EFFECT OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN KENYAN MANUFACTURING FIRMS: A CASE STUDY OF UNGA GROUP LIMITED

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP (HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OPTION) AT THE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other University.

Signature…………………………… **Date ………………………**

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my permission as the University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my loving husband, Samuel O. Ogutu, for his unwavering support, patience, and encouragement throughout this academic journey. I also dedicate this work to my beloved children, Chantal, Ryan, and Raylan, whose love, understanding, and inspiration gave me the strength and motivation to persevere.

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ABSTRACT

Employee productivity will remain a critical determinant of organizational performance, competitiveness, and sustainability in the manufacturing sector. In Kenya, manufacturing firms continue to experience productivity challenges arising from weaknesses in performance management practices despite increased investment in human capital systems. This study will examine the effect of performance management practices on employee productivity in Kenyan manufacturing firms, with specific reference to Unga Group Limited. The problem to be addressed in this study will be the persistent low levels of employee productivity attributed to ineffective performance planning, appraisal, feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices despite the existence of formal performance management systems. The study will be guided by the objective of determining the effect of performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices on employee productivity. The scope of the study will be limited to employees of Unga Group Limited in Kenya, while its significance will lie in generating empirical evidence to inform management, policymakers, and scholars on effective performance management practices that enhance productivity. The study will be anchored on Goal-Setting Theory, Expectancy Theory, Feedback Intervention Theory, and Equity Theory, which will explain the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity. A descriptive research design will be adopted. The target population will comprise 300 employees drawn from the production, human resource, finance, operations, and administration departments. A sample size of 171 respondents will be selected using stratified random sampling. Primary data will be collected using structured questionnaires. A pilot study will be conducted on 10% of the sample size to test the research instrument, and validity and reliability will be established through expert review and Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient respectively. Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis with the aid of SPSS, and results will be presented using tables and figures. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity, will be strictly observed throughout the study.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
ILO	International Labour Organization
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PM	Performance Management
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Employee Productivity: Refers to the level of efficiency and effectiveness with which employees at Unga Group Limited perform their assigned tasks. In this study, employee productivity was measured using work output, efficiency in task execution, quality of work, and timeliness of task completion

Performance Appraisal Practices: Refer to the systematic evaluation of employee performance against predefined standards at Unga Group Limited. In this study, performance appraisal practices were measured using appraisal frequency, clarity of appraisal criteria, fairness of the appraisal process, and the use of appraisal results for employee development.

Performance Feedback Practices: Refer to the processes through which employees at Unga Group Limited receive timely, constructive feedback and developmental support from their supervisors. In this study, performance feedback and coaching practices were measured using timeliness of feedback, clarity of feedback, availability of coaching support, and focus on employee development.

Performance Planning Practices: Refer to the extent to which Unga Group Limited establishes clear performance goals, defines employee roles, aligns individual targets with organizational objectives, and involves employees in goal-setting. In this study, performance planning practices were measured through goal clarity, role clarity, target alignment, and employee participation in performance planning.

Reward and Recognition Practices: Refer to the extent to which employee performance at Unga Group Limited is acknowledged and rewarded through financial and non-financial mechanisms. In this study, reward and recognition practices were measured using performance-based incentives, non-monetary recognition, perceived fairness of rewards, and consistency in rewarding high performance.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the foundational framework of the study by outlining the background and context of performance management practices and employee productivity within the manufacturing sector. Specifically, the chapter discusses the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the study objectives, research questions, significance, and scope of the study. The chapter further provides operational definitions of key variables and clarifies the contextual focus of the study on Unga Group Limited in Kenya.

1.1 Background of the Study

Employee productivity has been empirically established as a critical determinant of economic growth, industrial competitiveness, and employment creation across both developed and developing economies (International Labour Organization, 2023). Empirical evidence indicates that productivity growth enables firms to increase output levels while optimizing the use of labor and capital, thereby contributing to higher national income and improved living standards (World Bank, 2022). In the manufacturing sector, employee productivity has been directly associated with production efficiency, cost reduction, quality improvement, and timely delivery of goods, all of which are essential for sustaining industrial growth (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). Studies further demonstrate that manufacturing productivity has a strong multiplier effect on job creation and export performance, particularly in emerging economies pursuing industrialization strategies (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2022).

In the United States, empirical studies have consistently linked employee productivity in manufacturing firms to the adoption of structured performance management practices. Research shows that firms implementing systematic performance planning and goal-setting mechanisms report higher levels of employee efficiency and output quality compared to firms with informal systems (Aguinis, 2019). Evidence from large U.S. manufacturing organizations further indicates that regular performance appraisals and continuous feedback improve employee accountability and task focus, leading to sustained productivity improvements (Cappelli & Tavis, 2020). These studies suggest that performance management practices play a central role in aligning employee behaviour with organizational production objectives in highly competitive manufacturing environments.

In Europe, manufacturing firms operate in contexts characterized by high labor standards, technological advancement, and intense global competition. Empirical evidence from European manufacturing sectors indicates that performance management practices such as transparent appraisal systems, developmental feedback, and performance-linked rewards significantly influence employee productivity (DeNisi & Smith, 2021). Studies conducted in Germany and the United Kingdom reveal that firms with clearly defined performance targets and regular appraisal cycles achieve higher workforce efficiency and consistency in output compared to those with weak performance management frameworks (OECD, 2021). Furthermore, research shows that coaching-oriented feedback enhances employee skills development, which contributes to long-term productivity growth in European manufacturing firms (European Commission, 2022).

In Asia, particularly in industrialized and rapidly growing economies such as Japan, China, and South Korea, employee productivity in manufacturing has been closely associated with disciplined and culturally embedded performance management systems. Empirical studies indicate that performance planning, continuous monitoring, and collective accountability mechanisms significantly improve employee efficiency and production consistency in Asian manufacturing firms (Kim & Park, 2020). Research further demonstrates that performance-based rewards and recognition systems reinforce employee commitment to productivity targets and quality standards, even in labour-intensive manufacturing settings (Zhang, Li, & Zhao, 2021). These findings highlight the importance of integrating performance management practices into organizational routines to sustain high levels of employee productivity.

In the African context, manufacturing firms continue to face productivity challenges arising from skills shortages, technological gaps, and weak human resource management systems. However, empirical evidence increasingly suggests that effective performance management practices can mitigate these challenges. Studies conducted in South Africa and Nigeria reveal that manufacturing firms with formal performance appraisal systems and regular feedback mechanisms record higher employee efficiency and output quality than firms without such systems (Mensah & Tawiah, 2020). Similarly, regional studies across Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that performance management practices enhance role clarity and employee motivation, which positively influence productivity outcomes in manufacturing firms (African Development Bank, 2021).

In Kenya, the manufacturing sector is recognized as a key driver of economic growth, employment creation, and industrial development, as reflected in national policy frameworks such as Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (Government of Kenya, 2022). Despite this strategic importance, empirical evidence shows that the sector continues to experience productivity-related challenges, including high production costs, skills mismatches, and inconsistent employee performance (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Studies conducted within Kenyan manufacturing firms indicate that while performance management practices such as performance appraisal and reward systems are increasingly adopted, their effectiveness in enhancing employee productivity varies significantly across firms (Mwangi & Kwasira, 2021). This variation suggests gaps in the design and implementation of performance management practices within the sector.

Against this backdrop, this study examined the effect of performance management practices on employee productivity in Kenyan manufacturing firms, with specific reference to Unga Group Limited. The study focused on performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices as key dimensions of performance management. By empirically establishing how these practices influence employee productivity, the study sought to generate context-specific evidence to inform managerial decision-making, policy formulation, and academic discourse on productivity improvement within the Kenyan manufacturing sector.

1.1.1 Performance Planning Practices

Performance planning practices refer to the systematic process through which organizations set performance expectations, define goals, and align individual employee objectives with organizational strategic priorities. According to Aguinis (2019), performance planning involves establishing clear performance standards and measurable targets that guide employee effort and behaviour. Similarly, Armstrong and Taylor (2020) define performance planning as a continuous process of clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expected outcomes to ensure that employees understand what is required of them. DeNisi and Murphy (2017) further describe performance planning as a forward-looking managerial activity that focuses on goal clarity, work prioritization, and alignment between employee tasks and organizational objectives. These definitions emphasize that performance planning is not a one-time activity but an ongoing process aimed at enhancing employee focus and productivity.

The key dimensions of performance planning practices identified in the literature include goal setting, performance target formulation, role clarity, and alignment of individual goals with organizational strategy. Empirical studies have shown that these dimensions play a critical role in shaping employee behaviour and productivity. For instance, Locke and Latham (2019) found that specific and challenging goals significantly improve employee productivity by directing attention and increasing effort. Similarly, research by Mensah (2020) in manufacturing firms demonstrated that clear performance targets and role clarity enhance employee efficiency and reduce task ambiguity. A study by Kim and Park (2021) further established that alignment between individual performance goals and organizational objectives improves employee commitment and output levels. In this study, performance planning practices were operationalized using indicators such as clarity of performance goals, alignment of individual targets with organizational objectives, clarity of job roles, and employee involvement in goal setting.

1.1.2 Performance Appraisal Practices

Performance appraisal practices refer to the formal and systematic evaluation of employee performance against predefined standards and objectives. According to Armstrong (2021), performance appraisal is a structured process through which employee performance is assessed to inform decisions related to development, rewards, and career progression. Aguinis (2019) defines performance appraisal as the periodic assessment of an employee's work behaviours and outcomes to determine their contribution to organizational goals. Similarly, Grote (2020) views performance appraisal as a managerial tool for measuring performance effectiveness, providing feedback, and identifying performance gaps. These definitions underscore the evaluative and developmental nature of performance appraisal practices.

The main dimensions of performance appraisal practices include appraisal criteria clarity, frequency of appraisal, fairness and objectivity, and use of appraisal results for decision-making. Empirical evidence shows that these dimensions significantly influence employee productivity. For example, Kuvaas (2018) found that fair and transparent appraisal systems positively affect employee motivation and performance outcomes. A study by Mwangi and Kwasira (2021) in Kenyan manufacturing firms revealed that regular and objective performance appraisals enhance employee accountability and productivity. Similarly, research by Selvarajan and Cloninger (2019) demonstrated that appraisal systems perceived as fair and developmental lead to improved employee effort and task performance. In the present study, performance appraisal practices were measured using indicators such as fairness of appraisal process, clarity of appraisal criteria, frequency of performance evaluation, and utilization of appraisal results for employee development.

1.1.3 Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices

Performance feedback and coaching practices refer to the continuous process through which employees receive information and guidance regarding their performance to enhance improvement and learning. According to DeNisi and Smith (2021), performance feedback involves providing employees with timely and constructive information about their work performance to reinforce positive behaviour and correct deficiencies. Aguinis (2019) defines performance coaching as an interactive process in which supervisors support employees in developing skills, solving performance problems, and achieving performance goals. Similarly, London (2020) describes feedback and coaching as developmental tools aimed at enhancing employee competence and long-term productivity.

The dimensions of performance feedback and coaching include timeliness of feedback, constructiveness of feedback, managerial support, and developmental coaching. Empirical studies indicate that these dimensions are strongly associated with employee productivity. For instance, Kluger and DeNisi (2018) found that timely and task-focused feedback significantly improves employee performance outcomes. A study conducted by Kim, Egan, and Kim (2020) showed that coaching-oriented leadership enhances employee learning and productivity in manufacturing organizations. Additionally, research by Winstone et al. (2021) established that constructive feedback improves employee self-regulation and task efficiency. In this study, performance feedback and coaching practices were operationalized using indicators such as timeliness of feedback, clarity of feedback, availability of coaching support, and focus on employee development.

1.1.4 Reward and Recognition Practices

Reward and recognition practices refer to the systems through which organizations acknowledge and compensate employees for their performance and contributions. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), rewards include both financial and non-financial returns provided to employees in exchange for their work, while recognition focuses on acknowledging effort and achievement. Similarly, Milkovich, Newman, and Gerhart (2020) define reward practices as structured mechanisms that link employee performance to compensation and recognition outcomes. Aguinis (2019) further describes recognition as a motivational tool that reinforces desired performance behaviours and productivity.

The key dimensions of reward and recognition practices include performance-based pay, non-financial recognition, fairness of reward systems, and linkage between performance and rewards. Empirical studies demonstrate that these dimensions have a significant influence on employee productivity. For example, Kuvaas et al. (2017) found that performance-based rewards positively affect employee effort and output quality. A study by Njanja et al. (2019) in Kenyan manufacturing firms revealed that recognition and incentive systems enhance employee motivation and productivity. Similarly, research by Chiang and Birtch (2020) showed that fair and transparent reward systems strengthen employee commitment and performance. In the current study, reward and recognition practices were measured using indicators such as performance-based incentives, non-monetary recognition, perceived fairness of rewards, and consistency in rewarding high performance.

1.1.5 Employee Productivity

Employee productivity refers to the extent to which employees efficiently transform inputs such as time, skills, and effort into valuable work outputs that contribute to organizational objectives. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023), employee productivity reflects the relationship between labor input and the quantity or quality of output produced within a given period. Similarly, OECD (2021) defines employee productivity as the effectiveness with which human resources generate output while minimizing waste and inefficiencies. In an organizational context, Mathis, Jackson, and Valentine (2020) conceptualize employee productivity as the degree to which employees meet performance expectations in terms of output, quality, and efficiency. DeNisi and Smith (2021) further describe employee productivity as a multidimensional construct encompassing work quantity, work quality, and timeliness of task execution. These definitions collectively emphasize that employee productivity is not merely about working harder but about working effectively and efficiently.

