

## **Influence of Strategy Implementation Practices on Employee Performance of Ground Handling Personnel at KKIA, Lusaka**



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**ABSTRACT:** This study assessed the impact of strategic management practices on the performance of ground handling personnel at KKIA. Specifically, it aimed to establish the existing strategy implementation practices, evaluate the influence of strategy implementation on employee performance, and explore the perceptions of ground handling personnel on strategy implementation at the airport. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Stratified simple random sampling methods were used. The sample size included 50 participants from a total population of 200 employees, which included ground handling personnel and 10 management staff for interviews. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A total of 50 questionnaires were successfully returned, yielding a response rate of 100%. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS for reliability and accuracy, while qualitative data were processed using NVivo software for thematic content analysis. The findings indicated that strategic management practices at KKIA significantly influenced employee performance. Training and resource provision were rated as the most effective strategic components, with 70% of respondents agreeing that training programs improved their ability to meet organizational objectives (Mean = 3.80, SD = 1.340). However, the study also revealed critical gaps in employee involvement in decision-making, as 65% of employees disagreed that they were consulted in strategic decisions (Mean = 2.0, SD = 1.385). Furthermore, 60% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with how strategic management practices supported their daily tasks (Mean = 2.74, SD = 1.24). The study also found that 80% of employees felt that resource allocation was inadequate (Mean = 1.96, SD = 1.177), highlighting significant concerns about operational support. Employees who perceived strategy implementation practices as effective reported higher engagement levels, while those who felt excluded or unsupported exhibited lower morale and reduced productivity. Qualitative findings reinforced these results, with several employees raising concerns about favoritism, lack of communication, and poor workload distribution. The study's major contribution lies in its identification of key weaknesses in strategy execution at KKIA, particularly in communication (72% dissatisfaction, Mean = 2.22, SD = 1.148), employee participation, and policy consistency. It was recommended that KKIA enhance communication through regular briefings, newsletters, and digital platforms to ensure employees were well-informed about strategic decisions. Additionally, management was advised to implement participatory decision-making frameworks to increase employee involvement, improve motivation, and boost overall organizational performance. Addressing these gaps would strengthen the effectiveness of strategy implementation practices at KKIA and enhance the efficiency of ground handling personnel.

**KEYWORDS:** Influence, Strategy Implementation Practices, Employee Performance, Ground Handling, KKIA, Lusaka.

### **1.0. INTRO BACKGROUND**

Strategy is a term derived from military techniques, referring to the coordination of policies and tactics to achieve specific objectives. In the business context, strategy is a continuous process of long-term planning that provides a clear direction and goal (Kryger, 2018). During the early stages of strategic planning, decisions are not fixed and should be flexible enough to accommodate necessary modifications (Kryger, 2018). Strategic planning has long been recognized as an essential decision-making tool that enables organizations to develop competitive strategies by assessing opportunities and threats (Henderson, 2017). The strategic management process generally consists of three key stages: strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Henderson, 2017).

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Among these stages, strategy implementation is the most challenging and demanding (Kachaner et al., 2016). While brainstorming and formulating strategies are essential, managing the execution of a strategy is often more complex and resource-intensive (Mohamed et al., 2014). Strategy implementation involves translating formulated strategies into practical, actionable steps at the operational level (Mohamed et al., 2014). Even the well-developed strategic plans become ineffective if they are not properly executed (Mohamed et al., 2014).

Organizations engage in strategic management with the goal of improving overall performance, ensuring that resources, operations, and personnel align with business objectives. Aremu (2020) argued that strategy serves as a unifying force that brings together key stakeholders including employees, shareholders, and suppliers to foster commitment and enhance organizational performance. The successful execution of strategy is, therefore, a crucial determinant of business success and employee effectiveness (Mohamed et al., 2014).

