

**Influence of Performance Management Systems on Employee engagement  
in Private Universities: A Case Study of Strathmore University, in Kenya.**

65.5%

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## **ABSTRACT**

One of the most significant human resource practices in the world today is performance management. This is because, in order to improve employee performance, organizations must understand that their workers need a clear understanding of what is expected of them both in the short and long term. Regular performance evaluations are therefore considered essential, as they may involve asking workers to prioritize their tasks over activities that won't actually improve their output. The study found that PMS was a significant determinant of employee engagement at Strathmore University. The opportunities for professional development were seen to build the skills of employees and make them feel part of the institution, though at unequal levels. Feedback was constructive and timely, helping in aligning individual efforts towards organizational goals; what the respondents valued most was consistent and actionable feedback. Of these, goal-setting practices exerted the greatest influence because it was found that clearly set and aligned participatory goal-setting enhanced motivation and commitment. The findings underlined the integration of these facets of PMS to provide a supportive and involving work environment that drives organizational success.

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## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Performance management systems (PMS); is an integrated and comprehensive strategy that helps businesses achieve long-term success by enhancing team and individual performance.

Performance management (PM); The process of performance management is continuous and entails the methodical assessment and enhancement of a staff member's work performance in order to bring it into compliance with the aims and objectives of the company.

Employee Engagement (EE)

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and belief in my abilities have been a constant source of strength and motivation.

To the staff of Strathmore, whose resilience, creativity, and determination in the face of challenges inspired this study and their involvement made it easier.

It is also dedicated to all those that create opportunity and make a difference in Universities worldwide with great power of persistence and innovation, and desire to have a motivated workforce.

# 1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

Organizations all throughout the world are realizing more and more in the modern, worldwide economy how crucial employee engagement is to their success. Improved productivity, lower attrition, and more creativity have all been associated with employee engagement, which is defined as workers' emotional and psychological dedication to their company. Performance management systems (PMS) have therefore become well-known as crucial instruments for raising employee engagement via matching individual performance with corporate objectives. Over the past few decades, performance management system deployment changed dramatically on a global scale. Traditional yearly performance reviews are being replaced by more dynamic, ongoing feedback mechanisms in organizations. This change was a result of the requirement for agility in a business environment that is changing quickly. Keeping high levels of employee engagement requires constant development and real-time feedback. Redesigning performance management was a key concern for 79% of worldwide executives, according to a Deloitte report from 2017. This was because performance management had a direct influence on employee engagement, which in turn affects organizational performance. The focus on employee engagement and performance management was also noticeable at the national level in Kenya, where businesses are progressively using innovative HR strategies to draw and keep top personnel. The labor market in Kenya witnessed heightened competition as local and global enterprises contend for the services of qualified individuals. Therefore, it was more important than ever to have efficient performance management solutions that can raise employee engagement. Employee engagement and satisfaction are more common in Kenyan firms that have adopted robust performance management methods, according to research by Gachunga and Waiganjo (2015).

Employee engagement has become more recognized as an essential component of corporate success and effectiveness, affecting a variety of performance and workplace culture metrics. Employee engagement, defined as how attached they are to their work and the business, has a major influence on productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organizational success (Kahn, 1990; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Employees that are engaged have a genuine interest in their jobs, displaying anticipation and reverence, which frequently leads to increased

performance and better organizational outcomes (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008). Employee involvement is widely recognized across the globe. According to research, firms with high levels of employee engagement have lower attrition, improved productivity, and higher customer satisfaction. Bakker and Demerouti (2008), for instance, contend that engaged workers are more likely to engage in corporate responsibility activities that benefit the organization's atmosphere and performance. This linked between engagement and performance stresses the need of defining effective engagement measures to realize the full potential of the workforce.

In Kenya, where the business landscape is continually changing, increasing employee engagement is crucial for organizational competitiveness. As Kenyan firms face the difficulties of globalization and advances in technology, there was a rising realization of the need to invest in employees (Kiplagat & Mburu, 2017). Engaged employees in Kenyan organizations contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction and are more likely to remain with their employers, which helped address the issues of high employee turnover prevalent in the region. Employee engagement is crucial for academic institutions like Strathmore University, as it contributes to improved student satisfaction, academic outcomes, and a stronger institutional reputation. Engaged faculty and staff contributed to a vibrant learning environment and support the institution's mission of excellence. Effective performance management systems, including clear goal setting, regular feedback, and recognition, are essential for maintaining high engagement levels. Understanding employee engagement was essential for designing strategies that enhance employee engagement and overall organizational performance. Employee engagement was critical to corporate success, since it influences performance indicators and fosters a healthy workplace culture. Strathmore University utilized effective human resource management methods for accomplishing goals and promote a supportive workplace.

### **Background of the Study**

This research was placed in the backdrop of Strathmore University, a major higher education institution in Nairobi, Kenya. Strathmore University, famous for its dedication to academic quality, innovation, and ethical leadership, making it one of the region's most respected institutions. The university's success is inextricably linked to the involvement and happiness

of its academic and administrative personnel, who are essential to providing high-quality teaching and research (Kang, H. & Buswell, J. 2015).

Strathmore University;

Strathmore University, founded in 1961, is now a top university in Kenya, providing undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional degrees. The institution is well-known for placing a high value on ethical standards, social responsibility, and students' overall growth. Strathmore, as a private institution, works in a competitive higher education landscape, requiring it to constantly attract and retain outstanding personnel in order to preserve its reputation and fulfill its academic goal,(Meyer & Xin ,2018) a paper which talked about how universities moreso those in developing countries can support high quality research by attracting and retaining top talent which directly relates to SU's need to compete in the global academic landscape, while putting in place talent management in maintaining academic excellence.

Human Resources at Strathmore:The university's human resource management methods were critical to meeting its strategic objectives. Strathmore created a performance management system (PMS) and has been implemented as of 2010 and that is intended to connect its workers' individual contributions with the university's overall goals. This approach incorporates essential components such as goal planning, constant feedback, performance evaluations, and professional growth opportunities. The efficacy of this PMS is critical to keeping the university's workers engaged, motivated, and devoted to their jobs as well as make them happy

Performance Management and Employee Engagement:

Strathmore University's performance management system aimed to promote continual development and professional progress, in addition to evaluating staff performance. Engagement among workers, defined as an employee's emotional and psychological commitment to their job and the business, is a crucial result that the PMS seeks to impact. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute positively to the university's mission, perform better, and stay loyal to the institution. This same study has outlined the challenges and opportunities in regard to employee engagement and Strathmore university because like

all systems there could be loopholes as well as a chance to make this better and later the study will show how.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

In the context of a growing focus on performance management systems (PMS) in higher education, there was still a considerable vacuum in employee engagement, notably at Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya. Performance management systems were designed to align individual performance with corporate objectives, provide positive criticism, and facilitate employee development—all of which are essential for sustaining high levels of engagement and productivity (Aguinis, 2019).

Despite the university's adoption of a complete PMS, there were ongoing challenges in meeting the necessary levels of staff motivation, engagement, and satisfaction. A number of variables, like as goal congruence, feedback quality, affect how well PMS increases employee engagement (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Initial findings at Strathmore University raise questions regarding the effectiveness and openness of feedback systems in addition to misalignments between individual performance goals and the university's strategic objectives (Mone & London, 2018).

Furthermore, there were concerns regarding whether workers believe the existing performance review process to be just and comparable which could have a detrimental effect on their general level of engagement and job satisfaction (Hirschfeld, 2000). The problem Strathmore University has made sure that its performance management procedures improve employee engagement while simultaneously accomplishing organizational goals. The university runs the risk of decreased productivity, higher turnover, and worse organizational effectiveness if these practices are not well understood in terms of their influence on engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Engagement was critical for ensuring that personnel are completely involved in their positions and contribute productively to the university's purpose and objectives.

