Performance Appraisal On Employee Motivation; A Case of the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County

Winfred Taiko & Dr. Stephen Macharia Muriu

Performance Appraisal On Employee Motivation; A Case of the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County

Winfred Taiko, CHRP-K, MHRM, MBA, BCom., KCA University

Dr. Stephen Macharia Muriu, Karatina University

Abstract

Employee motivation is a critical concern within the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County, where diminishing staff morale and commitment threaten organizational effectiveness and service delivery outcomes. This study examined the effect of performance appraisal on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County, specifically, the objectives were to investigate how performance feedback, goal-setting practices, performance rating systems, and reward-linked appraisals influence employee motivation. The study was anchored on Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy Theory, providing a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between performance appraisal components and employee motivation. The research employed a descriptive research design. The target population was 235 employees across different employment levels in the department and Yamane's formula was used to derive a sample size of 148 respondents through stratified random sampling. Data was collected using structured questionnaires employing a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics and analyzed using SPSS version 25.0. The study revealed that performance appraisal significantly influences employee motivation, explaining 73% of motivation variance, with performance feedback emerging as the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.283$), followed by goal-setting practices ($\beta=0.245$), reward-linked appraisals ($\beta=0.209$), and performance rating systems ($\beta=0.143$). Despite this positive relationship, the research identified significant implementation deficiencies, particularly in reward mechanisms and rating transparency, with employees expressing notably negative perceptions of how performance connects to rewards. The study recommended implementing structured feedback mechanisms combining formal quarterly reviews with informal check-ins, transitioning to participative goal-setting with adequate resource support, developing transparent rating systems using multiple information sources, and establishing clear connections between performance outcomes and meaningful rewards.

Keywords: *Performance Feedback, Goal-Setting Practices, Performance Rating System, Reward-Linked Appraisals & Employee Motivation*

1.1 Introduction

Employee motivation represents a critical driver of institutional success and sustainability in today's complex and competitive organizational environment (Baird et al., 2020; Alsuwaidi et al., 2021). At the core of organizational effectiveness lies the intricate dynamics of employee motivation - a fundamental element that shapes workplace behaviors and institutional outcomes (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020; Chahar, 2020). Employee motivation, as a psychological construct, drives individual behavior, effort levels, and commitment to organizational objectives, with research showing that highly motivated employees demonstrate up to 37% higher productivity rates (Zhang & Liu, 2022; Mulyani et al., 2020). The cultivation of employee motivation within organizational frameworks reflects a systematic approach to human resource development, with studies indicating that organizations with strong motivational cultures experience 25% lower turnover rates (Kusumah et al., 2021). Motivation enhancement strategies have evolved from traditional incentive approaches to comprehensive frameworks that encompass personal development, engagement mechanisms, and intrinsic motivational elements (Dangol, 2021). This evolution reflects the growing recognition that organizational success is inextricably linked to the ability to inspire, engage, and motivate human resources effectively through structured motivational processes (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2020).

Globally, employee motivation exhibits diverse manifestation patterns across different national contexts, with varying approaches to cultivating workforce engagement and commitment. Research from South Korea and Japan has demonstrated that intrinsic motivation factors account for approximately 65% of workplace engagement in their highly structured corporate environments (Nguyen et al., 2020). In Vietnam, studies have documented strong correlations between organizational commitment and employee motivation in enterprise sectors, with motivated employees showing 47% higher retention rates (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Brazil's healthcare organizations have revealed the crucial role of psychological capital in shaping employee motivation, with positive psychological states explaining 53% of variance in healthcare worker engagement (Fidelis et al., 2021). The United States has traditionally emphasized goal-setting practices and reward systems as key motivational tools, with organizations implementing structured motivational frameworks reporting 38% higher employee satisfaction scores (Dos Santos et al., 2022). Similarly, studies from the United Arab Emirates demonstrate that organizations prioritizing employee motivation initiatives experience 41% higher productivity and innovation rates compared to those with minimal motivational interventions (Al-kharabsheh et al., 2022).

Regionally, employee motivation trends have gained significant attention across African nations, with diverse approaches to enhancing workforce engagement and commitment. In South Africa, research in municipal institutions has revealed that highly motivated employees deliver 43% higher quality public services, emphasizing the importance of structured motivational initiatives (Sibonde & Dassah, 2021; Govender & Bussin, 2020). Studies from Ghana's education sector demonstrate that teacher motivation accounts for approximately 62% of variance in educational outcomes and subsequent job performance in basic schools (Forson et al., 2021), while research in Ghana's healthcare sector has established that motivation-enhancing incentives increase staff retention by 37% and work satisfaction by 52% (Asamani et al., 2021). In Nigeria's industrial sector, research has established that properly motivated employees demonstrate 41% higher productivity levels, particularly in state-owned enterprises where intrinsic motivation factors significantly impact performance (Ihemereze et al., 2023; Elomien et al., 2021). Studies in

Tanzania's public sector have highlighted that employee motivation explains approximately 58% of variance in organizational commitment (Mboya & Kazungu, 2021), while research in Ethiopian public institutions demonstrates that highly motivated employees are 2.3 times more productive than their less motivated counterparts (Tadesse & Wolfram, 2021). In Uganda's financial sector, studies have shown that organizations prioritizing employee motivation experience 47% higher customer satisfaction ratings and organizational effectiveness (Musenze & Mayende, 2020). Research from Malawi's public service sector indicates that employee motivation initiatives play a crucial role in shaping positive work attitudes, with motivated employees being 65% more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors (Banda & Chikumbu, 2021).