The literature identifies several key dimensions of employee productivity, particularly within manufacturing firms. These dimensions include work output, efficiency, quality of work, and timeliness of task completion. Work output relates to the volume of goods or tasks completed by an employee, while efficiency focuses on the optimal use of time and resources to achieve desired outcomes. Quality of work reflects adherence to standards and minimization of defects, whereas timeliness captures the ability of employees to complete tasks within specified deadlines. These dimensions are widely used in productivity studies because they capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of employee performance (UNIDO, 2022).

Empirical studies provide strong evidence supporting these dimensions of employee productivity. For instance, a study by Bloom, Sadun, and Van Reenen (2019) found that employee productivity in manufacturing firms is significantly influenced by output levels, efficiency, and quality control mechanisms. Similarly, research conducted by Kim and Park (2020) in Asian manufacturing firms established that productivity improvements are reflected through higher output per employee, reduced error rates, and timely completion of production tasks. In the African context, Mensah and Tawiah (2020) demonstrated that employee productivity in manufacturing firms is best measured using indicators related to efficiency, quality of output, and adherence to production schedules. In Kenya, a study by Mwangi and Kwasira (2021) found that employee productivity in manufacturing firms is reflected in improved work output, reduced wastage, and consistent achievement of performance targets. In the present study, employee productivity was measured using indicators such as employee work output, efficiency in task execution, quality of work produced, and timeliness in completing assigned duties.

1.1.6 Profile of Unga Group Limited

Unga Group Plc is a publicly listed Kenyan holding company engaged in the manufacture, marketing, and distribution of human nutrition and animal nutrition products (Unga Group Plc, n.d.). Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, the Group has been in operation for over 115 years and is among the oldest and most established companies listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange

(NSE), where its shares have been traded since 1955 (Unga Group Plc, n.d.). The company's core business activities include milling wheat and maize into flours and other food products for human consumption, as well as the manufacture and distribution of animal feed and animal health products, covering a broad range of nutrition solutions for both people and livestock (Unga Group Plc, n.d.; African Financials, 2026). Its strategic portfolio supports food security and farm-care solutions across East Africa, with operations not only in Kenya but also in Uganda through subsidiary entities (Unga Group Plc, n.d.; African Financials, 2026).

Unga Group operates through key subsidiaries including Unga Limited, responsible for the milling of grain and production of consumer food products such as flour, maize meal, rice, and pasta, and Unga Farm Care (EA) Limited, which focuses on animal feed and related animal health products (Unga Group Plc, n.d.; Unga Farmcare, n.d.). The Group's products are widely distributed in Kenya and the East African region under various well-known brands, contributing to its reputation as a significant player in both the food and animal nutrition markets (Unga Group Plc, n.d.; Unga Farmcare, n.d.). Over the years, Unga Group has cultivated a strategic investment partnership with US-based Seaboard Corporation, enhancing its technical capacity and regional supply chain operations (Unga Group Plc, n.d.).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Employee productivity continues to pose a significant challenge to manufacturing firms worldwide, despite increased attention to performance management systems. Recent global data show that labour productivity growth in manufacturing has slowed markedly, with average annual growth rates declining below 1.5% in many economies over the last decade (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023). In developing economies, manufacturing firms experience even lower productivity levels due to inefficiencies in workforce management, weak performance monitoring, and limited incentive structures (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2022). These trends indicate that although performance management frameworks are widely promoted, their effectiveness in addressing employee productivity challenges remains uncertain.

Manufacturing productivity remains substantially lower than global benchmarks. The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2023) reports that labour productivity in African manufacturing firms is approximately 40–50% lower than the global average, largely due to weak human resource management systems and ineffective performance evaluation mechanisms. Empirical studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa further reveal that many manufacturing firms apply performance management practices inconsistently, with limited emphasis on structured performance planning, continuous feedback, and performance-linked rewards (Mensah & Tawiah, 2020). This regional evidence highlights a contextual gap, as most productivity-enhancing performance management models are developed and tested in advanced economies, with limited empirical validation in African manufacturing settings.

Manufacturing sector has persistently underperformed relative to national development expectations. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2023), the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP has stagnated at 7–8% over the past decade, falling short of the 15% target envisioned under Vision 2030. Additionally, World Bank (2022) data indicate that labor productivity growth in Kenyan manufacturing has remained below 2% annually, constrained by skills mismatches, weak performance appraisal systems, and limited employee motivation mechanisms. Although Kenyan manufacturing firms have adopted various performance management practices, empirical studies report mixed productivity outcomes, suggesting that the specific effectiveness of these practices remains unclear (Mwangi & Kwasira, 2021). This situation demonstrates a clear contextual gap in firm-level evidence linking performance management practices to employee productivity within Kenyan manufacturing firms such as Unga Group Limited.

Existing literature on performance management and employee productivity exhibits notable limitations. Many studies conceptualize performance management as a broad, aggregated construct without distinguishing its core dimensions, such as performance planning, performance appraisal, feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices (Aguinis, 2019). This aggregation obscures the relative contribution of individual practices to employee productivity and limits the ability to identify which aspects of performance management are most effective in manufacturing environments. Furthermore, several studies focus on overall organizational performance rather than employee-level productivity outcomes, thereby overlooking critical productivity indicators such as efficiency, output quality, and timeliness (DeNisi & Smith, 2021). This conceptual gap necessitates a more granular analysis that explicitly links specific performance management practices to measurable employee productivity outcomes.

Prior studies on performance management and productivity, particularly in developing economies, reveal several weaknesses. A significant proportion of studies rely on cross-sectional designs and descriptive analyses, which limit causal inference and reduce the robustness of findings (Kuvaas et al., 2018). Additionally, many studies adopt cross-sectoral samples, combining manufacturing firms with service and public sector organizations, thereby diluting sector-specific insights (Mensah & Tawiah, 2020). In the Kenyan context, existing studies often employ generalized survey approaches with limited firm-specific focus and inadequate use of inferential statistical techniques to test relationships between variables (Mwangi & Kwasira, 2021). These methodological shortcomings create uncertainty regarding the validity and applicability of existing findings to specific manufacturing firms.

There exists a clear empirical gap in understanding how distinct performance management practices influence employee productivity within individual Kenyan manufacturing firms. Despite Unga Group Limited's strategic role in Kenya's manufacturing sector, there is limited empirical evidence examining how its performance planning, appraisal, feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices affect employee productivity. This study therefore sought to bridge the identified contextual gap by focusing on a Kenyan manufacturing firm, address the conceptual gap by disaggregating performance management into specific practices, and overcome the methodological gap by employing appropriate inferential analysis at the firm level. In doing so, the study aimed to generate robust, context-specific evidence to inform managerial decision-making, policy formulation, and scholarly discourse on productivity enhancement in the Kenyan manufacturing sector.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of performance management practices on employee productivity in Kenyan manufacturing firms, with specific reference to Unga Group Limited.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. To determine the effect of performance planning practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

ii. To assess the effect of performance appraisal practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

iii. To examine the effect of performance feedback practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

iv. To evaluate the effect of reward and recognition practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

1.4 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

i. What influence does performance planning have on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited?
ii. How does performance appraisal affect employee productivity at Unga Group Limited?
iii. To what extent do performance feedback practices contribute to employee productivity at Unga Group Limited?
iv. What is the effect of reward and recognition practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study were significant to various stakeholders. To management of Unga Group Limited, the study provided insights on how performance management practices influenced employee productivity. The findings assisted management in identifying effective performance planning, appraisal, feedback, and reward systems that could be strengthened to enhance employee output and operational efficiency within the organization. To employees of Unga Group Limited, the study was important as it highlighted how different performance management practices affected their productivity and motivation at the workplace. The findings increased employees' awareness of the role of fair appraisals, timely feedback, and appropriate recognition in improving job performance and overall work satisfaction.

To policymakers and practitioners in the manufacturing sector, the study offered empirical evidence on the role of performance management practices in enhancing employee productivity. The findings informed the formulation and review of human resource policies and guidelines aimed at improving productivity and competitiveness within Kenyan manufacturing firms. To scholars and researchers, the study contributed to existing literature on performance management and employee productivity, particularly within the Kenyan manufacturing context. The study filled contextual and empirical gaps and served as a reference point for future academic research in human resource management and organizational performance.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The content scope of the study focused on performance management practices and employee productivity within the manufacturing sector. Specifically, the study examined performance management practices in terms of performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices as the independent variables. Employee productivity was the dependent variable and was assessed using indicators such as work output, efficiency, quality of work, and timeliness of task completion. The study concentrated on employees and management involved in performance management processes and did not address other human resource practices outside the defined variables.

The geographical scope of the study was limited to Unga Group Limited in Kenya. The study was conducted within selected operational units and departments of Unga Group Limited where performance management practices were implemented. The firm was selected due to its established presence in the Kenyan manufacturing sector and the relevance of its performance management systems to the study objectives. The findings of the study were therefore interpreted within the Kenyan manufacturing context.

The time scope of the study covered the period from January to March 2026. This period was adequate for proposal development, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and report writing. The time frame enabled the researcher to capture recent and relevant data on performance management practices and employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the background and contextual foundation of the study by examining employee productivity and performance management practices within the manufacturing sector. It outlined the problem motivating the study by highlighting existing contextual, conceptual, and methodological gaps related to performance management and employee productivity. The chapter further stated the study objectives and research questions, explained the significance of the study to key stakeholders, and defined the scope in terms of content, geographical coverage, and time. Additionally, the chapter introduced and discussed the key study variables and provided a profile of Unga Group Limited as the case organization. The subsequent chapter presents a review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature that underpins the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the study in order to establish a theoretical and empirical foundation for examining the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity. Specifically, the chapter presents the theoretical literature review, empirical literature review, summary and identified research gaps, the conceptual framework, and the operationalization of study variables. The chapter concludes with a summary highlighting key insights that inform the study

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

Theoretical literature provides the conceptual and explanatory foundation upon which empirical investigations are anchored. This study was anchored on Goal-Setting Theory as the primary theory supporting employee productivity and performance planning practices, while Expectancy Theory, Feedback Intervention Theory, and Equity Theory were used as supporting theories for the remaining independent variables.

2.1.1 Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-Setting Theory was proposed by Edwin Locke in 1968 and later expanded with Gary Latham. The theory posits that specific and challenging goals, when accepted by individuals, lead to higher levels of performance compared to vague or easy goals (Locke & Latham, 2022). According to the theory, goals direct attention, mobilize effort, increase persistence, and encourage the development of task-related strategies. In organizational contexts, goal clarity and commitment are central mechanisms through which employee productivity is enhanced. Over time, the theory has evolved to incorporate moderators such as feedback, goal commitment, task complexity, and self-efficacy. Proponents argue that goal-setting improves productivity by aligning individual effort with organizational objectives and providing a clear benchmark for performance evaluation (Locke & Latham, 2019). However, critics argue that overly challenging goals may encourage unethical behaviour, narrow focus, or stress, particularly in complex tasks (Ordóñez et al., 2019). Empirical studies have also shown that goal-setting may be less effective where employees lack adequate skills or resources to achieve set targets (Latham & Locke, 2017).

The key concepts of Goal-Setting Theory include goal specificity, goal difficulty, commitment, feedback, and task strategies. The underlying assumptions are that individuals are rational actors, that they respond predictably to goals, and that performance improves when goals are clear and meaningful. Strengths of the theory lie in its strong empirical support and practical applicability across work settings. However, limitations include its limited attention to intrinsic motivation and contextual constraints such as organizational culture and power dynamics (Ordóñez et al., 2019; Welsh & Ordóñez, 2019). In the current study, Goal-Setting Theory supports employee productivity (dependent variable) and performance planning practices (independent variable) by explaining how clear performance targets, aligned goals, and role clarity influence employee effort and output at Unga Group Limited. The theory was selected as the anchor theory because it has been widely applied in studies examining performance planning and productivity in manufacturing and organizational contexts (Locke & Latham, 2019; Mensah, 2020; Mwangi & Kwasira, 2021).

2.1.2 Expectancy Theory

Expectancy Theory was advanced by Victor Vroom in 1964 and explains motivation as a function of an individual's belief that effort will lead to performance (expectancy), performance will lead to rewards (instrumentality), and the rewards are valued (valence). The theory suggests that employees are more productive when they believe their performance will result in desirable outcomes. In performance appraisal contexts, employees are motivated to improve productivity if appraisal systems are perceived as credible and linked to meaningful rewards. The theory has developed over time to incorporate cognitive decision-making processes and individual differences in motivation. Supporters argue that Expectancy Theory explains why performance appraisal systems influence employee effort and productivity when appraisal outcomes are clearly linked to rewards and development opportunities (Van Eerde & Thierry, 2016). Critics, however, argue that the theory assumes rational decision-making and overlooks emotional, social, and cultural influences on behavior (Pinder, 2018). Additionally, empirical studies suggest that expectancy perceptions may be weakened in environments characterized by favoritism or weak appraisal credibility (Kuvaas, 2018).