Note that as much as there was PMS employee engagement was a problem due to the effectiveness of the professional development opportunities as they were not designed to

meet all the staff needs yet Aguinis (2019), emphasized that professional development is crucial for maintaining high levels of engagement but often fell short in practice. Secondly employee engagement was a problem due to the misalignments of the personal goals and the university's strategic objectives which led to confusion amongst workers and reduced engagement among workers.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

#### **General research objective.**

To determine the influence of Strathmore University's performance management system in increasing employee engagement.

#### **Specific research objectives**

To examine the effect of professional development opportunities on employee engagement at Strathmore University.

To examine the influence of feedback mechanisms on employee engagement at Strathmore University.

To investigate the role of goal-setting practices on employee engagement at Strathmore University.

### **1.4 Research questions**

How do professional development opportunities at Strathmore University influence employee engagement among academic and non-academic staff?

What is the influence of feedback mechanisms within the performance management system on employee engagement at Strathmore University?

How do goal-setting practices within the performance management system align individual and organizational objectives, and how does this alignment affect employee engagement at Strathmore University?

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

The findings of this study advanced understanding of related ideas and models, which was advantageous in the explained below;

### **1.5.1 To Strathmore University**

Strathmore University enhanced its performance management system by reviewing its efficacy and identifying areas for development and optimization. This resulted in better goal alignment, feedback systems, and assessment procedures, eventually increased employee engagement and corporate success. Understanding how performance management techniques affected employee engagement enabled the institution to develop focused measures that promote better motivation, contentment, and commitment among its employees. This led to increased productivity and retention rates. The study's findings assisted in guaranteeing that individual and departmental performance targets are tightly connected with the university's strategic objectives. This alignment was critical to fulfilling the institution's objective and preserving its competitive advantage in the higher education industry. The study yielded insightful data about the ways in which engagement is impacted by chances for professional development. This resulted in the creation of training and career development programs that are more successful in fostering the personal and professional development of staff members

### **1.5.2 To Human Resource Management**

The results provided guidance to HR specialists on how to develop and execute performance management programs that improve worker satisfaction or relate it to best practices. This resulted in enhanced HR plans and guidelines that more effectively foster worker motivation and growth. HR professionals may assess and enhance their own performance management systems by using the study's findings as a guide. Comprehending the ways in which Strathmore University's activities influence engagement helped other companies build comparable systems. The study emphasized how crucial equitable treatment, open communication, and constructive criticism are to performance management. HR managers made better use of employee happiness and retention by addressing typical difficulties with this information.

### **1.5.3 To other universities**

The paper aided as an example of a case study of how performance management systems operate in an institution of higher learning. This model can be used by other academic institutions to evaluate and contrast their own procedures, spot weaknesses, and make necessary adjustments thus used for comparison. Universities may sustain high standards in research and education, draw top talent, and strengthen their reputation as employers of choice by comprehending and enhancing performance management procedures thus a good reputation.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

This study examined Strathmore University's performance management system in Nairobi, Kenya, with an emphasis on how it influences staff engagement inside the institution. It focused on the university's current policies and systems, such as goal alignment, feedback procedures, performance evaluations, and professional development opportunities. The study aimed to better understand how these factors affect faculty and administrative personnel, namely their perceptions and experiences with engagement and work satisfaction. By examining these precise components, the study presented a full picture of the performance management system's success in cultivating a motivated and dedicated staff. Thus, Data for this study was gathered from a varied group of Strathmore University lectures to ensure a thorough examination of the performance management system's impact on employee engagement. This included faculty members who are directly affected by performance evaluations, administrative staff who interact with the system on a daily basis, human resource professionals who are in charge of implementing and managing the system, and university leaders who make strategic decisions. By gathering ideas from these diverse viewpoints, the project created a more nuanced understanding of how performance management techniques influence participation at various levels and functions within the university.

## **2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Interest in how performance management systems coupled with the phenomenon of employee engagement has intensified in the recent decade, more so from the perspective of organizational success and welfare of employees hence chapter two highlights the theoretical framework, empirical review, conceptual framework as well as the research gaps of this Study

### **2.2 Theoretical review**

The performance management system and employee engagement link was approached from a host of theoretical dimensions, which gave better insights into the dynamics underlying this relationship. Some of the main ideas clarifying this link include Goal-Setting Theory and Social Exchange Theory. Together, they give information about how performance management procedures might increase worker employee engagement, which is also directly linked to job satisfaction.

#### **2.2.1 Social exchange theory**

Peter Blau credited with the creation of the Social Exchange Theory in 1964. In essence, it supplied a skeletal frame under which the relationship dynamics between people and their employers can be better understood. The theory portrayed behavioral action as a result of an exchange process where individuals seek to maximize rewards while minimizing their costs. In the light of performance management systems within Strathmore University, Social Exchange Theory explained how the fairness, support, and recognition in the PMS elicited staff engagement. At the very heart of Social Exchange Theory is the principle of reciprocity.

Therefore, if employees perceived that their organization is treating them well hence, they are most likely to reciprocate this in attitudes and actions. It translated into higher involvement and commitment from them (Blau, 1964). More importantly, this needed to be further reinforced in performance management, where fair evaluation, constructive feedback, and recognition from employees are to be expected. Satisfied expectations would make staff

members feel valued, developing their emotional commitment to and attachment to the organization.

Perceived organizational support is one of the elements of social exchange theory in PMS. This was well summed up as the degree to which employees feel that the organization values their input and is concerned about their well-being. In a place like Strathmore University, it was also expected that a well-functioning performance management system increased perceived support and employee engagement. For instance, faculty and staff members who received regular constructive feedback, illustrated their progress and hailing their accomplishments, would have a sense of support and involvement. Conversely, if employees get the sense that the performance management system is unduly critical, partial, or overlooks their contribution, they will feel undervalued, which would therefore result in disengagement and drop in motivation (Wayne et al., 1997). Consequently, Strathmore University ensured that its PMS is seen as fair and supportive, such that it equipped employees with resources and extends recognition to them to impact their success. The Social Exchange Theory also required that organizational procedures be kept just and fair. Pertaining to performance management, it meant that the employees must view the appraisal and reward schemes to be carried out fairly, in a transparent way, consistently, and justly. Therefore, when employees feel a fair assessment has been put in place and rewards based on it, trust in the system will be significantly maintained, hence keeping them engaged in their work (Cropanzano & Rupp, 2008). At Strathmore University, fair performance evaluation was of the essence if the high performance of employees is to be kept intact. This meant that conducting performance criteria in a free and clear manner, whereby no bias is attributed from the staff appraisal, and each employee shall have an equal chance of attaining a high scoring with attendant rewards. By nurturing this culture of fairness and openness, the university will be able to better the social exchange relationship with employees, hence heightening trust, loyalty, and engagement.

Trust forms another important aspect of the Social Exchange Theory influencing employee engagement. A performance management system that employees feel was trustworthy is the one that meets the psychological contract between the organization and its employees. The concept of a psychological contract, according to Rousseau in 1995, referred to the unwritten

expectations and obligations between employees and their respective organization. In return, when Strathmore University played its part in this contract by way of fair appraisal, opportunities to develop, and rewards, the employees were likely to respond with trust and engagement (Robinson, 1996).

Violations of this psychological contract, however things like broken promotion promises or inconsistent application of performance standards makes the employee feel betrayed and then disengage. Hence, building trust through consistent and fair performance management practices was called for in fostering employee engagement at Strathmore University. Applying this theory to Strathmore University's performance management system, in such a way that University must prioritize establishing a supportive, fair, and transparent culture. By ensuring that the PMS is regarded as fair and that employees feel valued and honored for their successes, the institution can develop the social exchange a connection, culminating with greater engagement. These include prevalent communication and feedback, consideration of all employees, and keeping the implicit and explicit pledges made to staff members. When individuals understood that their organization is concerned about their success and well-being, they are more likely to respond to greater commitment, loyalty, and engagement, adding to the university's overall success.

