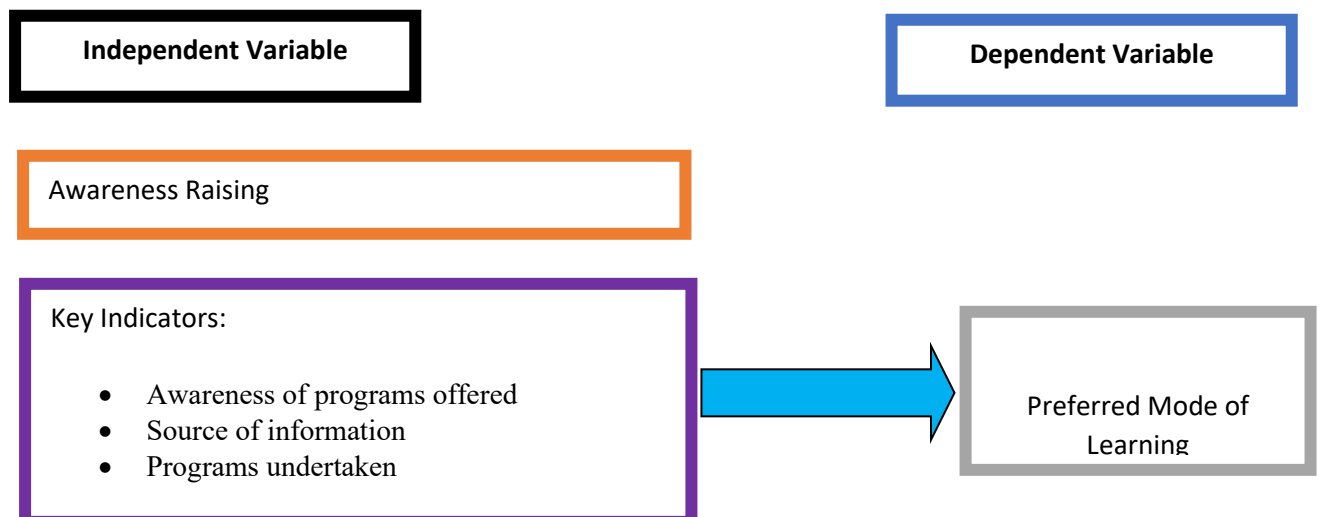


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Source: Authors, 2024)

### Empirical Review of the Literature

#### *Awareness Raising and Preferred Mode of Learning*

Empirical studies indicate that learners' choices of learning approaches are influenced by multiple factors, with awareness playing a central role in shaping these decisions. Gamage, Dehideniya, and Ekanayake (2021) found that students adjust their learning approaches based on contextual factors such as the learning environment, curriculum design, teaching style, and cultural background. While the study did not identify a consistent pattern in learning approaches, it highlights that learners' understanding and awareness of these factors significantly influence their engagement with different modes of learning.

Further, Arambewela and Hall (2011) established that personal values are key predictors of individual behavior and decision-making in educational settings. Their findings suggest that learners' awareness of their values and expectations influences how they perceive and select learning environments. This implies that awareness-raising can enhance learners' ability to

make informed choices about preferred learning modes, thereby improving satisfaction and overall learning experiences. Moreover, Peng and Chen (2019) found that specific learning modes positively influence deep learning approaches and outcomes, with students' engagement being partly dependent on their awareness and understanding of these modes. The integration of technology in education has expanded the range of available learning modes, particularly through e-learning and blended approaches (Timotheou et al., 2023). Studies show that while these modes enhance flexibility and access, their effectiveness depends on learners' awareness and ability to utilize them effectively (Kangethe, Simiyu, & Njoroge, 2016). Therefore, awareness raising is critical in bridging the gap between availability and actual utilization of digital learning platforms.