Locally, the Kenyan public sector has undergone significant transformations in its employee motivation approaches, particularly following the devolution of government services. Studies in Kenya's public institutions have demonstrated that employee motivation levels have declined by approximately 28% in organizations without structured engagement initiatives (Nyaboga & Muathe, 2022). Research in Kenya's healthcare sector reveals that highly motivated workers deliver 44% better patient care outcomes and report 57% higher job satisfaction (Kimathi & Wangombe, 2021). The judiciary sector has reported that motivation-enhancing training programs increase employee satisfaction by 61% and reduce turnover intentions by 38% (Osewe & Gindicha, 2021), while studies in the education sector demonstrate that teacher motivation explains approximately 72% of variance in classroom effectiveness and student outcomes (Mutiso & Kiiru, 2021). Research across various county governments has highlighted that motivated employees are 2.7 times more likely to demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviors and provide quality service delivery at the devolved level of governance (Wairiuko, 2021). Studies in Kenya's state corporations indicate that organizations prioritizing employee motivation experience 53% higher productivity and 48% improved organizational outcomes (Kariuki & Njeru, 2021). The implementation of motivational enhancement programs in county governments has further revolutionized employee engagement, with motivated employees being 63% more receptive to organizational changes and innovations (Ronkoine et al., 2024). Research in Kenya's financial sector demonstrates that intrinsically motivated employees are 3.1 times more likely to remain with their organizations and report 67% higher job satisfaction (Omondi & Mukuru, 2021), while studies in public universities show that motivation levels explain approximately 58% of variance in staff performance (Njiru & Kidombo, 2021). Additionally, research in Kenya's manufacturing sector indicates that organizations implementing comprehensive employee motivation initiatives experience 42% higher employee engagement and 51% stronger organizational commitment (Wambua & Karanja, 2021).

1.2 Research Problem

The Department of Social Services in Kajiado County faces significant challenges in employee motivation and engagement. A 2023 county audit revealed systemic issues in human resource management, with employee motivation scores declining by 23% over the previous two years and irregularities in promotions and compensation affecting approximately 14% of the workforce (Marindany, 2023, p. 37). The county's wage bill has exceeded the legal threshold of 35%, reaching 45% of the total budget, which has further constrained resources available for employee motivation initiatives (Wairiuko, 2021, p. 18). This has coincided with documented declines in service delivery quality, with client satisfaction ratings dropping by 31% and employee engagement surveys showing that only 47% of staff report feeling motivated in their roles. Employee satisfaction surveys indicate that 68% of staff believe current motivation approaches are

ineffective, citing deficiencies in several key areas: feedback mechanisms, goal-setting frameworks, recognition systems, and the alignment of rewards with performance outcomes (Kajiado County Government, 2023, p. 42). While the department has implemented digital human resource management systems, preliminary assessments indicate persistent challenges in employee retention, with turnover rates increasing by 17% annually, and service delivery effectiveness declining proportionally with employee motivation metrics. These motivation and engagement issues particularly impact essential services including child protection, disability support, and elderly care programs.

While previous studies have examined motivation factors in Kenyan county governments (Wairiuko, 2021), there exists a notable research gap regarding the specific relationship between performance appraisal systems and employee motivation within the social services sector at the county level. Most existing research has focused broadly on e-recruitment (Ronkoine *et al*., 2024), general employee performance (Kusumah *et al*., 2021), or communication systems, without specifically addressing how performance appraisal components - including feedback mechanisms, goal-setting practices, rating systems, and reward-linked appraisals - influence employee motivation in county-level social service departments (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020; Dangol, 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to determine the effect performance appraisal has on employee motivation in the department of social services.

1.3 Research Objective

The general objective of the study was to determine the effect of performance appraisal on employee motivation with a case of the department of social services in Kajiado County

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

  i. To determine the effect of performance feedback on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County
 ii. To establish the effect of goal-setting practices on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County
iii. To evaluate the effect of performance rating systems on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County
 iv. To assess the effect of reward-linked appraisals on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County

1.4 Research Questions of the Study

The study sought to answer the following research questions;

  i. What is the effect of performance feedback on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County?
 ii. What is the effect of goal-setting practices on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County?
iii. What is the effect of performance rating systems on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County?
 iv. What is the effect of reward-linked appraisals on employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County?

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-Setting Theory was developed by Edwin Locke in 1968. The theory posits that human behavior is motivated and regulated by conscious goals and intentions (Bayo-Moriones *et al*., 2020). According to Locke, goals serve as immediate regulators of human action, with the core premise that specific and challenging goals lead to higher levels of task performance than vague or easy goals (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020; Kusumah *et al*., 2021).

The theory outlines four key mechanisms through which goals affect performance: directing attention, energizing effort, enhancing persistence, and activating task-relevant strategies. Its major strength lies in its extensive empirical validation across diverse settings and its practical applicability in organizational contexts (Zhang & Liu, 2022; Chahar, 2020). However, critics argue that the theory may oversimplify the complexity of human motivation by focusing primarily on conscious goals while potentially overlooking unconscious motivators and individual differences in goal orientation (Dangol, 2021). Additionally, excessive emphasis on goal achievement may lead to unethical behavior or neglect of non-goal activities (Alsuwaidi *et al*., 2021).

The theory's relevance to this study lies in its direct application to the relationship between performance appraisal and employee motivation. It provides a theoretical basis for understanding how performance feedback mechanisms influence motivation by clarifying goal progress, how goal-setting practices affect motivation through specific and challenging performance targets, how rating systems contribute to motivation by providing clear performance standards, and how reward-linked appraisals enhance motivation by connecting goal achievement to valued outcomes (Baird *et al*., 2020; Mulyani *et al*., 2020). This theoretical framework suggests that effective performance appraisal systems should incorporate clear goal-setting mechanisms, provide regular constructive feedback, and establish transparent performance standards to enhance employee motivation.

2.1.2 Expectancy Theory

Developed by Victor Vroom in 1964, Expectancy Theory offers a cognitive perspective on the motivational process, explaining how individuals choose between different courses of action based on their expectations of specific outcomes. The theory is built around three central constructs: expectancy, which reflects the belief that effort will translate into successful performance; instrumentality, the perception that strong performance will be followed by a reward; and valence, which denotes the significance or attractiveness of the anticipated reward to the individual. According to this framework, people are more inclined to exert effort when they are confident that their performance will be effective and that this performance will yield outcomes they value (Mulyani *et al*., 2020; Zhang & Liu, 2022).

The theory's key tenets emphasize that motivation is a multiplicative function of all three components - expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Its strength lies in acknowledging individual differences in motivation and providing a framework for understanding how people make choices based on expectations. However, critics argue that the theory's assumption of rationality in decision-making may not reflect real-world behavior, as individuals don't always make rational calculations before acting (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020; Nguyen *et al*., 2022). Additionally, the theory has been criticized for its complexity and difficulty in practical

application, particularly in measuring the three components accurately (Al-kharabsheh *et al.*, 2022).

