

# Talent Management: The Game Changer for Work Engagement of Non-Teaching Workforce at Kyambogo University, Uganda

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## Abstract

The challenge in public universities in Uganda is that university non-teaching staff are disengaged and take their jobs for granted, hence never make an effort to serve to the satisfaction of students and other stakeholders. This study examined whether talent management strategies employed by the universities were a game changer for work engagement of the non-teaching workforce in public universities. Specifically, the study tested whether talent management in terms of talent attraction, talent development and talent retention had a relationship with work engagement of the non-teaching workforce in public universities. The study employed a correlational research design on a sample of 201 non-teaching staff. Data was collected using a questionnaire survey. The findings revealed that talent attraction and talent development had a positive significant relationship with work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. However, talent attraction had a negative and insignificant relationship with work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. It was concluded that talent attraction strategies in terms of selective recruitment and selection, and talent development in the form of performance appraisal, training and promotion are game changers for work engagement of the non-teaching staff. However, weak retention strategies hamper employee engagement. The study recommends that managers of universities should implement game-changing talent attraction strategies and talent development practices to enhance work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. It is also recommended that university managers should strengthen talent retention strategies to promote work engagement of the non-teaching workforce.

**Keywords:** *Talent attraction; Development; Management; Retention; Work engagement.*

## Introduction

Today, universities globally have been marketised, leading to competition for students (Latif et al., 2021). This competition has necessitated universities to adopt business sector strategies such as customer service to attract students, who are now considered clients (Guilbault, 2018). However, the challenge in public universities, especially in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa such as Uganda, is that university workers have not fully interested themselves in adapting to the business sector customer attraction practices. In public universities, workers are disengaged and take their jobs for granted, hence never make an effort to serve to the satisfaction of students (Kisaka et al., 2019). Therefore, if public universities are to survive in the competitive environment, they need high work engagement amongst their workers. This is because work engagement is fronted in human resource management circles as the magical formula for improving employee performance which, in turn, enhances customer satisfaction in today's cutthroat business environment (Hoole & Hotz, 2016). Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) contend that work engagement of employees has been propagated as an essential tool for enhancing the competitive advantage of organisations.

Work engagement refers to the high involvement of workers in their work tasks characterised by high drive, alertness and a willingness to put in extra effort to meet work objectives (Khusanova et al., 2021). Work engagement is exhibited by three states of mind – vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Absorption pertains to the employee's attitude of getting happily immersed in and focusing on work with time passing rather fast and with the employee finding difficulty in detaching himself or herself from their work (Schaufeli, 2017). Dedication describes the heavy involvement of an employee in his or her work due to the felt challenge, pride and motivation (Vallières et al., 2017). Vigour is the high level of energy, feeling fit and strong, hence being able to work for long periods without getting tired (Kodden, 2020). Operationally, as conceived by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), in this study work engagement is defined as an employee's attitude exhibited by an employee's vigour, dedication and absorption in his or her work tasks.

Today, across the globe, employee engagement is an issue of concern for leaders and managers in organisations because it is considered to be an imperative component in defining the level of organisational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). Nonetheless, while the work engagement of employees is imperative, amongst Ugandan workers it is low. Ugandan workers do not show vigour while at work, are not dedicated and hardly get absorbed in their work. They have a poor work ethic and serve with no sense of urgency (Clarke, 2017; Jabo, 2017). In 2018, a survey by the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) in partnership with Makerere University showed that only 49% of the employees were highly engaged, 6% were disengaged and 45% were moderately engaged. Therefore, those who were disengaged and moderately engaged were 51%, suggesting that the larger percentage of employees in Uganda exhibited engagement challenges (Mugizi et al., 2020a). At Kyambogo University (KYU) where the study was carried out, the work engagement of non-teaching staff was also reported to be low. Non-teaching staff exhibited high disengagement with a high rate of absenteeism and poor service delivery, especially when attending to students (Anyeko, 2016; Kasule & Bisaso, 2016). The workforce lacked vigour in doing work and was not dedicated. As a result, many students failed to register in time, with the workers tossing them up and down. There was also a delay in releasing examination results and in the issuance of transcripts and certificates (Anyeko, 2016). Evaluation reports carried out at Kyambogo University revealed that roughly 60% of its employees failed to accomplish their work targets (Tumuhimbise, 2017).