Despite its critical importance, many organizations struggle with strategy implementation. Research shows that 90% of companies fail to implement their strategies as planned, often due to ineffective execution processes, lack of alignment, or inadequate resource support (Gębczyńska, 2016). Poor strategy implementation negatively affects both organizational and employee performance, leading to inefficiencies, low motivation, and decreased productivity (Gębczyńska, 2016).

While studies by Tolici (2021), Ibrahim and Musa (2020) have highlighted the importance of strategic management in improving both employee performance and service quality, there remains a research gap in examining these effects specifically within the Zambian aviation context, particularly at KKIA. Koros et al. (2018) examined the strategic management impact on performance at Kenyan airports, revealing positive outcomes but also underscoring regional variations due to economic and regulatory differences. These gaps indicate a need for further localized research at KKIA to determine how strategic management practices uniquely affect the performance of ground handling personnel.

The ground handling sub-sector is vital to Zambia's socio-economic development, as it enables seamless passenger travel, supports international trade, and contributes to employment in the region. Ground handling activities such as baggage management, aircraft marshalling, and passenger services are integral to maintaining KKIA's operational efficiency and reputation. By implementing effective strategic management, KKIA can enhance service quality, which indirectly supports Zambia's tourism and business sectors, facilitating greater economic activity and job creation in the country. The strategic management practices and employee performance are particularly relevant as they directly influence operational efficiency and service quality at KKIA, with potential ripple effects on Zambia's socio-economic progress (Wilmsmeier, G., et al., 2020).

## **1.1. Problem Statement**

Employee performance in the ground handling sector is a critical determinant of service quality, safety, and operational efficiency at international airports. Efficient strategy implementation enhances employee productivity, job satisfaction, and retention, contributing to seamless airport operations. However, research indicates that ineffective strategy execution results in poor service delivery, increased operational inefficiencies, and high employee turnover (Wibowo et al., 2015). In the global aviation industry, delays caused by ground handling inefficiencies contribute to 65% of all departure delays, costing airlines an estimated \$25 billion annually (International Air Transport Association, 2021).

At Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA), inconsistent strategy implementation has resulted in a 15% annual employee turnover rate, exceeding the global average of 8–10% (Civil Aviation Authority Zambia, 2021). This turnover disrupts service levels, as new employees require 3–6 months of training to reach full productivity (IATA, 2020). Additionally, poor execution of strategic initiatives has led to a 20% increase in flight delays at KKIA compared to other regional airports (Zambia Airports Corporation Limited, 2022). 56% of regional flight delays are directly linked to ground handling inefficiencies (African Airlines Association, 2021).

Despite the critical need for structured strategy execution, Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA) faces significant implementation challenges. Research indicates that employees experience considerable job stress due to poor physical working conditions and inadequate support, leading to diminished performance and job dissatisfaction (Mubanga, 2021). Additionally, factors such as lack of motivation, insufficient training, and unclear performance goals have been identified as key contributors to reduced employee performance within the organization (Chanda, 2020). These challenges collectively lower employee morale, reduce efficiency, and hinder service quality at KKIA.

If these challenges persist, KKIA risks experiencing a 10–15% decline in airline traffic, as airlines shift to better-managed hubs with higher efficiency (Samad et al., 2018). Additionally, research shows that poor ground handling efficiency can increase operational costs by 20–30%, affecting the airport's profitability and ability to invest in further expansion (Pawiro et al., 2017). Given KKIA's

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role as Zambia's busiest airport, declining service standards could also impact the country's tourism industry, which contributes 7.2% to Zambia's GDP (Zambia Tourism Agency, 2022).

## **1.2. Specific Objectives**

- To establish current strategy implementation practices at KKIA
- To assess the influence of strategy implementation practices on employee performance
- To explore the perceptions of ground handling on the effectiveness of the strategy implementation practices at KKIA

## **2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Related Literature**

#### **2.1.1. Current strategy Implementation practices**

Strategy implementation practices are structured approaches that guide organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating strategies to achieve long-term goals (Wibowo et al., 2015). These include strategic planning, strategy formulation, and strategy implementation, ensuring that resources and employee roles align with organizational objectives (Muturi & Maroa, 2015).