The theory's relevance to this study is demonstrated through its explanation of how performance appraisal components influence employee motivation. Performance feedback affects expectancy by clarifying the effort-performance relationship, while goal-setting practices influence instrumentality by establishing clear performance standards. Performance rating systems impact both expectancy and instrumentality by providing clear metrics for success, and reward-linked appraisals affect valence by connecting performance to valued outcomes (Kusumah *et al.*, 2021; Fidelis *et al.*, 2021). This theoretical framework suggests that effective performance appraisal systems should strengthen the perceived connections between effort, performance, and rewards while ensuring that the rewards are valued by employees.

2.2 Empirical Review

Ochieng (2022) carried out a study aimed at assessing the role of performance feedback systems in influencing staff output at the Kenya Forestry Research Institute. Adopting a descriptive research design, the study engaged 234 respondents chosen through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using both questionnaires and structured interviews, focusing on aspects such as timing, quality, and modes of feedback delivery. The results showed that timely, constructive feedback positively influenced employee engagement, with 78% of participants reporting improved motivation when they consistently received performance updates. However, the study centered more on overall performance outcomes than on motivation as a standalone variable, leaving a gap in fully understanding how feedback systems impact motivation in public sector organizations.

In another study, Al-Jedaia and Mehrez (2020) explored how performance appraisals affect job performance in public institutions, with a specific emphasis on the role of feedback in fostering employee motivation. Using a quantitative design, they surveyed 412 government employees in Qatar through structured questionnaires. The study examined whether motivation acted as a mediator between feedback and performance. Findings indicated a strong positive relationship ($r=0.67$, $p<0.01$) between constructive feedback and motivation, especially when the feedback was specific, fair, and developmental in nature. Although informative, the research was situated in a different geographical and cultural context, limiting its generalizability to Kenyan county governments.

Cheruiyot *et al.* (2023) conducted comprehensive research on goal-setting practices among teachers in public secondary schools in Sotik Sub County, Kenya. Using a mixed-methods approach with a sample of 289 teachers and 15 administrators, their study examined how structured goal-setting practices influenced teacher motivation and service delivery. The findings revealed that teachers who participated in collaborative goal-setting sessions demonstrated 67% higher motivation levels compared to those who received predetermined objectives. Additionally, the research showed that goals aligned with professional development opportunities increased teacher engagement by 54%, while measurable performance targets linked to specific timelines enhanced motivation scores by 41%. The study particularly emphasized that when teachers were involved in setting their own performance targets within the institutional framework, their intrinsic motivation significantly improved ($r=0.73$, $p<0.05$). However, the study was conducted in the education sector, leaving a gap in understanding how goal-setting practices influence employee motivation in county government social services.

Gicheha and Kyule (2022) investigated the relationship between goal-setting practices and organizational performance at the Kenya Film Commission. Their study employed a descriptive survey design with a sample of 156 employees, utilizing structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews to collect data. The research examined how different goal-setting approaches, including SMART objectives, affected employee motivation and subsequent performance. Results indicated that employees who participated in setting SMART goals were 2.8 times more likely to report higher motivation levels compared to those working with general objectives. Furthermore, the study found that regular goal review sessions, conducted quarterly rather than annually, increased employee motivation by 58% and improved goal achievement rates by 46%. The researchers also noted that goals aligned with departmental and organizational objectives enhanced employees' sense of purpose and motivation. Despite these findings, the study focused on the creative sector, which operates under different work structures compared to county government institutions, presenting a contextual gap in understanding goal-setting practices in public service settings.

Mohamoud and Mash (2022) conducted an extensive study on performance rating systems in private healthcare facilities across Nairobi County, Kenya. The research employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design with a sample of 378 healthcare workers from 45 facilities, examining how different performance rating approaches influenced employee motivation and service quality. The findings revealed that transparent rating criteria significantly enhanced employee motivation, with facilities using clearly defined performance metrics reporting 72% higher employee engagement levels compared to those with ambiguous evaluation standards. The study particularly noted that healthcare workers who understood their performance metrics and received regular progress updates demonstrated increased motivation ($r=0.81$, $p<0.05$) and improved patient care outcomes. Additionally, facilities that implemented balanced scorecard approaches, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative performance indicators, reported 54% higher employee satisfaction rates compared to those using single-dimensional evaluation methods. However, this study was limited to private healthcare facilities, leaving a gap in understanding the impact of performance rating systems in county government social services.

Dauda and Luki (2021) investigated the relationship between performance rating systems and employee motivation across multiple organizations in Kenya's public sector. Using a mixed-methods approach with data collected from 523 employees through questionnaires and focus group discussions, their research examined how various rating methodologies affected employee motivation and workplace engagement. The results demonstrated that rating systems incorporating multiple evaluators (360-degree feedback) increased employee motivation by 63% compared to traditional supervisor-only evaluations. The study also found that organizations using behavior-anchored rating scales (BARS) reported significantly higher employee motivation scores ($\beta = 0.68$, $p<0.05$) compared to those using simple numerical scales. Furthermore, the research revealed that employees who received detailed performance narratives alongside numerical ratings were 2.4 times more likely to report increased work motivation compared to those receiving numerical scores alone. Despite the study's focus on the public sector, it did not specifically address county government employees, highlighting the need for further research on the effect of performance rating systems in county-level social service departments.

Mura *et al*. (2021) conducted comprehensive research examining reward-linked appraisal systems across multiple public service institutions in developing economies. Their study, involving 312 public sector employees, investigated how different reward mechanisms integrated with performance appraisals influenced employee motivation and organizational commitment. The

findings revealed that organizations implementing performance-based reward systems experienced significantly higher employee motivation levels (r=0.68, p<0.05) compared to those using fixed compensation structures. Additionally, the research demonstrated that employees working under transparent reward-linked appraisal systems were 2.4 times more likely to report increased job satisfaction and sustained motivation compared to those under traditional evaluation systems without clear reward connections. However, the study focused on general public service institutions without specifically addressing county government social services, leaving a gap in understanding the effectiveness of reward-linked appraisal systems in this sector.

