

**EFFECT OF TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRMS IN KENYA**

BY:

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented to any other university for the award of a degree or any other purpose.

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Date 27th November 2023

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

HR	: Human Resource
HRM	: Human Resource Management
IT	: Information Technology
PSFs	: Professional Service Firms
SET	: Social Exchange Theory

ABSTRACT

The success of professional service businesses is greatly influenced by employee engagement. PSFs have placed a high premium on talent management; hence the implementation of talent management practices in these firms is critical. However, the lack of qualified people in Kenya's labor market, particularly in specialized sectors like law, engineering, and finance, poses a challenge for the professional service organizations. Therefore, this study sought to determine the effect of talent management practices on employee engagement of professional service firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The descriptive survey design was used in this study to evaluate the data that was gathered from the target population. The target population for the study was employees in the five professional services firms in Kenya. Using purposive sampling, the researcher targeted 30 employees from each of the five PSFs; therefore, the sample size of the study was 150 employees. The main tool for gathering data was a questionnaire. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The study found employees at PSF firms in Kenya are highly engaged, and talent management practices are commonly implemented by these firms. The study showed that talent management practices positively influenced employee engagement in PSFs in Kenya. The study recommended that companies should create more efficient and open feedback mechanisms that show how they genuinely use employee input to enhance training initiatives. Additionally, the study suggested that future scholars should conduct longitudinal studies to provide further understanding of talent management practices in PSFs.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The employment landscape has entered a new period in the twenty-first century where the importance of talent as a decisive competitive advantage is growing (Muyela, & Kamaara, 2021). For many firms throughout the world, talent management has been a crucial problem and a difficult condition for human resource managers. According to Agarwal (2018), replacing an employee might cost up to 2.5 times what they make in salary. High staff turnover increases the likelihood of lower output, lower employee engagement, more training expenses, and a negative corporate image. A workforce that is more engaged and less likely to leave is the result of effectively implementing talent management techniques and demonstrating a commitment to human capital (Muyela, & Kamaara, 2021). Similar findings have been made about the importance of employee involvement in attracting and retaining talent (Tetik, & Halil, 2021).

The study was built upon two theories. The first is the human capital theory, which Robert Shultz first proposed in the 1950s (Shultz, 1961). The theory contends that because it increases output, investing in human capital makes a business more valuable and competitive (Wamwangi, & Kagiri, 2018). According to Homans' (1958) Social Exchange Theory (SET), people go into partnerships with the expectation of reaping benefits and incurring a price. These rewards can include tangible benefits (e.g., salary, promotions) as well as intangible ones (e.g., recognition, autonomy). Therefore, based on this assumption, talent management practices such as career development opportunities, fair compensation, work-life balance, and recognition programs can enhance employee engagement and commitment.

Kenya has seen an increase in population recently as a result of the emergence of professional services firms (PSFs) in Nairobi County. PwC Kenya, Deloitte East Africa, KPMG Kenya, and McKinsey & Company are a few PSFs in Kenya. PSFs operating in Kenya encounter a variety of particular difficulties (Kibue, 2019). Getting and keeping great talent is one of the biggest problems. PSFs depend greatly on the abilities and expertise of their personnel, and talent is frequently in short supply. PSFs must therefore

create efficient personnel management techniques, such as competitive pay, prospects for career advancement, and a favorable work atmosphere. PSFs have the capacity to grow and succeed significantly despite these obstacles.

1.1.1 Talent Management Practices

Talent management is the use of an integrated set of procedures to ensure that the business attracts, engages, develops and retains the individuals it requires both now and, in the future, (Muyela, & Kamaara, 2021). According to Wandabwa and Makokha (2021), talent management is the procedures, systems, and strategies that increase work efficiency of staff members who have the abilities and talent to fulfill organizational goals. Talent management is an important duty to ensure that the business has the right individuals with the knowledge and experience to satisfy its present and future expectations. The procedure includes steps like performance management, succession planning, and development (Agarwal, 2018).

Talent management practices go above and beyond standard human resource management (HRM) procedures and are designed to draw in, engage, nurture, and keep high-potential workers (Rahmany, 2018). While general HRM strategies may cover a wider range of workforce management, talent management practices concentrate on a subset of workers who are thought to have valuable talents that merit management. Different scholars have operationalized talent management, for instance, Johnson, (2020) measured talent management using talent planning, acquiring, sustaining and transitioning. On the other hand, Karimi (2019) operationalized talent management into recruitment, selection, learning and development and employee retention. For this study, talent management was operationalized into learning and development, talent recruitment and selection, performance management, career planning and succession planning.

For firms to fulfill their strategic goals, exceptional talent must be attracted and retained. Talent management, according to Rahmany, (2018), is predicated on the idea that businesses with the best employees are those who succeed in their industry. Hence, talent management is a tool to improve organisational capabilities. Talented individuals are getting harder to find and keep as a result of competitive markets and global dynamic trends, and there is always a chance that they will defect to rivals (Wamwangi, & Kagiri,

2018). The result of globalization is uniformity in talent management, development, and recruitment because firms are vying for the same talent pool on the international labor market. This means that firms must adapt to local labor market conditions as well as talent management practices.

1.1.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a reflection of a person's love of what they do and commitment to the success of their company (Semi, 2022). Such involvement denotes going above and beyond the call of duty to enthusiastically make additional contributions that advance the organization. According to Alias et al. (2016), engaged workers enjoy less stress, fewer health issues, and greater personal life satisfaction. In comparison to their less involved colleagues, engaged people live healthier lives and produce better health results. Engagement clearly has positive effects for both the person and the organization, showing a symbiotic link (Tetik & Halil, 2021).

According to Semi (2022) engaged employees are individuals who work hard and feel connected to their firm. According to Elumeze (2020) engaged workers are more productive, innovative, more likely to be kept by their company, as well as healthier and like their work more than others. Employee engagement is to instill an inner desire to work for the organization. Alias et al., (2016) contends that employee involvement is indicated by good attitudes and actions, reflecting trust, equity, and a fulfilled commitment. Employee engagement was examined in the context of this study using important indicators such as employee satisfaction, turnover rates, and employee retention, offering a full knowledge of the workforce's commitment and connection to the firm.

1.1.3 Professional Service Firms

Professional Service Firms (PSFs) are businesses that offer clients in a range of industries specialized services. Professional services firms are organizations that market their knowledge and experience, Kibue (2019). They primarily help clients manage, nurture, and expand their clientele. These businesses could be accountancy, consulting, or law firms, among others that offer professional services. PSFs often possess a high level of knowledge and competence in their specialized domains. One distinguishing feature of

PSFs is that their main resource is a highly qualified workforce that develops and provides intangible services (Skjlsvik, Pemer, & Lwendahl, 2017). An increasing number of researchers are examining PSFs to learn more about how to proactively manage human capital and knowledge in enterprises. This is because modern organizations have challenges in how to produce, use, and retain knowledge to build competitive advantages.

Currently, PSFs are seen as leaders and significant forces in the growth of the knowledge economy. PSFs are extremely important to the Kenyan economy. Nairobi, the nation's capital, is home to several of these businesses, which are often distinguished by a high level of professionalism, client-centricity and quality standards, (Kibue, 2019). PSFs also prosper when they develop strong bonds with their clients and uphold a reputation for providing top-notch services. This necessitates a focus on creating solid customer connections, properly managing risk, and maintaining adherence to industry laws.

1.2 Research Problem

The success of professional service businesses is greatly influenced by employee engagement. According to study by Alias et al. (2016), organizations that emphasize human resource management and implement effective talent management have greater levels of employee engagement and reduced turnover rates. For organizational activities to be carried out successfully, staff engagement is crucial (Agarwal, 2018). Businesses can obtain a competitive advantage by encouraging employee engagement since an engaged staff is totally dedicated and driven. Employee engagement is further increased by providing possibilities for professional growth, top-notch assistance, and recognition through personnel management methods. The necessity of emphasizing engagement within PSFs is emphasized by Muyela and Kamaara (2021), who emphasize the important role of employee engagement in fostering performance.

PSFs have placed a high premium on talent management; hence the implementation of talent management practices in these firms is critical. However, the lack of qualified people in Kenya's labor market, particularly in specialized sectors like law, engineering, and finance, poses a challenge for the professional service organizations (Wamwangi & Kagiri, 2018). Today, the number of PSFs is increasing as more organizations seek competent staff. PSFs in Kenya consequently encounter substantial difficulties in locating

and luring excellent people, particularly in specialized professions. Moreover Kibue (2019), observed that professional service company employees were not free to choose the type of training they wanted to pursue. This implies that although, the employees received different forms of training they were not allowed engaging in decision making. This has a ripple effect on the PSFs since it leads to demotivated employees resulting in increased employee turnover.

Abdollahbeigi, Salehi, and Jayashree (2017) study looked at how hiring, selecting, and developing employees affected talent management at the IKCO Company in Iran. The results indicate that drawing talented people to the business depends heavily on an efficient recruitment and selection process. Alias et al. (2016) conducted a study in Malaysia which looked into three constructs, employee retention, employee engagement and talent management. Through a Pearson correlation analysis, the research revealed that talent management positively impacted the engagement of employees.

In a similar vein, Wamwangi and Kagiri (2018) investigated the connection between employee performance and talent management in Kenyan professional consulting service firms. Their research showed that employees' active participation in daily business operations and successful talent management are positively correlated. A study by Mugina (2018) looked at talent management as practiced in Kenyan state corporations. The study observed that talent management is predicated on the idea that through training, the engagement of employees rises, resulting in improved performance. In Bungoma County, Wandabwa and Makokha (2021), assessed the correlation between practices of talent management and employee performance. The outcomes revealed that through talent management employee efficiency increases as the staff seeks to be more engaged in the day-to-day operations within the working environment. Muyela and Kamara (2021) study focused on Kenya's civil service through its implementation of talent management. Their research demonstrated the significant and positive impact that talent management techniques have on employee performance. While employee performance shows an overall view of the employees in an organization, it is attained by ensuring employee engagement. Based on extant literature there is a research gap in determining the most efficient talent management practices in promoting employee

engagement especially in PSFs. Therefore, this study sought to answer this research question; what is the effect of talent management practices on employee engagement of PSFs in Nairobi, Kenya?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the effect of talent management practices on employee engagement of PSFs in Nairobi, Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

The management of professional service organizations will benefit from this study since it may offer insights into how talent management practices can improve employee engagement. With the use of this knowledge, talent management practices can be created and put into action that promote employee engagement and, in turn, increase productivity, lower employee turnover, and boost profitability. Professional service company management will be able to create effective personnel management procedures to reduce the high turnover seen in the cutthroat business environment.