In their study involving students, administrators, academic staff and support staff of Kyambogo University, Namubiru et al. (2017) claimed that the problems of KYU staff stemmed from poor talent management because of the lack of a shared vision between staff and managers of the university. Accordingly, the university was characterised by maladministration, decadence in governance, and unethical and negligent behaviours (Inspectorate of Government Report, 2015). With the problems of staff of the university blamed on talent management, this study empirically examined whether talent management strategies can be the game-changer for work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. Talent management, which is the methodical process of attracting, sieving, enhancing, engaging, keeping and deploying talented individuals (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020), operationally describes talent attraction, development and retention (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). The following research hypotheses were tested:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between talent attraction strategies and work engagement of the non-teaching workforce.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between talent development strategies and work engagement of the non-teaching workforce.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between talent retention strategies and work engagement of the non-teaching workforce.

### **Theoretical Review**

The Social Exchange Theory (SET), introduced by Homans (1958) and further propagated by Homans (1961), was provided the underpinning for this study. Homans (1958) posits that human relations emerge because of a subjective cost-benefit analysis, with individuals tending to redo actions previously rewarded, and quite often a specific behaviour rewarded in the past is largely likely to recur. Blau (1964) adds that social interactions happen because of the premise that tendencies of good will have to be reciprocated (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). The basic assumption of SET is that individuals such as employees and employers are bound in relationships because of the hope to gain maximum positive value from them (Cortez & Johnston, 2020). The broad notion in SET is reciprocity based on the assumption that good treatment will be repaid (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). Exchange or reciprocation in social connections is strengthened when both parties are eager to offer each other resources that are beneficial to them (Kuruzovich et al., 2021). Therefore, SET suggests that satisfactory talent management practices generate positive exchanges in the relationship with workers and are reciprocated with positive attitudes and behaviour such as work engagement (Najam et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). Therefore, based on SET, this study examined the relationship between talent management strategies and work engagement of non-teaching workforce in universities.

#### **Talent management strategies and work engagement**

Talent management is the identification of the required individuals and maintaining them to propel organisational success (Ansar & Baloch, 2018). Talent management strategies include talent attraction, development and retention (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). Talent attraction is putting the right people in the right jobs and enabling them to maximise their talent for the optimal success of the organisation (Lyria et al., 2017). Attracting candidates that possess higher-level calibre, that are devoted to work and focused on attaining their regular and extraordinary tasks results in having individuals engaged in their job roles (Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020). Talent attraction strategies include selective recruitment and selection (Nazari et al., 2014). Studies (Budriene & Diskien, 2020; Karumuri, 2017; Lewis; 2019; Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020; Nawaz et al., 2020; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2017;

Vuong & Suntrayuth, 2019; Zacher et al., 2015) have been carried out on talent attraction and work engagement. Except for the studies by Vuong and Suntrayuth (2019) and Zacher et al. (2015), which reported the existence of no significant relationship between the selection aspect of talent attraction with employee work engagement, all the other studies indicated the existence of the relationship. This contradiction made it necessary to further test the relationship between talent attraction and work engagement of employees to establish what pertained to the Ugandan context.

Talent development is the second aspect of talent management strategies studied in this article. Talent development is the support that enhances employees' technical knowledge of performing their duties well (Pandita & Ray, 2018). Talent development provides satisfaction to employees as it is regarded as a positive exchange, hence contributing to their development of work engagement (Lee & Eissenstat, 2018). Studies (Ajibola et al., 2019; Aybas & Acar, 2017; Bai & Liu, 2018; Lee & Eissenstat, 2018; LeVan, 2017; Morethe et al., 2020; Mugizi et al., 2020b; Pandita & Ray, 2018) examined the relationship between talent development and employee engagement. However, contrary to other scholars, Lee and Eissenstat (2018) and Morethe et al. (2020) reported that talent development opportunities had no significant relationship with work engagement of employees. This means that an empirical gap still existed as studies were not unanimous on the relationship between talent development and employee work engagement. This necessitated ascertaining the relationship between the variables in the context of public universities in Uganda.