Furthermore, Sharma and Shree (2023) noted that learners increasingly perceive blended learning as more credible and flexible compared to traditional classroom approaches. However, factors such as inadequate sensitization, limited publicity, and a lack of clarity about learning modes can hinder adoption. Muchanji (2017) also observed that insufficient awareness and technological skills can lead to reduced participation and increased feelings of isolation in online learning environments. These findings collectively emphasize that awareness raising is a critical determinant in influencing learners' preferences for different modes of learning. However, there is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on how awareness raising influences preferred modes of learning in public sector training institutions such as the Kenya School of Government, thereby justifying the need for the current study.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *The Systems Theory*

The primary founder of the Systems Theory was an Austrian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1940s and 1950s. Ludwig viewed an organization as a system comprising of interrelated and interdependent parts which work together for a common goal. The Systems Theory is an interdisciplinary framework that studies the interconnected, interdependent relationships within complex systems. These parts include organizational structures, management, Human competences, Nature of Program Participants, policies, Standard Operating Procedures and the external environment such as technological advancement among other aspects. It shifts focus from analyzing isolated parts to understanding how those parts interact within a whole. According to the Systems Theory, a change in one part of the system affects all other parts. In the subject of Awareness Raising, indicators such as Programs being offered; source of information about programs been offered; programs undertaken by participants; management practices such as flexible work policies, staff workload allocation, and employee Competencies influence the overall Preferred Mode of Learning by program participants.

In public institutions, Systems Theory emphasizes that promoting Awareness Raising is not an isolated activity but a holistic process involving coordination between internal and external factors such as global technological advancement and changes, management, employees, organizational policies; systems and procedures. Top Management must ensure that all components of organization function in harmony to support program participants to be aware and make the right choices on the Preferred Mode of Learning. It concurs with the sentiment that Participants Preferred Mode of learning is not an isolated activity and it is determined by several factors.

### *Research Gap*

The studies reviewed revealed that the learners preferred mode of learning is influenced by factors such as individual learner's orientation and institutional capacity. Furthermore, most scholarly work undertaken focused on mode of learning at institutions of higher learning and tertiary education, while there exist institutions such as Kenya School of Government mandated constitutionally to train the public service, hence build their capacity to enhance their skills and competences. Therefore, a gap exists in literature on the influence of Awareness Raising on selection of the Preferred Mode of Learning in the Public Service in Kenya. Consequently, this study sought to address this gap.

### *Scope of the Study*

The study was carried out at Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus in Embu County. KSG is ISO 9001:2015 certified and its mandate is to offer Training, Research, Consultancy Services and Advisory Services to empower the public service in Kenya. Beyond the development of skills and competencies in the corresponding courses and areas of specialization, the institution aims to facilitate the acquisition of wider and deeper knowledge about social and economic issues of national, regional, and global concern.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted a cross-sectional design and targeted course participants who had attended training at KSG, Embu Campus between the year 2022 and March 2024. The program participants were selected by purposive sampling method. This comprises the intentional, purposeful selection of people who are able to provide detailed, in-depth information on the subject under study. The study used an online questionnaire for data collection. A total of forty (40) respondents were identified and contacted. The data collected was analyzed using a spreadsheet namely Microsoft Excel. The results were presented in form of charts and graphs.

### **Study Findings**

#### *Response Rate*

The study targeted 40 respondents, but only 37 were able to provide the needed responses, giving a response rate of 93%. The response rate of 93% was deemed sufficient for analysis and reporting in the study.

#### *Descriptive Analysis of Awareness Raising and Preferred Mode of Learning*

The researcher examined the influence of Awareness Raising on the Preferred Mode of Learning. The indicators of Awareness Raising investigated were awareness of programs offered, source of information from where participants got to know the programs offered by KSG and programs they had undertaken.