The study will offer evidence to policymakers on the significance of talent management techniques in organizations, which will help them establish policies to support talent management practices in PSFs. PSFs ' policy makers will be able to create regulations to make sure talent management procedures are followed.

This study lays the groundwork for future research into the relationship between employee engagement and talent management strategies across different markets and geographical areas. This will contribute to a greater understanding of talent management techniques and reveal new possibilities for their use to raise employee engagement in various circumstances.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter review theoretical and empirical literature related to talent management practices and employee engagement. The past research reviewed is instrumental in providing insight and understanding to the research topic. The researcher also highlights the research gap which needed further exploration.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is founded on two theories, the human capital theory and the social exchange theory.

2.1.1 Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory was first advocated by Schultz (1961), but it was significantly advanced by Becker (1964). According to Schultz, (1961) capital can take the form of both knowledge and skills, and this capital is the result of planned firm expansion. As a result, a firm should invest in its employees by providing them with training and education. Schultz makes a comparison between having the means of production and gaining knowledge and abilities. Schultz's theory states that spending money on training and education increases employee productivity, which produces positive returns and the expansion of businesses.

The intrinsic value that people provide to a firm is highly valued in the notion. It emphasizes that when businesses perceive people as valuable assets, they may expect a significant return on their investments in human capital. As a result, businesses should always make an effort to hire the best employees by investing in their learning and development. This will always assist the company keep the employees with the best skills who can provide it a competitive edge and boost its profits (Najat, 2021). It is expected that increasing one's knowledge, proficiency, and skill set will improve performance as well as flexibility, productivity, and innovative potential. The idea of retaining talent within an organization is supported by this theory.

The human capital theory, which emphasizes the importance of developing employees' skills, knowledge, and capabilities, is crucial to this study since it acknowledges that employees are significant assets and investments for firms. The theory also offers a framework for comprehending how expenditures in workers' education, training, and skill development can raise their productivity, drive, and dedication to the company (Najat, 2021). This study was anchored on this theory to determine how talent management contribute to the development of employee competencies, which results in higher engagement levels, by incorporating the Human Capital Theory into this study.

2.1.2 Social Exchange Theory

Homans (1958) developed the social exchange theory. The theory holds that social conduct results from an exchange process. Maximizing earnings and cutting costs are the objectives of this exchange. This theory holds that people consider the advantages and disadvantages of relationships. People will end a relationship when the disadvantages become too great for the advantages. The exchange approach makes the assumption that a person's commitment to an organization is based on their sense of a favorable reward to utility ratio (Wachira, 2013). This theory places emphasis on the current exchange relations between individuals and organizations. If the participant sees the exchange as more valuable, their commitment will be higher.

The following assumptions about human nature are made by the social exchange theory: people are logical beings who seek rewards and shun punishment, and their typical assessments of cost and reward vary over time and between people. According to this theory, relationships are interconnected and rationality is a process. Deprivation satiation, stimulus, and success are the three concepts that sum up the system. According to the success proposition, a person will repeatedly perform an action that will result in a reward. The stimulus proposition explains that a stimulus that has historically regularly resulted in a reward is likely to elicit a response. A key exchange variable is the degree to which an employee is engaged in the work environment. According to Wachira (2013), an employee's desire to leave or stay in a company is a result of how engaged they are in the work environment.

According to the success proposition, a person will repeatedly perform an action that will result in a reward. The stimulus proposition explains that a stimulus that has historically regularly resulted in a reward is likely to elicit a response. A key exchange variable is the degree to which an employee is engaged in the work environment. According to Homans (1958), an employee's desire to leave or stay in a company is a result of how engaged they are in the work environment. There are several limitations with social exchange theory: Some may view the scientific model of the theory as a simplified method of explaining human partnership.

This study adopts the social exchange approach to shed light on the relationship between employee commitment and the perceived positive exchange between individuals and their organizations. According to this perspective, the accomplishment of job duties and the perks offered by the business can contribute to job satisfaction, which in turn encourages higher commitment from employees to both their specialized positions and the company as a whole.

2.2 Talent Management Practices and Employee Engagement

In her thesis, Semi (2022) examines performance management and its impact on the engagement of employees. In the study, performance management was measured as a practice of talent management. The research highlights performance management as a helpful strategy for raising employee engagement. The results highlight how a well-designed and effectively managed performance management system may increase employee engagement by giving clear performance goals, consistent feedback and coaching, chances for growth and development, and acknowledgement of accomplishments. The current study focused on five elements of talent management including succession and career planning.

Jia-Jun and Hua-Ming (2022) investigated the relationship between knowledge-based workers' engagement and talent management as measured by career planning. They gave special attention to the moderating effects of organizational support and the mediation impact of affective commitment. The results show that when workers see opportunities for professional advancement, they are more likely to be highly engaged at work. It is

noteworthy that whereas the earlier research was carried out in an Asian setting, the present study is set in Africa, more precisely in Kenya.

The relationship between talent management practices and worker performance in Kenyan state businesses was assessed by Waweru (2022). The results imply that employees are likely to be engaged and motivated at work if they positively perceive the practices of talent management, such as performance feedback, professional development programs, and prospects for advancement, are present. The findings showed that businesses must give career planning programs top priority and spend money giving staff members chances for professional advancement. The study targeted state corporations which are in the public sector, due to differences in the dynamics of conducting business, the study could not be used to mirror similar research targeting the private sector.

The study by Milburn (2021) focuses on talent management recruitment tactics in the information technology (IT) industry. The findings suggest that firms in the IT sector experience particular difficulties in luring and keeping elite personnel. The study found that businesses that use successful IT talent management recruitment tactics have higher employee engagement and retention rates, which boosts productivity and boosts business performance. The study focused on one sector, the IT sector. This study looked at the professional service sector by targeting five PSFs.

Lartey (2021) examined the effects of manager gratitude, employee autonomy, and career planning on employee engagement. According to the author, career planning as a practice of talent management significantly and favorably increased employee engagement. Second, it was shown that employee autonomy was a highly significant predictor of employee engagement, meaning that higher levels of engagement are attained by workers who have the autonomy to make their own decisions and accept responsibility for their work. The present study posits that career planning has a favorable impact on employee engagement, based on its findings.

Chovarda's (2021) uncovers compelling evidence that effective talent management practices play a pivotal role in fostering higher levels of work engagement among employees within the banking industry. The research notes that comprehensive training

programs not only enhance employees' job-related capabilities but also contribute to their personal and professional growth. The study only assessed one aspect of talent management; learning and development, the current study further assessed other aspects of talent management including career planning and succession planning.

The relationship between employee engagement and talent management in the English language industry in Ireland was investigated by Sardinha Ribeiro's (2021). The findings emphasize the significance of organizations within the English language sector investing in robust talent management practices and in particular, training that cater to the unique interests of their employees. The study was based in Ireland and focused on the English language sector, this research was located in Kenya, Nairobi County.

The study conducted by Rotich and Kiiru (2021) examined employee performance as influenced by succession planning in Kenya. Based on their research, succession planning had a major and favorable impact on ministry staff performance. The current research was directed toward the private sector, with a specific focus on PSFs, whereas the reviewed study though based in Kenya focused on the public sector.

Johnson (2020) carried out qualitative exploratory research to gather information about the value of leadership succession planning as a tenet of talent management. The findings showed that succession planning is regarded as a useful tool for raising employee engagement levels and is an essential part of talent management. Johnson's (2020) research focused exclusively on succession planning, a single facet of talent management. On the other hand, the current study broadens its scope to include performance management and learning and development as additional aspects of talent management.

Research by Karimi (2019) explored employee retention at Madison Insurance Company Limited in Nairobi, Kenya. This study highlights the value of funding training and development initiatives as a tactic to raise internal staff retention rates. The findings showed that giving employees a sense of worth and providing them with necessary resources, as this increases the probability that they will remain with the company and contributes to its stability and long-term success. Compared to Karimi's (2019) study,

which concentrated on the insurance sector and was based in Kenya, the new study provides a more thorough understanding of talent management in PSFs.

Jain and Khurana's (2017) study delve into the intricate relationship between training and development as a talent management practice and employee engagement within organizations in Asia. The study highlights that employees who receive adequate training and development opportunities not only feel more engaged in their roles but also exhibit higher levels of motivation, commitment, and productivity. Training and development initiatives serve as a catalyst for personal and professional growth, enabling employees to perform their tasks with confidence and proficiency. While the current study is centered on Kenya, the reviewed research was carried out in an Asian setting.

In India, Hiremath (2017) observed that to enhance job performance, many contemporary organizations are focusing on their performance management systems as a talent management practice. However, the author argued that performance improvements can be best achieved by aligning the performance management system with employee engagement. The study revealed that the employees became more engaged when the quality performance management was implemented. The authors did, however, acknowledge that other elements, such as corporate culture, which also influences employee engagement. It is suggests that more research be done to find and examine these other variables that affect employee engagement.

Abdollahbeigi, Salehi, and Jayashree (2017) study looked at how hiring, selecting, and developing employees affected talent management at the IKCO Company in Iran. The results indicate that drawing talented people to the business depends heavily on an efficient recruitment and selection process. The study also found that businesses that place a strong priority on talent development typically have greater levels of retention, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. The study targeted employees in Iran, due to the geographical location, the study could not be used to make generalizations for a similar study in Kenya.

Ramki (2015) looked into how hiring and selection procedures affected the retention of teachers in foreign elementary schools in Nairobi County. The findings showed that

boosting employee engagement and lowering turnover rates require efficient talent recruiting and selection procedures. In-depth screening procedures, candidate evaluations, and interviews were found to be effective recruitment tactics that increased the likelihood that schools would recruit highly qualified and motivated teachers. The study however looked at employee engagement as a driver of employee retention. This study assessed employee engagement as a dependent variable in relation to PSFs.

A study by Gulzar and Durrani (2014) provided an analysis of the connection between employee engagement and succession planning, with a focus on the function of talent management in the present global setting. The study's conclusions show that in the telecom industry, successful succession planning and employee engagement are significantly correlated. The findings of this study have significance for telecom companies looking to improve employee engagement practices through the adoption of effective succession planning programs. However, the research had a contextual gap since it only focused on the telecommunications industry while the following study focused on PSFs in Kenya.