Talent retention strategies are the third component of talent management that were considered in this study. Talent retention strategies involve quality incentives, organisational norms and values and retention policies (Veloso et al., 2014). Shibiti (2020) revealed that the implementation of practices that discourage employees from leaving the organisation leads to their work engagement. In their studies, scholars (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016; Brenyah & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017; Hoole & Hotz, 2016; Kang et al., 2020; Mugizi et al., 2020b; Victor & Hoole, 2017) related talent retention strategies and work engagement. However, while all the other studies indicated the existence of a significant positive relationship between the variables, Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) reported the contrary regarding the talent retention strategy of incentives. Therefore, the relationship between incentives and work engagement is not definite, creating the need for the study in the context of Uganda.

## Methods

The study employed a correlational research design to ascertain the relationship between talent management and the engagement of non-teaching workforce of public universities. Therefore, quantitative data relating variables to establish relationships existing between them was collected. This is because correlational studies involve the testing of relationships between variables in the same population (Queirós et al., 2017). The findings obtained based on the design helped to determine the extent to which the independent and dependent variables changed together. Data was analysed using quantitative methods because correlational studies are quantitative in nature. The simple random sampling procedure by which every individual in the population has an equal chance of participating in the study was used to select the respondents. This was because the procedure would help in producing generalisable findings. A sample of 201 non-teaching workforce, including administrative and support staff of Kyambogo University, provided data from a population of 417. The sample comprised 53.7% females and 46.3% males. The larger percentage (47.8%) was 40 years old and above, 32.3% were 30 but below 40 years in age, and 19.9% were up to 30 years old. The

larger percentage (39.6%) had worked for more than 10 years, 37.8% for five but less than 10 years, 18.4% for one but less than five years, and 4.0% for less than one year.

### Measures of the variables

The study variables were talent management strategies (independent variable) and work engagement (dependent variable). The measures of talent management were talent attraction, development and retention. Talent retention covered selective recruitment while talent development comprised performance appraisal, training and promotion (Tizikara & Mugizi, 2017) and talent attraction was measured in terms of quality incentives (Mugizi & Bakkabulindi, 2018), organisational norms and values (Akhan-Çağırtekin & Aküzüm, 2020) and retention policies (Kyndt et al., 2009). The measures of the dependent variables were vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The indicators of the constructs were based on a five-point Likert scale anchor (where, 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly agree). Before reduction, the indicators of the constructs were selective (six), recruitment and performance appraisal, training (seven) respectively, and promotion (six), while quality incentives, norms and values had eight, respectively. Indicators for the dependent variable were vigour (six), dedication (five) and absorption (six).

### Data analysis method

Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), specifically SmartPLS 3 software, was used in carrying out the study because it has the efficacy to spontaneously generate higher-order constructs and estimate complex models with numerous latent variables. SmartPLS reveals predictive links between variables based on strong theoretical support indicating causal associations. SmartPLS made it possible to identify the indicators of the different constructs and draw measurement models showing links (paths) between the different variables (Sarstedt et al., 2017.) The PLS-SEM approach involving SmartPLS was relevant as it enabled testing of the cause and effect linkages in the conjectured model because the sample was 100 ( $n = 201$ ) (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Thus, SmartPLS helped in showing the relationship between talent management and work engagement.

## Findings

This section presents the empirical results of the study. The results include measurement models, the structural equation model and the path model.

### Measurement models

To ascertain whether the constructs were appropriate for structural modelling, structural evaluation models (Tables 2 and 3) testing validity in the form of convergent and discriminant validity were developed. Structural evaluation modelling also included reliability, average variance extracted, collinearity and reliability tests aimed at confirming interrelatedness in indicators of the constructs, which included Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and composite reliability. The validity tests aimed at establishing whether the constructs were independent, hence able to measure the dependent variable independently. Convergent validity or the extent of confidence that a construct is described by its indicators involved testing average variance extracted (AVE). The findings revealed that variations in the indicators were explained by the constructs. This is because the AVE values indicated in Table 2 were significantly above the limit of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019). A discriminant validity test was done using a Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. HTMT is a reflective test that enables

one to establish whether concepts or measures in a model are independent, which suggests that indicators of each construct actually measure it (Roemer et al., 2021). Table 2 reveals that Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) correlations satisfied the discriminant validity condition, as all the values were less than 0.90 (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). Hence, the indicators were appropriate measures of the constructs, enabling further analysis.