### **Awareness of Programs Offered**

The study sought to establish whether the participants were aware of the various programs offered by Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus, since this would initiate their interest to maybe pursue the programs and affect their choice of mode of learning. The results are shown in Figure 2. The majority of the respondents, 94.6%, were aware of Senior Management Course (SMC), while 89.2% of the respondents were aware of Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP). 78.4% of the respondents were aware of

Supervisory Management Skills, 35.1% were aware of Public Finance Management Program, 32.4% were aware of Public Relations and Customer Care Course, 27% were aware of Secretarial Management Course while 2.7% of the respondents were aware of Performance Management Course and Diploma in Social Work respectively.

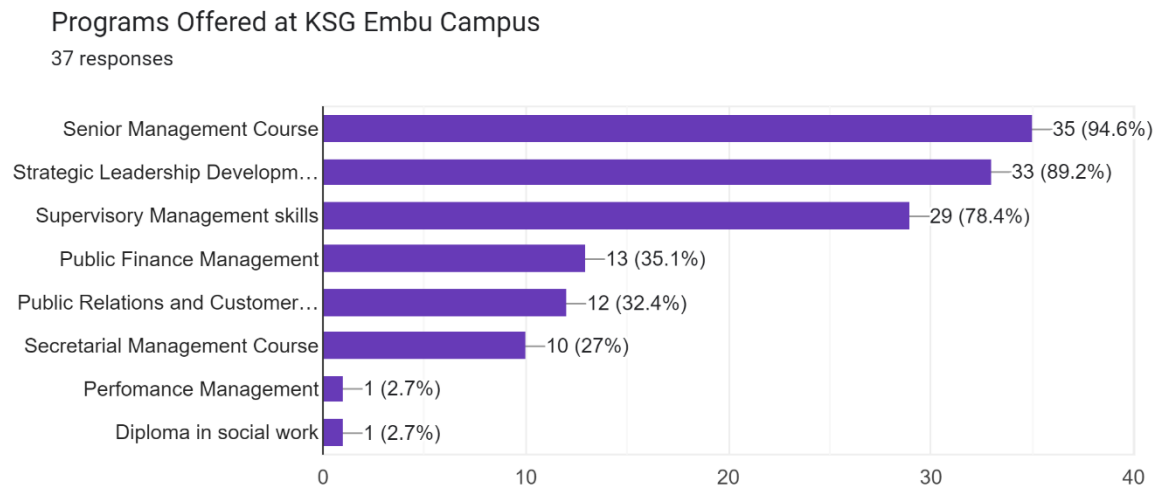


Figure 2: Awareness of Programs offered at KSG Embu Campus

*Participants' Source of Information on the Programs Offered*

The study sought to establish the source of information from where the participants got to know about the programs offered by Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus, since this would initiate their interest to maybe pursue the programs and affect their choice of mode of learning. The results are shown in Figure 3. Most participants knew about the programs offered through referrals (35%), those participants who learnt through social media and internet were at 25% while those participants who learnt about the KSG programs through social media and internet or via referrals stood at 15%.