Wuim-Pam (2014) looked into how talent management affected employees' competencies at Plateau State University in Bokkos. Results showed that employees' abilities, skills, and knowledge influence performance management. Wuim-Pam (2014) suggests developing specific competency models in cases where the organization lacks the necessary skills. These models ought to recognize and include high-achieving behaviors. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the dependent variable in this study employee engagement was not discussed by the author.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows how the variables under study are interrelated. Talent management practices is the independent variable while employee engagement is the dependent variable.

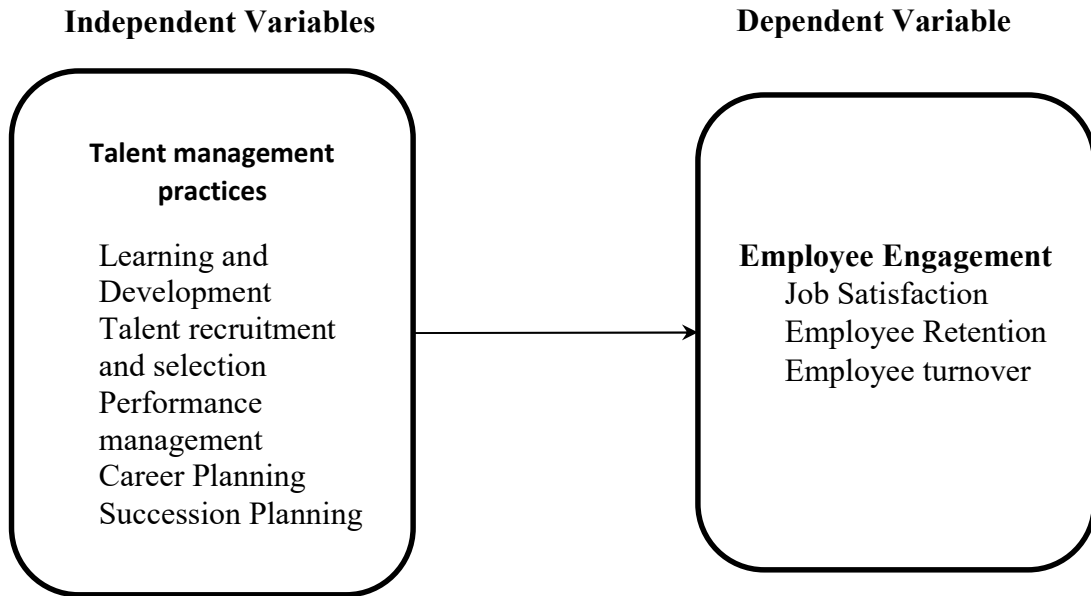


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

2.4 Research Gap

The studies that were analyzed offered insightful information on how employee engagement and talent management techniques interact. These studies have, however, also highlighted research gaps, highlighting the need for more investigation. The little knowledge of how talent management techniques affect employee engagement in the Kenyan environment is one significant study gap. There is currently a large knowledge gap about this influence in Kenya, despite Jain and Khurana's (2017) study highlighting the correlation between training initiatives and worker engagement in the Asian environment. More research is needed in this area, as demonstrated by Karimi's (2019) study on staff retention which highlighted the critical impact that training and development programs have in creating a healthy work environment. The Irish study by Sardinha Ribeiro (2021) looked into learning and development opportunities as a tenet of talent management and its effect on employee engagement in the English language industry. Chovarda (2021) focused on this particular facet of learning and development, even as it stressed the need of efficient training and development programs in raising

work engagement within the banking industry. In light of these results, there is a strong need for more research on other aspects of HRM, specifically career and succession planning, in the Kenyan setting. In Nairobi County, which is home to a wide variety of PSFs, this is especially pertinent.

Extant research has examined the impact of hiring and selection processes on employee retention in particular contexts, such as international elementary schools in Nairobi County (Ramki, 2015), the Iranian IKCO Company (Abdollahbeigi, Salehi, & Jayashree, 2017), and the Afghan public sector (Rahmany, 2018). These earlier studies, however, were mostly limited to specific industries and business sectors, which reduces their relevance to Kenya's PSFs. By investigating the effects of talent management techniques, such as recruiting and selection procedures, on employee engagement within the framework of five PSFs in Kenya, this research aimed to close this knowledge gap. It offers insightful information about successful personnel management techniques used in this particular sector.

In contrast, Elumeze's (2020) study ignores other crucial human resource management strategies including succession planning, training, and development in favor of concentrating only on performance management in the foodservice industry. In a similar vein, Hiremath's (2017) research emphasizes the significance of matching performance management to employee engagement while ignoring other elements that influence it. Employee engagement, which is the main emphasis of the current study, is not taken into account in Wuim-Pam's (2014) analysis because it concentrates on the impact of talent management on employees' core abilities.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between career advancement and employee retention as well as the impact of career planning on employee engagement. Despite concentrating on career planning at Deloitte Kenya, Abubakarr's (2014) study did not expressly look at the more general idea of employee engagement. Additionally, Jia-Jun and Hua-Ming (2022) concentrated on knowledge-based workers in Asia, which would not accurately reflect the particular dynamics and difficulties experienced by workers in Kenya. Waweru (2022) only looked at talent management practices in Kenyan state corporations, which restricted the study's application. It is therefore still need to do

more thorough studies on the relationship⁰ between career planning and other aspects of talent management in Kenya's various organizational contexts, which include both public and private sector businesses.

Furthermore, the results of Rotich and Kiiru's (2021) study, which was done in Kenya's public sector, cannot be generalized to the private sector in general or PSFs in particular. Research by Johnson (2020) and Tunje (2015) places all of its attention on succession planning within talent management, ignoring other crucial components like performance management and learning and development. The work by Gulzar and Durrani (2014) illuminates the telecommunications sector, while the current study attempts to explore PSFs in Kenya, hence there is a contextual gap. The need for more study into talent management practices, encompassing several components and diverse sectors, notably within the Kenyan private sector and PSFs, is highlighted by these research gaps.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the research methodologies. It explains the procedures to be followed to complete the research. This section includes information on the design and the target population. This chapter discusses the sample and the sampling tools. The method for collecting data and analyzing are also covered in chapter three.

3.2 Research Design

A research design, according to Paneerselvam (2014), is a framework that researchers use to gather and analyze data. This study employed a descriptive survey approach to assess the data collected from the target population. A descriptive survey methodology can be used to describe study variables, as asserted by Creswell and Creswell (2017). To determine how talent management practices effect employee engagement in PSFs, this study adopted a descriptive research design.

3.3 Target Population

A population is made up of every element and individuals with observable commonalities from which conclusions can be drawn (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The target population for the study was five PSF, namely: PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Deloitte East Africa, Ernst & Young (EY) Kenya, KPMG Kenya and Grant Thornton Kenya. The study targets the five companies since they are the largest PSFs in Kenya. Moreover, the five companies deal in offering professional service an implication that talent management practices are essential to the firms.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling approach was adopted for this study. This implies that the researcher sampled the individuals relevant to providing the required data for the study. Using purposive sampling, the researcher targeted 30 employees from each of the five PSFs; therefore, 150 employees made up the sample. Moreover, the employees were randomly selected across the departments. This ensured that data is collected from all departments in the firms, hence ensuring the collection of adequate data that was representative of the five PSFs.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

A structured questionnaire was developed to gather primary data. There were two parts to the questionnaire. The first section recorded demographic information about the participants while the second section collected information on the variables of the study. The questionnaire was developed with the understanding that research participants would be literate and capable of providing correct answers.

In this era of technology, the researcher sent the respondents in the five PSFs google forms to fill in the questionnaires. This helped save on cost of travelling to each of the firms to collect the data. To capture a high response rate, the researcher reminded the respondents to fill in the questionnaires by making phone calls and sending emails.

3.5.1 Validity of the instruments

Both content validity and face validity were used in this investigation. To ensure proper coverage of crucial elements of the study's variables, content validity was evaluated. To make sure the questionnaire appears to be assessing the relevant constructs, face validity was assessed. By inviting specialists from the respondents to participate in the pilot test, face validity was proven. Additionally, face validity was gained by discussing the research tools produced with the academic supervisors. The research instruments were improved based on the feedback from the academic advisors.

3.5.2 Reliability of the instruments

Internal consistency of a measurement, based on the procedure for data collection and interpretation, is the emphasis of reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was employed to assess

the instruments' reliability. Reliability increases as alpha increases, which ranges from 0 to 1. It is advised to aim for a coefficient above 0.7 because this denotes an effective and trustworthy research tool.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The first step in the data analysis process was the editing of the survey responses. This step involves carefully reviewing the completed surveys to identify and, to the greatest extent possible, correct any errors, informational gaps, or other problems. After data editing, the responses to closed-ended questions were coded and entered into the SPSS software program to undertake statistical analysis.

Both descriptive and inferential analysis was used in the investigation. Inferential analysis seeks to assess hypotheses, whereas descriptive analysis seeks to provide meaningful descriptions of the research variables. Descriptive statistics reveal the central tendency and dispersion using the mean. Measures of dispersion revealed how a variable's data points are spread out around the true average value. To present these statistical findings, tables were used.

The regression model that was adopted is presented below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \varepsilon$$

Y= Employee engagement

β_0 = Constant

X_1 = Learning and Development

X_2 = Talent Recruitment

X_3 = Performance Management

X_4 = Career Planning

X_5 = Succession Planning

$\beta_1 - \beta_5$ = the regression coefficients or changes in Y brought about by the independent variable.

ε is the random error term that takes into consideration every other element that influences employee engagement but is left out of the model.

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine the significance level of the variance and to assess whether there existed any significant differences between the study variables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The findings of the research are presented in this section. It first provides a brief overview of the response rate that was attained before delving into specifics regarding the respondents' demographic composition. The variables used in the study are then further described. The inferential statistical results are then presented and correlated with the goal of the study in this chapter.

4.2. Response Rate

150 employees from five PSFs in Kenya (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Deloitte East Africa, Ernst & Young (EY) Kenya, KPMG Kenya, and Grant Thornton Kenya) were sampled for this study. 121 (80.7%) of the sample population participated in the research while 29 (19.3%) of the employees did not take part in the study. According to Morton et al. (2012), obtaining a response rate of 60% or more is necessary to conduct research that is considered scientifically acceptable; hence this particular response rate is remarkable. As a result, it was determined that the response rate attained in this study was sufficient. It is imperative to emphasize that the increased response rate is directly attributable to the steadfast commitment and ceaseless work of the researcher in reminding the respondents to answer the questionnaire via email.