**Table 2:** AVE and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) discriminant validity assessment

Measures	AVE	TA	TD	TR	WE
TA	0.542	0.736			
TD	0.511	0.314	0.715		
TR	0.553	0.271	0.715	0.744	
WE	0.532	0.556	0.572	0.404	0.729

**Abbreviations:** TA = talent attraction, TD = talent development, TR = talent retention, and WE = work engagement.

Reliability tests aimed at confirming the interrelatedness in indicators of the constructs were done (Table 3). The reliability tests included Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and composite reliability. The Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and composite reliability (CR) values obtained for the different indicators measuring the constructs were higher than 0.70, suggesting an adequate level of reliability. Composite reliability was included because Cronbach's alpha erroneously assumes that all indicator traits are similar in the population, thus reducing reliability values. Composite reliability is liberal as it considers the outer traits of the indicator variables (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Also, test results showed that there was no collinearity (high association) between the independent variables because the values for variance inflation factor (VIF), the standard metric for measuring collinearity, were less than 5 (Marcoulides & Raykov, 2019). This implies that the predictor variables (talent attraction, development and retention) independently predicted the dependent variable (work engagement).

**Table 3:** Reliability, average variance extracted and collinearity

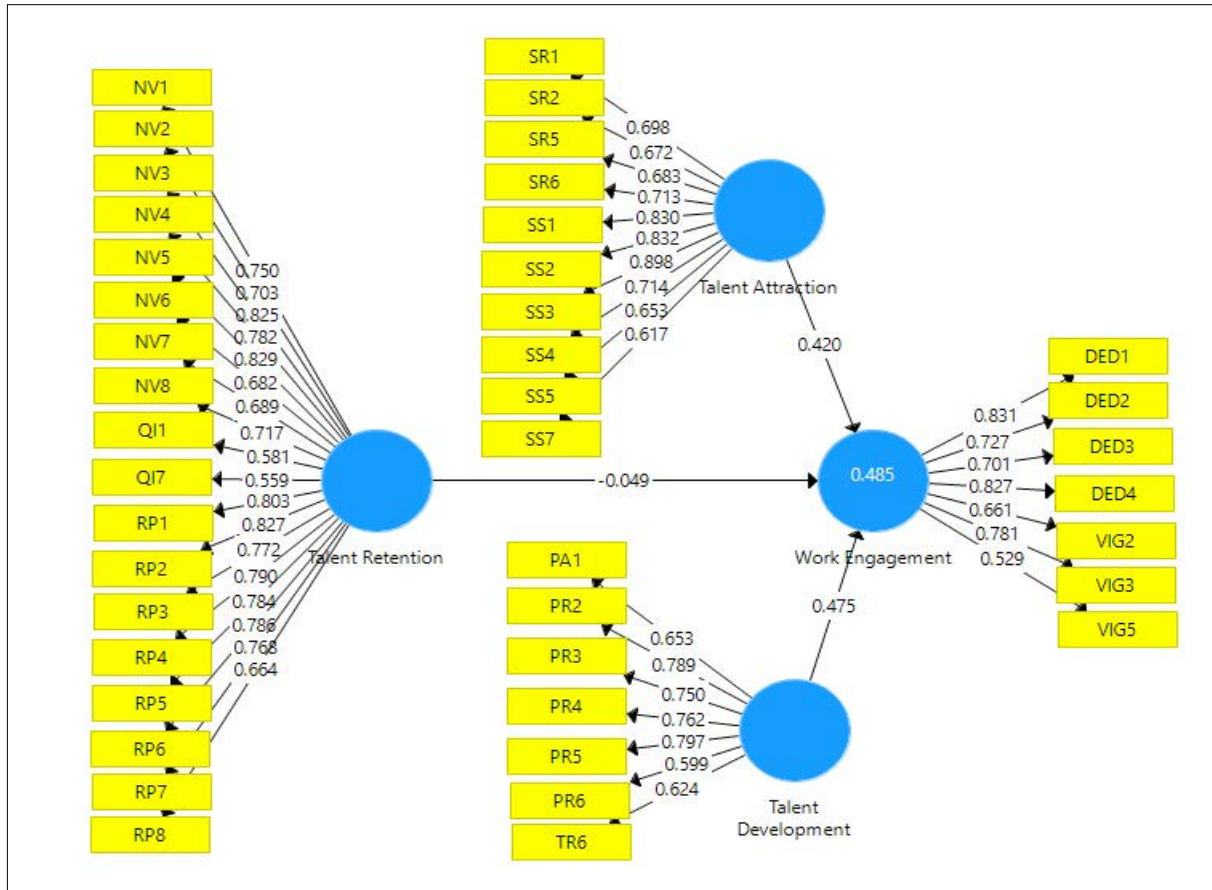
Measures	$\alpha$	CR	VIF
TA	0.905	0.921	1.115
TD	0.847	0.878	2.113
TR	0.953	0.957	2.055
WE	0.848	0.886	