Choudhary (2022) analyzed the influence of Leadership in Strategic Alignment on employee performance in the aviation industry. The study targeted airport managers and ground handling staff in 15 global hubs. A qualitative research approach was used, combining focus groups and case studies. The findings emphasized that clear communication of organizational objectives and participative leadership styles led to higher levels of employee engagement and adaptability.

According to Okafor, Njoku, and Ouma (2021) assessed the impact of Continuous Training Programs on employee performance in African airports. A descriptive research design was utilized, with 350 employees surveyed across airports in West and East Africa. The study adopted the human capital theory, which emphasizes the role of education and training in improving employee output. Results showed that continuous training programs were positively correlated with improved task performance and employee motivation.

#### **2.1.2. The Influence of Strategy Implementation practices on employee performance**

Several global studies have assessed strategic management practices in the aviation industry. Raduan et al. (2009) found that airlines with clear strategic goals and performance management systems had better employee performance, lower absenteeism, and higher job satisfaction. David (2001) demonstrated that regular training and strategy reassessment improve efficiency in international airports. Choudhary (2022) emphasized the importance of leadership in strategic alignment, showing that participative leadership led to better employee engagement. Continental studies by Mugabe (2020) and Okafor et al. (2021) revealed that skill shortages and lack of continuous training negatively impact employee performance. Adeyemi (2019) examined SAATM's role in harmonizing ground handling operations in Africa. Regionally, Phiri & Ncube (2020) found that lean management practices improve operational efficiency, while Masuku (2021) showed that outsourcing non-core services enhances employee performance. Locally, Ng'andu (2018) studied strategic management in SMEs, highlighting moderate adoption levels and performance challenges.

Muthaa (2018) investigated the effects of the strategic values on worker performance at Kenya's technical training institutions. The study used a cross-sectional descriptive survey research approach. The study involved participation from the top, middle, and lower level managers of the three technical training institutes located in Meru County. Surveys were used to collect information. When the dependability of the instruments was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, a correlation coefficient of 0.75 was discovered. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, and then presented using tables and figures. Muthaa (2018) found that the strategic values had a substantial impact on the work performance of employees at technical training institutions and that the model of strategic importance was improved by adding a moderating variable derived from government policy.

Agwu (2018) used regression analysis and descriptive statistics to evaluate the impact of strategic management on the worker performance of SMEs in Nigeria. Agwu (2018) discovered that strategic management had a favourable effect on worker performance. Fiberesima and Abdul Rani (2013) looked into the relationship between strategic management and the success of Nigerian companies. Thus, the researchers concluded that strategic management has a favourable impact on the corporate success of an organization. Furthermore, strategic management approaches would enhance and increase the financial performance of Nigerian businesses

#### **2.1.3. Perceptions of Ground Handling Personnel on the Effectiveness of Strategy Implementation Practices**

Globally, Williams (2017) found that clear strategic goals and leadership involvement improve job satisfaction among ground handling staff. Employees valued transparency and participatory decision-making in their organizations. Continental studies, such as Adeyemo et al. (2017) and Zhao (2019), highlighted that structured strategic management fosters higher employee engagement

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in China, India, and African countries. However, regional disparities in infrastructure and staff engagement influenced perceptions. Regionally, Moyo (2018) and Nhamo et al. (2018) found that limited training and poor communication negatively impacted employee perceptions of strategic management in African airports. Locally, Banda (2022) emphasized that Zambia's aviation sector faces inconsistent implementation of strategic practices, requiring greater investment in training and structured performance evaluations for effective workforce engagement.

Study by Moyo (2018) investigated the perceptions of ground handling personnel across major African airports, including those in South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods, gathering data through surveys and interviews with ground handling employees. The findings revealed that while ground handling staff recognized the significance of strategic management, there were concerns about its practical application. Employees in some airports expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of training and resources, while others cited poor communication from management. The study highlighted that strategic management practices were often hindered by limited investment in employee development and the inconsistent implementation of strategic initiatives across different airports.