4.3. Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability shows the level to which research instruments faithfully capture the main concepts being examined (Sham & Azmi, 2018). Cronbach's alpha was the statistic utilized in this study to assess reliability. According to current scholarly opinion, an internal consistency score of 0.7 for Cronbach's alpha is adequate to evaluate the instruments. The results are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1: Reliability Test Results

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Learning and Development	10	0.79	Reliable
Talent Recruitment	8	0.80	Reliable
Performance Management	6	0.81	Reliable
Career Planning	8	0.76	Reliable
Succession Planning	6	0.74	Reliable
Employee Engagement	15	0.79	Reliable

Table 4.1 indicates that all of the study's variables satisfied the internal consistency standards, as indicated by Table 4.1's results. According to Lang et al. (2018), the Cronbach's alpha values demonstrated the study method's dependability, falling between 0.7 and 0.9. Because of this reliability investigation, every survey item was confirmed to be consistent and valid.

4.4. Demographic Characteristics of the employees

The participants' demographic data is shown in this section. Data was collected on age, gender, length of employment in PSFs, and highest degree of education acquired.

4.4.1 1 Gender of the employees

Table 4.2 details the gender distribution of the employees from the PSFs from whom data was collected.

Table 4. 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	69	57.0
Female	52	43.0
Total	121	100.00

According to the data in Table 4.2, out of the 121 respondents, 57% were male, while 43% were female. The analysis shows that the disparity between the number of males and female respondents was not very wide an indication that the gender distribution in these PSFs is almost equal.

4.3.3 Age of the employees

The researcher collected data about the respondents' age. The findings are showcased in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4. 3: Age of the employees

No. of Years	No. of respondent	Percentage
Less than 20 years	9	7.4
20 – 29 years	18	14.9
30 – 39 years	42	34.7
40 – 49 years	30	24.8
Over 50 years	22	18.2
Total	121	100

Table 4.3 shows that all age groups were represented in this study. The results indicate that 34.7% of the employees are between the ages of 30-39. This implies that most of employees for the PSFs were at the height of their careers. It's also important to note that all age categories are well represented: people in the 20–29 and 40–49 age groups make up 14.9% and 24.8% of the total, respectively, while people under 20 and over 50 make

up 7.4% and 18.2% of the total. The respondents under the age of twenty were unpaid volunteers seeking experience. This represented the PSFs' dedication to serving as mentors to the next generation.

4.3.3 Highest Level of Education

The researcher collected data about the respondents' highest level of education. The results are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4. 4: Highest Level of Education

No. of Years	No. of respondent	Percentage
Secondary	9	7.4
College	25	20.7
Undergraduate	41	33.9
Masters	36	29.7
Doctoral	10	8.3
Total	121	100

The educational backgrounds of 121 respondents from the five sampled PSFs are presented in Table 4.4. 20.7% had earned a college diploma, 41.3% had completed undergraduate studies, 29.7% had a master's degree, and 8.3% had a doctorate. Only 7.4% of the employees had attained a secondary school achievement. This is because, these 9 respondents were volunteers still undertaking their undergraduate studies. The relevance of advanced education within the PSFs is highlighted by the large percentage of responders who have master's degrees, highlighting the value of in-depth subject knowledge.

4.3.4 Length of Time Worked in the PSFs

Data on the length of time worked in the PSFs by the respondents was collected. The findings are exhibited on Table 4.5 below.

Table 4. 5: Length of Time Worked in the PSFs

No. of Years	No. of respondent	Percentage
Under 1 year	15	12.5
1-5 years	50	41.3
6-10 years	36	29.7
Above 10 years	20	16.5
Total	121	100

Table 4.5 reveals that 41.3% of respondents had one to five years of experience working for PSFs. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of the employees—12.5% had less than a year of experience working for these companies. These results imply that a majority of the employees had over a year's worth of experience, having worked in the PSFs. They were probably able to supply relevant and thorough data for the study through the questionnaires because of their experience.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

This section provides a detailed exploration of the study variables, which include; employee engagement and talent management practices. By using frequencies and percentages, this section seeks to show how these variables exhibit themselves. To do this, an in-depth analysis of each study variable is presented in this section.

4.4.1 Employee Engagement

The dependent variable of the study was employee engagement. Descriptive data was collected using a Likert scale and presented on Table 4.6.

Table 4. 6: Employee Engagement in PSFs

Statement	N	MEAN	SD
I am highly motivated to contribute to the success of this organization.	121	3.64	0.77
I feel a strong sense of loyalty to this organization.	121	5.00	0.00
I feel I fit in well with the culture of this organization.	121	4.03	0.50
I am passionate about the work I do here.	121	3.85	0.41
I intend on working for the company for many years	121	4.07	0.48
I always report to work on a daily basis	121	4.13	0.82
I always go the extra mile to achieve the best possible outcomes in my job.	121	4.07	0.91
Average		4.08	

The analysis in Table 4.6 shows that all the employees agreed that they have a stronger loyalty to their respective PSFs (Mean = 5.00; SD = 0.00). Additionally, the findings show that the employees always report to work on a daily basis (Mean = 4.13; SD = 0.82) and that they intend to work for the PSFs for many years (Mean = 4.07; SD = 0.48). Majority of the employees also agreed to the statement “I always go the extra mile to achieve the best possible outcomes in my job (Mean = 4.07; SD = 0.91). With reference to the PSFs culture, the employees agreed that they fit well with the culture of their respective organizations (Mean = 4.03; SD = 0.50). Additionally, the employees agreed that they are passionate about the work they do in the PSFs (Mean = 3.85; SD = 0.41) and that they are highly motivated to contribute to the success of this organization (Mean = 3.64; SD = 0.77).

The analysis implies that the employees of the PSFs are highly engaged in their day-to-day operations. This is evidenced by the fact that there is high levels of loyalty, high levels of motivation and a feeling of culture fit among most of employees. Employees at PSF in Kenya are also passionate about work and are always willing to go an extra mile to achieve outcomes.

The researcher also asked the respondents whether they would recommend the companies as good places to work to other people. This was essential in assessing whether the working environment influenced employee engagement. The results are shown on Figure 4.1 below

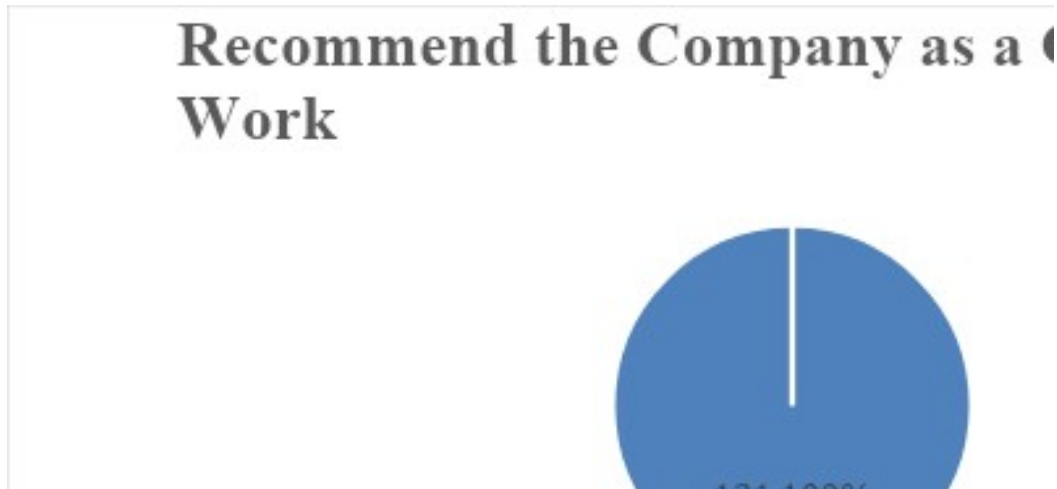


Figure 4. 1: Recommend the Company as a Good Place to Work

Figure 4.1 above shows that all of the employees (100%) were of the opinion that they would recommend the company to other people. This shows that the working environment in the PSFs in Kenya is conducive hence explaining the employee engagement

4.4.2 Talent Management Practices and Employee Engagement

4.4.2.1 Learning and Development

Learning and development is a practice of talent management. The employees were asked to respond to whether the PSFs had implemented initiatives of learning and development. The findings were presented on Figure 4.2 below

Knowledge on Any Training Programs Offered by the PSFs

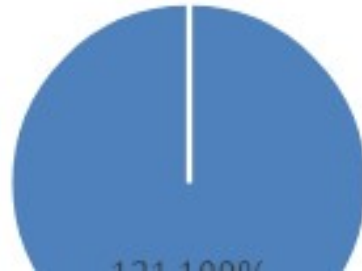


Figure 4. 2: Knowledge of Any Training Programs Offered by the PSFs

Figure 4.2 presents data indicating that all respondents were aware of the training programs offered by PSFs. This understanding may have resulted from the compulsory training that all personnel must complete prior to beginning work with the PSFs. A follow-up question about the respondents' satisfaction with these training programs was also asked of them; the results are shown in Figure 4.3 below.

Satisfied with the Training Programs Offered by the PSFs

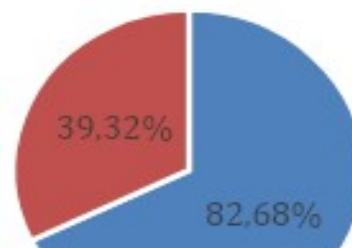


Figure 4. 3: Satisfaction with the Training Programs Offered by the PSFs

The findings on Figure 4.3 above show that 68% of the employees were happy and satisfied with the training programs. The respondents indicated that the training programs offered by the PSFs were relevant and helped them undertake their day-to-day tasks with ease. The 32% respondents who indicated that they were not satisfied with the training programs offered alluded that the PSFs could do more in ensuring that the training

programs not only align to organizational objectives but the career aspirations of the employees to facilitate greater employee engagement.

To understand the relevance of the training offered, the employees were asked to indicate the extent to which the PSFs supported the individual developmental goals and needs. The results were presented on Figure 4.4 below.