### Structural equation model

After confirming that the measures of the constructs were appropriate, a structural model figure (Figure 1) depicting factor loadings and showing the relationship between the constructs was developed. The results in the figure include path links, betas ( $\beta$ s), p-values and coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).  $R^2$  assessed the model's predictive strength. The model involved testing three hypotheses to the effect that there is a significant relationship between talent attraction strategies and work engagement of the non-teaching workforce in public universities (H1), there is a significant relationship between talent development strategies and work engagement of the non-teaching workforce in public universities (H2), and there is a significant relationship between talent retention

strategies and work engagement of the non-teaching workforce in public universities (H3). Table 3 and Figure 1 illustrate the relationship between the variables.

Figure 1: Structural equation model results



**Key:** DED= dedication, NV = norms and values, PR = promotion, RP = retention policies, QI = quality incentives, SR = selective selection, SS= selective selection, TR = training, and VIG = vigour.

Factor loadings in Figure 1 indicate that for the independent variable of talent attraction conceptualised in terms of selective recruitment and selection, for recruitment indicator 4 was dropped while for selection indicator 6 was dropped. For the independent variable of career development, one indicator of performance appraisal (PA1) was retained, with all of them being dropped, while for promotion five indicators were retained, with one being dropped (PR1); and for training, one indicator (TR6) was retained and the rest dropped. For the independent variable of talent retention, all the items for norms and values were retained (NV1-8), only two indicators (Q1 and Q7) were retained for quality incentives, with the rest dropped and for retention policies, all the eight indicators (RP1-RP8) were retained. For the dependent variable of work engagement, all the indicators for the construct of absorption were dropped, and for dedication, four indicators (DED1-DED4) were retained, with indicator five (DED5) being dropped. With regard to vigour, out of six only three indicators (VIG 2, VIG3 and VIG5) were retained with three indicators (VIG1, VIG4 and VIG6) dropped. The indicators retained were those that loaded highly above the minimum value of 0.50 (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The indicators retained for the various constructs are illustrated in Figure 1.

**Table 4:** Structural equation path model

		$\beta$	Mean	STD	t	p
Talent attraction	Work engagement	0.420	0.416	0.061	6.870	0.000
Talent development	Work engagement	0.475	0.473	0.064	7.449	0.000
Talent retention	Work engagement	-0.049	-0.037	0.055	0.886	0.376
$R^2 = 0.485$						
Adjusted $R^2 = 0.477$						

The findings in Figure 1 and Table 4 indicate that talent attraction ( $\beta = 0.420$ ,  $t = 6.870$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) and talent development ( $\beta = 0.475$ ,  $t = 7.449$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) had a positive significant relationship with work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. However, talent attraction ( $\beta = -0.049$ ,  $t = 0.886$ ,  $p = 0.376 > 0.05$ ) had a negative and insignificant relationship with work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. Therefore, hypotheses one (H1) and two (H2) were supported while hypothesis three (H3) was rejected.  $R^2$  suggested that combined, talent attraction strategies, development and retention explained 48.5% ( $R^2 = 0.485$ ) of the variation in work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. Adjusted  $R^2$  indicated that the two significant talent management strategies of talent attraction strategies and development explained 47.7% (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.477$ ). The coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ) suggested that 51.5% of the variation in work engagement of the non-teaching workforce was accounted for by other factors than talent management. Further, the means show that for talent retention they were very low (negative). Therefore, talent retention strategies were weak.