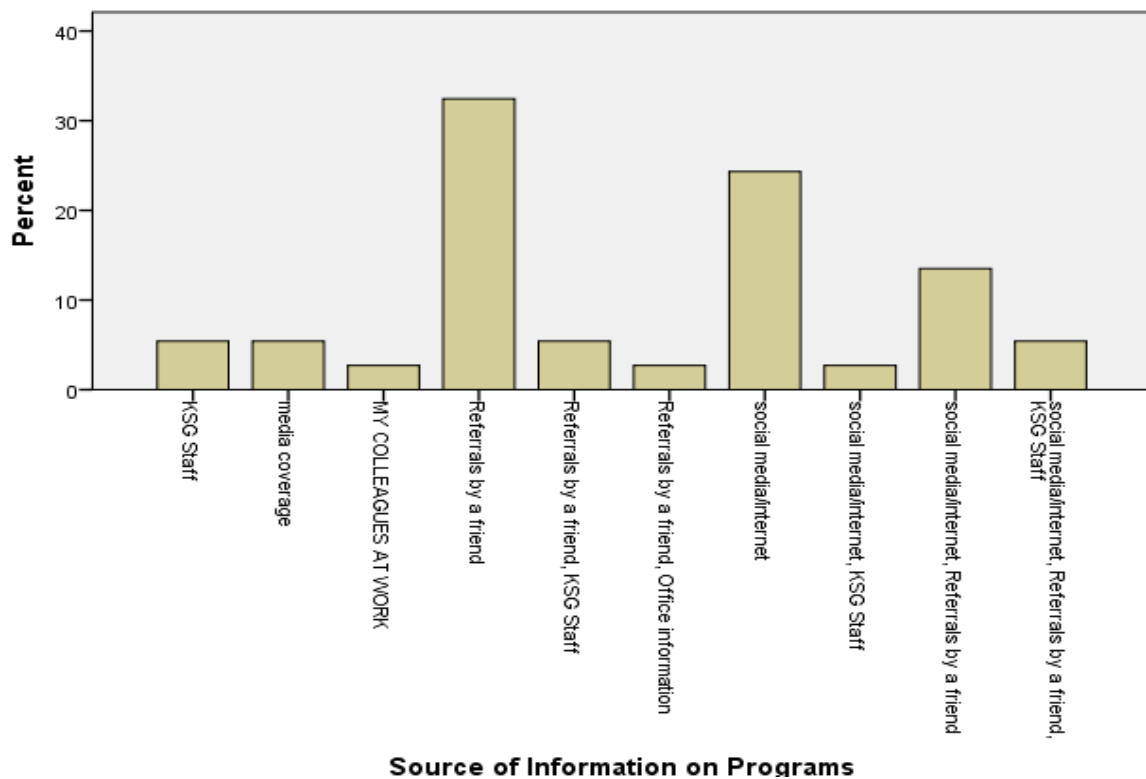


Figure 3: Participants Source of Information on the Programs Offered

*Programs Undertaken by the Participants*

The study sought to establish the programs offered by Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus which had been undertaken by the respondents. The results are shown in Figure 4. Majority of the respondents (94.6%) had undertaken Senior Management Course, 24.3% had undertaken SLDP, 8.1% had undertaken Supervisory Management Skills, while Performance Management and Diploma in Social Work each had been undertaken by 2.7% of the respondents respectively. No respondent had undertaken Public Finance Management course.

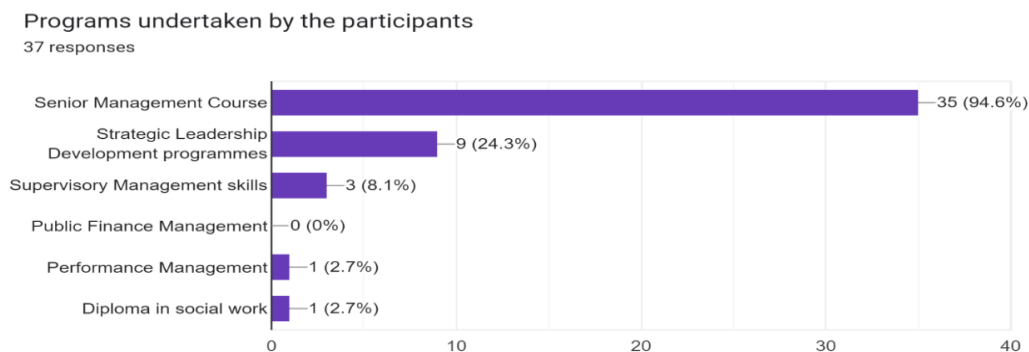


Figure 4: The Programs Undertaken by Participants

*The Preferred Mode of Learning*

The study sought to establish the Preferred Mode of Learning at Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus. The results are shown in Figure 5. Majority of the respondents (55%), preferred the face to face mode of learning, while 25% of the respondents preferred online mode of learning, 8% of the respondents preferred blended mode of learning while 6% of the respondents preferred a combination of online and blended mode of learning.