Figure 4. 4: Organizational Support for Individual Developmental Needs and Wants

Figure 4.4 showed that 32% of the employees believed that the support from the PSFs for individual developmental needs and wants were poor while 63.6% of the employees believed that the support from the organizations on individual developmental needs and wants were well implemented. This disparity indicates that the PSFs need to put more effort to meet individualized developmental needs and wants to promote higher levels of employee engagement.

Using Likert scale statements, data on the variable learning and development was collected. The findings are show in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4. 7: Learning and Development

Statement	N	MEAN	SD
The training and development opportunities provided by the company have enhanced my job-related skills.	121	4.73	0.45
I feel more confident in applying the skills acquired through learning and development programs in my daily tasks.	121	4.82	0.39
The training and development programs have significantly expanded my knowledge in my area of expertise	121	5.00	0.00
The company's efforts to enhance my knowledge have positively influenced my understanding of our organization's goals and strategies	121	4.03	0.52
The feedback received during and after training sessions has been valuable in improving my learning experience	121	3.85	0.65
The company demonstrates a genuine interest in gathering feedback from employees to enhance the effectiveness of training programs	121	2.04	1.16
I am comfortable expressing my thoughts and opinions regarding the training content and delivery.	121	3.96	0.77
Average		4.06	

The analysis in table 4.7 above shows that employees strongly agree that training and development has enhanced their job skills (Mean = 4.73: SD = 0.45) and that training and development has greatly improved their confidence in applying the skills acquired (Mean = 4.82: SD = 0.39). Employees also strongly agree that the Programmes significantly expanded their knowledge in their respective areas of expertise (Mean = 5.00: SD = 0.00) and that the company's efforts to enhance the employees' knowledge have positively influenced their understanding of the organization's goals and strategies (Mean = 4.03: SD = 0.52). The employee agree that feedback received during and after training sessions has been valuable in improving their learning experience (Mean = 3.85: SD = 0.65) and that they are comfortable expressing their thought regarding content delivery (Mean = 3.96: SD = 0.77).

However, the respondents felt that organizations did not demonstrate a genuine interest in gathering feedback from employees to enhance the effectiveness of training programs, as shown by mean of 2.04 and SD of 1.16. The SD is greater than one and hence there was disparity in the responses.

From this analysis, it can be concluded that employees perceive training and development as a talent management practice in PSF in Kenya as effective except in regard to gathering feedback.

4.4.2.2 Talent Recruitment

Secondly, the study evaluated talent recruitment as a talent management practice. To provide a better description of talent recruitment as practices in PSFs in Nairobi, Kenya, Likert scale questions were used to collect data. The outcomes are showcased in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4. 8: Talent Recruitment

Statement	N	MEAN	SD
The competitive compensation packages offered during the recruitment positively influenced my decision to join the PSF.	121	5.00	0.00
The company's commitment to fair and attractive remuneration has increased my job satisfaction and motivation	121	3.63	0.49
The compensation and benefits provided by the company have contributed to my sense of loyalty towards the organization	121	4.25	0.43
The company's emphasis on diversity during the recruitment process has fostered an inclusive work environment.	121	3.64	0.98
The presence of diverse talents within the company has enriched my overall work experience.	121	3.64	0.77
The focus on employee competencies has helped me to grow and develop within my role.	121	4.74	0.44
The company's commitment to hiring based on competencies aligns with its overall performance-oriented culture	121	3.87	0.34
The competency-driven selection process has resulted in a high-performing workforce, positively impacting the company's success	121	5.00	0.00
Average		4.22	

The results presented in Table 4.8 shows that all of the employees agreed that the competitive compensation packages offered during the recruitment positively influenced my decision to join the PSF and that the competency-driven recruitment process has resulted in high-performing workforce positively impacting the company's success (Mean = 5.00; SD = 0.00). Additionally, the employees agreed that that their sense of loyalty towards the organization was contributed by the compensation and benefits provided (Mean = 4.25; SD = 0.43). This finding was backed up by the employees who agreed that the fair and attractive remuneration has increased their job satisfaction and motivation (Mean = 3.63; SD = 0.49). The results show that the employees agreed that the focus on employee competencies has helped them to grow and develop within their roles in the PSFs (Mean = 4.74; SD = 0.44). Further, the findings show that the company's commitment to hiring based on competencies aligns with its overall performance-oriented culture (Mean = 3.87; SD = 0.34). With reference to diversity, the respondents agreed that the company's emphasis on diversity during the recruitment process has fostered an inclusive work environment (Mean = 3.64; SD = 0.98) and that the presence of diverse talents within the company has enriched my overall work experience (Mean = 3.64; SD = 0.77).

The analysis imply that the PSFs adopted talent recruitment as a talent management practices. The PSFs focused on competencies, compensation and benefits, and diversity during talent recruitment. Therefore, this study concluded that the PSFs have implemented talent recruitment as an effective practice of talent management.

4.4.2.3 Performance Management

Thirdly, the study evaluated performance management as an indicator of talent management practices. The employees were asked to indicate the frequency in which they received feedback on their performance. The results are highlighted on Figure 4.5 below;

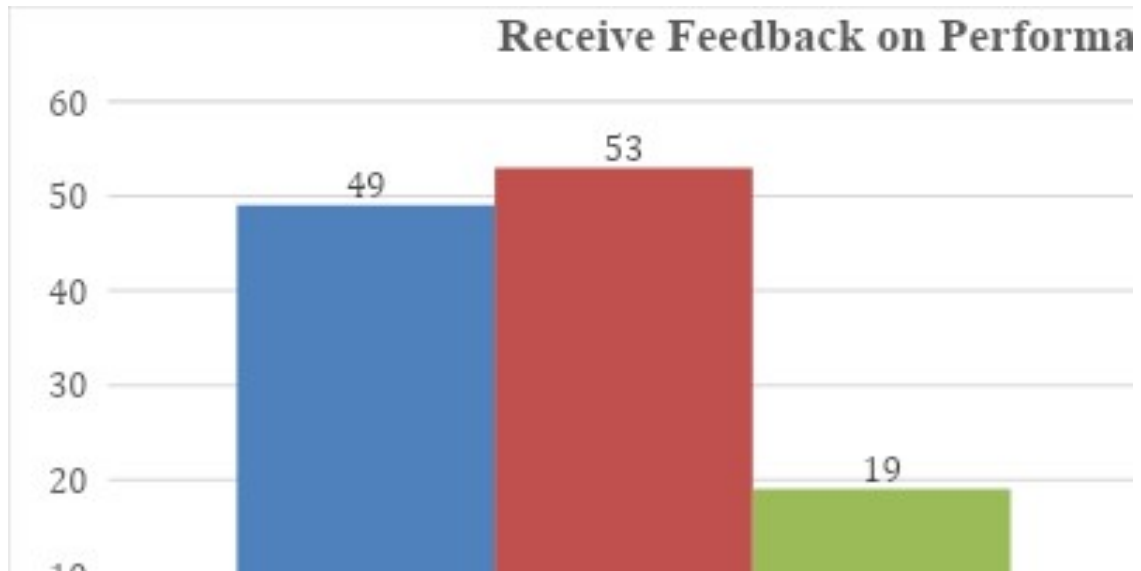


Figure 4. 5: Receive Feedback on Performance

The findings presented on Figure 4.5 show that 84.3% of the PSFs' employees indicated that they often received feedback on their performance. 15.7% of the employees were neutral about receiving feedback on their performance. This finding indicates that feedback on performance is generally given in the PSFs.

Additionally. The respondents were presented with statements on performance management as an element of talent management and were asked to show their level of agreement in the context of the PSFs. The findings are presented on Table 4.9 below.

Table 4. 9: Performance Management

Statement	N	MEAN	SD
The performance management process helps me set clear and achievable goals for my role.	121	5.00	0.00
The performance management process recognizes and rewards goal attainment, which enhances my job satisfaction.	121	3.63	0.49
The KPIs used to measure my performance are relevant and meaningful to my role.	121	4.25	0.43
The performance management process includes benchmarking against industry best practices.	121	3.64	0.98
The organization's commitment to benchmarking demonstrates a dedication to continuous improvement.	121	3.64	0.77
Average		4.03	

The results presented in Table 4.9 show that all of the employees strongly agreed that the performance management process helps them set clear and achievable goals for their respective roles (Mean = 5.00; SD = 0.00). Additionally, the employees strongly agreed that the KPIs used to measure their performance are relevant and meaningful (Mean = 4.25; SD = 0.43). The employees also agreed that the performance management process includes benchmarking against industry best practices (Mean = 3.64; SD = 0.98) and that the PSFs' commitment towards benchmarking demonstrates a dedication to continuous improvement (Mean = 3.64; SD = 0.77). The employees also agreed that the performance management process recognizes and rewards goal attainment, which enhances their job satisfaction (Mean = 3.63; SD = 0.49).

From the analysis it can be concluded that the PSFs have adopted performance management as a practice of talent management. The PSFs has been effective in implementing performance management as indicated by the consensus of the employees that the KPIs used by the organizations are relevant and meaningful to the employees' respective roles.

4.4.2.4 Career Planning

Career planning was the fourth talent management practice that was assessed for this study. The respondents were asked to indicate whether their career goals were aligned to the organization objectives. The results obtained are presented on Figure 4.6 below

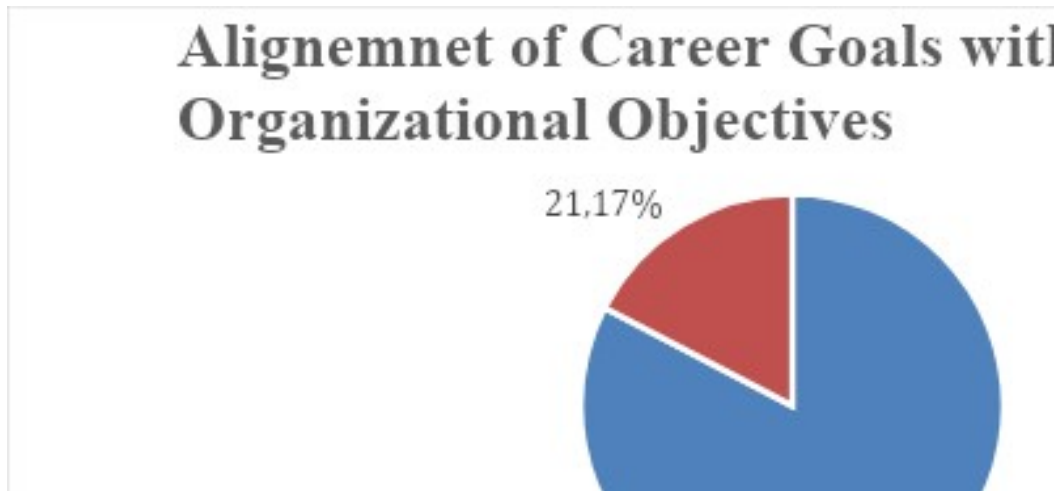


Figure 4. 6: Alignment of Career Goals with Organizational Objectives

Figure 4.6 indicates that 83% of the employees believed that their career goals were aligned with the organization objectives. This was because the employees enjoyed their work and felt a sense of belonging within the organizations. The respondents were also asked if they had mentors who were guiding them towards their career path. Figure 4.7 presents the results.