## Discussion

The results showed that talent attraction strategies (selective recruitment and selection) positively and significantly related to work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. This finding was consistent with the findings of previous scholars (Budriene & Diskien, 2020; 2016; Karumuri, 2017; Lewis; 2019) that the talent attraction strategies had a positive association with employee engagement. The finding was also supported by different scholars (Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020; Nawaz et al., 2020; Sivapragasam & Raya, 2017), who revealed that the talent attraction strategy of selection was positively significantly associated with employee work engagement. Nonetheless, the finding was inconsistent with those of Vuonga and Sida (2020) and Zacher et al. (2015), who reported that selection had no significant relationship with employee work engagement. However, with the findings of the study being consistent with the findings of most previous scholars, it can be surmised that talent attraction strategies relate to work engagement of the non-teaching workforce.

The results also indicated that talent development strategies (performance appraisal, promotion and training) had a significant positive relationship with work engagement of non-teaching workforce. The finding corroborated those of previous scholars (Ajibola et al., 2019; Mugizi, et al., 2020b; Pandita & Ray, 2018). This is because these scholars reported the existence of a positive relationship between talent development and employee engagement. Relatedly, Aybas and Acar (2017) indicated that skill-enhancing human resource management practices positively and significantly related to employee engagement. Also, the studies by Bai and Liu (2018) and Liu et al. (2017) corroborated the finding of the study that talent development had a significant positive impact on work engagement. However, the finding of the study was contrary to those of the studies by Lee and Eissenstat (2018) and Morethe et al. (2020), who reported that talent development opportunities had no significant relationship with work engagement of employees. Nonetheless, with the finding of the study agreeing with



those of most previous scholars, it can be affirmed that talent development strategies have a largely significant positive relationship with work engagement of non-teaching workforce.

Nevertheless, the results revealed that talent retention strategies (organisational norms and values, quality incentives and retention policies) had a negative and insignificant relationship with work engagement of non-teaching workforce. This finding was close to the finding by Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) that the talent retention strategy of incentives in terms of money had the least effect on employee engagement. However, the finding is contrary to the findings of most previous scholars (Hoole & Hotz, 2016; Victor & Hoole, 2017; Mugizi et al., 2020a). The scholars reported that the relationship between incentives and work engagement was positive and significant. Also, Brenyah and Obuobisa-Darko (2017) and Kang et al. (2020) revealed that organisational norms and values positively and significantly related to employee engagement. With the finding of the study being contrary to the finding of the study, it can be inferred that in the context of Kyambogo University, the talent retention strategies implemented hindered development of work engagement of the non-teaching workforce. This confirms the premise on which this study was based that in the universities, there was poor talent management (Namubiru et al., 2017). Therefore, talent retention strategies were poor.

### Conclusion

The discussion above led to the conclusion that talent attraction strategies in terms of selective recruitment and selection are a game-changer for work engagement of employees. This is especially true in cases where the recruitment process involves scrutinising of resumes of the candidates, basing recruitment strictly on merit, assessing recommendations from referees, and carrying out reference checks. In addition, talent attraction is a game-changer for work engagement if the selection process is competitive and rigorous, relevant skills and job attitudes are evaluated, background checks are carried out on the candidates, and there are interviews with immediate supervisors and management. It was also concluded that talent development in the form of performance appraisal, training and promotion are a game-changer for work engagement of employees. This is when performance appraisal involves measuring performance based on objective results and training needs are identified through a formal appraisal mechanism. Also, talent development is a game-changer for work engagement when workers have the opportunity for fast promotion opportunities, the available promotion opportunities are satisfying, the promotion requirements are communicated and promotion is based on merit.