Key concepts of Expectancy Theory include expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, while its assumptions rest on rational choice and conscious evaluation of outcomes. The strength of the theory lies in its explanatory power regarding effort–performance–reward linkages. Its weakness lies in its limited applicability in contexts where rewards are not clearly differentiated or performance measures are subjective. In this study, Expectancy Theory supports performance appraisal practices by explaining how appraisal fairness, clarity, and use of results influence employee productivity. The theory was justified for inclusion based on its application in studies examining appraisal systems and productivity in manufacturing and organizational settings (Kuvaas, 2018; Chiang & Birtch, 2020).

2.1.3 Feedback Intervention Theory

Feedback Intervention Theory was proposed by Kluger and DeNisi in 1996 and explains how feedback influences performance by directing attention toward or away from task-relevant cues. The theory posits that feedback improves performance when it focuses on task processes rather than personal characteristics. In organizational settings, performance feedback and coaching help employees identify performance gaps, adjust behaviour, and improve productivity. Over time, the theory has been refined to distinguish between constructive, task-focused feedback and ego-focused feedback, with the former being more effective in enhancing performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 2018). Supporters argue that feedback interventions are critical for learning and continuous improvement, especially in performance-driven environments. However, critics note that poorly delivered feedback can demotivate employees and reduce performance (Steelman et al., 2024). Studies also suggest that feedback effectiveness depends on the credibility of the source and the organizational climate (Winstone et al., 2021).

The main concepts of the theory include feedback focus, attention regulation, and task learning, while its assumptions emphasize cognitive processing of performance information. Strengths of the theory include its explanatory depth regarding feedback mechanisms, while weaknesses include inconsistent feedback effects across contexts. In this study, Feedback Intervention Theory supports performance feedback and coaching practices by explaining how timely and constructive feedback enhances employee productivity. The theory was selected because it has been widely used to study feedback, coaching, and performance outcomes in organizational research (Kluger & DeNisi, 2018; Kim et al., 2020).

2.1.4 Equity Theory

Equity Theory was developed by J. Stacy Adams in 1963 and posits that employees assess fairness by comparing their inputs and outcomes with those of others. The theory argues that perceived inequity leads to reduced effort, dissatisfaction, and lower productivity, while perceived fairness enhances motivation and performance. In the context of reward and recognition practices, employees are more productive when rewards are perceived as fair and proportional to effort. The theory has evolved to incorporate distributive, procedural, and interactional justice perspectives. Proponents argue that equitable reward systems enhance trust and sustained productivity (Colquitt et al., 2019). Critics, however, contend that the theory overemphasizes social comparison and neglects individual differences in reward preferences (Greenberg, 2011). Empirical studies also indicate that perceptions of fairness may vary across cultures and organizational contexts (Cropanzano et al., 2019).

Key concepts of Equity Theory include inputs, outcomes, comparison referents, and perceived fairness. Its assumptions rest on rational comparison and fairness sensitivity. Strengths of the theory include its relevance in explaining reward-related behaviour, while weaknesses include its limited predictive precision in complex reward systems. In this study, Equity Theory supports reward and recognition practices by explaining how fairness and consistency in rewards influence employee productivity. The theory was justified based on its extensive use in studies examining reward systems and employee performance (Colquitt et al., 2018; Njanja et al., 2019).

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Empirical literature review examines existing studies related to the study variables in order to establish what has been researched, the methodologies employed, and the findings obtained. This section provides empirical evidence on the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity across different contexts. The review helps to identify consistencies, contradictions, and gaps in existing studies that justify the need for the current research. The studies reviewed are organized according to the study variables: performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, reward and recognition practices, and employee productivity.

2.2.1 Performance Planning Practices and Employee Productivity

Mensah (2020) conducted a study to examine the effect of performance planning practices on employee productivity in large manufacturing firms in Ghana. The objective of the study was to establish how goal setting and role clarity influenced employee productivity. The study targeted 420 production and supervisory employees drawn from selected manufacturing firms and adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design. Stratified random sampling was used to select respondents, and data were collected using structured questionnaires. Data analysis involved multiple regression analysis, and findings were presented using tables and coefficients. The study found that clear performance goals and well-defined job roles significantly improved employee efficiency and output levels. However, the study was conducted outside the Kenyan context, thereby presenting a contextual gap, which the current study addresses by focusing on a Kenyan manufacturing firm, Unga Group Limited.

Locke and Latham (2019) examined the relationship between goal-setting practices and employee productivity in manufacturing organizations in the United States. The objective of the study was to determine whether specific and challenging goals enhanced employee performance. The study targeted production employees across 30 manufacturing firms and employed an experimental research design. Data were collected using performance records and structured surveys and analysed using inferential statistical techniques, including analysis of variance. The findings revealed that specific and challenging goals significantly enhanced employee productivity compared to vague or general goals. Despite its methodological rigor, the study was conducted in a developed economy, limiting its applicability to developing economies. This presents a contextual gap that the current study addresses by examining performance planning practices within a developing economy setting.

Kim and Park (2021) investigated the influence of performance planning on employee productivity in South Korean manufacturing firms. The objective of the study was to assess how alignment between individual performance goals and organizational objectives affected employee output. The study targeted 350 manufacturing employees and adopted a survey research design. Simple random sampling was used, and data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed for data analysis and presentation. The findings indicated that goal alignment significantly enhanced employee commitment and productivity. However, the study treated employee productivity as a single construct, creating a conceptual gap. The current study addresses this gap by measuring employee productivity using multiple indicators, including output, efficiency, quality, and timeliness.

Mwangi and Kwasira (2021) examined the relationship between performance planning practices and employee productivity in selected Kenyan manufacturing firms. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of goal clarity on employee productivity. The study targeted 180 employees and adopted a descriptive research design, using census sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and analysed using regression analysis. The findings showed a positive and significant relationship between performance planning and employee productivity. However, the study relied heavily on descriptive analysis and focused on general manufacturing firms without firm-specific depth, presenting a methodological and contextual gap. The current study addresses these gaps by employing robust inferential analysis and focusing on a specific manufacturing firm, Unga Group Limited.

Bloom, Sadun, and Van Reenen (2019) examined the effect of structured management practices, including performance planning, on productivity in manufacturing firms across multiple countries. The objective of the study was to determine whether formal management systems influenced productivity outcomes. The study used panel data from manufacturing plants and employed an econometric research design. Data were analysed using advanced econometric techniques, and results were presented using statistical models. The findings revealed that firms with structured planning and management systems recorded significantly higher productivity levels. However, the study adopted a broad management perspective and did not isolate performance planning practices, presenting a conceptual gap. The current study addresses this gap by isolating performance planning as a distinct variable and empirically testing its effect on employee productivity.

2.2.2 Performance Appraisal Practices and Employee Productivity

Kuvaas (2018) conducted a study to examine the influence of performance appraisal practices on employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Norway. The objective of the study was to determine how appraisal fairness and appraisal purpose affected employee performance outcomes. The study targeted 412 manufacturing employees and adopted a survey research design. Simple random sampling was used, and data were collected using structured questionnaires. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis, with results presented in tables and coefficients. The findings revealed that performance appraisal systems perceived as fair and developmental had a significant positive effect on employee productivity, while control-oriented appraisals produced weaker outcomes. However, the study was conducted in a developed European context, presenting a contextual gap that limits its applicability to developing economies such as Kenya. The current study addresses this gap by examining performance appraisal practices within a Kenyan manufacturing firm.

Mwangi and Kwasira (2021) examined the relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee productivity in selected Kenyan manufacturing firms. The objective of the study was to assess the effect of appraisal frequency and clarity of appraisal criteria on employee productivity. The study targeted 200 employees and employed a descriptive research design. Stratified sampling was used, and data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. Regression analysis was applied, and findings indicated that clear and regularly conducted performance appraisals significantly enhanced employee productivity. Despite being conducted in Kenya, the study focused only on appraisal practices in isolation, creating a conceptual gap. The current study addresses this gap by integrating appraisal practices with other performance management practices such as planning, feedback, and rewards.

Selvarajan and Cloninger (2019) investigated the impact of performance appraisal systems on employee productivity in manufacturing organizations in the United States. The objective of the study was to determine whether developmental performance appraisals influenced employee task performance and effort. The study targeted 300 manufacturing employees and adopted a correlational research design. Data were collected using questionnaires and analysed using hierarchical regression analysis. The findings revealed that developmental appraisals had a stronger positive effect on employee productivity compared to purely evaluative appraisals.

However, the study focused on appraisal orientation rather than appraisal implementation processes, presenting a conceptual gap that the current study addresses by examining appraisal fairness, clarity, and utilization of appraisal results.

Mensah and Tawiah (2020) examined performance appraisal systems and employee productivity in manufacturing firms across Sub-Saharan Africa. The objective of the study was to establish whether performance appraisal practices influenced employee efficiency and output. The study targeted 250 employees and adopted a descriptive survey design. Data were collected through questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The findings indicated a positive relationship between appraisal practices and employee productivity. However, the reliance on descriptive analysis limited causal inference, presenting a methodological gap. The current study addresses this gap by employing inferential statistical techniques to establish the strength and direction of relationships.

Chiang and Birtch (2020) investigated the relationship between performance appraisal systems, perceived fairness, and employee performance in manufacturing firms across selected Asian economies. The objective of the study was to determine how appraisal transparency and fairness influenced employee performance outcomes. The study adopted a survey research design targeting 370 manufacturing employees, with data collected through structured questionnaires. Structural equation modelling was used for data analysis and presentation. The findings revealed that transparent and fair appraisal systems significantly enhanced employee productivity. However, cultural and institutional differences across Asian contexts limit the generalizability of the findings to the Kenyan manufacturing sector, presenting a contextual gap. The current study addresses this gap by focusing on a single Kenyan manufacturing firm, Unga Group Limited.

2.2.3 Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices and Employee Productivity

Kluger and DeNisi (2018) conducted a study to examine the effect of feedback interventions on employee productivity in organizational settings, including manufacturing environments. The objective of the study was to determine how different types of feedback influenced employee task performance. The study targeted employees across multiple organizations and employed an experimental research design. Data were collected using performance records and controlled feedback interventions, and data analysis involved inferential statistical techniques, including analysis of variance. The findings revealed that task-focused and timely feedback significantly improved employee productivity, while poorly structured or ego-focused feedback reduced performance. However, the experimental nature of the study limited its applicability to real organizational settings, presenting a methodological gap that the current study addresses by using a field-based survey design within an actual manufacturing firm.

Kim, Egan, and Kim (2020) examined the influence of managerial coaching on employee productivity in manufacturing firms in South Korea. The objective of the study was to assess how coaching behaviours enhanced employee learning and task performance. The study targeted 340 manufacturing employees and adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. Simple random sampling was used, and data were collected through structured questionnaires. Structural equation modelling was employed to analyse and present the data. The findings indicated that coaching-oriented leadership positively influenced employee productivity through enhanced skill development and motivation. However, the study was conducted in an Asian context, creating a contextual gap. The current study addresses this gap by examining performance feedback and coaching practices within a Kenyan manufacturing firm.

Winstone, Nash, Parker, and Rowntree (2021) investigated the role of feedback quality in shaping employee performance outcomes across organizational contexts. The objective of the study was to examine how feedback characteristics such as clarity, timeliness, and constructiveness influenced task performance. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design and targeted employees across different sectors, including manufacturing. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews and analysed using thematic analysis and regression techniques. The findings revealed that constructive and timely feedback improved task efficiency and employee self-regulation. However, the study did not focus specifically on manufacturing firms, presenting a contextual gap that the current study addresses by focusing on a manufacturing organization.

Mensah (2020) examined the relationship between performance feedback practices and employee productivity in African manufacturing firms. The objective of the study was to determine whether regular feedback influenced employee efficiency and output levels. The study targeted 260 manufacturing employees and employed a descriptive survey design. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using regression analysis. The findings showed that timely performance feedback had a positive and significant effect on employee productivity. However, the study focused solely on feedback and did not incorporate coaching as a complementary practice, presenting a conceptual gap. The current study addresses this gap by jointly examining performance feedback and coaching practices as an integrated variable.

DeNisi and Smith (2021) reviewed performance feedback systems and their effects on employee productivity across organizational settings. The objective of the study was to synthesize empirical evidence on feedback effectiveness. The study employed a systematic review research design, analysing findings from prior empirical studies. The findings revealed mixed productivity outcomes depending on feedback delivery, source credibility, and organizational context. However, the study did not empirically test feedback practices at the firm level, presenting an evidence gap. The current study addresses this gap by empirically testing the effect of performance feedback and coaching practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

2.2.4 Reward and Recognition Practices and Employee Productivity

Njanja, Maina, Kibet, and Njagi (2019) examined the effect of reward and recognition practices on employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Kenya. The objective of the study was to determine how financial rewards influenced employee productivity. The study targeted 180 employees drawn from selected manufacturing firms and adopted a descriptive survey research design. Stratified sampling was used to select respondents, and data were collected using structured questionnaires. Data analysis involved correlation and regression analysis, with results presented in tables. The findings revealed that performance-based financial rewards had a positive and significant effect on employee productivity. However, the study focused mainly on financial rewards and excluded non-financial recognition and fairness perceptions, presenting a conceptual gap. The current study addresses this gap by examining both financial and non-financial reward and recognition practices.