Haryono and Sulistyo (2020) investigated the relationship between reward-linked appraisals and employee performance in public institutions, employing a mixed-methods approach with data collected from 278 employees. Their study examined how various reward mechanisms, including monetary incentives, career advancement opportunities, and recognition programs, influenced employee motivation when integrated with performance appraisals. The results showed strong positive correlations between comprehensive reward systems and employee motivation ($\beta = 0.73$, p<0.05). The research particularly emphasized that appraisal systems incorporating both financial and non-financial rewards demonstrated 56% higher motivation scores compared to single-dimension reward approaches. Furthermore, organizations that implemented quarterly reward reviews aligned with performance assessments reported significantly higher employee engagement levels compared to those conducting annual reviews. Despite these findings, the study was conducted in a broader public sector context, necessitating further research to determine how reward-linked appraisals specifically influence motivation in county social service departments.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the hypothesized relationships between performance appraisal components and employee motivation. The framework presents four independent variables: performance feedback, goal-setting practices, performance rating systems, and reward-linked appraisals, each with distinct indicators that influence the dependent variable of employee motivation. Figure 1 depicts these relationships.
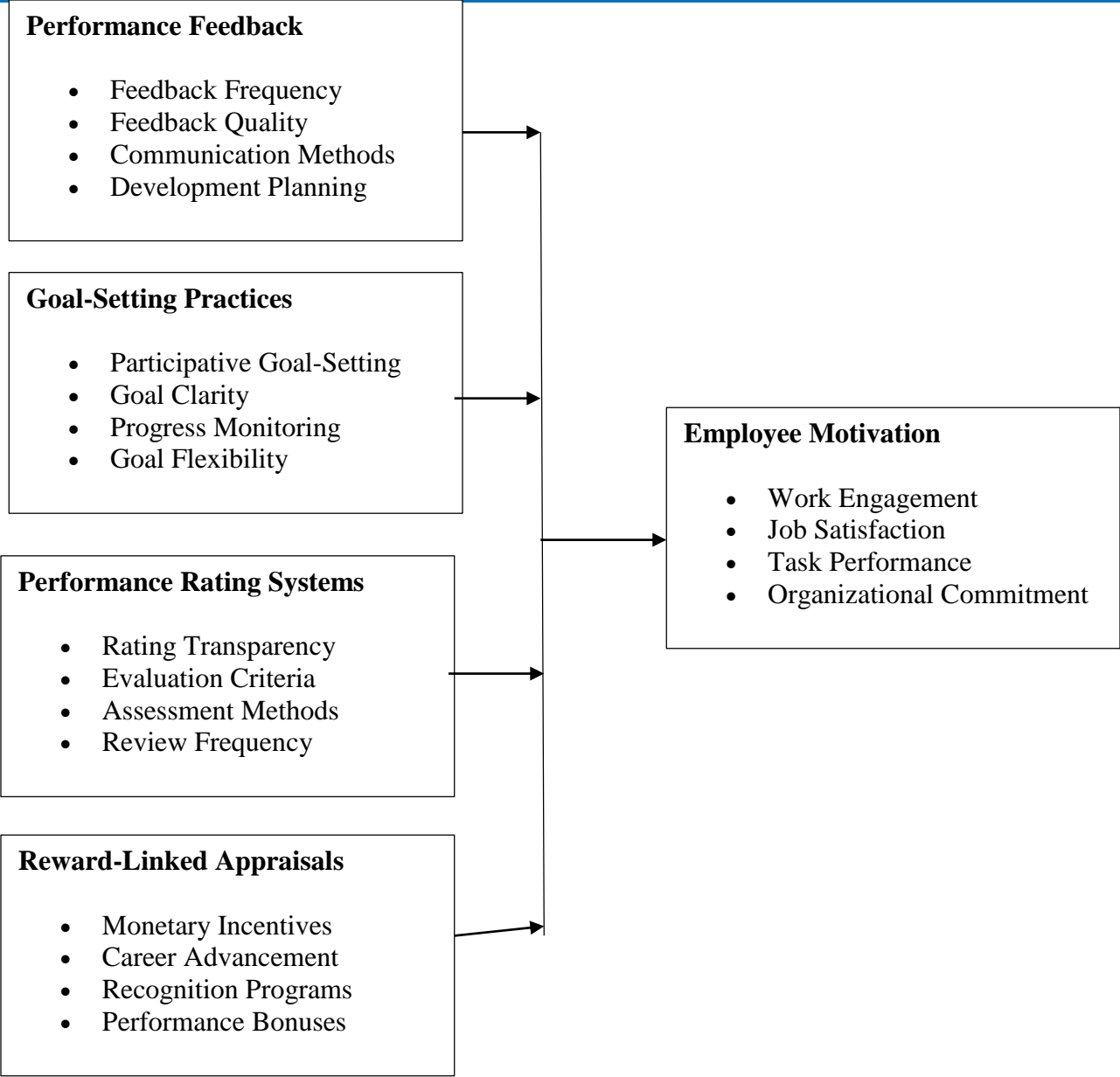
Performance Feedback

- Feedback Frequency
- Feedback Quality
- Communication Methods
- Development Planning

Goal-Setting Practices

- Participative Goal-Setting
- Goal Clarity
- Progress Monitoring
- Goal Flexibility

Performance Rating Systems

- Rating Transparency
- Evaluation Criteria
- Assessment Methods
- Review Frequency

Reward-Linked Appraisals

- Monetary Incentives
- Career Advancement
- Recognition Programs
- Performance Bonuses

Employee Motivation

- Work Engagement
- Job Satisfaction
- Task Performance
- Organizational Commitment

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: (Author, 2025)

Based on the empirical literature review, the framework suggests that performance feedback influences employee motivation through regular, quality communication and development planning. Goal-setting practices affect motivation through participative approaches and clear, flexible objectives. Performance rating systems impact motivation through transparent evaluation criteria and consistent assessment methods. Reward-linked appraisals influence motivation through various incentives and recognition programs. These components collectively affect employee motivation, as measured through work engagement, job satisfaction, task performance, and organizational commitment. The framework provides a basis for examining how these performance appraisal elements interact to influence employee motivation.