Concerning talent retention strategies, weak strategies hamper employee engagement. This is when there is a weak emphasis on norms, lack of a unique family atmosphere, limited open communication, with staff not being encouraged to speak up, and management does not value ideas and input from staff. Also, employee engagement will not be promoted when superiors are not accessible to staff, the spirit of teamwork is not promoted and the problems experienced by staff in their work are not understood. Work engagement also will not be promoted when there is a lack of quality incentives, with incentives not being comparable to the market and the pay being inadequate for staff basic needs. Further, work engagement will not change positively when retention policies are poor, with employees not given sufficient opportunity to use their talents and initiative, no effort is made by management to be pleasant to staff, and there are limited opportunities for staff to enhance their skills. In addition, retention policies will not promote work engagement when tasks are not assigned to the right people in a clear manner, the culture of participative decision-

making is not created, there are no flexible working arrangements and the workload does not allow a work-life balance.

### Recommendation

Based on the conclusions above, it was recommended that managers of universities should implement talent attraction strategies that are game-changers for work engagement. The talent attraction strategies should include a recruitment process that involves scrutinising of resumes of the candidates, based strictly on merit, and involves assessing recommendations from referees and carrying out reference checks. Talent attraction strategies should also involve a selection process that is competitive and rigorous, there should be an evaluation of relevant skills and job attitudes, and the carrying out of background checks and interviews should involve immediate supervisors and management. Secondly, managers of universities should emphasise talent development to enhance work engagement of employees. This should be done by ensuring that performance appraisal involves measuring performance based on objective results and identifying training needs through a formal appraisal mechanism. University managers should also implement talent development strategies that include providing fast-satisfying promotion opportunities based on merit and the promotion requirements should be clearly communicated.

With weak existing talent strategies, university managers should strengthen talent retention at the university to promote work engagement of the non-teaching staff. The strategies should include a strong emphasis on norms, creating a unique family atmosphere, open communication, with staff being encouraged to speak up, and the imperative for managers to value ideas and input from staff. University managers should also be accessible to staff, promote teamwork and understand the problems experienced by staff in their work. Efforts should also be made to provide quality incentives that are comparable to the market so that staff can afford staff basic needs. Staff should also be given sufficient opportunity to use their personal talents and initiative, and managers should be pleasant to them and should also provide them with opportunities to enhance their skills. It should also be ensured that tasks are assigned to the right people in a clear manner, participative decision-making is created, flexible working arrangements are established and the workload allows a work-life balance.

### Limitations

This study makes significant contributions in showing how talent management can enhance work engagement of workers. However, gaps that cannot be ignored emerged. For example, the results for the third hypothesis was to the effect that there is a significant relationship between talent retention strategies and work engagement of the non-teaching workforce contrary to what was conjectured. This is because while work engagement was high, the retention strategies provided were weak. Therefore, future studies should further test this relationship, possibly in more universities since this study was carried out in only one university. Further, the current study used the positivist approach, which limited in-depth analysis. Therefore, future studies should include the use of the interpretive approach for in-depth analysis.

### Declaration

This study was sponsored by the authors and did not attract any funding from anywhere. There is no conflict of interest/ competing interests. All the data is available with the corresponding author and can be made available if required. All the data generated or analysed during this study is included in this article.

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## Appendix: Study Instrument

Construct	Item	Measure
<b>Section A: Demographics</b>		
Demographics	BP1	Sex (1 = Male, 2= Female)
Profiles (BP)	BP2	Age group (1= Up to 30; 2 = 30 but below 40; 3 = 40 and above).
	BP3	Education level (1= Diploma; 2 = Bachelor Degrees; 4 = Masters)
	BP5	Years worked at the University (1= Less than 1 year; 1 but less than 5 years; 5 but less than 10 years; More than 10 years)
<b>Section B: Work Engagement</b>		
Absorption (ABS)	ABS1	When occupied by my job tasks in this university, time flies without noticing
	ABS2	When I am working on my job assignments in this university, all other things skip my mind
	ABS3	When intensely doing my job assignments in this university, I feel happy
	ABS4	In this university, I am totally focused on my work.
	ABS5	When I am working on my job activities in this university, I totally get lost into them
	ABS6	It is not easy to get separated from my work at this university.
Dedication (DED)	DED	The work I do in this university gives me a sense of meaning and purpose
	DED	I am zealous about my job in this university
	DED	The job I do in this university motivates me
	DED	I am pleased with the work I perform in this university
	DED	The work I do in this university challenges me
Vigour (VIG)	VIG1	I am always bursting with energy whenever I am doing my job
	VIG2	When I am on my tasks in this university, I feel energized and strong.
	VIG3	Each new day, I look forward to go to the university to do my assignments
	VIG4	When I am on the job I do in this university demands, I work for extended time
	VIG5	At my job in this university, I try to be mentally resilient
	VIG6	Even when things do not go well at work, I never give up
<b>Section: Talent Attraction</b>		
Selective	SR1	I tendered in a resume at the time of recruitment
Recruitment (SR)	SR2	My appointment on the job in this university was strictly based on merit
	SR3	When I was being recruited, I received enough pertinent information about this university
	SR4	When I applied for this job at this university, I received enough pertinent information about it
	SR5	I submitted recommendations from referees about my appropriateness for the job
	SR6	The university carried out reference checks on me
	Selective selection (SS)	SS1
SS2		I underwent a rigorous selection process to get hired by this university