Kuvaas, Buch, Dysvik, and Nerstad (2018) investigated the relationship between extrinsic rewards and employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Europe. The objective of the study was to assess how performance-contingent rewards influenced employee effort and output. The study targeted 410 manufacturing employees and employed a survey research design. Simple random sampling was applied, and data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. Regression analysis was used to analyse the data, and findings indicated that while performance-based rewards improved productivity, the effects were inconsistent when rewards were perceived as controlling. However, the study was conducted in developed European economies, limiting its applicability to developing contexts, thereby presenting a contextual gap. The current study addresses this gap by focusing on a Kenyan manufacturing firm operating in a developing economy.

Chiang and Birtch (2020) examined the influence of reward fairness and recognition practices on employee productivity in manufacturing firms across selected Asian economies. The objective of the study was to establish how perceived fairness and transparency in reward systems affected employee performance. The study adopted a survey research design targeting 370 manufacturing employees. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using structural equation modelling. The findings showed that fair and transparent reward systems significantly enhanced employee productivity and commitment. However, cultural and institutional differences across Asian economies limit the generalizability of the findings to the Kenyan context, presenting a contextual gap. The current study addresses this gap by generating firm-specific evidence from the Kenyan manufacturing sector.

Mensah and Tawiah (2020) examined reward and recognition practices and their effect on employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Sub-Saharan Africa. The objective of the study was to assess whether recognition practices influenced employee efficiency and output. The study targeted 250 manufacturing employees and adopted a descriptive survey research design. Data were collected using questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The findings indicated a positive relationship between recognition practices and employee productivity. However, the study relied heavily on descriptive analysis, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships, thus presenting a methodological gap. The current study addresses this gap by employing inferential statistical techniques to determine the strength and direction of relationships.

Milkovich, Newman, and Gerhart (2020) examined the relationship between reward systems and employee performance outcomes in manufacturing organizations using firm-level data. The objective of the study was to determine whether linking rewards to performance enhanced productivity. The study adopted a quantitative research design using secondary and survey data from manufacturing firms. Data analysis involved regression analysis, and findings revealed that performance-linked reward systems contributed to improved productivity outcomes. However, the study did not adequately capture employee perceptions of reward fairness and recognition, presenting an evidence gap. The current study addresses this gap by incorporating employee perceptions of reward and recognition practices as key explanatory variables.

2.3 Summary of Literature Gaps

Although numerous studies have examined performance management practices and employee productivity, variations in context, conceptualization, and methodology reveal significant research gaps. A synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates that many studies were conducted outside the Kenyan manufacturing context, relied on aggregated constructs, or employed weak methodological approaches. This section summarizes the key gaps identified from the reviewed studies and highlights how the current study addresses these gaps.

Table 1: Summary of Literature Gaps

Author and Year	Title of the Study	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gaps Identified	Focus of the Current Study
Mensah (2020)	Performance Management Practices and Employee Productivity in Manufacturing Firms	Descriptive cross-sectional design; stratified random sampling; questionnaires; multiple regression analysis	Performance planning and feedback practices significantly improved employee productivity	Study conducted outside Kenya (contextual gap); limited firm-specific focus (contextual gap)	Examines performance management practices within a Kenyan manufacturing firm (Unga Group Limited)
Mwangi & Kwasira (2021)	Performance Appraisal Systems and Employee Productivity in Kenyan Manufacturing Firms	Descriptive research design; stratified sampling; questionnaires; regression analysis	Appraisal clarity and fairness positively influenced employee productivity	Focused only on appraisal practices; excluded other performance management practices (conceptual gap)	Integrates appraisal with planning, feedback, coaching, and reward practices
Bloom, Sadun & Van Reenen (2019)	Do Management Practices Drive Productivity?	Panel data analysis; econometric modelling; secondary firm-	Structured management practices were associated with higher	Broad management focus without isolating performance	Isolates specific performance management practices and tests their effect on employee

Author and Year	Title of the Study	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gaps Identified	Focus of the Current Study
		level data	productivity	management dimensions (conceptual gap)	productivity
Kuvaas (2018)	Performance Appraisal and Employee Outcomes	Survey design; random sampling; questionnaires; regression analysis	Fair and developmental appraisals enhanced employee productivity	Conducted in developed economies; limited relevance to developing contexts (contextual gap)	Provides evidence from a developing economy manufacturing firm in Kenya
Kim & Park (2021)	Goal Alignment and Employee Productivity in Manufacturing Firms	Survey design; simple random sampling; questionnaires; SEM	Alignment of individual and organizational goals improved productivity	Employee productivity treated as a single construct (conceptual gap)	Uses multidimensional indicators of employee productivity (output, efficiency, quality, timeliness)
Njanja et al. (2019)	Reward Systems and Employee Productivity	Descriptive survey; stratified sampling; questionnaires; correlation and regression analysis	Financial rewards positively influenced productivity	Excluded non-financial recognition and fairness perceptions (conceptual gap)	Examines both financial and non-financial reward and recognition practices
Mensah & Tawiah (2020)	Employee Motivation and Productivity in African Manufacturing Firms	Descriptive survey design; questionnaires; descriptive statistics	Motivation and recognition improved productivity	Reliance on descriptive analysis; weak causal explanation (methodological gap)	Employs inferential statistics to establish strength and direction of relationships
Chiang & Birtch (2020)	Reward Fairness and Employee Performance in Manufacturing Firms	Survey design; questionnaires; SEM analysis	Fair and transparent rewards enhanced employee productivity	Cultural and institutional differences limit generalizability (contextual gap)	Generates firm-specific evidence from the Kenyan manufacturing sector
UNIDO (2022)	Industrial Development Report	Secondary data analysis; global manufacturing data	Manufacturing productivity remains low in developing economies	Lack of employee-level and firm-specific analysis	Provides micro-level, employee-focused analysis within a specific manufacturing firm

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable as examined in this study. It shows how performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices are expected to influence employee productivity in Kenyan manufacturing firms, with specific reference to Unga Group Limited.

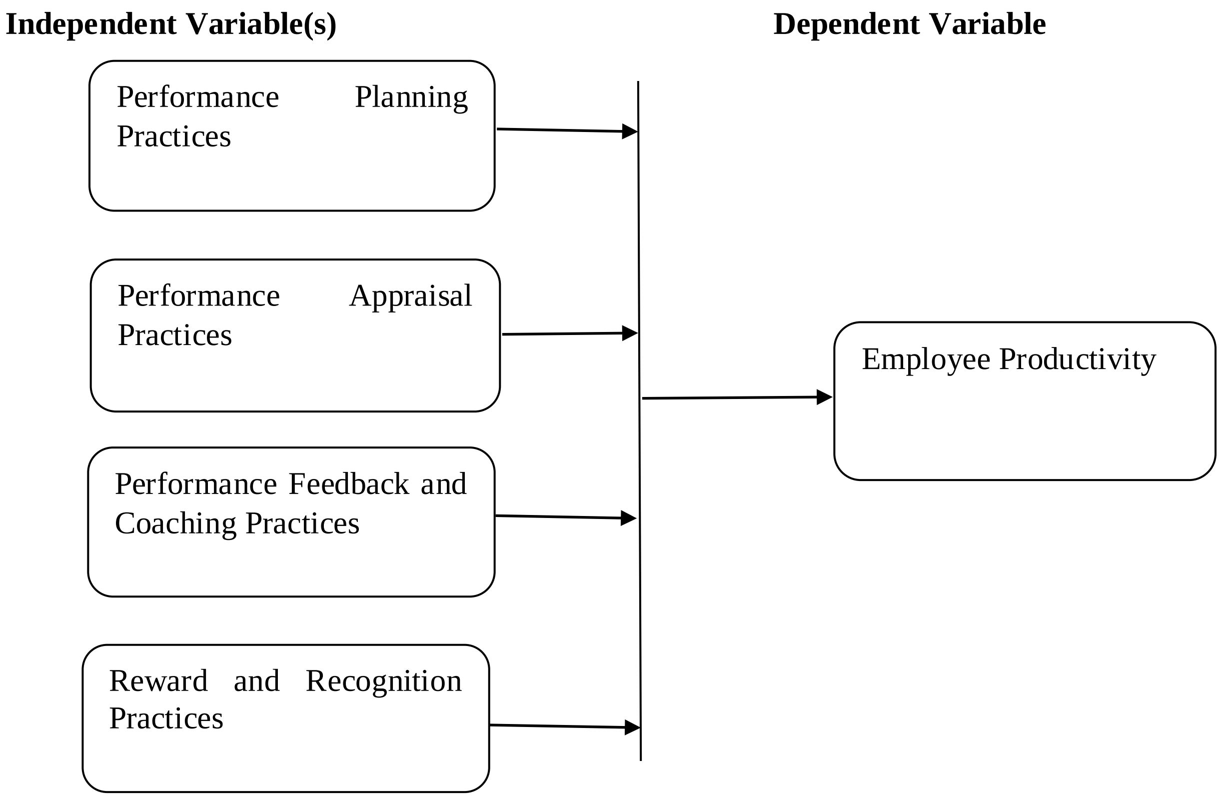

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.5 Operationalization of Variables

This section presents the operationalization of the study variables by defining how each variable was measured and analysed in the study. The operationalization links the study variables to specific indicators, methods of analysis, and measurement scales to ensure consistency between the conceptual framework, data collection, and data analysis.

Table 2: Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Indicators	Analysis	Measurement
Performance Planning Practices	• Goal clarity; • Role clarity; • Alignment of individual targets with organizational objectives; • Employee involvement in goal setting	Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations); Regression analysis	Five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Performance Appraisal Practices	• Fairness of appraisal process; • Clarity of appraisal criteria; • Frequency of appraisal; • Use of appraisal results for development	Descriptive statistics; Regression analysis	Five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices	• Timeliness of feedback; • Clarity of feedback; • Availability of coaching support; • Developmental focus of feedback	Descriptive statistics; Regression analysis	Five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Reward and Recognition Practices	• Performance-based incentives; • Non-monetary recognition; • Perceived fairness of rewards; • Consistency in rewarding performance	Descriptive statistics; Regression analysis	Five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)
Employee Productivity	• Work output; • Efficiency in task execution; • Quality of work; • Timeliness of task completion	Descriptive statistics; Regression analysis	Five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed relevant theoretical and empirical literature to provide a strong foundation for examining the effect of performance management practices on employee productivity. It discussed key theories underpinning the study, including the anchor and supporting theories, and reviewed empirical studies related to performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, reward and recognition practices, and employee productivity. The chapter also identified and summarized contextual, conceptual, methodological, and evidence gaps in the existing literature, presented the conceptual framework guiding the study, and operationalized the study variables. The next chapter presents the research methodology adopted to address the study objectives and research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for the study in order to address the research objectives and questions. Specifically, the chapter discusses the research design, target population, sample design and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, pilot testing, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation methods, and ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with a summary highlighting the methodological approach used in the study.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the overall plan or blueprint that guides the process of collecting, measuring, and analysing data in order to answer research questions and achieve study objectives (Kothari, 2019). Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) define research design as the framework that specifies the procedures for data collection, measurement, and analysis, ensuring that the study is conducted systematically and logically. A well-defined research design enhances the reliability and validity of research findings by providing a structured approach to investigating relationships among variables. This study adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive design focuses on describing the characteristics of a population or phenomenon and examining relationships among variables as they exist in their natural setting without manipulation (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The design was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data on performance management practices and employee productivity and to establish the relationship between these variables within Unga Group Limited. Additionally, the descriptive research design supported the use of structured questionnaires and inferential statistical analysis, such as regression analysis, thereby making it suitable for achieving the objectives of the study.

3.2 Target Population

Target population refers to the entire group of individuals who share specific characteristics relevant to a study and from whom the researcher seeks to draw valid conclusions (Kothari, 2019). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), the target population should comprise respondents who are knowledgeable about the study variables and directly affected by the phenomenon under investigation. Proper identification of the target population enhances the relevance, accuracy, and generalizability of research findings. In this study, the target population comprised all employees of Unga Group Limited working in departments that are directly involved in, or affected by, performance management practices and employee productivity outcomes. Employees from the production, human resource, finance, operations, and administration departments were considered appropriate because performance planning, appraisal, feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices are implemented across these functional areas.

Table 3: Target Population

Department	Target Population
Production	150
Human Resource	20
Finance	30
Operations	70
Administration	30
Total	**300**

3.3 Sample Design and Sampling Technique

Sample design refers to the process of selecting a subset of elements from the target population in such a way that the sample adequately represents the entire population (Kothari, 2019). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), an appropriate sample design enhances the accuracy of research findings while reducing the cost and time associated with studying the entire population. Sampling technique, on the other hand, refers to the specific method used to select respondents from the target population. This study adopted a stratified random sampling technique. The target population was first stratified according to functional departments, namely production, human resource, finance, operations, and administration. Stratification was considered appropriate because the departments differ in terms of roles, responsibilities, and exposure to performance management practices. This approach ensured that each department was adequately represented in the sample, thereby enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the study findings.