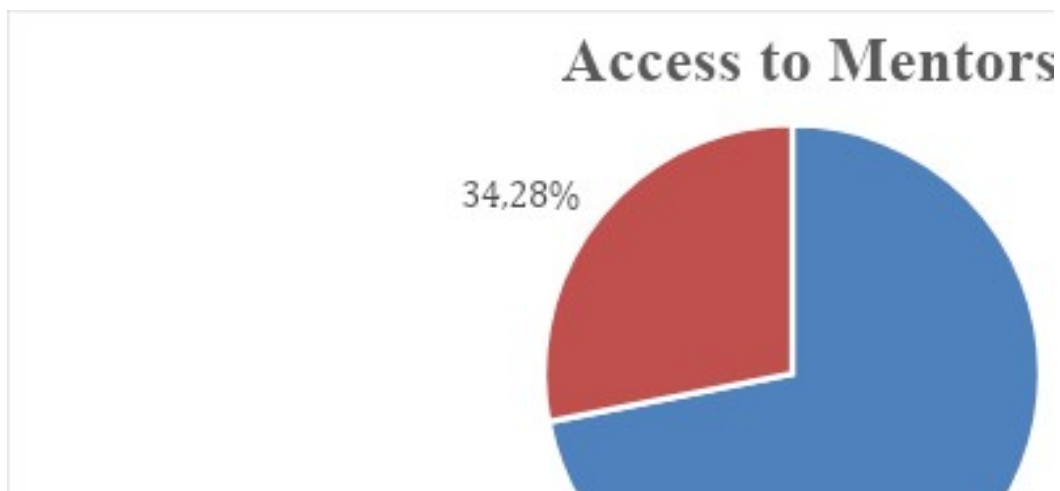


Figure 4. 7: Access to Mentors

Figure 4.7 indicates that 72% of the employees reported that they have access to mentors. This is an indication that the employees understood the importance of mentors in propelling their careers. Further, the respondent who revealed to having mentors, indicated that the mentors guided them in making the correct career decisions.

Data on the perception of the employees towards career planning was gathered using a likert scale and findings presented on Table 4.10 below.

Table 4. 10: Career Planning

Statement	N	MEAN	SD
The availability of mentorship programs has positively impacted my career development.	121	4.02	0.71
The mentorship program fosters a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization	121	4.37	0.49
The company's investment in training and development has enhanced my skills and knowledge.	121	5.00	0.00
The training opportunities provided align well with my career aspirations and interests.	121	3.97	0.53
The company's focus on employee training reflects its commitment to nurturing talent.	121	4.82	0.39
Average		4.44	

The results presented in Table 4.10 focus on career planning as implemented by the PSFs. The findings show that in regard to training, all of the employees agreed that the company's investment in training and development has enhanced their skills and knowledge (Mean = 5.00; SD = 0.00). Additionally, the findings reveal that the training opportunities provided were aligned with the employees' aspirations and interests (Mean = 3.97; SD = 0.53) and that the PSFs' focus on employee training reflected on its commitment to nurturing talent (Mean = 4.82; SD = 0.39). The findings also showed that the respondents agreed that the availability of mentorship programs has positively impacted on the employees' development (Mean = 4.02; SD = 0.71) and that the

mentorship program fosters loyalty and belonging to the organization (Mean = 4.37; SD = 0.49).

The analysis imply that the PSFs have implemented career planning by offering training and mentorship programs that are aligned with the employees' aspirations and dreams. Therefore, this study concluded that the PSFs have been effective in implementing career planning as a practice of talent management.

4.4.2.5 Succession Planning

The also assessed succession planning as a talent management practice. The findings are presented on Table 4.11 below.

Table 4. 11: Succession Planning

Statement	N	MEAN	SD
The succession planning process identifies and grooms high-potential employees effectively.	121	4.64	0.48
Succession planning makes me feel more invested in the long-term success of the company.	121	3.74	1.27
The knowledge transfer initiatives enable the smooth transition of responsibilities during leadership changes.	121	4.27	0.45
The organization recognizes and rewards employees for actively participating in knowledge transfer activities	121	4.42	0.49
Knowledge transfer ensures organizational continuity and minimizes disruptions during leadership transitions.	121	4.26	0.44
The opportunity for internal promotions motivates me to excel in my current role.	121	5.00	0.00
Average		4.39	

Table 4.11 reveals that the employees agreed with the statement that the succession planning process identifies and grooms high-potential employees effectively (Mean = 4.64; SD = 0.48). This succession planning according to the employees results in

organizational continuity and minimizes disruptions during leadership transitions (Mean = 4.26; SD = 0.44). The employees also agreed that knowledge transfer initiatives enable the smooth transition of responsibilities during leadership changes (Mean = 4.27; SD = 0.45) and that the organization recognizes and rewards employees for actively participating in knowledge transfer activities (Mean = 4.42; SD = 0.49). All of the employees strongly agreed that the opportunity for internal promotions motivates me to excel in my current role (Mean = 5.00; SD = 0.00). However, the findings show a disparity in the statement that succession planning makes me feel more invested in the long-term success of the company (Mean = 3.74; SD = 1.27). Although, the employees agreed with the statement, the high standard deviation that is above 1 indicates a disparity in opinions.

The analysis imply that the PSFs have effectively adopted and embraced succession planning as a practice of talent management through internal promotions and grooming high potential employees.

The respondents were also asked to make recommendations that the PSFs could adopt to improve talent management. Figure 4.8 presents the results.

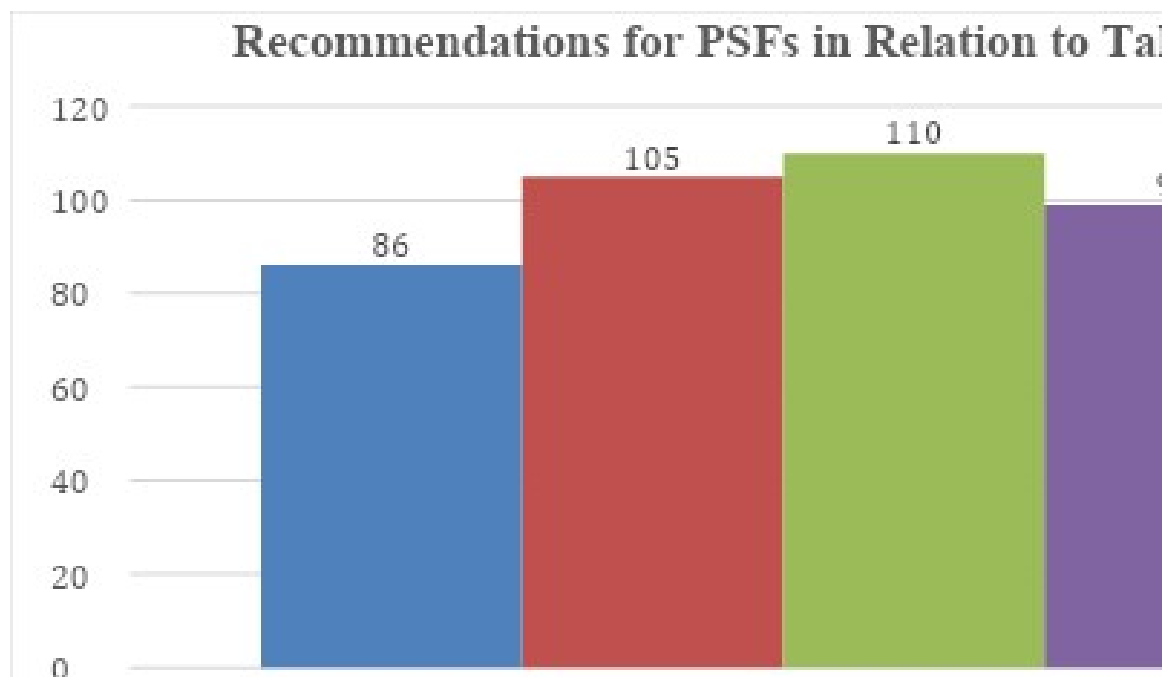


Figure 4. 8: Recommendations for PSFs in Relation to Talent Management

The results presented in Figure 4.8 indicates that 90.9%of the employees recommended that the PSFs should encourage better work-life balance, followed by providing clearer career paths (86.8%), provide frequent feedback (81.8%) and ensure more training programs (71.1%). The high percentage (90.9%) of respondents advocating for the encouragement of better work-life balance underscores the prevalent issue of potential overwork and stress within these firms.

4.5 Regression Analysis

The relationship between the research variables was assessed using a multiple regression model. The objective of this analytical approach was to assess the relationships between employee engagement, learning and development, talent recruitment, performance management, career planning and succession planning. The multiple regression analysis made it easier to determine the coefficients associated with the variables under investigation. These coefficients were crucial in assessing how well differences in the independent variables; learning and development, talent recruitment, performance management, career planning and succession planning could account for variations in the dependent variable, employee engagement. In Table 4.12, the model summary is displayed.

Table 4. 12:Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.851	0.725	0.713	0.335

Source: Research, 2023

Table 4.12 shows that the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.725, indicating that the combined effects of learning and development, talent recruitment, performance management, career planning, and succession planning account for 72.5% of the variability in employee engagement in PSFs. However, 27.5% variation in employee engagement cannot be explained; this raises the possibility that other variables were not included in this study. It is advised that more investigation be conducted into these

unknown reasons that caused the difference of 27.5% and how they might impact employee engagement in PSFs.

To ascertain the significance of the regression model, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed as a stage in the regression analysis procedure. Table 4.13 presents the ANOVA results and illustrates how well the regression model explains the observed variances in employee engagement.