Construct	Item	Measure
	SS3	When I was being interviewed to work at this university, my job-relevant talents were assessed
	SS4	When I was being interviewed to work at this university, my attitudes pertinent to the position were assessed
	SS5	I underwent background checks before I was appointed on my job position
	SS6	My immediate supervisor was on the panel that interviewed me
	SS7	I was subjected to an interview with management of the university
<b>Section C: Talent Development</b>		
Performance Appraisal (PA)	PA1	The performance evaluation I undergo is based on objective job results
	PA2	My university appraisal system is fair
	PA3	I get performance feedback after each evaluation
	PA4	My university's appraisal process helps progress of my career
	PA5	The appraisal process of the university takes place at regular intervals
Training (TR)	TR1	I am required to attend regular seminars and workshops in this university
	TR2	I receive opportunities for training in varied aspects of my job in this university
	TR3	To evoke my skills, I am assigned challenging jobs in this university
	TR4	Staff are encouraged to attain further studies in this university
	TR5	I have mentors that have been instrumental in way I perform my job
	TR6	The trainings I receive are as a result of the appraisal process of the university
	TR7	The university avails training opportunities consistent with my job changing needs
Promotion (PR)	PR1	I am sure that will get promoted to the next rank in this university
	PR2	I look forward to get promoted because of the associated benefits
	PR3	My promotion in this university will be fast
	PR4	I am aware of the promotion policy of this university because it has been communicated
	PR5	Merit is the basis for promotion in this university
	PR6	I know what I need to do to get promoted in this university
<b>Section D: Talent Retention</b>		
Quality Incentives (QI)	QI1	I receive compensation and benefits from this university that are competitive in the market
	QI2	I am happy with the benefits and compensation I get from this university
	QI3	In this University, rewards and remuneration are paid equitably
	QI4	I receive a fair pay for the work that I accomplish in this university
	QI5	My job performance has a significant impact on how much I get paid and rewarded in this university
	QI6	My incentives and compensation in this university are promptly paid.



Construct	Item	Measure
	QI7	The pay I receive affords me basic needs
	QI8	The amount of pay I receive in university is proportionate to my position
Norms and Values (NV)	NV1	Management of the university has created a unique family atmosphere
	NV2	The university emphasises open communication
	NV3	Management of the university encourages staff to speak up when they disagree with a decision
	NV4	Management of the university allows staff the freedom to express ideas
	NV5	Management of the university values ideas and inputs from staff
	NV6	Management of the university is open to questions from staff
	NV7	In this university staff have a chance to meet with superiors on one-to-one sessions to discuss performance and goals
	NV8	In this university there is a spirit of team work amongst staff
Retention Policies (RP)	RP1	The management of the university tries to understand the problems employees experience in their work
	RP2	On the job every employee is given sufficient opportunity to their personal talents and use initiative.
	RP3	Management makes effort to be nice to staff
	RP4	The university gives staff the opportunity to get to enhance their skills
	RP5	Tasks to staff are assigned to the right people in a clear manner
	RP6	A culture of participation in decision making has been created in this university
	RP7	Flexible working arrangements have been put in place for staff in this university
	RP8	The workload in this university allows work-life balance
	RP1	The management of the university tries to understand the problems employees experience in their work