### **2.2.2 Goal setting theory**

Goal-Setting Theory in Relation to Performance Management Systems and Employee Engagement:

The Goal-Setting Theory, launched by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham back in 1990 in favor of more specific and broader ways, lay at the crux of understanding how PMS creates the level of engagement through employees. Specific and challenging goals bring about a higher level of performance and motivation compared to vague or easy goals. This theory is appropriate in the setting of Strathmore University since it brought out the issue of clear and measurable objectives in the PMS, which was set by persons considering their aspirations and general goals of the institution. When employees at Strathmore University were provided with well-defined goals that are challenging yet attainable, they were more likely to experience a sense of purpose and direction in their work. This clarity helped in reducing ambiguity, which can otherwise lead to disengagement and dissatisfaction (Locke & Latham,

2002). Moreover, the theory emphasized the need for goal commitment, which can be enhanced through participative goal-setting processes.

When employees are involved in setting their own performance targets, they are more likely to be committed to achieving them, which in turn boosts their engagement levels (Latham, 2004). Employees who establish their own performance objectives are more likely to be dedicated to meeting them, which increases their engagement (Latham, 2004). To be effective, Strathmore University's performance management system included goal-setting processes that not only connect individual performance with university objectives, but also drove personnel to surpass expectations. This involved giving regular feedback on progress toward goals, which was an important aspect of the idea. Feedback allowed employees to alter their efforts and stay on target, which increased their engagement (Locke & Latham, 2013). In conclusion, Goal-Setting Theory provided a helpful structure for analyzing how Strathmore University's performance management system affected employee engagement.

Concentration on clear, demanding goals and guaranteeing active employee engagement in the goal-setting process, the college may build a more motivated and engaged workforce, which ultimately adds to the institution's overall success.

### **2.3 Empirical review**

Performance Management Systems (PMS's) were very important tools through which an organization can develop its human capital to increase employee performance and engagement and help employees in individual goals correlate with organizational objectives. One such emerging area of interest is the role of PMS in increasing employee engagement, a fundamental aspect of organizational behavior that helps keep employees motivated, satisfied in their jobs, and, therefore, more productive. Therefore, an empirical review was conducted for the numerous pieces of literature that are dwelling on how some of the major components of PMS documentation, such as feedback mechanisms, goal setting, and recognition, among a string of others, do affect employee engagement in the long. This review compiled studies from various sectors and contexts, among them the higher education context, to establish

how performance management practices can be optimized in engaging the worker. The review was specialized to Strathmore University.

### Global Insights into PMS and Employee Engagement

The influence of PMS on employee engagement has been extensively researched across an assortment of corporate situations. Grukman and Saks (2011) examined performance management strategies and their impact on employee engagement. They observed that systems that include continual input, goal-setting, and developmental assistance are associated with better employee engagement. Their findings showed that when workers regard their PMS as helpful and connected with their professional aspirations, their engagement levels rise. This research implies that Strathmore University benefited from using comparable approaches to improve satisfaction with work. In a more recent study, Pulakos et al. (2019) investigated the efficacy of continuous performance management vs annual assessments. Their findings showed that continual feedback

### Performance Management in Higher Education: A Sectoral Review.

In higher education, PMS was examined largely in terms of faculty performance and work satisfaction. Shuck et al. (2014) found that higher education institutions that use performance management strategies centered on clear goals, regular feedback, and acknowledgment have greater levels of faculty engagement. Faculty members are more engaged when they feel encouraged and acknowledged for their contributions, which has an immediate effect on teaching effectiveness and outcomes for students. Strathmore University believed that a well-designed PMS might contribute to increased academic achievement and institutional reputation. Bakker and Bal (2010) investigated the link between job resources, such as performance management procedures, and work engagement among educators. They concluded that educators who receive sufficient resources, like performance reviews and opportunities for professional development, are more engaged in their duties. This emphasizes the need of a supporting PMS at Strathmore University, where instructors combined teaching, research, and administrative duties.

### PMS and Employee Engagement in Higher Education in Kenya

Kipkebut (2010) performed an in-depth investigation on organizational commitment and job fulfillment in Kenyan universities. According to the study, transparent and supportive performance management systems had a considerable impact on employee engagement. Employees are more dedicated and engaged if they believe PMS was fair and connected with their professional goals. Strathmore University, which competed with both local and foreign universities, believed that making PMS viewed as fair and helpful is critical to maintaining top personnel.

Wambugu (2014) investigated performance management strategies in Kenyan public universities and their effect on employee performance. The study found that regular feedback and professional development opportunities were important drivers of engagement. Although Wambugu's research focused on public universities, the results are extremely relevant to Strathmore University as much of a private university that it is. In the same way, to further enhance employee engagement and its competitive edge, Strathmore could adopt similar practices, such as routine performance appraisals and the provision of growth opportunities. For example, Njeru and Kanali (2017) investigated the efficacy of PMS in promoting job satisfaction and engagement of the academic staff in private universities in Kenya. It was evident that in case academic staff were to set performance goals and objectives and also receive day-to-day feedback from both supervisors and subordinates about the chosen goals, then their engagement would increase to higher levels. This was true for the findings that have been made on the importance of involving faculty members: Through goal setting and frequent feedback, the university can engender in the faculty a feeling of coming on board with its new PMS drive, in order to instill a culture of perpetual improvement and commitment which improved engagement.

### **2.3.2 Factors that affect employee engagement**

Thus, there are very many factors affecting employee engagement that were career development, effective management, leadership, HR practices, organizational culture, and compensation. (Vanshwee, Chandani & Mehta, 2016) The findings suggested that employee engagement is influenced by various factors, including career development, leadership, and organizational culture and compensation and that EE is positively correlated with job characteristics, perceived organizational and supervisor support, recognition, and rewards

and that it can negatively be impacted by organizational politics. As per the study's findings, employees who worked in a political environment that displayed strong negative emotions which could in turn be responsible for hindering their growth along with learning & development. Organizations emphasized and put effort into improving the work environment, leadership style and, they must promote programs that would enhance job satisfaction. In the context of higher education institutions, Effective feedback mechanisms were important so as to maintain engagement, as they helped staff understand their performance and feel valued (Feldman & Bolino, 2000). Work-life balance was another critical factor in EE; faculty and staff who manage their professional and personal lives effectively were more likely to be engaged and satisfied (Kirkpatrick & Tuckett, 2017).

### **2.3.2 Profession development opportunities and employee engagement**

In the interest of the objectives professional development opportunities were very important as they fostered employee engagement at Strathmore University for instance when employees perceived that the institution is invested in their growth and skill development, they exhibited higher levels of engagement. Professional development enhanced individual capabilities and strengthened the organization by increasing productivity and retention rates. Studies indicated that well-structured training and development programs significantly impacted employee engagement that provided a sense of value and future career prospects. For instance, Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) found that professional development positively influenced employee engagement and performance across various sectors not forgetting, Henderson (2016) talked about the importance of continuous professional development in higher education, noted that faculty engagement improved when institutions offer opportunities for both career advancement and personal growth.