After stratification, simple random sampling was used to select respondents from each stratum. This technique gave every employee within each department an equal chance of being selected, thus minimizing selection bias. The combination of stratified and simple random sampling was suitable for this study because it ensured proportional representation of all departments while maintaining randomness in respondent selection. Given that the target population is 300 employees, the study used Yamane's (1967) formula to determine an appropriate sample size. The formula is expressed as:

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

Where:

n = sample size

N = target population

e = level of precision (0.05)

Substituting the values: $n = 300/1+300(0.05)^2$

=171

Table 4: Sample Size Distribution

Department	Target Population	Proportion of Sample (%)	Sample Size
Production	150	50.30%	86
Human Resource	20	6.40%	11
Finance	30	9.90%	17
Operations	70	23.40%	40
Administration	30	9.90%	17
Total	**300**	**100%**	**171**

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments refer to the tools used by a researcher to gather relevant data required to address the study objectives (Kothari, 2019). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill

(2019), appropriate data collection instruments enhance the accuracy, reliability, and validity of research findings by ensuring that data are collected in a consistent and systematic manner.

This study used a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was considered suitable because it enabled the collection of quantitative data from a large number of respondents within a relatively short period. It also allowed for standardization of responses, thereby making the data suitable for statistical analysis. The questionnaire was designed to capture information on the study variables, namely performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, reward and recognition practices, and employee productivity.

The questionnaire was divided into several sections. The first section captured respondents' demographic information, including department, age, gender, length of service, and job category. Subsequent sections consisted of closed-ended statements aligned to each study variable and were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The use of closed-ended questions enhanced objectivity, ease of coding, and comparability of responses across respondents. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire items were developed based on the study objectives, operational definitions of variables, and indicators identified. The instrument was also reviewed by the research supervisor and subject matter experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives before administration.

3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study is a preliminary investigation conducted prior to the main study to test the adequacy, clarity, and suitability of research instruments and procedures (Kothari, 2019). Recent methodological literature emphasizes that pilot studies help identify ambiguities in questionnaire items, estimate the time required for data collection, and reduce the likelihood of systematic errors during the main survey (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Conducting a pilot study therefore enhances the overall rigor and credibility of empirical research. In this study, a pilot study was conducted on 10% of the sample size, equivalent to 17 respondents, as recommended in applied social science research (Hair et al., 2020). The pilot respondents were drawn from employees of Unga Group Limited who did not participate in the final survey to avoid contamination of results. Simple random sampling was used to select pilot respondents, and the collected data were analysed to assess clarity of questionnaire items, sequencing of questions, and consistency of responses. Feedback obtained from the pilot study informed the refinement of the questionnaire before the main data collection exercise (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.5.1 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures the concepts it is intended to measure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Content validity, which focuses on the adequacy and representativeness of questionnaire items in relation to the study variables, is particularly important in survey-based research (Hair et al., 2020). Ensuring validity enhances confidence that the results obtained truly reflect the phenomena under investigation. To enhance content validity, the questionnaire items were developed based on the study objectives, conceptual framework, and operational definitions of the variables. The instrument was then subjected to expert review by the research supervisor and specialists in human resource management and organizational studies to assess clarity, relevance, and completeness. Incorporating expert feedback is widely recommended as an effective approach to strengthening instrument validity in empirical studies (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.5.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument produces consistent and stable results when applied repeatedly under similar conditions (Hair et al., 2020). Reliable instruments reduce measurement error and increase the dependability of research findings, which is critical in quantitative studies that rely on survey data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). In this study, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, which is commonly applied in social science research to test the reliability of Likert-scale items (Hair et al., 2020). Data obtained from the pilot study were analyzed using SPSS, and a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable, in line with contemporary methodological recommendations (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). Questionnaire items that failed to meet the acceptable reliability threshold were reviewed and refined before the main data collection exercise.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection procedure refers to the systematic steps followed by the researcher in administering research instruments and gathering data from respondents in a consistent and ethical manner (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). A well-defined data collection procedure ensures accuracy, minimizes bias, and enhances the reliability of the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Management University of Africa and sought permission from the management of Unga Group Limited to conduct the study. Once authorization was granted, the researcher briefed respondents on the purpose of the study, assured them of confidentiality, and informed them that participation was voluntary. This approach was consistent with recommended ethical research practices in organizational studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

The questionnaires were then administered to the selected respondents using Google Forms, which is commonly used in organizational research to enhance response rates and facilitate efficient data management (Hair et al., 2020). Respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaires, after which the researcher retrieved the submitted responses electronically. Follow-ups were conducted where necessary to minimize non-response. Upon receipt, the completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness, coded, and securely stored in preparation for data analysis, in line with best practices in quantitative research (Saunders et al., 2019).

3. 7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis refers to the process of systematically organizing, coding, and interpreting collected data in order to draw meaningful conclusions and answer research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Proper data analysis enhances the validity, accuracy, and usefulness of research findings by converting raw data into meaningful information for decision-making (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). In this study, quantitative data collected through questionnaires were edited, coded, and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and describe the general trends of the study variables. This approach enabled the researcher to understand respondents' perceptions of performance management practices and employee productivity (Hair et al., 2020). The analyzed data were presented using tables and figures to enhance clarity and ease of interpretation.

Inferential statistical analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity. Regression analysis was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to assess both the combined and individual effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The regression model to be used in the study was specified as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon}$$

Where:

Y = Employee Productivity

β_0 = Constant term

X_1 = Performance Planning Practices

X_2 = Performance Appraisal Practices

X_3 = Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices

X_4= Reward and Recognition Practices

β_1, β_2, β_3, β_4 = Regression coefficients

ε = Error term

The regression results were used to test the significance of each independent variable and to determine their contribution to employee productivity. The findings from both descriptive and inferential analyses were presented using tables and figures to enhance clarity and ease of interpretation. This method of presentation ensured that the results are clearly communicated and aligned with accepted standards of academic research reporting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are fundamental in research as they protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of participants while enhancing the credibility of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study adhered to established ethical standards in social science research by ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity throughout the research process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to the process through which participants are adequately informed about the purpose, procedures, benefits, and potential risks of the study before agreeing to participate

(Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). In this study, respondents were provided with a clear explanation of the study objectives and procedures through an introductory letter and briefing. Participants were informed of their rights and were requested to provide consent before completing the questionnaire, in line with ethical research guidelines (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.8.2 Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation implies that respondents take part in a study out of their own free will, without coercion, pressure, or undue influence (Saunders et al., 2019). Participation in this study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. This approach ensured respect for participants' autonomy and compliance with accepted ethical research practices (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

3.8.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to the obligation of the researcher to protect participants' information from unauthorized access or disclosure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, respondents were assured that the information they provided would be used strictly for academic purposes. Completed questionnaires and electronic responses were securely stored, and access to the data was restricted to the researcher only. Findings were reported in aggregate form to ensure that individual responses could not be traced to specific participants (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.8.4 Privacy

Privacy involves respecting participants' personal space and ensuring that sensitive information is not intrusively collected or misused (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). The study ensured privacy by allowing respondents to complete the questionnaires at their convenience and by avoiding questions that required disclosure of sensitive personal information. Data collection was conducted in a manner that minimized intrusion into participants' personal and professional lives, consistent with ethical research standards (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.8.5 Anonymity

Anonymity refers to the protection of participants' identities such that neither their names nor any identifying information is linked to their responses (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, questionnaires did not require respondents to indicate their names or personal identifiers. Codes were used instead of names during data analysis to ensure that individual respondents could not be identified. This measure enhanced respondents' confidence and encouraged honest and accurate responses, in line with ethical research principles (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology adopted for the study on the effect of performance management practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. It discussed the research design, target population, sample design and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, pilot study, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation methods, and ethical considerations. The chapter outlined how quantitative data will systematically be collected and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques to address the study objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion of the study on the effect of performance management practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The chapter begins with the response rate and demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the study variables. The findings are presented using tables and figures and are discussed in relation to the study objectives and relevant empirical literature.

4.1 Presentation of Research Findings

This section presents the findings obtained from the data collected from respondents through the administered questionnaires. The results are presented using descriptive and inferential statistics in the form of tables and figures to facilitate clear interpretation and discussion of the study variables.

4.1.1 Response Rate

Response rate refers to the proportion of questionnaires that were completed and returned by respondents out of the total number of questionnaires issued. A high response rate is important because it improves the reliability of the study findings and ensures that the collected data adequately represent the target population.

Table 5: Response Rate

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires Returned	158	92
Questionnaires Not Returned	13	8
Total	**171**	**100**

The study issued a total of 171 questionnaires to the sampled respondents drawn from various departments of Unga Group Limited. Out of these, 158 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a 92% response rate, while 13 questionnaires, representing 8%, were not returned. The high response rate was attributed to the effective data collection approach used, including the administration of questionnaires through Google Forms and follow-up communication with respondents to encourage participation. A response rate of 92% was considered highly satisfactory for statistical analysis because it exceeded the minimum threshold commonly recommended in social science research. This high participation level indicated that the responses obtained were sufficient to represent the views of employees regarding performance management practices and employee productivity at Unga Group Limited, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study findings.

4.1.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The demographic information includes gender, age, department, and length of service, which help to provide a better understanding of the background of the respondents involved in the research.

4.1.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents according to gender. Gender distribution was considered important in understanding the representation of male and female employees who participated in the study.

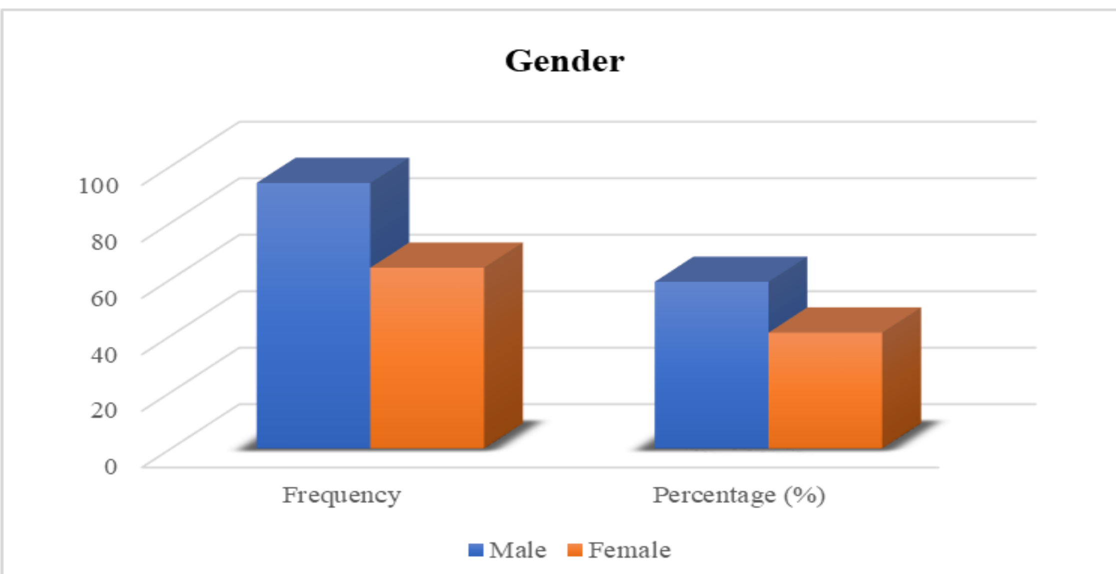

Figure 2: Gender of Respondents

The results in figure 2 show that 94 respondents (59%) were male, while 64 respondents (41%) were female. This indicates that male employees constituted the majority of respondents who participated in the study. The findings suggest that both male and female employees were adequately represented in the research, which enhanced the reliability of the study findings since views were collected from respondents of different genders within the organization.

4.1.2.2 Age of the Respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents according to their age categories. Age was considered important in the study because employees from different age groups may have varied levels of experience, skills, and perceptions regarding performance management practices and employee productivity.

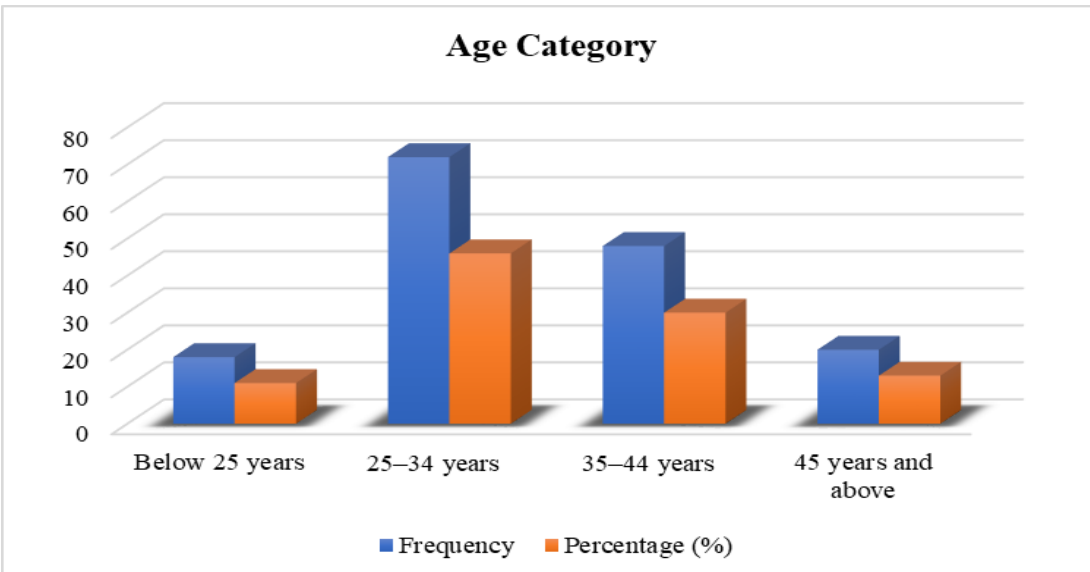

Figure 3: Age of Respondents

The results presented in figure 3 indicate that the majority of respondents, 72 (46%), were aged between 25 and 34 years, followed by 48 respondents (30%) who were aged between 35 and 44 years. In addition, 20 respondents (13%) were aged 45 years and above, while 18 respondents (11%) were below 25 years. These findings suggest that most employees participating in the study were within the active working-age group, which is typically associated with higher productivity levels and active engagement in organizational performance management processes.