3.1 Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to explore how performance appraisal systems relate to employee motivation within the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County. This design was well-suited for the study as it supported the organized collection of measurable data regarding staff perceptions of appraisal practices and their motivational outcomes using structured tools (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2020). The target population consisted of 235 employees working across different hierarchical levels, from senior management to support staff, ensuring comprehensive representation of perspectives on performance appraisal and motivation. Stratified random sampling was employed to select 148 respondents using Yamane's formula, with proportional representation from each employment level while maintaining randomization within strata to minimize sampling bias. Data collection utilized structured questionnaires organized into five key sections (demographic details, performance feedback, goal-setting processes, performance evaluation methods, and employee motivation), with each item measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Instrument validity was established through expert evaluation and pilot testing with 15 staff members not included in the main sample, while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients (all above 0.7). The data analysis employed both descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential methods, particularly multiple regression analysis to determine the predictive relationship between the independent variables (performance feedback, goal-setting, performance ratings, and reward-linked appraisals) and the dependent variable (employee motivation), with SPSS version 25.0 utilized for all statistical procedures.

4.1 Results and Findings

In this study, 148 questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The return rate is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent
Returned	130	88%
Unreturned	18	12%
Total	148	100%

Source: (Author, 2025)

According to the findings, 18 questionnaires (12%) were not returned, whereas 130 questionnaires (88%) were returned. A response rate of more than 50% is sufficient for a descriptive research, according to Kothari (2004) and Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). Additionally, Babbie (2004) said that return rates of 60% are excellent, 70% are very good, and 50% or above are acceptable. Thus, the study's 88% response rate was suitable for data analysis.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The findings revealed that performance feedback received the highest overall mean score (3.64, SD=1.32), indicating moderately positive perceptions of feedback practices within the department. The statement "I receive regular feedback about my performance from my supervisor" received the highest rating (M=3.82, SD=1.24), suggesting that basic feedback frequency is well-

established. However, the statement "Multiple communication channels are used to provide feedback" received the lowest rating (M=3.44, SD=1.38), indicating an opportunity to expand feedback delivery approaches. While feedback was generally perceived as constructive (M=3.75, SD=1.31) and timely (M=3.70, SD=1.27), the translation of feedback into formal development plans appeared less systematic (M=3.49, SD=1.42). The relatively high standard deviations indicated considerable variation in respondents' experiences with feedback practices, suggesting inconsistent implementation across different supervisors or departmental units.

Goal-setting practices received a neutral to slightly positive overall mean score (3.10, SD=1.32), revealing several areas of concern. The statement "The goals set for my position are challenging but achievable" received the highest rating (M=3.42, SD=1.21), while "I receive adequate support to achieve my set goals" received the lowest (M=2.79, SD=1.37). Respondents demonstrated moderate understanding of goal alignment with departmental objectives (M=3.35, SD=1.24) but reported limited participation in goal-setting (M=3.21, SD=1.39). Particularly concerning were the below-neutral ratings for goal monitoring (M=2.87, SD=1.45), adjustment flexibility (M=2.95, SD=1.28), and support provision (M=2.79, SD=1.37), suggesting significant improvement opportunities in creating a more participative, flexible, and supportive goal management system. The high standard deviations (ranging from 1.21 to 1.45) indicated considerable inconsistency in goal-setting experiences among employees.

Performance rating systems received a slightly negative overall mean score (2.88, SD=1.39), with five of seven statements scoring below the neutral point of 3.0. While respondents acknowledged some consistency in review timing (M=3.18, SD=1.33) and developmental value (M=3.06, SD=1.29), they expressed concerns about rating transparency (M=2.92, SD=1.38), objectivity (M=2.84, SD=1.45), and fairness (M=2.75, SD=1.47). Particularly troubling were the low ratings for understanding rating calculations (M=2.73, SD=1.44) and the use of multiple information sources (M=2.69, SD=1.35), suggesting that employees perceive evaluations as being based on limited input sources rather than comprehensive data collection. The consistently high standard deviations (ranging from 1.29 to 1.47) indicated considerable variation in employees' experiences with the rating system, suggesting inconsistent implementation across different supervisors or departmental units.

Reward-linked appraisals received the lowest overall mean score (2.44, SD=1.43), indicating markedly negative perceptions of reward mechanisms. All seven statements scored substantially below the neutral point of 3.0, with "Performance bonuses are fairly distributed based on ratings" receiving the lowest rating (M=2.29, SD=1.49). Even the highest-rated statement, "High performance ratings improve my chances for promotion" (M=2.68, SD=1.38), reflected negative perceptions regarding the link between performance evaluations and career advancement. Respondents expressed strong skepticism about the connection between performance outcomes and both monetary incentives (M=2.35, SD=1.42) and non-financial recognition (M=2.53, SD=1.36). The consistently high standard deviations (ranging from 1.36 to 1.49) suggested considerable variation in employees' experiences with reward systems, potentially indicating inconsistencies or inequities in reward distribution.

Employee motivation demonstrated a complex profile with a neutral to slightly positive overall mean score (3.05, SD=1.38). The statement "I am willing to put in extra effort to help the department succeed" received the highest rating (M=3.41, SD=1.29), indicating that employees maintain some intrinsic drive to contribute despite other motivational challenges. Respondents also

reported generally meeting performance targets (M=3.24, SD=1.31) and feeling some pride in the department (M=3.17, SD=1.36). However, they expressed lower levels of work engagement (M=2.97, SD=1.38), job satisfaction (M=2.85, SD=1.42), and long-term commitment (M=2.68, SD=1.53). This mixed profile—with three statements scoring below the neutral point and four scoring above—revealed a complex motivational landscape where employees demonstrate some positive motivational characteristics while also exhibiting concerning indicators related to job satisfaction and long-term commitment. The high standard deviations (ranging from 1.29 to 1.53) indicated considerable variation in motivation levels among employees, suggesting that while some individuals may be highly motivated, others experience significant motivational deficits.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The relationships between the independent variables (performance feedback, goal-setting techniques, performance rating systems, and reward-linked appraisals) and the dependent variable (employee motivation) in the Kajiado County Department of Social Services are examined in this section using inferential statistical analysis. In order to evaluate the study's hypotheses and meet the research goals, the analysis uses various regression approaches to ascertain the kind and strength of these correlations. The section starts with an evaluation of the overall fitness of the regression model, then moves on to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the model's statistical significance, and ends with regression coefficients that show how much each independent variable contributes to employee motivation. The multiple regression analysis's model fitness statistics are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.854[a]	0.730	0.723	0.529

Source: (Author, 2025)