### **2.3.3 Constructive feedback and employee engagement**

Constructive feedback enabled employees to understand their strengths and areas for improvement by aligning their efforts with the university's goals. When feedback is timely, specific, and supportive, it fostered a sense of value and motivation among staff members. Kluger and DeNisi (1996) emphasized that feedback interventions are critical for sustained engagement, as they provided employees with clear guidance on how to improve their performance, London and Smither (1999) argue that a positive feedback environment can

empower employees, encouraged continuous development and increased engagement therefore Strathmore University ensured that feedback systems are transparent and effective led to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

#### **2.3.4 Goal setting and employee engagement**

Lastly, goal-setting methods play a significant part in boosting staff engagement at Strathmore University through linking individual aspirations with the institution's overall aims. Employees that participated in defining clear, attainable, and meaningful goals are more likely to be interested, inspired, and devoted to their jobs. Locke and Latham (2002) examined the goal-setting hypothesis, which stated that detailed and difficult goals led to improved performance and engagement, especially when employees received sufficient feedback and support. Also, Latham and Yukl (1975) showed that goal-setting techniques had an important impact on motivation and engagement, particularly when goals are clearly stated and matched with corporate objective an effective goal-setting culture might enhance staff fulfillment, productivity, and engagement, all of which leads to the institution's success.

In conclusion this empirical data indicated that when organizations encouraged professional development, people felt appreciated and driven, resulted in higher commitment and performance. Effective feedback methods increased engagement by offering clarity and creating a supportive atmosphere that promotes continuous development. Similarly, goal-setting procedures that linked individual and corporate objectives are critical for keeping employees focused, motivated, and feeling accomplished. Addressing these critical areas assisted Strathmore University in developing a more engaged and productive staff, consequently incorporated the institution's overall performance in the competitive higher education scene. The university improved its capacity to retain, and inspire both academic employees, assured long-term viability and quality.

#### **2.4 Summary of literature and research gaps**

The link between performance management systems (PMS) and employee engagement received a great deal of attention in academic and corporate studies throughout the world. Effective PMS practices, included constant feedback, goal-setting, and professional development opportunities, had repeatedly been found to improve employee engagement across several industries (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Pulakos et al., 2019). Studies in higher

education highlighted the significance of PMS in encouraging teacher engagement, with systems that stress openness, regular feedback, and acknowledgment contributing to better levels of commitment and performance (Shuck et al., 2014; Bakker & Bal, 2010). These methods not only serve to match individual and institutional goals, but they also promoted professional development, which improved overall organizational performance. In Kenya, research on PMS in higher education emphasized its critical role in improving work satisfaction and engagement. Kipkebut (2010) discovered that open and supportive project management approaches at Kenyan institutions considerably improve organizational commitment and staff morale. Wambugu (2014) underlined the value of frequent feedback and professional development at public institutions, stating that these factors are essential for sustaining high levels of engagement. Njeru and Kanali (2017) investigated the link at private institutions and concluded that goal setting and constant feedback constitute significant drivers of engagement. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that PMS is an important tool for increasing worker engagement in Kenyan universities, however with tactics that may be adapted to the unique circumstances of each institution.

Despite the current corpus of information, substantial discrepancies remain that need more exploration. First, most studies, like those by Kipkebut (2010) and Wambugu (2014), focused on state universities, leaving an empty spot in the research for private schools like Strathmore University. Private colleges face various demands, such as financial sustainability and competitive positioning, which may necessitate customized PMS tactics to effectively engage staff.

Second, the bulk of the studies were cross-sectional, and offered just a glimpse of the association between PMS and involvement at a specific moment in time. Longitudinal studies that evaluate changes in employee involvement over time as a result of PMS procedures would give more information about the practices' long-term viability.

Finally, there had been little study into the impact of PMS on non-academic workers at universities. While the contribution of faculty had been extensively documented, administrative and supported employees, who were essential to the operational success of higher education institutions, are sometimes overlooked. Addressing these gaps through targeted research would allow for a more complete understanding of how PMS can be

optimized to engage all employees in a university setting, ensured that academic staff are aligned with the institution's goals and motivated to contribute to its success.

## **2.5 Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework of this study examined the link between performance management systems and employee engagement at Strathmore University. This study was based on certain theoretical postulates, including goal-setting theory, expectation theory, social exchange theory, and the Job Demands-Resources Model. It clearly defined the factors involved and their predicted connections.

### **Independent Variable: Performance Management Systems (PMS).**

Strathmore University employed this approach and practice to measure, monitor, and enhance employee performance. In this regard, the following are the key characteristics of PMS:

Goal setting is the act of establishing clear objectives for employees by defining explicit and quantifiable goals.

Performance appraisals are periodic evaluations of an employee's performance against defined goals.

Training and Development: A Channel through which they get the opportunity for constant professional development.

Feedback Mechanisms: Ongoing constructive feedback bestowed upon the employee.

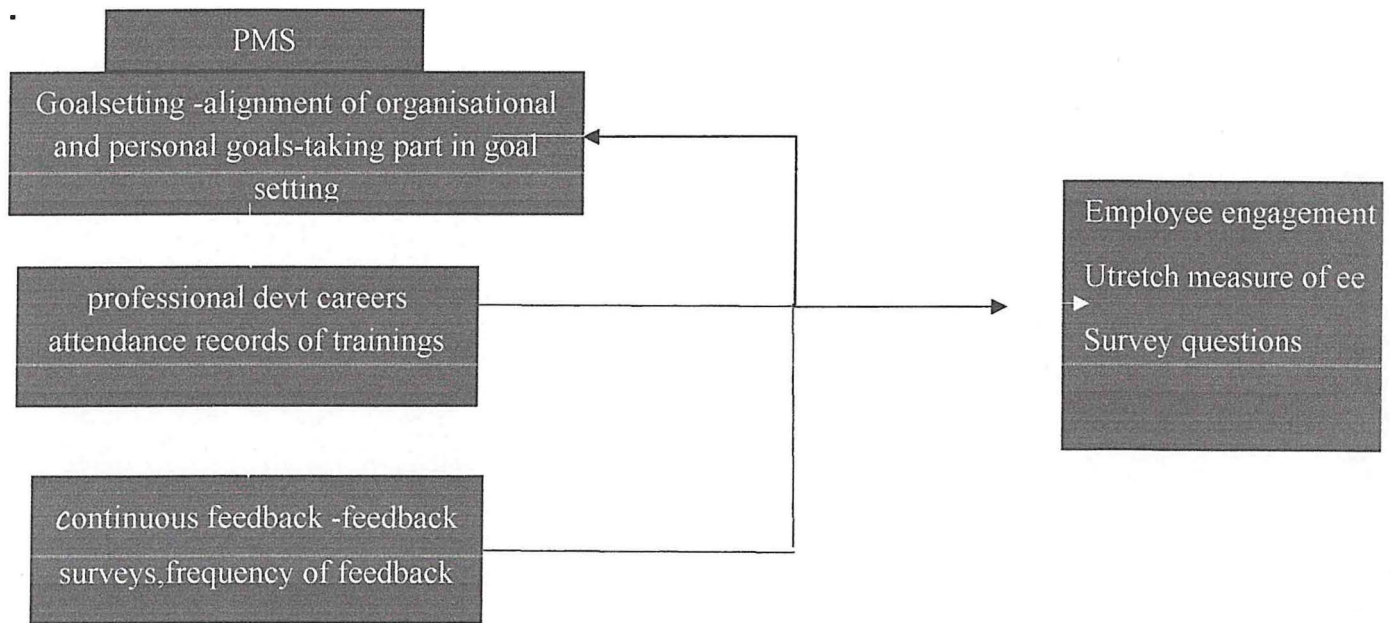
Recognition and Rewards: Acknowledgment and rewards for good performance.

### **Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement refers to the extent of commitment, motivation, and involvement that employees exhibit towards work and the organization. The dimensions of employee

engagement explored in this research are: Emotional Engagement: Employees' sense of attachment to their work.