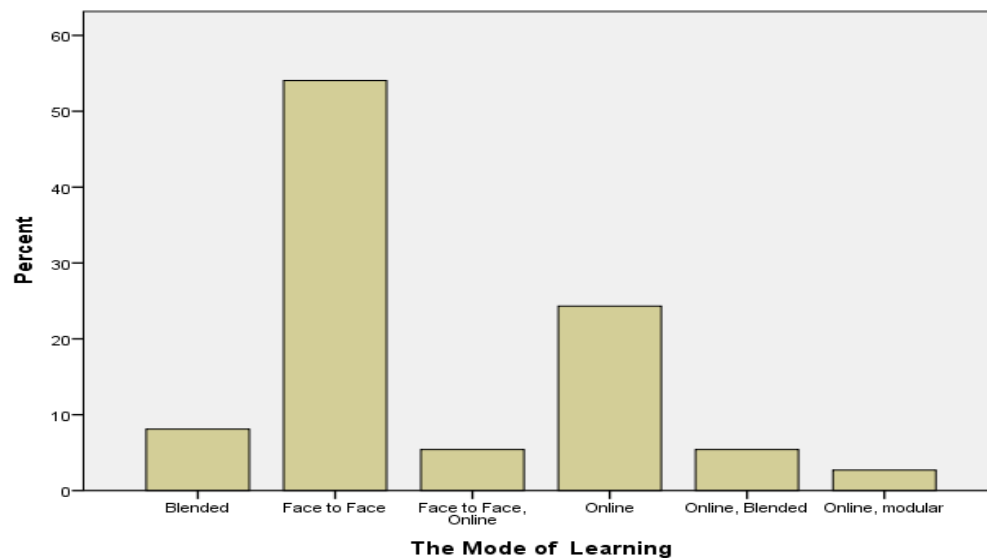


Figure 5: Preferred Mode of learning

**Discussion of the Study Findings**

The study sought to establish the connection between Awareness Raising and Preferred Mode of Learning for program participants at KSG Embu Campus. The indicators of Awareness Raising investigated were awareness of programs offered, source of information from where participants got to know about the programs offered by KSG and programs they had undertaken. The majority of the respondents, 94.6%, were aware of Senior Management Course (SMC), while 89.2% of the respondents were aware of Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP). 78.4% of the respondents were aware of Supervisory Management Skills, 35.1% were aware of Public Finance Management Program, 32.4% were aware of Public Relations and Customer Care Course, 27% were aware of Secretarial Management Course while 2.7% of the respondents were aware of Performance Management Course and Diploma in Social Work respectively. The most popular program on offer at KSG, Embu Campus was established to be Senior Management Course followed by Strategic Leadership Development Program.

In terms of programs undertaken by participants, Majority of the respondents (94.6%) had undertaken Senior Management Course, 24.3% had undertaken SLDP, 8.1% had undertaken Supervisory Management Skills, while Performance Management and Diploma in Social Work each had been undertaken by 2.7% of the respondents respectively. No respondent had undertaken Public Finance Management course. Senior Management Course was established to be the most popular course undertaken by participants. The study established that awareness raising on programs offered at KSG Embu Campus, would significantly affect the uptake of the courses. Some courses could be having low uptake due to low level of

awareness raising about the programs on offer and their relevance to the career progression of the public servants.

As pertains sources of information about the programs on offer at KSG Embu Campus, majority of participants knew about the programs offered through referrals (35%), those participants who learnt through social media and internet were at 25% while those participants who learnt about the KSG programs through social media and internet or via referrals stood at 15%. Therefore, publicity of KSG programs on offer via referrals, social media and internet was effective and reaching out to majority of clients. More effort could be geared towards publicity of KSG programs via social media and internet. Equally important is the way the KSG programs are offered, which is attracting referrals thus pointing to good customer experience. The Staff at KSG, Embu Campus should keep offering quality services to clients at all service points.