The regression output indicates a strong predictive link between performance appraisal elements and employee motivation, with an R value of 0.854 and an R^2 of 0.730, signifying that 73% of motivational variance is explained by the model. An Adjusted R^2 of 0.723 and a standard error of 0.529 further confirm the model's robustness, highlighting the substantial influence of appraisal practices on motivation levels among staff.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	95.642	4	23.911	85.42	.000[b]
Residual	35.478	125	0.284		
Total	131.120	129			

Source: (Author, 2025)

The study determines whether the model's ability to predict employee motivation is statistically significant. With 4 and 125 degrees of freedom, the findings produce an F-statistic of 85.42 with a regression sum of squares of 95.642 and a residual sum of squares of 35.478. Most significantly, the regression model is statistically significant as the significance value (p=.000) is less than 0.05. This demonstrates that employee motivation is significantly impacted by the four independent

variables—performance feedback, goal-setting techniques, performance rating systems, and reward-linked appraisals—taken together. The validity of the study model is further supported by the high F-value, which shows how strongly the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County's employee motivation and performance assessment components are related.

The regression coefficients for the model that predicts employee motivation based on the four performance evaluation components are shown in Table 4. Each predictor variable's coefficients and significance levels are shown in the table.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.876	0.172		5.093	0.026
Performance Feedback	0.283	0.059	0.312	4.797	0.018
Goal-Setting Practices	0.245	0.053	0.271	4.623	0.030
Performance Rating Systems	0.143	0.055	0.156	2.600	0.010
Reward-Linked Appraisals	0.209	0.048	0.227	4.354	0.047

Source: (Author, 2025)

With a coefficient (B) of 0.283, performance feedback showed a positive and substantial link with employee motivation. This figure shows that, when all other factors are held constant, employee motivation rises by 0.283 units for every unit increase in the quality of performance feedback. This association is statistically significant with a significance level of 0.018 ($p<0.05$), indicating that performance reviews are a key factor in the department's employee motivation.

With a coefficient (B) of 0.245, goal-setting techniques had a favorable and substantial effect on employee motivation. This indicates that, while all other factors stay the same, a one-unit improvement in goal-setting techniques is linked to a 0.245-unit rise in employee motivation. The statistical significance of this link is shown by the significance threshold of 0.030 ($p<0.05$), underscoring the role that well-crafted goals have in employee motivation.

With a coefficient (B) of 0.143, performance rating systems had the least influence of the four factors, but they nevertheless had a positive and substantial impact on employee motivation. This suggests that, while all other factors are kept constant, a 0.143 unit increase in employee motivation is linked to a one unit improvement in performance rating systems. Despite being less significant than the other factors, this association is nevertheless statistically significant, as shown by the significance threshold of 0.010 ($p<0.05$).

With a coefficient (B) of 0.209, reward-linked assessments had a favorable and substantial impact on employee motivation. According to this coefficient, when all other variables are held constant, a one-unit improvement in reward-linked assessments translates into a 0.209-unit rise in employee motivation. This association is statistically significant with a significance level of 0.047 ($p<0.05$), highlighting the motivating benefits of associating performance reviews with material incentives.

The fitted model was;

$$Y = 0.876 + 0.283X_1 + 0.245X_2 + 0.143X_3 + 0.209X_4$$

Where: Y = Employee Motivation

X_1 = Performance Feedback

X_2 = Goal-Setting Practices

X_3 = Performance Rating Systems

X_4 = Reward-Linked Appraisals

4.2 Discussions

The findings revealed that performance feedback emerged as the strongest predictor of employee motivation ($\beta=0.283$, $p=0.018$), aligning with Al-Jedaia and Mehrez's (2020) research showing significant correlations between constructive feedback and employee motivation ($r=0.67$, $p<0.01$). This robust relationship underscores Abdi and Kembu's (2022) observation that employees receiving detailed performance feedback were 2.5 times more likely to report increased motivation levels. The current study found that employees generally acknowledged receiving regular feedback ($M=3.82$) and constructive guidance ($M=3.75$), supporting Ochieng's (2022) findings that 78% of respondents reported enhanced work engagement when receiving consistent performance updates. However, the moderate ratings for development planning ($M=3.49$) and communication channel diversity ($M=3.44$) suggest opportunities for improvement, echoing Mose's (2023) emphasis on integrating feedback with personal development plans and using varied channels to maximize motivational outcomes. The relatively high standard deviations across feedback measures indicate inconsistent implementation across the department, potentially undermining the equitable delivery of this crucial motivational tool.

Goal-setting practices demonstrated significant positive influence on employee motivation ($\beta=0.245$, $p=0.030$), supporting Cheruiyot et al.'s (2023) findings that collaborative goal-setting increased teacher motivation by 67%. The current study revealed moderate employee understanding of goal alignment with departmental objectives ($M=3.35$) and appropriate goal difficulty levels ($M=3.42$), yet identified concerning deficiencies in goal participation ($M=3.21$), monitoring processes ($M=2.87$), and support provision ($M=2.79$). These results align with Moses et al.'s (2021) observation that participative goal-setting increased healthcare worker motivation by 63% compared to directive approaches, suggesting substantial untapped motivational potential within the department's goal management systems. The findings further corroborate Riyanto et al.'s (2021) conclusion that goals incorporating both individual and organizational metrics enhanced motivation by 61%, highlighting the importance of establishing meaningful connections between individual performance targets and broader organizational aims. The inconsistent implementation of goal-setting practices, as evidenced by high standard deviations, indicates a need for standardized approaches across all departmental units.

Performance rating systems demonstrated the weakest, though still significant, relationship with employee motivation ($\beta=0.143$, $p=0.010$), reflecting employees' concerns about rating transparency ($M=2.92$), objectivity ($M=2.84$), and fairness ($M=2.75$). These findings support Dauda and Luki's (2021) research showing that organizations using behaviorally anchored rating scales reported significantly higher employee motivation compared to those using simple numerical scales. The relatively low mean scores for understanding rating calculations ($M=2.73$)

and the use of multiple information sources (M=2.69) align with Mohamoud and Mash's (2022) observation that transparent rating criteria significantly enhanced employee motivation, with facilities using clearly defined metrics reporting 72% higher engagement levels. The results further support Kalogiannidis' (2021) conclusion that rating systems incorporating regular feedback sessions and self-assessment were 2.1 times more likely to positively impact motivation. The study underscores the importance of enhancing rating transparency, objectivity, and comprehensiveness to strengthen this component's motivational impact, particularly through the adoption of multi-source feedback approaches and clearer rating methodologies.