Table 4. 13: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.2145	5	18.0429	60.7487	0.001
	Residual	34.156	115	0.2970		
	Total	124.3705	120			

The obtained significance value of 0.001, smaller than the preset threshold of 0.05, indicates a relationship between the independent variables and the target variable. It was also found that the critical F value was 2.29 at a 5% significance level. The calculated F value was 60.74 signified the statistical relevance of the model in this study. The coefficient table was utilized to investigate the dynamics of the study variable in more detail.

Table 4. 14: Coefficient of Determination

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	1.546	0.512		3.020	0.003
	Learning and development	0.812	0.215	0.401	1.916	0.000
	Talent recruitment	0.784	0.087	0.296	4.414	0.000
	Performance	0.623	0.098	0.211	2.276	0.000

management					
Career planning	0.723	0.074	0.246	5.716	0.000
Succession planning	0.787	0.034	0.193	8.441	0.000

Source: Research, (2023)

The following equation was generated based on the results on Table 4.12.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon$$

$$Y = 1.546 + 0.812 X_1 + 0.784 X_2 + 0.623 X_3 + 0.787 X_4 + 0.723 X_5 + \varepsilon$$

The results showed that as independent variables, learning and development, talent recruitment, performance management, career planning, and succession planning had a substantial impact on employee engagement at the PSFs. The regression coefficient for employee engagement was 1.546 when all other factors were held constant. Additionally, the study found that, when all other independent variables were held constant, a one-unit increase in learning and development was associated with a 0.812 rise in employee engagement in the PSFs. In addition, the employee engagement increased by 0.784 for a unit increase in talent recruitment, by 0.623 for a unit increase in performance management, by 0.787 for a unit increase in career planning and by 0.723 for a unit increase in succession planning. The results also showed to be statistically significant using a 95% confidence interval and a 5% significance threshold. These findings align with results by Karimi (2019) and Rahmany, (2018) who established that talent management practices have a positive effect on employee engagement.

4.6 Discussion of the Findings

This section presents a discussion of the findings focusing on the six variables assessed (employee engagement, learning and development, talent recruitment, performance management, career planning and succession planning). The findings are further discussed with reference to relevant literature captured in chapter one and two.

The findings revealed that employee engagement in the PSFs studied was high. This finding is consistent with research by Semi (2022) that highlights loyalty as a key component of organizational commitment. The high sense of loyalty to the PSFs was identified as an indicator of employee engagement. This suggests that the employees were happy with the working environment provided by the PSFs. The result aligns with Tetik and Halil, (2021) concept of "flow" in work environments which results in employee retention.

The findings showed that the employees in PSF attended work daily and they took the extra mile to achieve the best possible outcome while at work. This may have been attributed to the fact that the employees felt that their goals aligned with the culture of the studied. These findings align with results by Elumeze (2020) who indicated that engaged workers are more productive, innovative, more likely to be kept by their company, as well as healthier and like their work more than others. The results also showed that the employees were passionate about their work and were motivated to work towards the success of the organization. These findings show that the. Nonetheless, the results concur with results by Alias et al., (2016) that employee involvement is indicated by good attitudes and actions, reflecting trust, equity, and a fulfilled commitment.

The findings presented on Table 4.7 show that learning and development is essential in contributing to the professional development of employees and in motivating the employees to apply the acquired skills in their day-to-day operations. This finding was consistent with the observations made by Jain and Khurana (2017), who claim that training and development programs boost worker motivation, engagement, and output. Moreover, the results showed that the endorsing training programs increased the knowledge of the employees in their respective areas of competencies. This was also supported by Karimi (2019) who emphasized on the importance of training in employee retention.

Sardinha Ribeiro (2021) highlighted that training initiatives ought to be tailored to each employee's specific requirements. This was evidenced by the results that the employees were able to understand the PSFs objectives and goals due to the learning and development opportunities provided in the company. Moreover, the findings revealed that

more to offering training, it is essential to provide feedback to employees. This is because, through the feedback provided, the employees are able to identify their areas of weaknesses and improve on them hence remain engaged in the organizational operation. This supports results by Najat, (2021) who established that providing learning and development creates a competitive edge for an organization resulting in improved performance.

However, the findings presented on Table 4.7 also show that the employees were disagreed that the PSFs demonstrated a genuine interest in gathering feedback from employees to enhance the effectiveness of training programs. This suggested that there might be a discrepancy between the company's attempts to get input and the staff's perception of the sincerity and efficacy of these initiatives. The finding shed light to the need for the business to reconsider how it obtains and applies feedback to strengthen the legitimacy of its training programs. This is similar to Chovarda's (2021) assertion that improving employee engagement requires development programs.

The result on the extent to which the employees valued their organizations' training and development programs and how the programs helped them grow professionally and engage are in line with the human capital theory, developed by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964). According to this theory, businesses should consider their staff members like assets and invest in their knowledge and abilities. By doing this, businesses can boost employee productivity, which will result in positive rates of return and organizational growth. The conclusions further corroborate the theory's claim that making investments in employees' learning and development leads to better performance, productivity, and innovation, which in turn increases employees' loyalty to the business.

The findings on Table 4.8 show that the PSFs have implemented talent recruitment as a practice of talent management. Based on the results provided, emphasis has been made on ensuring employee competencies during recruitment. Moreover, it was observed that the emphasis on competencies during recruitment helped develop and grow the employees within their respective role in the PSFs and that a performance-centric culture was developed. These findings show the importance of recruiting employees based on competencies to perform different roles. The findings concur with authors Milburn's

(2021); Rahmany (2018); and Abdollahbeigi et al. (2017) who established that talent recruitment processes that focus on employee competencies create opportunities for employee engagement thus facilitating organizational success.

Further, the findings established that compensation and benefits during talent recruitment also played a critical role in PSFs. Based on the findings presented on Table 4.8, compensation packages positively influenced the decisions of the employees to join the company. Moreover, the compensation packages fueled employee loyalty and increased employee job satisfaction. These results aligns with findings by Argwal (2018) who established that fair compensation is an essential aspect of talent recruitment. Moreover, According to Homans' (1958) Social Exchange Theory (SET), people go into partnerships with the expectation of reaping benefits. Therefore, an organization can ensure employee engagement by offering competitive compensation packages as a talent management practice.

The concept of diversity was also identified as critical during talent recruitment. The findings showed that the PSFs emphasized on workforce diversity during recruitment hence providing an inclusive working environment and that the employees had a good working experience in a company where diversity is encouraged. These findings shed light into the importance of acknowledging and appreciating diversity of different employees during the recruitment process. The finding concurs with Rahmany (2018) who established that effective talent recruitment encompasses acknowledgement of employee diversity.

The results presented in Table 4.9 showed that performance management is an important practice since it allows employees to set clear and achievable goals with reference to their respective roles. This result is consistent with Semi (2022), who stressed the value of well-defined performance objectives in raising employee engagement. A key component of a successful performance management system is the ability to articulate clear, attainable objectives, which the organizations appear to have done well based on the consistency of the responses. Moreover, the findings show that the KPIs adopted by the PSFs were meaningful and relevant. According to Hiremath (2017), this pattern indicates a conformity to industry norms, which is necessary to improve job performance. Further,

relevant KPIs provide a connection between everyday activities and the overall business objectives.

The study also found that the PSFs benchmarked performance against industry best practices showing their commitment towards continuous improvement. This suggests that performance management is a vital practice of talent management since it not only promotes employee engagement but also paves way for improved organization performance. These findings were similar to outcomes by Elumeze's (2020); and Hiremath's (2017) who established that performance management drives employee engagement and commitment towards organization success.

The findings presented on Table 4.10 indicate that the employees appreciated the mentorship programs provided in the PSFs creating a sense of loyalty and belonging to the organizations. This demonstrates that mentoring is a crucial component of career progression initiatives, which is consistent with Abubakarr's (2014) emphasis on the significance of career planning through mentorship programs as a driver of employee engagement. This finding is further supported by Lartey (2021), who points out that career planning has a major influence on employee engagement and that this impact can be increased by well-organized mentoring.

Additionally, the results showed that training was adopted by the PSFs as a metric of career planning. Based on the findings presented on Table 4.10, training offered by the organizations built on the employees' skills and knowledge. Moreover, it was noted that for career planning to be effective, the training needs to be aligned with the interests and aspirations of the employees. These results are similar to observations made by Jia-Jun and Hua-Ming (2022) that career planning as implemented through training is critical in ensuring the involvement of employees. The findings also indicate that the commitment to nurturing talent by the PSFs was evidenced by the organizations' willingness to offer training to its employees. This supports Waweru's (2022) assertion that career management practices, including training are vital for employee engagement and motivation.

The findings presented in Table 4.11 show that the succession planning process in the PSFs successfully identifies and develops high-potential personnel. This is consistent with the research conducted by Rotich and Kiiru (2021), which showed that succession planning significantly improved employee performance in Nairobi City County's public sector. The findings also indicated that knowledge transfer initiatives promote a smooth transition. Furthermore, the findings showed that rewards and recognition for knowledge transfer participation were also well-received by the staff, indicating that the organization's efforts in this area are well-received by the staff and may help foster a culture of ongoing learning and sharing. These findings align with outcomes by Gulzar and Durrani's (2014) that succession planning ensures long-term continuity of an organization.

The findings also showed that the employees felt that the possibility of internal promotions may serve as motivation for better employee commitment. This demonstrates the vital role that possibilities for career progression have in inspiring workers, which is consistent with research by Tunje (2015) that links staff retention to efficient succession planning. Additionally, the support for clearer career paths indicates the need for greater transparency and direction in career advancement. This finding concurs with research by Karimi (2019) who established that talent management practices improve employee engagement. This is also supported by Johnson (2020) who emphasized the benefit of succession planning for raising employee engagement and suggested that better succession planning initiatives should be adopted to improve employee engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings are summarized, and inferences are derived from the study's findings. Building on these findings, specific actionable recommendations are provided to address the opportunities and problems identified in the study. The suggestions serve as a catalyst, bridging the knowledge gap between the research's theoretical and practical applications and guaranteeing that the knowledge gained is translated into workable solutions for all stakeholders.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This study collected data from employees from five PSFs in Kenya. The demographic data collected revealed that there were more male employees than female employees in the PSFs. Moreover, majority of the employees were of age group 30-39 years, followed by 40 – 49 years. The least represented age group was under 20 years. Notably, it is worth noting that all age groups were represented in the study. With reference to educational background, majority of the employees had attained undergraduate studies followed by a master's level. The least represented educational level was the doctorate. The study also revealed that majority of the employees had worked for the PSFs for 1-5 years.