Furthermore, the study established that majority of the respondents (55%), preferred the face to face mode of learning, while 25% of the respondents preferred online mode of learning, 8% of the respondents preferred blended mode of learning while 6% of the respondents preferred a combination of online and blended mode of learning. Therefore, Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus should continue to offer quality services to clients when they attend their face to face trainings. Equally, more capacity could be built around the other modes of learning to make them attractive and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the nexus between Awareness Raising and Preferred Mode of Learning among course participants in KSG Embu Campus. The study established that majority of the respondents, 94.6%, were aware of Senior Management Course (SMC), while 89.2% of the respondents were aware of Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP) as a program on offer at KSG Embu Campus. The popularity of Senior Management Course resulted in the course been undertaken by majority of the respondents, and could consequently affect the selected mode of learning. The study established that Awareness Raising on programs offered at KSG Embu Campus, would significantly affect the uptake of the courses. Some courses could be having low uptake due to low level of awareness raising about the programs on offer and their relevance to the career progression of the public servants.

Further, majority of participants knew about the programs offered through referrals (35%), those participants who learnt through social media and internet were at 25% while those participants who learnt about the KSG programs through social media and internet or via referrals stood at 15%. Therefore, publicity of KSG programs on offer via referrals, social media and internet was effective and reaching out to majority of clients. More effort should be geared towards publicity of KSG programs via social media and internet. Equally important is the way the KSG programs are offered, which is attracting referrals thus pointing to good customer experience. The Staff at KSG Embu Campus should keep offering quality services to clients at all service points.

Moreover, the study established that majority of the respondents (55%), preferred the face to face mode of learning, while 25% of the respondents preferred online mode of learning, 8% of the respondents preferred blended mode of learning while 6% of the respondents preferred a combination of online and blended mode of learning. Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus should continue to offer quality services to clients when they attend their face to face trainings. Equally, more capacity could be built around the other modes of learning to make them attractive and ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

The study established that the indicators of Awareness Raising had varied influence on the Preferred Mode of Learning for participants at KSG Embu Campus. Senior Management Course was the most popular course. The popularity of Senior Management Course resulted in the course been undertaken by majority of the respondents, and could consequently affect the selected mode of learning. The study established that awareness raising on programs offered at KSG Embu Campus, would significantly affect the uptake of the courses. Some courses could be having low uptake due to low level of awareness raising about the programs on offer. Furthermore, publicity of KSG programs on offer via referrals, social media and internet was effective and reaching out to majority of clients. More effort should be geared towards publicity of KSG programs via social media and internet. Equally important is the way the KSG programs are offered, which is attracting referrals thus pointing to good customer experience. The Staff at KSG Embu Campus should keep offering quality services to clients at all service points. Face to face mode of learning was established to be the most preferred mode of learning at KSG Embu Campus. The authors make a theoretical contribution by establishing existence of a significant relationship between awareness of programs on offer and programs undertaken and; selection of mode of learning. Therefore, more effort should be geared towards publicity of KSG programs via social media and internet and; referrals to spur uptake of the programs. Further, delivery of face to face mode of learning should be enhanced and staff at KSG Embu Campus should continue to offer quality services to clients when they attend their face to face trainings at all service points.

### **Recommendations**

The study established that uptake of KSG Courses could be significantly influenced by awareness of programs on offer, and thus affect selection of mode of learning at KSG Embu Campus. Therefore, the study makes the following recommendations; there is need for the National and County Governments, Development Partners and the Private Sector to work closely with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) such as Kenya School of Government to realize the following recommendations;

- (a) Kenya School of Government to continuously develop its capacity in online publicity of the courses on offer to promote uptake among public servants. This would build capacity of the participants either through upskilling or reskilling hence be able to offer quality services to the public.
- (b) Kenya School of Government to continuously develop its capacity on diverse modes of learning to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities in the public service.

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