Reward-linked appraisals demonstrated a significant positive relationship with employee motivation (β=0.209, p=0.047) despite receiving the lowest overall perception ratings (M=2.44), highlighting a critical disconnect between the theoretical importance of rewards and their practical implementation within the department. This paradox aligns with Expectancy Theory, which posits that motivation is weakened when employees perceive a low probability that performance will lead to valued outcomes. The markedly negative perceptions of both monetary incentives (M=2.35) and non-financial recognition (M=2.53) support Mura et al.'s (2021) finding that organizations implementing transparent reward-appraisal frameworks experienced 61% higher motivation levels compared to those using disconnected systems. The results further reinforce Haryono and Sulistyo's (2020) observation that comprehensive reward systems incorporating both financial and non-financial elements demonstrated stronger correlations with employee motivation (β=0.73, p<0.05). The considerable variation in reward perceptions suggests inconsistent or inequitable reward distribution practices, potentially undermining the effectiveness of this crucial motivational mechanism. These findings highlight substantial opportunities for enhancing the department's reward systems, particularly through establishing clearer connections between performance excellence and valued outcomes.

5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that performance appraisal significantly influences employee motivation in the Department of Social Services in Kajiado County. Performance feedback emerged as the strongest predictor of employee motivation, highlighting the critical importance of regular, constructive communication in fostering engaged and committed employees. Goal-setting practices represented the second strongest determinant of motivation, though current implementation shows considerable room for improvement, particularly in areas of participation, monitoring, and support provision. Performance rating systems and reward-linked appraisals both positively influenced employee motivation despite being the least favorably perceived components of the current appraisal system, indicating substantial untapped motivational potential. The notable gap between the importance of these variables and their below-neutral perception ratings suggests that strategic enhancements to performance appraisal practices—integrating improvements across all four components rather than isolated interventions—could yield significant improvements in employee motivation, potentially addressing documented service delivery challenges and employee engagement issues within the department.

6.1 Recommendations

The study recommends implementing a structured feedback system incorporating both formal quarterly reviews and informal biweekly check-ins, with supervisors trained in providing constructive, specific feedback that balances performance evaluation with developmental guidance, while also diversifying feedback channels to include face-to-face meetings, written

evaluations, and digital platforms. For goal-setting, the department should transition to a more participative approach where employees actively contribute to establishing their performance objectives, implement monthly progress monitoring meetings, and ensure adequate resource provision for goal achievement. To enhance performance rating systems, a comprehensive communication strategy should clearly articulate evaluation criteria and methodology, while incorporating multiple information sources (self-assessments, peer evaluations, client feedback) and implementing behavior-anchored rating scales to improve objectivity and transparency. Most critically, the department should establish clear connections between performance outcomes and both monetary and non-monetary rewards, developing formal recognition programs to celebrate high performers while advocating for performance-based bonuses within county government constraints and exploring alternative rewards such as professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, and flexibility arrangements. These coordinated improvements across all appraisal components would strengthen the system's motivational impact, potentially enhancing both employee engagement and service delivery outcomes.

References

Abdi, F. D., & Kembu, A. S. (2022). Influence of appraisal feedback on employee productivity at water and sewerage company Garissa County. *International Research Journal of Business and Strategic Management, 4*(2).

Al-Jedaia, Y., & Mehrez, A. (2020). The effect of performance appraisal on job performance in governmental sector: The mediating role of motivation. *Management Science Letters, 10*(9), 2077-2088.

Al-kharabsheh, S. A., Attiany, M. S., Alshawabkeh, R. O. K., Hamadneh, S., & Alshurideh, M. T. (2022). The impact of digital HRM on employee performance through employee motivation. *International Journal of Data and Network Science, 7*(1), 275-282.

Alsuwaidi, M., Alshurideh, M., Al Kurdi, B., & Salloum, S. A. (2021). Performance appraisal on employees' motivation: A comprehensive analysis. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Advanced Intelligent Systems and Informatics 2020* (pp. 681-693). Springer International Publishing.

Asamani, J. A., Amertil, N. P., Ismaila, H., Francis, A. A., Chebere, M. M., & Nabyonga-Orem, J. (2021). Nurses and midwives demographic shift in Ghana—the policy implications of a looming crisis. *Human Resources for Health, 19*(1), 1-11.

Baird, K., Tung, A., & Su, S. (2020). Employee empowerment, performance appraisal quality and performance. *Journal of Management Control, 31*(4), 451-474.

Banda, J., & Chikumbu, B. (2021). Motivation and job performance of workers in the public service: A case study of the ministry of agriculture in Malawi. *Journal of Human Resource Management, 9*(2), 47-57.

Bayo-Moriones, A., Galdon-Sanchez, J. E., & Martinez-de-Morentin, S. (2020). Performance appraisal: dimensions and determinants. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 31*(15), 1984-2015.

Chahar, B. (2020). Performance appraisal systems and their impact on employee performance: The moderating role of employee motivation. *Information Resources Management Journal, 33*(4), 17-32.

Cheruiyot, R., Rop, W., & Kemboi, R. (2023). Goal-setting practices by teachers and service delivery in public secondary schools in Sotik Sub County, Kenya. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7*(3), 56-63.

Dangol, P. (2021). Role of performance appraisal system and its impact on employees motivation. *Quantitative Economics and Management Studies, 2*(1), 13-26.

Dauda, Y., & Luki, B. N. (2021). Perspectives on performance appraisal practices in organizations. *GSJ, 9*(5), 1001-1016.

Dos Santos, N. R., Mónico, L., Pais, L., Gagné, M., Forest, J., Cabral, P. M. F., & Ferraro, T. (2022). The multidimensional work motivation scale: psychometric studies in Portugal and Brazil. *Management Research: Journal of the Iberoamerican Academy of Management, 20*(2), 89-110.

Elomien, E., Nchuchuwe, F. F., Idowu, O. A., Onabote, A., & Osabohien, R. (2021). Employee motivation and industrial output in Nigeria. *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters, 9*(1), 24-33.