The presence of respondents from different age groups enhanced the diversity of perspectives captured in the study.

4.1.2.3 Length of Service of the Respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents according to their length of service in the organization. Length of service was considered important because employees who have worked longer in an organization are more likely to have greater familiarity with performance management practices and their influence on employee productivity.

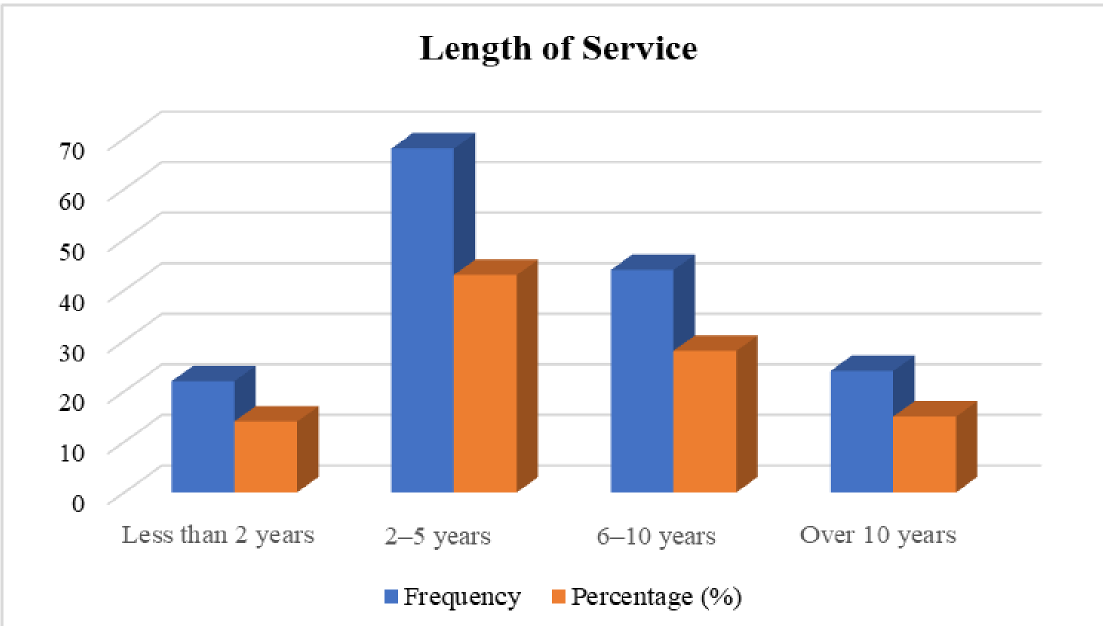

Figure 4: Length of Service

The results in figure 4 show that the majority of respondents, 68 (43%), had worked in the organization for 2–5 years, followed by 44 respondents (28%) who had served for 6–10 years. In addition, 24 respondents (15%) had worked in the organization for over 10 years, while 22 respondents (14%) had worked for less than 2 years. These findings indicate that most respondents had served in the organization long enough to understand the existing performance management practices and how they influence employee productivity. The presence of employees with varying levels of experience enhanced the credibility of the study since diverse perspectives were captured.

4.1.2.4 Job Level of the Respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents according to their job level within the organization. Job level was considered important in the study because employees at different managerial levels may experience performance management practices differently and may have varying perspectives regarding their influence on employee productivity.

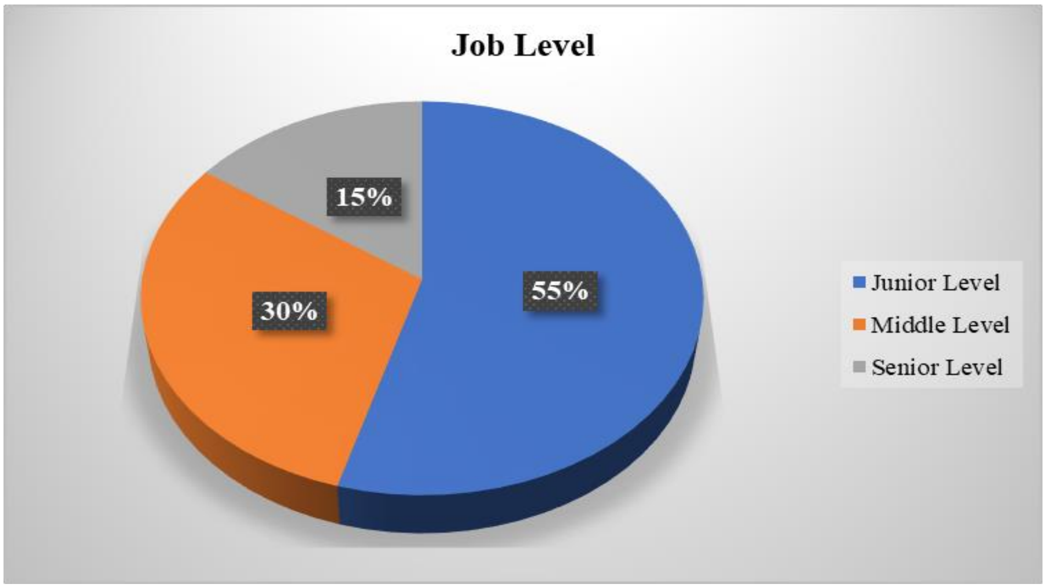

Figure 5: Job Level

The results in figure 5 indicate that the majority of respondents, 86 (54%), were at the junior job level, followed by 48 respondents (30%) who were at the middle management level. In addition, 24 respondents (16%) were at the senior management level. These findings suggest that most of the respondents were operational employees who are directly involved in daily organizational activities and are therefore closely influenced by performance management practices. The inclusion of respondents from junior, middle, and senior job levels ensured that the study captured perspectives from different levels of organizational hierarchy, thereby enhancing the reliability and comprehensiveness of the findings.

4.1.2.5 Department of the Respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents according to their departments within the organization. Departmental distribution was important in the study because performance management practices are implemented across different functional units, and employees in various departments may experience these practices differently.

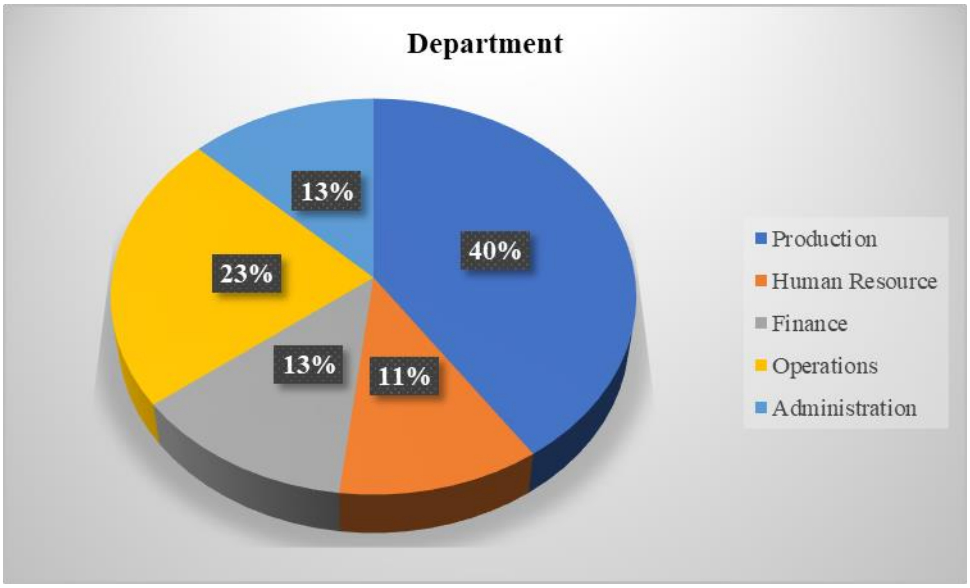

Figure 6: Departments

The results in figure 6 indicate that the majority of respondents, 64 (41%), were drawn from the production department, followed by 36 respondents (23%) from the operations department. In addition, 20 respondents (13%) were from the finance department, 20 respondents (13%) from the administration department, and 18 respondents (11%) from the human resource department. These findings suggest that employees from the production and operations departments constituted the largest proportion of respondents, which is expected because these departments are directly involved in the core manufacturing activities that influence employee productivity. The inclusion of respondents from all key departments ensured that the study captured diverse organizational perspectives regarding performance management practices and their effect on employee productivity.

4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the descriptive statistical analysis of the study variables. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe respondents' perceptions regarding performance management practices and employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. Measures such as mean and standard deviation were used to analyse responses from the Likert-scale items and to provide an overall understanding of the trends and patterns associated with the study variables.

4.1.3.1 Performance Planning Practices

This section presents the descriptive statistics on performance planning practices at Unga Group Limited. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements related to performance planning using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Performance Planning Practices

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Performance goals in my department are clearly defined	5	8	16	82	47	4.01	0.86
My job roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined	6	11	19	77	45	3.9	0.91
Individual performance targets are aligned with organizational objectives	8	13	22	73	42	3.82	0.94
Employees are involved in setting performance goals	5	9	17	79	48	3.98	0.88
Overall						**3.93**	**0.9**

The findings in Table 6 indicate that most respondents agreed that performance planning practices were implemented within the organization. The statement “Performance goals in my department are clearly defined” recorded a high mean score of 4.01, suggesting that employees clearly understood the performance expectations within their departments. Similarly, the statement “Employees are involved in setting performance goals” recorded a mean score of 3.98, indicating that employee participation in performance planning was moderately high.

The results also show that “My job roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined” had a mean score of 3.90, implying that most employees understood their duties and responsibilities within the organization. However, the statement “Individual performance targets are aligned with organizational objectives” recorded a slightly lower mean of 3.82, suggesting that although alignment existed, some respondents felt that performance targets could be better integrated with broader organizational goals.

Overall, the mean score of 3.93 indicates that performance planning practices were generally well established at Unga Group Limited. The relatively low standard deviations across the statements suggest that respondents had consistent views regarding the presence of performance planning practices within the organization.

4.1.3.2 Performance Appraisal Practices

This section presents the descriptive statistics on performance appraisal practices at Unga Group Limited. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements relating to the appraisal process using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Performance Appraisal Practices

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Performance appraisal criteria are clear and well communicated	7	10	18	79	44	3.9	0.92
Performance appraisals are conducted regularly	6	9	20	81	42	3.91	0.88
The appraisal process is fair and unbiased	9	12	23	74	40	3.79	0.95
Appraisal results are used for employee development	6	11	19	76	46	3.92	0.9
Overall						**3.88**	**0.91**

The results in Table 7 indicate that most respondents agreed that performance appraisal practices were implemented within the organization. The statement "Appraisal results are used for employee development" recorded the highest mean score of 3.92, suggesting that employees perceived the appraisal process as useful in guiding professional growth and development. Similarly, the statement "Performance appraisals are conducted regularly" had a mean score of 3.91, indicating that appraisal activities were generally conducted consistently within the organization.

The findings also show that "Performance appraisal criteria are clear and well communicated" recorded a mean of 3.90, implying that most employees were aware of the standards used in evaluating their performance. However, the statement "The appraisal process is fair and unbiased" had a slightly lower mean of 3.79, suggesting that some respondents perceived potential concerns regarding fairness in the appraisal system.

Overall, the mean score of 3.88 indicates that performance appraisal practices were moderately strong within Unga Group Limited. The relatively small standard deviation values suggest that respondents had fairly consistent perceptions regarding the implementation of appraisal practices in the organization.

4.1.3.3 Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices

This section presents the descriptive statistics on performance feedback and coaching practices at Unga Group Limited. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to feedback and coaching using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
I receive timely feedback on my performance	6	10	18	80	44	3.92	0.9
Feedback provided is clear and constructive	7	11	19	78	43	3.88	0.92
Supervisors provide coaching to improve performance	8	12	22	74	42	3.82	0.94
Feedback focuses on improving employee skills and development	6	9	20	79	44	3.92	0.89
Overall						**3.89**	**0.91**

The findings in Table 8 show that most respondents agreed that performance feedback and coaching practices were implemented within the organization. The statement “I receive timely feedback on my performance” recorded a mean score of 3.92, indicating that employees generally received feedback within a reasonable timeframe. Similarly, the statement “Feedback focuses on improving employee skills and development” also recorded a mean score of 3.92, suggesting that feedback was largely developmental in nature.