Figure 1: Diagrammatical representation of the variables



### 2.5.1 Operationalization of variables

Table 1; OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

Variable	Indicators	Measures
Performance management	Goal Setting Training & Development Feedback Mechanisms	Surveys assessing goal clarity Records of appraisal schedules Training attendance records Feedback frequency surveys Surveys on recognition and rewards

<b>Employee engagement</b>	Vigor Dedication Absorption	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)
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## **3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This required a systematic approach to collect and analyze and interpret this data at the end of the study. To guarantee that the study accurately reflected the connection between employee engagement and the performance management system, the research methodology was comprehensive. The chapter also described the processes for data analysis, sampling, and acquiring that was employed to collect and assess pertinent data. The approach was customized to the specific situation of Strathmore University, considering its unique organizational culture and the unique challenges it has in monitoring worker engagement and performance.

### **3.2 Research design**

A mixed methods design was used and it allowed data from a large sample of participants at a given time which was done through online surveys in order to gather data on the perceptions from the different employees and the extent to which they were satisfactory thus the data to be collected was analyzed and determined the relationship between the variables.

This design was chosen to show the relationship between the variables by offering clear and prompt knowledge of how existing performance management addresses influence employee engagement through providing a brief picture of these dynamics due to its efficacy and effectiveness, this approach was perfect for rapidly collecting large amounts of data, which enabled researchers to see patterns and connections without needing the lengthy time frames associated with longitudinal studies. Because of this, the design not only made it easier to analyze the current situation thoroughly, but it also established a solid basis for useful insights and directing future study. Its capacity to provide a whole picture of the current situation guarantees that the conclusions are impact and appropriate, offering important data to support the advancement of performance management techniques and increase employee engagement.

### 3.3 Population

Population refers to a substantial collection of subjects, elements or elements and occurrences under the study for this context.

The study was carried out at Strathmore University among academic staff in different faculties that is;

Strathmore law school, Strathmore business school, school of humanities and social sciences, all businesses and arms of SU following the people and culture policy, school of mathematics, engineering and the Strathmore institute,

Table 2: POPULATION

	schools	number
1	Strathmore institute	49
2	SCES	94
3	SIMS	74
4	SHSS	84
5	STH	18
6	SLS	74
7	SBS	227
	Total	704

As per date Strathmore had about 704 academic employees thus taking this as the target population.

### 3.4 Sampling procedure

Sampling is the process of choosing a subset or group of a population to represent a complete population (Saunders et al,2019) A simple random approach was used to provide a representative and robust examination of the link between Strathmore University's employee engagement and performance management systems. To ensure that all parts of the university workforce are fairly represented, a random sample was chosen . Using the relevant formulae to computed the required number of participants, the sample size was determined to assure statistical significance and reliability. This methodology guaranteed that a variety of viewpoints from within the institution are recorded in addition to improving the findings' accuracy and generalizability. Given the total population of 704 academic employees, the sample size was 225.

Below using the Taro Yamane formular (1967) is used;

$$n=N/1+N(e)^2 \text{ where}$$

n is the sample size

N is the total population size

e is the margin of error ie 0.05

$$n=704/1+704(0.05)^2$$

n is 225

Table 3: SAMPLES

		TARGET POPLN	SAMPLE SIZE	PERCENTAGE
1	Academic staff	704	225	32%

This sample size is enough to provide reliable insights while being manageable in data collection.

### 3.5 Data collection

Here the data was collected from 225 participants in survey form through the provision of structured questionnaires that was distributed to the respondents focusing Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) with a likert measure of 7 the shorter version with 9 question with 0 as never and 6 as always. And use of survey questions to measure the dependent variable elements. The questionnaire had 5 sections, section one with demography, section two will entail questions relating to professional developments, section 3 with continuous feedback questions, section 4 with goal setting questions and ,section 5 with the UWES that pertains overall engagement of the employees.

### 3.6 Data analysis and presentation

The data analysis was done quantitatively and data was evaluated to define the sample's fundamental characteristics and offer an overview of response distribution. Measures like as means, medians, and standard deviations are used to provide a clear picture of the data.

It investigated the relationships between performance management systems and employee engagement correlation and regression analysis, was utilized to discover relevant predictors and evaluate the strength of these associations.

After critically analyzing the data, it was represented on charts and graphs and a table to see the trends, made conclusions easy and provide a clear verdict for the research study.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

In conducting this research, ethical considerations were paramount in bringing forward utmost integrity as well as welfare of the targeted participants therefore these principles shall be put forward;

Informed consent from all the participants was taken in the study that is there was full consent for the study's purpose, benefits as well as the procedures and they was a choice of withdrawal. All these participants received a detailed consent form outlining the study's objectives and their rights. They were given sufficient time to review this information and ask questions before consenting to participate in the study. Confidentiality and privacy, that is, the identities of the participants were kept confidential thus identifiable information was not be disclosed and data was stored securely following institutional guidelines.

Transparency and honesty; The research was conducted with transparency and honesty, ensuring accurate report findings and acknowledgment of any conflicts of interests in the long run, the final findings were reported truthfully.

Lastly, the research strictly adhered to all relevant ethical, institutional, and legal standards to ensure its integrity and validity. Approval was be sought from Strathmore University before commencing the study, ensured that all research protocols to the required ethical guidelines. The research complied with local and international regulations concerning data protection, privacy, and participant rights. By aligning with these guidelines, the research aimed to uphold the highest standards of ethical practice, hence safeguarding the interests and welfare of all participants while it ensured the reliability and credibility of the study's findings.

## **4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction.**

This chapter includes a study of data acquired from a questionnaire issued to Strathmore University's academic and non-academic workers. The findings are consistent with the study's objectives, which include investigating the impact of professional development opportunities, feedback methods, and goal-setting practices on employee engagement. The responses have been analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis strategies. This chapter also addresses the findings associated with the research questions and objectives set forth in Chapter One as we are about to see;

### **4.2 Demographic data of the respondents**

The demographic characteristics of the 108 respondents, that were interviewed provide a foundation for understanding the diversity of participants and contextualizing the findings.

#### **4.2.1 Gender distribution**

From the survey, the gender distribution among respondents was as follows:

Male: 55%

Female: 45%

This indicated a relatively balanced gender representation among the academic staff surveyed.

#### **4.2.2 Age distribution**

The distribution of respondents by age was:

18-25 years: 10%

26-35 years: 35%

36-45 years: 30%

46-55 years: 20%

56 years and above: 5%

The majority of respondents (65%) were in the age range of 26 to 45 years, indicating a predominantly middle-aged workforce rather than too young or too old.

#### **4.2.3. Years of service**

The data on years of service showed is analyzed as follows as per the information received.

Less than 1 year: 5%

1-3 years: 20%

4-6 years: 25%

7-10 years: 30%

More than 10 years: 20%

This indicated that a significant portion of the workforce has been at the institution for over four years, suggesting stability in the workforce as there is less attrition.

#### **4.2.4 Levels of education**

Respondents' education levels were distributed as follows:

Diploma: 15%

Bachelor's Degree: 45%

Master's Degree: 30%

Ph.D.: 10%

### **4.3. Analysis of the research objective**

#### **4.3.1 Professional Development opportunities**

One of the primary objectives of this study was to evaluate the influence of professional development opportunities on employee engagement. Respondents were asked to rate their access to job-related training programs, career growth support, and workshops or seminars and the findings revealed that 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had access to sufficient job-related training programs, while 20% were neutral, and 10% disagreed. This indicates that the majority of staff members perceive the training programs as adequate and effective.

Additionally, 60% of respondents affirmed that Strathmore University supports their career growth through professional development opportunities, underscoring the institution's commitment to enhancing staff skills and career trajectories. Workshops and seminars were found to be of great impact professional skill improvement, with 65% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to this assertion. Furthermore, 55% of respondents indicated that they were supported to take on challenging tasks that contributed to their growth.