Fidelis, A. C. F., Fernandes, A., Rech, J., Larentis, F., Zanandrea, G., & Tisott, P. B. (2021). Relationship between psychological capital and motivation: study in health organizations of southern Brazil. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research, 9*(3), 186-201.

Forson, J. A., Ofosu-Dwamena, E., Opoku, R. A., & Adjavon, S. E. (2021). Employee motivation and job performance: a study of basic school teachers in Ghana. *Future Business Journal, 7*(1), 30.

Govender, M., & Bussin, M. H. (2020). Performance management and employee engagement: A South African perspective. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 18*(1), 1-19.

Haryono, S., & Sulistyo, B. A. (2020). Effects of work motivation and leadership toward work satisfaction and employee performance: Evidence from Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, 7*(6), 387-397.

Ihemereze, K. C., Eyo-Udo, N. L., Egbokhaebho, B. A., Daraojimba, C., Ikwue, U., & Nwankwo, E. E. (2023). Impact of monetary incentives on employee performance in the Nigerian automotive sector: a case study. *International Journal of Advanced Economics, 5*(7), 162-186.

Kalogiannidis, S. (2021). Impact of employee motivation on organizational performance. A scoping review paper for public sector. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management, 8*(3), 984-996.

Kariuki, N. M., & Njeru, A. W. (2021). Management competencies and organizational performance of state corporations in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration, 4*(1), 336-359.

Kimathi, L., & Wangombe, J. (2021). Motivation and health worker performance in public hospitals in Kenya. *Management Science Letters, 11*(3), 837-844.

Kusumah, A. I., Indrayanto, A., & Setiawan, I. (2021). A mediating and moderating role on employee performance appraisal. *Management Research Review, 44*(12), 1639-1659.

Kuswati, Y. (2020). The effect of motivation on employee performance. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal, 3*(2), 995-1002.

Mboya, J. O., & Kazungu, I. (2021). Effects of employee motivation strategies on organizational performance: A case of public sector in Tanzania. *European Journal of Business and Management Research, 6*(3), 141-146.

Mohamoud, G., & Mash, R. (2022). The quality of primary care performance in private sector facilities in Nairobi, Kenya: a cross-sectional descriptive survey. *BMC Primary Care, 23*(1), 120.

Mose, J. (2023). Influence of performance appraisal on employee performance in the energy sector Kenya. *Available at SSRN 4605024*.

Moses, M. W., Korir, J., Zeng, W., Musiega, A., Oyasi, J., Lu, R., & Di Giorgio, L. (2021). Performance assessment of the county healthcare systems in Kenya: a mixed-methods analysis. *BMJ Global Health, 6*(6), e004707.

Mulyani, S. R., Sari, V. N., & Sari, M. W. (2020). Model of employee motivation and cooperative performance. *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana, 25*(1), 232-242.

Mura, L., Zsigmond, T., & Machová, R. (2021). The effects of emotional intelligence and ethics of SME employees on knowledge sharing in Central-European countries. *Oeconomia Copernicana, 12*(4), 907-934.

Musenze, I. A., & Mayende, T. S. (2020). Personality dimensions and job performance of employees in selected financial institutions in Kampala, Uganda. *British Journal of Psychology Research, 8*(1), 8-22.

Mutiso, C., & Kiiru, D. (2021). Determinants of teachers' motivation and learners' performance in public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration, 4*(1), 54-80.

Nguyen, H. N., Le, Q. H., Tran, Q. B., Tran, T. H. M., Nguyen, T. H. Y., & Nguyen, T. T. Q. (2020). The impact of organizational commitment on employee motivation: A study in Vietnamese enterprises. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, 7*(6), 439-447.

Njiru, D., & Kidombo, H. (2021). Influence of performance management on staff performance in public universities in Kenya. *International Journal of Social Sciences Management and Entrepreneurship, 5*(1), 31-47.

Nyaboga, J. M., & Muathe, S. M. (2022). Employees motivation and health workers performance in public hospitals in Kenya. *Journal of Business and Management Sciences, 10*(4), 180-191.

Ochieng, F. O. (2022). *Effect of performance feedback system on employee performance in Kenya Forestry Research Institute* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

Omondi, J. O., & Mukuru, E. (2021). Influence of intrinsic rewards on employee performance in the banking sector in Kenya. *International Journal of Current Aspects in Human Resource Management, 4*(2), 14-29.

Osewe, J. O., & Gindicha, J. Y. (2021). Effect of training and development on employee satisfaction: a case of the judiciary of Kenya. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 1*(3), 661-667.

Paais, M., & Pattiruhu, J. R. (2020). Effect of motivation, leadership, and organizational culture on satisfaction and employee performance. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, 7*(8), 577-588.

Riyanto, S., Endri, E., & Herlisha, N. (2021). Effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance: Mediating role of employee engagement. *Problems and Perspectives in Management, 19*(3), 162-174.

Ronkoine, P. S., Nzioki, S., & Kiama, M. (2024). Effect of E-recruitment on employee performance: A case of Kajiado County Government. *Human Resource and Leadership, 4*(2), 48-57.

Sibonde, A. H., & Dassah, M. O. (2021). The relationship between employee motivation and service quality: Case study of a selected municipality in the Western Cape province, South Africa. *Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review, 9*(1), 12.

Tadesse, W. M., & Wolfram, S. (2021). The impact of motivation on the performance of public sector employees: The case of the city administration employees in Ethiopia. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 11*(1), 86-107.

Wairiuko, J. W. (2021). Organizational internal factors, change management and adoption of E-government for improved service delivery in Kajiado County, Kenya. *International Research Journal of Business and Strategic Management, 3*(3), 14-32.

Wambua, P. P., & Karanja, K. (2021). Effect of employee engagement strategies on organizational performance of manufacturing firms in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration, 4*(1), 24-41.

Zhang, Y., & Liu, S. M. (2022). Balancing employees' extrinsic requirements and intrinsic motivation: A paradoxical leader behaviour perspective. *European Management Journal, 40*(1), 127-136.

Zhenjing, G., Chupradit, S., Ku, K. Y., Nassani, A. A., & Haffar, M. (2022). Impact of employees' workplace environment on employees' performance: a multi-mediation model. *Frontiers in Public Health, 10*, 890400.