The results further show that “Feedback provided is clear and constructive” had a mean score of 3.88, implying that employees generally perceived the feedback provided by supervisors as helpful and understandable. However, the statement “Supervisors provide coaching to improve performance” recorded a slightly lower mean of 3.82, indicating that although coaching occurred, some employees felt that there was room for improvement in supervisory coaching practices. Overall, the mean score of 3.89 suggests that performance feedback and coaching practices were moderately effective at Unga Group Limited. The relatively small standard deviation values indicate that respondents had consistent perceptions regarding the feedback and coaching practices within the organization.

4.1.3.4 Reward and Recognition Practices

This section presents the descriptive statistics on reward and recognition practices at Unga Group Limited. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements relating to reward and recognition using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The results are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Reward and Recognition Practices

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Good performance is rewarded through financial incentives	9	14	23	70	42	3.77	0.96
Non-monetary recognition is provided for good performance	8	13	21	74	42	3.82	0.93
Rewards are distributed fairly among employees	11	16	25	68	38	3.67	0.99
High-performing employees are consistently recognized	7	12	20	76	43	3.86	0.91
Overall						**3.78**	**0.95**

The results in Table 9 indicate that respondents generally agreed that reward and recognition practices were implemented within the organization. The statement "High-performing employees are consistently recognized" recorded the highest mean score of 3.86, suggesting that employees who perform well are acknowledged by the organization. Similarly, the statement "Non-monetary recognition is provided for good performance" recorded a mean score of 3.82, indicating that the organization provides recognition through non-financial means such as praise, certificates, or awards.

The results further show that the statement "Good performance is rewarded through financial incentives" had a mean score of 3.77, suggesting that although financial incentives exist, they may not always be perceived as sufficient by some employees. In addition, the statement "Rewards are distributed fairly among employees" recorded the lowest mean score of 3.67, indicating that some respondents perceived possible inconsistencies in the fairness of reward distribution. Overall, the mean score of 3.78 suggests that reward and recognition practices were moderately implemented at Unga Group Limited. The relatively low standard deviation values indicate that respondents had fairly consistent views regarding reward and recognition practices within the organization.

4.1.3.5 Employee Productivity

This section presents the descriptive statistics on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements relating to their productivity using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The results are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10: Employee Productivity

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
I consistently meet my work output targets	5	9	18	80	46	3.97	0.89
I complete assigned tasks efficiently	6	8	17	82	45	4	0.87
The quality of my work meets organizational standards	4	7	16	85	46	4.03	0.85
I complete my duties within the required timelines	5	9	19	79	46	3.99	0.88
Overall						**4**	**0.87**

The findings in Table 10 indicate that respondents generally agreed that they demonstrated high levels of productivity within the organization. The statement “The quality of my work meets organizational standards” recorded the highest mean score of 4.03, suggesting that employees believed they consistently maintained the quality expected by the organization. Similarly, the statement “I complete assigned tasks efficiently” recorded a mean score of 4.00, indicating that employees generally perceived themselves as efficient in performing their duties.

The results further show that the statement “I complete my duties within the required timelines” recorded a mean score of 3.99, while “I consistently meet my work output targets” recorded a mean score of 3.97. These findings suggest that employees generally meet their performance targets and complete their work within the required deadlines. Overall, the mean score of 4.00 indicates that employee productivity at Unga Group Limited was relatively high. The relatively low standard deviation values suggest that respondents had consistent perceptions regarding their level of productivity within the organization.

4.1.4 Inferential Statistics

This section presents the inferential statistical analysis conducted to determine the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. Inferential statistics were used to test the study hypotheses and to establish whether the independent variables significantly influenced the dependent variable. In this study, multiple regression analysis was applied to examine the effect of performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, and reward and recognition practices on employee productivity.

4.1.4.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the study. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique was used to examine the degree of association between performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, reward and recognition practices, and employee productivity. The correlation coefficients range between -1 and +1, where values closer to +1 indicate a strong positive relationship, values closer to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship, and values close to 0 indicate no significant relationship between variables.

Table 11: Correlation Matrix

Variables	**Performance Planning**	**Performance Appraisal**	**Feedback & Coaching**	**Reward & Recognition**	**Employee Productivity**
Performance Planning Practices	1.000				
Performance Appraisal Practices	0.542**	1.000			
Performance Feedback & Coaching Practices	0.615**	0.588**	1.000		
Reward & Recognition Practices	0.497**	0.533**	0.561**	1.000	
Employee Productivity	0.648**	0.602**	0.671**	0.589**	1.000

Note: ** Correlation is significant at **p < 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

The results presented in Table 11 indicate that there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between performance planning practices and employee productivity ($r = 0.648$, $p <$

0.01). This finding suggests that when performance goals are clearly defined, job roles are well outlined, and individual targets are aligned with organizational objectives, employees are more likely to perform effectively. Clear planning helps employees understand what is expected of them, which enhances focus, accountability, and commitment to achieving performance targets. Consequently, organizations that invest in effective performance planning mechanisms are likely to experience improved employee productivity.

The findings also show that performance appraisal practices had a positive and significant relationship with employee productivity ($r = 0.602$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that regular, fair, and well-communicated appraisal systems contribute positively to employee performance outcomes. When employees perceive appraisal processes as transparent and objective, they are more motivated to improve their work performance. Performance appraisals also provide employees with an opportunity to understand their strengths and areas that require improvement, thereby supporting continuous performance enhancement within the organization.

Further results indicate that performance feedback and coaching practices had the strongest positive relationship with employee productivity ($r = 0.671$, $p < 0.01$) among the independent variables. This suggests that timely feedback and supportive coaching from supervisors play a critical role in enhancing employee efficiency and competence. Constructive feedback allows employees to identify gaps in their performance and take corrective action, while coaching helps develop the necessary skills and knowledge required to improve productivity. Organizations that emphasize continuous feedback and mentoring are therefore more likely to foster high-performing employees.

Finally, the results demonstrate that reward and recognition practices were positively and significantly associated with employee productivity ($r = 0.589$, $p < 0.01$). This finding implies that employees are more motivated to perform better when their efforts and achievements are acknowledged through appropriate rewards and recognition mechanisms. Both financial incentives and non-monetary recognition contribute to improved morale, increased job satisfaction, and stronger commitment to organizational goals. Overall, the correlation analysis indicates that effective implementation of performance management practices plays a crucial role in enhancing employee productivity within the organization.

4.1.4.2 Model Summary

The model summary presents the extent to which the independent variables explain variations in the dependent variable. In this study, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine how performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, and reward and recognition practices influence employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

Table 12: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.742	0.551	0.539	0.428

The results in Table 12 indicate that the correlation coefficient (R = 0.742) shows a strong positive relationship between the combined independent variables and employee productivity. This suggests that performance management practices collectively have a substantial association with employee productivity within Unga Group Limited. The R Square value of 0.551 implies that approximately 55.1% of the variation in employee productivity can be explained by the four independent variables included in the study, namely performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, and reward and recognition practices. This indicates that these performance management practices play a significant role in influencing employee productivity within the organization.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.539 further confirms the explanatory power of the model after adjusting for the number of predictors in the regression model. This means that even after accounting for potential model bias, about 53.9% of the variation in employee productivity is explained by the independent variables. The remaining 46.1% of the variation in employee productivity may be attributed to other factors not included in the model, such as employee skills, organizational culture, leadership practices, and work environment. The standard error of the estimate (0.428) indicates the average deviation of the observed values from the regression line, suggesting that the model provides a reasonably accurate prediction of employee productivity.

4.1.4.3 Analysis of Variance

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the overall significance of the regression model used in the study. The ANOVA test determines whether the independent variables collectively have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. In this study, the test examined whether performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, and reward and recognition practices jointly influenced employee productivity. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	28.964	4	7.241	39.541	0.000
Residual	23.582	153	0.154		
Total	**52.546**	**157**			

The results in Table 13 indicate that the regression model was statistically significant with an F-value of 39.541 and a significance level of 0.000, which is less than the threshold value of 0.05. This implies that the independent variables collectively had a significant influence on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The findings suggest that performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, and reward and recognition practices jointly explain a significant proportion of variation in employee productivity. Therefore, the regression model used in the study was appropriate for analysing the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity within the organization.

4.1.4.4 Regression Coefficients

Regression coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the individual contribution of each independent variable to employee productivity. The analysis examined the extent to which performance planning practices, performance appraisal practices, performance feedback and coaching practices, and reward and recognition practices influenced employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant	0.512	0.143		3.58	0.001
Performance Planning Practices	0.214	0.058	0.268	3.69	0.000
Performance Appraisal Practices	0.187	0.061	0.221	3.06	0.003
Performance Feedback & Coaching Practices	0.243	0.064	0.296	3.8	0.000
Reward & Recognition Practices	0.169	0.057	0.204	2.96	0.004

The results presented in Table 14 indicate that performance planning practices had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee productivity ($\beta = 0.268$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that when organizations clearly define performance goals, outline job roles and responsibilities, and align individual targets with organizational objectives, employees are more likely to perform effectively. Clear planning provides employees with direction and measurable expectations, which enhances focus and accountability in performing assigned duties. As a result, employees become more motivated to achieve performance targets, leading to improved productivity within the organization.

The findings further show that performance appraisal practices had a positive and significant influence on employee productivity ($\beta = 0.221$, $p = 0.003$). This suggests that a well-structured and transparent appraisal system plays an important role in improving employee performance. Regular performance evaluations enable employees to receive feedback on their achievements and areas that require improvement. When employees perceive appraisal processes as fair and objective, they tend to develop higher levels of commitment and motivation, which ultimately contributes to enhanced productivity and overall organizational effectiveness.

The results also indicate that performance feedback and coaching practices had the strongest positive effect on employee productivity ($\beta = 0.296$, $p = 0.000$) among all the independent variables. This finding highlights the importance of continuous communication between supervisors and employees regarding performance expectations and improvement strategies. Timely and constructive feedback helps employees understand their performance gaps, while coaching provides guidance on how to enhance skills and competencies required for improved job performance. Organizations that encourage regular feedback and supportive coaching are therefore more likely to foster high-performing employees who are capable of achieving organizational goals.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that reward and recognition practices had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee productivity ($\beta = 0.204$, $p = 0.004$). This implies that employees tend to perform better when their efforts and achievements are acknowledged and rewarded. Both financial incentives and non-monetary recognition mechanisms help reinforce desirable behaviours and encourage employees to maintain high levels of performance. Recognition also enhances job satisfaction and strengthens employee commitment to organizational objectives. Overall, the regression results confirm that effective implementation of performance management practices plays a critical role in improving employee productivity within Unga Group Limited.

4.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite the efforts made to ensure that the study was conducted systematically and rigorously, several limitations were encountered. One limitation of the study was that it focused on Unga Group Limited only, which may limit the generalization of the findings to other manufacturing firms in Kenya. Organizational structures, management practices, and operational environments vary across firms, and therefore the findings of this study may reflect the specific context of Unga Group Limited rather than the entire manufacturing sector. Another limitation related to the use of self-reported data collected through questionnaires. Since respondents provided information based on their personal perceptions and experiences, there was a possibility of response bias. Some respondents may have provided socially desirable answers or may not have fully disclosed their true opinions about performance management practices and employee productivity.

The study was also limited by time and resource constraints. The research was conducted within a limited time frame, which restricted the researcher from conducting more extensive data collection across multiple branches or manufacturing firms. A longer study period could have allowed the researcher to gather more comprehensive data and conduct deeper analysis on performance management practices and employee productivity. Finally, the study focused on four performance management practices, namely performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices. However, employee productivity may also be influenced by other factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, employee skills, working conditions, and technological resources. These variables were not included in the study and therefore represent areas for further research.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research findings and discussion of the study, including the response rate and demographic characteristics of respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity. The results showed that performance planning, performance appraisal, feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices significantly influenced employee productivity.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the results obtained from the analysis. It highlights the key findings in relation to the study objectives and discusses their implications for improving employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The chapter also provides recommendations for practice and suggests areas for further research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This section presents a summary of the key findings of the study based on the research objectives. The summary highlights the main results obtained from both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses regarding the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity at Unga Group Limited.

5.1.1 Performance Planning Practices and Employee Productivity

The findings of the study indicated that performance planning practices had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. Descriptive statistical results showed that a majority of respondents agreed that performance goals within their departments were clearly defined, job roles and responsibilities were well outlined, and individual performance targets were aligned with the overall objectives of the organization. Respondents also indicated that employees were involved in the process of setting performance goals, which contributed to greater clarity and ownership of performance expectations. These findings suggest that when employees understand what is expected of them and how their tasks contribute to organizational goals, they are more likely to perform their duties effectively.

Further analysis using inferential statistics revealed that performance planning practices significantly influenced employee productivity. The correlation results demonstrated a strong positive relationship between performance planning practices and employee productivity, while regression analysis confirmed that performance planning practices were a significant predictor of employee productivity. This implies that clear performance planning provides employees with direction, enhances accountability, and ensures that work activities are aligned with organizational objectives. When organizations establish well-structured planning processes, employees are able to prioritize their responsibilities and focus their efforts on achieving measurable outcomes.