These findings show the positive role of professional development opportunities in fostering employee engagement at the institution.

#### **4.3.2 Feedback mechanisms**

The second purpose was to assess the effect of feedback mechanisms within the performance management system on employee engagement. Constructive feedback was an essential area of study.

According to the statistics, 75% of respondents reported receiving constructive feedback in the previous six months, with 15% claiming they "sometimes" received input and 10% stating they rarely or never heard it. Satisfaction with the quality of feedback was equally substantial, with 60% expressing satisfaction, 20% neutral, and 20% dissatisfied. Furthermore, 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that existing feedback approaches were helpful at aligning their efforts with corporate objectives.

### 4.3.3 Goal setting practices

The third objective assessed the extent to which goal-setting practices align individual and organizational objectives and their impact on employee engagement. Clarity of expectations emerged as a critical component.

The results indicated that 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understood what was expected of them in their roles. Furthermore, 60% felt that their individual goals were aligned with the university's strategic objectives. However, only 50% of respondents agreed that they were actively involved in setting their performance targets. Resource provision also played a significant role, with 65% of respondents stating they were provided with sufficient resources to achieve their goals. These findings underscore the importance of clarity, alignment, and resource availability in enhancing employee engagement.

### 4.4 EE metrics

The **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)** was employed to measure employee engagement across three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Each dimension is analyzed below;

**Vigor:** This dimension measures the energy and enthusiasm respondents feel towards their work. A total of 65% of respondents reported feeling energetic and enthusiastic about their work "often" or "very often." The mean score for vigor was calculated as 4.2 on a 6-point scale, indicating a moderately high level of energy among employees.

**Dedication:** This dimension assesses employees' pride, inspiration, and enthusiasm for their roles. Results showed that 70% of respondents expressed pride and inspiration in their work. The mean score for dedication was 4.5, reflecting high levels of commitment to the organization's mission and values.

**Absorption:** Absorption evaluates the extent to which employees are immersed in their tasks. The data revealed that 60% of respondents reported being deeply engaged in their work. The mean score for absorption was 4.0, suggesting a moderate level of immersion and focus.

The overall engagement score, calculated as the average of the three dimensions, was 4.23, indicating a workforce that is generally engaged and motivated.

#### 4.5 Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between performance management system (PMS) components and employee engagement. The following calculations were performed using the results:

**Professional Development Opportunities and Engagement:** Pearson correlation  $r$ - coefficient of  $r = 0.65$  was calculated. This positive correlation suggests a significant relationship between training opportunities and employee engagement.

**Feedback Mechanisms and Engagement:** The correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.58$ . This moderate correlation highlights the importance of constructive feedback in fostering engagement as much as it is not stronger than the other two variables.

**Goal-Setting Practices and Engagement:** The strongest correlation was observed with  $r = 0.72$ , indicating a robust relationship between clear goals and engagement. The high correlation underscores the critical role of goal alignment in enhancing motivation.

#### 4.6 Discussion

The results of the research confirm that performance management systems have a substantial effect on employee engagement. Professional development opportunities, feedback mechanisms, and goal-setting processes all play important roles. Training and growth efforts give employees with the skills and motivation required for advancement in their careers, which is consistent with Aguinis' results (2019). Feedback mechanisms are an important tool for increasing alignment and morale, as Kluger and DeNisi (1996) suggest. Goal-setting

procedures, as noted by Locke and Latham (2002), are critical for matching individual goals with company objectives and thereby increasing the overall participation.

The strong correlation observed between goal-setting practices and employee engagement underscores the importance of setting clear and challenging objectives for all. Employees who understand their roles and see their personal goals aligned with organizational objectives are more likely to feel engaged and motivated. This finding aligns with Locke and Latham's (2002) goal-setting theory, which posits that specific and challenging goals enhance performance and engagement. Moreover, the provision of resources to achieve these goals further supports this effect, as evidenced by the respondents who acknowledged receiving adequate support in the data provided. Other factors included opportunities for professional development.

The positive relationship between availability of training and commitment consolidates the assertion that opportunities for professional growth and employee commitment enhance employee performance, as documented by Aguinis and Kraiger (2009). Those employees who perceived more skill enhancement and career growth opportunities reported a higher degree of engagement, suggesting that these programs enhance the perceptions of organizational value and belonging.

Another significant contributor that was established as regards employee engagement is feedback mechanisms. The correlation analysis had a moderate positive correlation, evidencing that feedback is important and it has to be constructive and timely. According to Kluger and DeNisi (1996), effective feedback not only explains the expectations but also encourages employees because their contribution or performance is valued. Respondents who got regular and quality feedback felt that they were working for the organization and were satisfied with their jobs.

All things considered, the results highlight how these three elements of performance management systems interact. Even if each element influences engagement on its own, together as a whole, they have an even greater effect. Strathmore University ought to think

about combining these components in a way that maximizes worker happiness and motivation. The findings also highlight how important it is to modify performance management plans to meet the particular requirements of academic and non-academic employees in order to maintain equity and inclusion within the organization. Long-term involvement, increased productivity, and enhanced organizational performance are expected outcomes of such a strategy.

The findings of the study affirm that performance management systems bear a significant impact on employee engagement in the most influential way: professional development opportunities, feedback mechanisms, and goal-setting practices. Training and growth initiatives offer career-enhancing competencies and drive among employees, as indicated by Aguinis (2019). Feedback mechanisms are used to achieve important improvements in alignment and morale, which also supports the claims of Kluger and DeNisi (1996). According to Locke and Latham (2002), goal-setting practices are key in aligning individual goals with organizational objectives, which in turn will lead to better engagement.

The correlation analysis further supports these findings and shows that effective PMS strategies can lead to a greater level of engagement. The high positive correlation between goal-setting and engagement suggests that clarity and alignment are most effective, while professional development and feedback are also strongly related.

#### **4.6 Summary**

This chapter has presented a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from academic staff at Strathmore University, providing insights into the role of performance management systems (PMS) on employee engagement. The findings demonstrate the critical impact of professional development opportunities, feedback mechanisms, and goal-setting practices on engagement levels.

## **5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the conclusions gained from the data analysis and findings presented in Chapter Four. The solutions were specialized to the identified difficulties and improve the effectiveness of Strathmore University's performance management systems (PMS). The chapter also examines the study's weaknesses and provides recommendations for future research.

### **5.2 Summary of findings**

The study comprehensively explored the influence of professional development opportunities, feedback mechanisms, and goal-setting practices on employee engagement at Strathmore University.

For the Professional Development Opportunities, the training programs and career growth initiatives emerged as vital contributors to employee engagement. They provided staff with the skills and competencies required to excel in their roles while enabling a sense of value and belonging. However, the study identified that access to these opportunities is not uniformly distributed among all employees which is creating disparities in engagement levels. By addressing this gap, Strathmore University can ensure that every staff member benefit from development programs which can enhance overall engagement and performance.

In the case of the Feedback Mechanisms, Constructive and timely feedback was shown to positively impact employee motivation and alignment with organizational goals. Respondents that received regular and actionable feedback felt recognized and valued, which increased their commitment to the institution. Nonetheless, inconsistencies in feedback quality were highlighted amidst a few employees, with some employees reporting dissatisfaction. These disparities underline the need for standardized feedback processes to ensure equitable and effective communication across all staff.

Goal-Setting Practices, alignment of individual and organizational goals was strongly linked to higher levels of engagement as shown in Chapter four. Employees who clearly understood their roles and responsibilities have reported increased motivation and productivity. However, the study found out that limited involvement of employees in the goal-setting process led to feelings of disconnection and reduced ownership of tasks generally. Engaging employees in collaborative goal-setting practices can fuel a sense of accountability and drive, further enhancing engagement.