Employee engagement was the dependent variable of this study. The study found that the employees of the PSFs are highly engaged in their daily operations. This is demonstrated by the high levels of loyalty, high levels of motivation, feeling of culture fit among most of employees, and employees are passionate about work. Moreover, the study found that the employees at PSF are always willing to go an extra mile to achieve outcomes. In summary, the working environment in the PSFs in Kenya is conducive hence explaining the employee engagement.

Talent management practices was the independent variable of this study. The talent management practices surveyed for the study were learning and development, talent recruitment, performance management, career planning and succession planning.

The study found out that of the training programs offered by the PSFs in Kenya were relevant and helped them undertake their day-to-day tasks with ease. Moreover, the employees perceived training and development as a talent management practice in PSF in Kenya as effective except in regard to gathering feedback. The study also found that the PSFs had effectively adopted talent recruitment as a talent management practice. In addition, the study indicated that the PSFs has been effective in implementing performance management as indicated by the consensus of the employees that the KPIs used by the organizations are relevant and meaningful to the employees' respective roles. Further, the study found that the PSFs have implemented career planning by offering training and mentorship programs that are aligned with the employees' aspirations and interests. The study also concluded that the succession planning strategies adopted by the PSFs have been effective, however, it is potent for the organization to ensure that the strategies adopted motivate the employees to perform better towards the success of the organization.

The purpose of the study was to assess the effect of talent management practices on employee engagement. The regression findings showed that talent management practices (as measured by learning and development, talent recruitment, performance management, career planning and succession planning) each had a positive and significant effect on employee engagement in PSFs in Kenya.

5.3 Conclusions

This study sheds light on the complex interplay between talent management practices and employee engagement in PSFs. The study demonstrated the necessity of verifying the legitimacy of feedback systems and emphasized the value of competency-based hiring and strategic talent acquisition in developing a productive workforce. Additionally, the study established the importance of performance management in establishing specific objectives and recognizes the discrepancy in rewards recognition, indicating opportunities for development in these PSFs. In promoting talent management practices, the study called for individualized training opportunities while acknowledging the alignment of employee aspirations with business objectives and the beneficial influence of mentorship. Furthermore, the consensus on the need of succession planning shows its

imperativeness in providing a legacy of knowledge transfer and ongoing learning. The study built on the human capital theory by confirming its assumption that promoting talent management practices improves employee engagement and by extension the organization performance. Grounded on the human capital theory, the study issues a challenge to PSFs to take these realizations to heart and pave the way for even higher employee engagement and organizational success.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

This study recommends that companies should create more efficient and open feedback mechanisms that show how they genuinely use employee input to enhance training initiatives. A structured feedback loop where employee suggestions are incorporated into program enhancements visible could be implemented by enterprises to overcome the distrust indicated by a major portion of employees.

Diversity in hiring is in the study as a critical element in talent recruitment. However, there is still room for improvement in these procedures' efficacy. PSFs should evaluate their diversity programs in-depth to make sure they are not only present but also successfully fostering an inclusive work environment.

Moreover, although training programs are well appreciated, there is room for improvement in terms of their alignment with individual professional goals. Employees could be given the opportunity to choose training modules that align with their goals for professional development through the introduction of personalized career development plans.

The study also recommends that performance management procedures need to be applied more consistently and with greater clarity. Companies want to think about educating managers on how to provide constructive criticism and make sure that awards and recognition are directly related to the set KPIs.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Subsequent studies ought to explore the reasons behind the skepticism of some Professional Service Firm (PSF) personnel about the use of their input in training initiatives, maybe utilizing qualitative approaches to gain more profound understanding.

Research on the effects of career planning and mentoring over time might be longitudinal, and more study on succession planning could provide insight into raising employee engagement and investment. The understanding of human resource strategies and their significance to corporate success would grow as a result of these investigations.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AT PSFs

This research seeks to assess the effect of talent management practices on employee engagement of PSFs in Nairobi, Kenya. Please take the time to thoroughly read the questions and provide as honest of an answer as you can by checking the appropriate box or entering your response in the area provided after each question. Please do not write your name on this questionnaire.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender

- i. Male []
- ii. Female []

2. What is your age distribution?

- i. Less than 20 years []
- ii. 20 – 29 years []
- iii. 30 – 39 years []
- iv. 40 – 49 years []
- v. 50 and above years []

3. What is your highest Level of education?

- i. Primary []
- ii. Secondary []
- iii. Diploma []
- iv. Degree []
- v. Masters []

4. How many years have you worked in this organization?

- i. Less than 2 years []
- ii. 2 – 5 years []
- iii. 6 – 10 years []
- iv. Above 10 years []

SECTION II: TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Are you aware of the various training and development programs offered by the organization?

- i. Yes []
- ii. No []

6. Are you satisfied are you with the current opportunities for skill development and learning within the organization? (Explain)

7. How well does the organization support your individual development needs and goals?

- i. Very Well []
- ii. Well []
- iii. Neutral []
- iv. Poorly []
- v. Very Poorly []

8. How often do you receive constructive feedback on your performance and progress toward your career goals?

- i. Always []
- ii. Often []
- iii. Sometimes []
- iv. Rarely []
- v. Never []

9. Do you feel that your career goals are aligned with the strategic direction of the organization?

- i. Yes []
- ii. No []

10. Have you had access to mentors or advisors who guide you in your career development?

- i. Yes []
- ii. No []

11. How valuable do you find mentorship or guidance in shaping your career within the organization? Explain.....

12. The following statements relate to talent management practices. To what extent do you agree with each one of them with respect to your organization?

Use a scale of 1-5 below;

Where 1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral 4=Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

Learning and Development	1	2	3	4	5
The training and development opportunities provided by the company have enhanced my job-related skills.					
I feel more confident in applying the skills acquired through learning and development programs in my daily tasks.					
The training and development programs have significantly expanded my knowledge in my area of expertise					
The company's efforts to enhance my knowledge have positively influenced my understanding of our organization's goals and strategies					
The feedback received during and after training sessions has been valuable in improving my learning experience					
The company demonstrates a genuine interest in gathering feedback from employees to enhance the effectiveness of training programs					
I am comfortable expressing my thoughts and opinions regarding the training content and delivery.					
Talent Recruitment and Selection	1	2	3	4	5
The competitive compensation packages offered during the recruitment process positively influenced my decision to join the company.					
The company's commitment to fair and attractive remuneration has increased my job satisfaction and motivation					

The compensation and benefits provided by the company have contributed to my sense of loyalty towards the organization					
The company's emphasis on diversity during the recruitment process has fostered an inclusive and welcoming work environment.					
The presence of diverse talents within the company has enriched my overall work experience.					
The focus on employee competencies has helped me to grow and develop within my role.					
The company's commitment to hiring based on competencies aligns with its overall performance-oriented culture					
The competency-driven selection process has resulted in a high-performing workforce, positively impacting the company's success					
Performance Management	1	2	3	4	5
The performance management process helps me set clear and achievable goals for my role.					
The performance management process recognizes and rewards goal attainment, which enhances my job satisfaction.					
The KPIs used to measure my performance are relevant and meaningful to my role.					
The performance management process includes benchmarking against industry best practices.					
The organization's commitment to benchmarking demonstrates a dedication to continuous improvement.					
Career Planning	1	2	3	4	5
The availability of mentorship programs has positively impacted my career development.					
The mentorship program fosters a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization					
The company's investment in training and development has enhanced my skills and knowledge.					

The training opportunities provided align well with my career aspirations and interests.					
The company's focus on employee training reflects its commitment to nurturing talent.					
Succession Planning	1	2	3	4	5
The succession planning process identifies and grooms high-potential employees effectively.					
Succession planning makes me feel more invested in the long-term success of the company.					
The knowledge transfer initiatives enable the smooth transition of responsibilities during leadership changes.					
The organization recognizes and rewards employees for actively participating in knowledge transfer activities					
Knowledge transfer ensures organizational continuity and minimizes disruptions during leadership transitions.					
The opportunity for internal promotions motivates me to excel in my current role.					
The promotion process is transparent, and feedback is provided to candidates during the evaluation.					

13. The following statements relate to Employee engagement. To what extent do you agree with each one of them with respect to your organization? Use a scale of 1-5 below; Where 1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral 4=Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree

Employee Engagement	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am highly motivated to contribute to the success of this organization.					
2. I feel a strong sense of loyalty to this organization.					
3. I feel I fit in well with the culture of this organization.					

4. I am passionate about the work I do here.					
5. I intend on working for the company for many years					
6. I always report to work on a daily basis					
7. I always go the extra mile to achieve the best possible outcomes in my job.					

14. How likely are you to recommend this organization as a good place to work to others?.....

15. What improvements would you suggest for the company in relation to talent management?

- i. More Training Programs []
- ii. Clearer Career Paths []
- iii. Better Work-Life Balance []
- iv. More Frequent Feedback []
- v. Other (please specify).....

“THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY”

APPENDIX II: INTRODUCTION LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF NAI
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGE

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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Our Ref: D64/65141/2013

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NACOSTI Headquarters
Upper Kabete, Off Waiyaki Way
P. O. Box 30623- 00100
NAIROBI

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER: MAY WAWIRA NYAGA

The above named is a registered Masters of Science in Human Resource Management candidate at the University of Nairobi, Faculty of Business and Economics. She is conducting research on "*Effect of Talent Management on Employee Engagement of Professional Services.*"

APPENDIX III: NACOSTI PERMIT

 <p> Ref No: 844944 RESEARCH LICENSE </p>	
<p>This is to Certify that Ms. May Nyaga of University of Nairobi, has been licensed to conduct research under the provisions of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: Effect of employee engagement of professional services, for the period ending : 31/October/2024.</p>	
<p>Licensee Name: NACOSTI/P/23/30754</p>	
<p>Applicant Identification Number</p>	

The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, hereafter referred to as the Commission, established under the **Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014)** herein after referred to as the Act. To regulate and assure quality in the science, technology and innovation sector and advise the Government

CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedural guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of the Act if the licensee is a signatory to
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country
 - i. Endanger national security
 - ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
 - iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention, Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Convention
 - iv. Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
 - v. Adversely affect the environment
 - vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
 - vii. Endanger public safety and national cohesion
 - viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
4. The license and any rights thereunder are non-transferable
5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Executive Member at the commencement of the research.
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