The findings further imply that effective performance planning practices play a crucial role in improving work output, efficiency, quality of work, and timely completion of tasks. Clear planning processes help reduce role ambiguity, improve coordination among employees, and promote goal-oriented work behaviour. As a result, employees are better positioned to utilize their skills and resources effectively in achieving performance targets. Overall, the study established that organizations that emphasize clear performance planning practices are more likely to achieve higher levels of employee productivity and improved organizational performance.

5.1.2 Performance Appraisal Practices and Employee Productivity

The findings of the study indicated that performance appraisal practices had a positive and statistically significant influence on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The descriptive statistics showed that most respondents agreed that performance appraisal criteria were clearly communicated and that appraisal exercises were conducted regularly within the organization. Employees also indicated that the appraisal process provided an opportunity to review their performance and assess how well they met their assigned responsibilities. These results suggest that clear and structured appraisal systems enable employees to understand how their performance is evaluated and what standards they are expected to achieve.

The inferential statistical analysis further confirmed that performance appraisal practices significantly contributed to employee productivity. The correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee productivity, while the regression results showed that performance appraisal practices had a significant effect on improving employees' work output and efficiency. These findings imply that when appraisal systems are conducted fairly and consistently, they encourage employees to improve their performance and align their efforts with organizational expectations.

In addition, the findings showed that performance appraisal results were used to support employee development within the organization. Through appraisal feedback, employees were able to identify their strengths and areas that required improvement. This process helps employees enhance their skills, competencies, and work performance over time. Consequently, effective performance appraisal practices not only serve as evaluation mechanisms but also function as important tools for employee development and productivity improvement. Overall, the study established that organizations that implement transparent and well-structured appraisal systems are more likely to enhance employee motivation, accountability, and overall productivity.

5.1.3 Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices and Employee Productivity

The findings of the study revealed that performance feedback and coaching practices had a strong and statistically significant influence on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. Descriptive statistical results showed that the majority of respondents agreed that they received timely feedback on their performance and that the feedback provided by supervisors was clear and constructive. Respondents also indicated that supervisors provided coaching aimed at improving their performance and enhancing their professional capabilities. These findings suggest that regular feedback and supportive coaching create a work environment where employees clearly understand their strengths and areas that require improvement.

The inferential statistical analysis further confirmed the importance of feedback and coaching in improving employee productivity. The correlation results indicated a strong positive relationship between performance feedback and coaching practices and employee productivity. Similarly, the regression analysis revealed that performance feedback and coaching practices had the strongest effect on employee productivity among all the independent variables examined in the study. This implies that organizations that encourage continuous feedback and active supervisory support are more likely to enhance employee efficiency, skills development, and work performance.

The results further suggest that effective feedback and coaching mechanisms contribute to improved work quality, higher levels of efficiency, and timely completion of tasks. Through constructive feedback, employees are able to correct mistakes, improve their work methods, and develop the competencies required to perform their roles effectively. Coaching from supervisors also helps employees acquire new skills, build confidence, and improve their ability to meet performance expectations. Overall, the findings demonstrate that organizations that emphasize continuous communication, mentorship, and employee development through feedback and coaching are more likely to achieve higher levels of employee productivity.

5.1.4 Reward and Recognition Practices and Employee Productivity

The findings of the study indicated that reward and recognition practices had a positive and statistically significant influence on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. Descriptive statistical results showed that most respondents agreed that employees who demonstrated good performance were rewarded through financial incentives and non-monetary recognition mechanisms. Respondents also indicated that high-performing employees were acknowledged for their efforts within the organization. These findings suggest that when employees feel appreciated and recognized for their contributions, they are more motivated to maintain high levels of performance.

The inferential statistical analysis further confirmed the significant role of reward and recognition practices in improving employee productivity. Correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between reward and recognition practices and employee productivity, while regression results showed that reward and recognition practices significantly contributed to improvements in employee performance. This implies that employees tend to increase their effort and commitment when their performance is linked to meaningful rewards and recognition. Incentives such as bonuses, promotions, and recognition programs encourage employees to work harder and achieve organizational goals.

The results also indicated that although reward and recognition practices positively influenced productivity, some respondents perceived that the distribution of rewards was not always completely fair. This suggests that organizations must ensure that reward systems are transparent, equitable, and based on measurable performance outcomes. Fair and consistent reward practices help strengthen employee trust, enhance job satisfaction, and promote a culture of merit-based recognition. Overall, the study established that effective reward and recognition systems play a crucial role in motivating employees, improving morale, and enhancing overall employee productivity within the organization.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that performance management practices play a critical role in enhancing employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The study established that effective implementation of performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices significantly contributes to improved employee performance outcomes. These practices collectively create a structured work environment where employees clearly understand their responsibilities, receive guidance on performance improvement, and remain motivated to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, organizations that implement effective performance management systems are more likely to achieve higher levels of productivity and operational efficiency.

The study further concluded that performance planning practices significantly influence employee productivity. When organizations clearly define performance goals, communicate job roles and responsibilities, and align individual performance targets with broader organizational objectives, employees develop a clear understanding of their work expectations. This clarity reduces role ambiguity and enables employees to focus their efforts on achieving measurable outcomes. The involvement of employees in the performance planning process also enhances commitment and accountability, which positively influences work output, efficiency, and quality of performance.

The study also concluded that performance appraisal practices are an important determinant of employee productivity. A well-structured appraisal system provides employees with an opportunity to review their performance, receive feedback on their progress, and identify areas that require improvement. When appraisal criteria are transparent and consistently applied, employees perceive the evaluation process as fair and objective, which enhances trust in management and increases motivation to improve performance. Consequently, regular and effective appraisal practices support employee development and contribute to sustained improvements in productivity.

In addition, the study concluded that performance feedback and coaching practices play a vital role in improving employee productivity. Continuous feedback enables employees to understand how well they are performing and what adjustments are required to improve their work outcomes. Coaching from supervisors further strengthens employees' skills, competencies, and confidence in performing their tasks. Through regular communication and mentorship, employees are able to correct mistakes, enhance their capabilities, and maintain high levels of performance. As a result, organizations that encourage consistent feedback and coaching are more likely to develop a high-performing workforce.

Finally, the study concluded that reward and recognition practices significantly enhance employee motivation and productivity. Employees who perceive that their efforts and achievements are acknowledged through financial incentives and non-monetary recognition mechanisms are more likely to demonstrate increased commitment and dedication to their work. Recognition strengthens employee morale, reinforces positive work behaviours, and encourages employees to maintain high standards of performance. However, the study also highlights the importance of ensuring that reward systems are fair, transparent, and based on objective performance criteria. When reward and recognition practices are implemented effectively, they contribute to improved job satisfaction, stronger employee engagement, and sustained productivity within the organization.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several practical recommendations are proposed to improve the effectiveness of performance management practices and enhance employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The study recommends that Unga Group Limited should strengthen its performance planning practices by ensuring that performance goals are clearly defined and effectively communicated to all employees at the beginning of each performance cycle. Management should involve employees in the goal-setting process so that individual performance targets are aligned with departmental and organizational objectives. Regular departmental planning meetings can also be conducted to clarify expectations, review performance targets, and ensure that employees understand how their tasks contribute to overall organizational performance.

Second, the study recommends that the organization should improve the transparency and consistency of its performance appraisal system. Management should ensure that appraisal criteria are clearly communicated to employees and applied uniformly across all departments. Supervisors should be adequately trained on how to conduct objective and constructive performance evaluations. In addition, the organization should ensure that appraisal results are not only used for evaluation purposes but also for employee development, promotion decisions, and career planning.

Third, the study recommends that Unga Group Limited should strengthen performance feedback and coaching mechanisms within the organization. Supervisors and line managers should provide regular feedback to employees regarding their performance rather than waiting for formal appraisal periods. Continuous feedback sessions and coaching programs should be encouraged to help employees improve their skills, address performance challenges, and enhance their productivity. Establishing mentorship programs where experienced employees guide junior staff may also help improve employee competence and performance.

Fourth, the study recommends that the organization should enhance its reward and recognition systems to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency. Management should ensure that employees who demonstrate high performance are recognized through both financial incentives and non-monetary rewards such as certificates, employee-of-the-month programs, and public recognition during organizational meetings. Implementing clear performance-based reward policies will help motivate employees to maintain high levels of productivity and commitment to organizational goals.

Finally, the study recommends that Unga Group Limited should continuously monitor and evaluate its performance management system to ensure that it remains effective and responsive to organizational needs. Management should periodically review existing performance management policies, gather feedback from employees, and introduce improvements where necessary. By continuously improving performance management practices, the organization will be better positioned to enhance employee productivity, strengthen organizational competitiveness, and achieve sustainable growth in the manufacturing sector.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of the study, several areas for further research are recommended. First, future studies may examine the effect of other human resource management practices on employee productivity, such as leadership style, employee training and development, organizational culture, and employee engagement. These factors may also significantly influence employee performance and productivity but were not included within the scope of the current study. Second, further research may be conducted in other manufacturing firms or across multiple organizations within the manufacturing sector in Kenya. Expanding the geographical and organizational scope would enable researchers to compare findings across different firms and improve the generalizability of the results. Such studies would provide broader insights into how performance management practices influence employee productivity in the manufacturing industry.

Third, future researchers may adopt different research designs such as longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper insights into the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity. A longitudinal study would allow researchers to examine changes in employee productivity over time, while qualitative approaches such as interviews could provide deeper explanations of employees' perceptions of performance management systems. Finally, future studies may explore the role of moderating or mediating variables, such as employee motivation, organizational culture, or leadership style, in the relationship between performance management practices and employee productivity. Examining these variables may help provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence employee productivity and organizational performance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER

EUNICE KEBENEI

BML/39/01397/3/24

Management University of Africa

To

The Management

Unga Group Limited

Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH

I am a student at the Management University of Africa, pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Management and Leadership. I am currently undertaking an academic research project as part of the requirements for the award of my degree. The study is titled **"Effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Productivity in Kenyan Manufacturing Firms: A Case Study of Unga Group Limited."** The purpose of the study is to examine how performance planning, performance appraisal, performance feedback and coaching, and reward and recognition practices influence employee productivity.

I kindly request permission to conduct this study within your organization and to collect data from selected employees through the use of questionnaires. The information collected will be used strictly for academic purposes, and confidentiality of respondents will be fully observed. Participation will be voluntary, and no personal identifiers will be required. Your organization's support and cooperation will greatly contribute to the successful completion of this study and to the advancement of academic knowledge in the area of performance management and employee productivity. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,

EUNICE KEBENEI

BML/39/01397/3/24

Management University of Africa

APPENDIX II: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to collect information for an academic study on the effect of performance management practices on employee productivity at Unga Group Limited. The study seeks to understand employees' perceptions of performance planning, appraisal, feedback and coaching, reward and recognition practices, and how these influence productivity. Your responses will be used strictly for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

Title: Effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Productivity in Kenyan Manufacturing Firms: A Case Study of Unga Group Limited

Section A: Demographic Information

Please tick (✓) the option that best represents your opinion.

1. **Gender**: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. **Age:** ☐ Below 25 years ☐ 25–34 years ☐ 35–44 years ☐ 45 years and above
3. **Length of Service:** ☐ Less than 2 years ☐ 2–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ Over 10 years
4. **Job Level**: ☐ Junior ☐ Middle ☐ Senior
5. **Department:**☐ Production ☐ Human Resource ☐ Finance ☐ Operations ☐ Administration

Section B: Performance Planning Practices

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements using the 5-point Likert scale: Where 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Undecided (UD), 2 = Disagree (D) and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Performance goals in my department are clearly defined					
My job roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined					
Individual performance targets are aligned with organizational objectives					
Employees are involved in setting performance goals					

Section C: Performance Appraisal Practices

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements using the 5-point Likert scale: Where 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Undecided (UD), 2 = Disagree (D) and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Performance appraisal criteria are clear and well communicated					
Performance appraisals are conducted regularly					
The appraisal process is fair and unbiased					
Appraisal results are used for employee development					

Section D: Performance Feedback and Coaching Practices

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements using the 5-point Likert scale: Where 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Undecided (UD), 2 = Disagree (D) and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I receive timely feedback on my performance					
Feedback provided is clear and constructive					
Supervisors provide coaching to improve performance					
Feedback focuses on improving employee skills and development					

Section E: Reward and Recognition Practices

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements using the 5-point Likert scale: Where 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Undecided (UD), 2 = Disagree (D) and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Good performance is rewarded through financial incentives					
Non-monetary recognition is provided for good performance					
Rewards are distributed fairly among employees					
High-performing employees are consistently recognized					

Section F: Employee Productivity

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements using the 5-point Likert scale: Where 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Undecided (UD), 2 = Disagree (D) and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I consistently meet my work output targets					
I complete assigned tasks efficiently					
The quality of my work meets organizational standards					
I complete my duties within the required timelines					

Thank you for your participation. Your responses are highly appreciated.

APPENDIX III: DATA COLLECTION LETTER

The Management University of Africa

Sponsored by The Kenya Institute of Management

Date: 11th March 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

EUNICE KEBENEI– BML/39/01397/3/24

This letter serves to introduce the above named who is a **Bachelors of Management and Leadership (BML)** student and is interested in carrying out research on Effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Productivity in Kenyan Manufacturing Firms. A Case Study of Unga Group Limited.

Any assistance accorded to her in pursuit of this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Juster Nyaga

Dean, School of Management and Leadership

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