Lastly, Employee engagement metrics which was The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) provided deep insights into the three dimensions of engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employees demonstrated moderately high levels of vigor, characterized by energy and resilience at work place and their work. Dedication scores reflected employees' strong sense of pride and enthusiasm for their roles and anything involving their work, while absorption indicated their deep focus and immersion in tasks for the majority of them. This metrics revealed a motivated workforce, with a room for improvement in certain areas to achieve optimal engagement levels.

Training programs and career growth initiatives were found to significantly enhance employee engagement. However, accessibility to these opportunities needs improvement to ensure equitable participation. Constructive and timely feedback positively influences employee engagement. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in feedback quality were evident, with some respondents expressing dissatisfaction. Clear goal alignment and adequate resource provision were strongly linked to higher engagement levels. However, limited involvement of employees in the goal-setting process emerged as a concern to some of the respondents.

## **5.3 Discussions**

### **5.3.1 Goal setting**

According to  $r = 0.72$ , goal-setting techniques were found to have the strongest relationship with employee engagement. 60% of respondents believed that their personal objectives matched the university's strategic goals, and 70% of respondents understood their role expectations, according to the study. But only majority said they actively participated in the goal-setting process, indicating that more inclusivity is necessary.

According to Locke and Latham's (2002) Goal-Setting Theory, goal-setting is crucial for increasing engagement. The model predicts that by giving employees a feeling of direction and purpose, clear, difficult, and attainable goals improve motivation and performance. Workers are more likely to experience a sense of ownership when they actively participate in defining their goals. Goal-setting increases motivation and commitment, especially when goals are in line with organizational objectives, according to Latham and Yukl (1975).

The study's conclusions imply that although Strathmore University has made strides in coordinating personal and corporate objectives, employee involvement in goal-setting could still be enhanced. Insufficient participation may eventually impede engagement since it can result in a sense of alienation and diminished responsibility for tasks. This is in line with Pulakos et al.'s(2019)research, which discovered that goal-setting techniques that involve participation are more successful in promoting alignment and commitment. Strathmore University should take a more cooperative stance in order to improve goal-setting procedures. To make sure that employees' individual goals and the goals of the company are in line, this may entail holding workshops or one-on-one meetings. Furthermore, supplying sufficient sources

### **5.3.2 Professional development opportunities**

Professional development opportunities turned out as a critical driver of employee engagement at Strathmore University. The study revealed that 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had access to sufficient job-related training programs, while 60% approved that the university actively supports their career growth. These finding show the role of professional development in improvement of the employees' skills and career , thus fostering a sense of belonging and value within the institution.

This research further supports the notion that professional development contributes to employee engagement. According to Aguinis and Kraiger (2009), structured training programs not only enhance individual competencies but also strengthen organizational performance by cultivating a committed and motivated workforce. Similarly, Henderson (2016) highlighted that continuous professional development is particularly effective in

higher education institutions, where career advancement and personal growth opportunities are very important for maintaining and sustaining faculty engagement in the long run.

However, the study also uncovered unequal access to professional development opportunities, which leads to uneven levels of engagement across departments. Employees who perceive unequal access to training programs may feel undervalued, which reduces their overall commitment. These disparities emphasize the need for a transparent system that ensures all staff members have access to developmental resources at per Strathmore University can address this gap by implementing policies that promote inclusivity in professional development. For example, mentorship programs, rotational training schedules, and targeted workshops can be employed to bridge the gap.

Furthermore, offering individualized career development plans rather than a generalized one tailored to employees' specific goals and needs can further enhance engagement by demonstrating the university's investment in their growth. This approach aligns with the findings of this study and previous literature, which emphasize that professional development is not just a tool for skill improvement but also a strategy for building a motivated and loyal workforce as well as committed.

### **5.3.3 Feedback mechanisms**

Feedback mechanisms are also significant in ensuring that individual efforts are aligned with the objectives of the organization, hence increasing employee engagement. In the study, 75% of respondents indicated receiving constructive feedback in the last six months, while 65% agreed that the existing feedback mechanisms were effective in aligning their efforts with the goals of the university. This indicates how feedback is crucial in clarifying expectations, recognizing contributions, and infusing a sense of direction among employees.

The importance of feedback is evidenced in literature. Kluger and DeNisi (1996) asserted that feedback interventions provide guidance for the employees, make them more motivated and committed due to reinforcement of their importance and value to the organizations. Further, London and Smither (1999) cited that a positive feedback environment empowers, encourages continuous development, and enhances overall engagement. Yet even within generally positive findings, the research showed discrepancies in the quality and timeliness

of feedback. For example, 20% or so said they were dissatisfied with the feedback provided to them, indicating some cause for concern. Poor or inconsistent feedback will often cause confusion, discontentedness, and disengagement. Hirschfield (2000) also corroborates that unfair or incomplete feedback is seen by employees as negative regarding morale and productivity.

In order to address these challenges, Strathmore University needs to standardize its feedback; it should be consistent and fair. Supervisors have to be trained in giving effective and constructive feedback. Such training needs to focus on effective communication, empathy, and clarity in setting expectations. Additionally, periodic feedback surveys help assess the level of satisfaction employees have with the feedback process, which can be used to identify and bridge gaps.

This would also be possible if the university refined its feedback mechanisms in order to develop a supportive environment which would promote not only more engagement but continuous improvement and mutual respect. This was further supported by the finding of the study that "feedback" was considered the cornerstone of effective performance management.

#### **5.4 Conclusions.**

To start with, the findings affirm that an effective PMS is an essential drive for employee engagement, Employee skill enhancement and a sense of belonging inside the company are greatly aided by training and development opportunities. Workers who believe their employer cares about their career development are more likely to stay motivated and dedicated. In order for all employees, regardless of their jobs, to benefit equitably from these opportunities, it is imperative that accessibility barriers be addressed. A more inclusive strategy can enhance the benefits of professional development for involvement.

#### **Significance of Feedback Mechanisms.**

Constructive feedback is one of the most critical ways to align employee performance with organizational goals. However, much of the effectiveness of feedback is compromised due to inconsistency in its quality and delivery. Clear, actionable feedback given consistently strengthens an employee's confidence and sense of direction, while inconsistent or

unconstructive feedback can result in dissatisfaction and disengagement. These could be minimized if there is standardization of the feedback process and training of supervisors in giving effective feedback.

The function of goal-setting techniques.

Because it gives workers direction and clarity, goal-setting is an effective strategy for increasing employee engagement. Workers are more likely to have a sense of ownership and coordinate their efforts with the aims of the company if they actively engage in goal-setting. However, this sense of ownership is diminished and disengagement may result from minimal participation in the goal-setting process. Engagement levels may be considerably raised by using inclusive goal-setting techniques that consider employee input and guarantee sufficient resource allocation.

Relation in these PMS Components.

The study underlines the synergistic effects of professional development, feedback mechanisms, and goal-setting practices. While each component separately contributes to engagement, their combined application creates a more cohesive and effective performance management system. This interlinked approach ensures that employees experience a consistent and supportive work environment, which fosters higher levels of motivation and satisfaction.

### **5.5 Recommendations to the institution.**

Based on the study's findings, the following suggestions are made:

Enhance Access to Professional Development:

Equitable access to training programs is critical for ensuring that all employees, regardless of function or department, may benefit. This may be accomplished by establishing a transparent method for nominating participants and rotating opportunities among employees.

Customized career development plans should be designed to meet the specific objectives and

needs of each employee. Mentorship programs, external certifications, and internal workshops are all possible components of these strategies.

#### Improve Feedback Mechanisms:

The processes of feedback should be standardized across board and departments. A uniform framework for delivering feedback will ensure fairness and consistency in the process.

Supervisors should be trained to acquire the skills of providing constructive and workable feedback. The training can focus on how to communicate effectively, being empathetic, and setting expectations clearly.

Regular feedback surveys should be introduced to test satisfaction with feedback mechanisms. From this, any results can be used in making necessary changes and adjustments in the system.

#### Encourage participative goal-setting process.

Encourage workers to actively participate in defining their performance targets on both sides and not only what the employer needs but rather both. Workshops or one-on-one meetings can be utilized to match personal ambitions with company objectives.

Provide enough resources, such as time, tools, and assistance, for workers to effectively achieve their goals. Resource limits can impede involvement and performance.

#### Integrating PMS components.

Create an integrated plan that connects professional growth, feedback, and goal-setting activities. This method guarantees that progress in one area has a favorable impact on others.

Regular PMS audits should be done to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. To guarantee relevance and efficacy, these audits may include employee participation.

#### Improving Engagement Metrics

Monitoring engagement by using standardized tools like UWES is an ongoing process that should continue to be used. Periodic surveys can show the trend and thus provide timely interventions.

Engagement data should be used to drive strategic decisions within HR policy to make sure that employee well-being and motivation remain key in organizational priorities.

### **5.6 Recommendations for further research**

Future studies can enhance this research in the following ways:

Longitudinal studies that evaluate employee involvement over time might demonstrate how PMS treatments evolve and what their long-term impact may be and not waiting to carry out these studied in a longer, the frequency within which this can be done will enable easier study of trends and relations within this study.

Broaden the scope to include comparison studies involving multiple institutions, which will give broader insights into best practices in performance management as there will be different perspectives and data collection from different institution to test the suitability of the results. Investigate the link between employee engagement and other PMS components, such as recognition and incentive systems. This would have provided a more comprehensive list of elements that contribute to involvement rather than the three that have been talked about here.

Lastly, investigations on how company culture might influence the link between PMS and employee engagement, as culture has a significant impact on employee perceptions and actions and this can also be made as a study of its own to show the exact rate to which each factor affects employee engagement without entirely leaning on one side of the coin.

### **5.7 Limitations of the study.**

The study targeted only one university, Strathmore University, while many others exist, and hence generalization to other universities could not be made. The scope of further studies should expand to cover other private and public universities for a comparative analysis. Responses were based on participants' perceptions, which could introduce bias for those who feel unwanted in the organization however triangulating self-reported data with performance metrics or observational studies could enhance reliability.

Data collection also emerged as a problem as it took over a month to gain permissions from the research office and even when it came in there was a limit to the number of respondents which wasn't the case for some other people who did data collection in the same place and therefore there should be a systematic approach for everyone collecting data to avoid such disparities.

### **5.8 Conclusion.**

In conclusion, this research underpins the great role that performance management systems play in promoting employee engagement at Strathmore University. Even though there are positives about the current PMS, the addressing of identified gaps that have been mentioned will go a long way in enhancing effectiveness as time goes on. If the recommendations suggested herein are implemented, Strathmore University will have more motivated, committed, and productive workforce who contribute toward its overall success and good reputation. This study has also focused on the deep role that PMS plays in shaping employee engagement at Strathmore University. The focus of the research on professional development opportunities, mechanisms of feedback, and goal-setting practices has exposed critical insights as to how collectively these elements drive employee motivation, commitment, and productivity.

Professional development opportunities not only equip staff with key competencies but also engender feelings of value and belonging and should therefore be guaranteed to all on an

equal basis. Feedback mechanisms are a foundation in terms of the integration of goals of individuals and the organization, where constructive and timely feedback was particularly instrumental in boosting morale and performance. In a similar way, goal-setting practices showed the strongest impact on engagement, reinforcing that clarity, alignment, and inclusiveness are paramount in setting and achieving meaningful goals. The study identified synergy among these PMS practices in the manner that the concerted application of all created a more integrated, helpful, and well-performing work environment. Efforts by Strathmore University to apply these practices are highly commendable; at the same time, the gaps identified present opportunities for improvement. Removing gaps in professional development, standardizing the process of giving feedback, and promoting participative goal setting not only improve employee engagement but also help the institution cement its position in higher learning.

The premise of many researches: a motivated workforce is the backbone of organizational success. With this, Strathmore University promises to do even better with a better PMS, an inclusive and improving culture, and focused interest in the welfare and development of its staff. It now remains to translate these findings into action by building a motivated, innovative, and resilient work profile that will drive the organization toward its goals of excellence.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Introductory letter

Ndagire Thelma,  
P.O BOX 59857-00200,  
Strathmore University,  
Nairobi.

Dear Respondent,

#### **REF: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY**

My name is Ndagire Thelma, a student currently pursuing an Undergraduate degree in Bachelor of Commerce at Strathmore University. As part of the school requirements, I am conducting research on employee engagement, specifically focusing on the impact of professional development, feedback mechanisms, and goal-setting practices at Strathmore University. Your knowledge is important to this research, and I would be grateful if you could take a moment to complete a little survey that will provide me with your thoughts on these subjects. Your answers are essential to me completing my research and meeting my degree requirements.

Please be assured that your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance. Your contribution is essential to the success of my research and my academic journey.

Yours Sincerely,

NDAGIRE THELMA,

STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY.

## Appendix II: Questionnaire

**Dear Participant,**

Thank you for considering this survey! My name is Ndagire Thelma a 4<sup>th</sup> year student at Strathmore doing my research on employee engagement at the organization. Your participation is optional, and you may choose to answer or skip any questions. All responses are confidential and used solely for research purposes. I appreciate your time.

### Section 1: Bio Data

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female

2. Age:

- 18-25 years
- 26-35 years
- 36-45 years
- 46-55 years
- 56 years and above

3. Years of Service at Strathmore University:

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years

- 7-10 years
- More than 10 years

4.Highest Level of Education:

- Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Ph.D.
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Section 2: Professional Development Opportunities

5.I have access to sufficient job-related training programs that enhance my skills.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

6.The organization supports my career growth through professional development opportunities

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

7. Workshops and seminars offered by the organization help improve my professional skills.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

8. I am supported by the organization to take on challenging tasks that contribute to my growth.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

### Section 3: Feedback Mechanisms

9. I have recently (6 months) you received constructive feedback that helped improve your performance.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

10. I am satisfied with the quality of feedback you receive at the organization

- Extremely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Extremely Satisfied

11. Feedback mechanisms in place at the organization are effective

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

12. I have had a discussion with someone about your progress at work, in the last 6 months

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

#### Section 4; goal setting

13.I know what is expected of me

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

14. Are your individual goals aligned with Strathmore University's strategic objectives?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

15.How involved do you feel in the goal-setting process for your role?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

- Agree
- Strongly Agree

16. My work contributes to the mission or purpose of Organization?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. I am provided with the resources needed to achieve my goals.

Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Section 5 ;

	Never (0)	Almost never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very often (5)	Always (6)
At my work, I feel							

bursting with energy.							
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.							
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.							
I am enthusiastic about my job.							
My job inspires me.							
I am proud of the work that I do.							
I feel happy when I am working intensely.							

I am immersed in my work.							
I get carried away when I am working.							

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME



### MANAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISION SCHEDULE

NAME OF THE STUDENT: Ndagire Thelma

REG. NO: 147510

Sessions	Date	Tasks Achieved	Student Signature	Supervisor Signature
1			<i>Thelma</i>	
2			<i>Thelma</i>	
3			<i>Thelma</i>	
4			<i>Thelma</i>	
5			<i>Thelma</i>	
6			<i>Thelma</i>	
7			<i>Thelma</i>	

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**AACSB**



Sessions	Date	Tasks Achieved	Student Signature	Supervisor Signature
8			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
9			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
10			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
11			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
12			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
13			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
14			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
15			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	

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