Research by Banda (2022) highlighted that the perceptions of strategic management practices in Zambia's aviation sector were influenced by broader national challenges, such as infrastructural deficits, economic instability, and government policies. These challenges often resulted in inconsistent implementation of strategic management practices, which impacted employee performance. The study recommended that for ground handling personnel to better perceive and respond to strategic management practices, there needed to be greater investment in training, more effective communication between management and staff, and a more systematic approach to performance evaluation and feedback.

### **2.2. Gaps in the Literature**

Whereas a number of scholars have written papers on strategic management practices and their impact on employee performance in the aviation industry across various global contexts, none has specifically focused on the perceptions of ground handling personnel regarding strategic management practices in Zambia's aviation sector. It is of paramount importance to note that this study will bring out unique and dynamic experiences of ground handling personnel in Zambia, particularly in relation to how they perceive leadership involvement, training programs, and communication strategies, and how these factors influence their overall performance.

Carrying out such a study, particularly focusing on the unique challenges within Zambia's aviation sector, will provide valuable insights into the effects of resource constraints, infrastructure limitations, and employee training gaps on strategic management implementation. This study will serve as an essential local resource, helping airport administrators, policymakers, and aviation stakeholders understand how these factors shape the effectiveness and perception of strategic management practices among ground handling personnel.

A number of studies reviewed have focused on aviation industries in North America, Europe, and Asia, with some continental and regional studies in Southern Africa addressing similar issues. However, the current study will specifically fill the gap in empirical literature on strategic management practices within Zambia's aviation industry. Additionally, the literature reviewed highlights that there is no standardized framework for implementing strategic management practices in Zambia's aviation sector, a gap that this study will aim to address.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

This study will employ several theoretical perspectives to understand the relationship between strategic management practices and employee performance:

**2.3.1. Resource-Based View (RBV):** The Resource-Based View (RBV) suggests that an organization's internal resources and capabilities are crucial for achieving competitive advantage and superior performance (Barney, 1991). In the context of KKIA, strategy implementation practices serve as critical organizational resources that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of ground handling personnel. Key RBV principles value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability underscore the significance of structured strategy implementation, including specialized training programs, optimized workflow processes, and teamwork initiatives. By leveraging these strategic resources, KKIA can enhance operational efficiency, service quality, and employee productivity, ultimately positioning itself as a high-performing aviation hub.

**2.3.2 Goal-Setting Theory:** Goal-Setting Theory, developed by Locke and Latham (2002), emphasizes that specific and challenging goals can lead to enhanced performance outcomes. At KKIA, aligning strategic management practices with clear, measurable performance goals for ground handling personnel can foster a focused work environment that motivates employees to achieve ambitious targets. The principles of specificity, challenge, feedback, and goal commitment outlined in the theory suggest that involving employees in the goal-setting process and providing regular

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feedback can significantly enhance their motivation and commitment. By implementing these practices, KKIA can create a performance-oriented culture that not only drives individual performance but also contributes to the overall effectiveness of ground handling operations.

**2.3.3 Expectancy Theory:** Expectancy Theory, proposed by Vroom (1964), focuses on the motivation of employees and their belief that effort will lead to performance, which in turn will result in specific rewards. For ground handling personnel at KKIA, it is crucial to establish a clear connection between their efforts, performance outcomes, and the rewards they receive. This theory highlights three components: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, which together determine employee motivation. Strategic management practices that effectively communicate the relationship between performance and rewards, such as promotions or bonuses, can enhance motivation among employees. By tailoring rewards to align with the diverse values of ground handling personnel, KKIA can foster a motivated workforce that is committed to achieving high performance, ultimately improving operational efficiency and service delivery.

### 2.4. Conceptual Framework

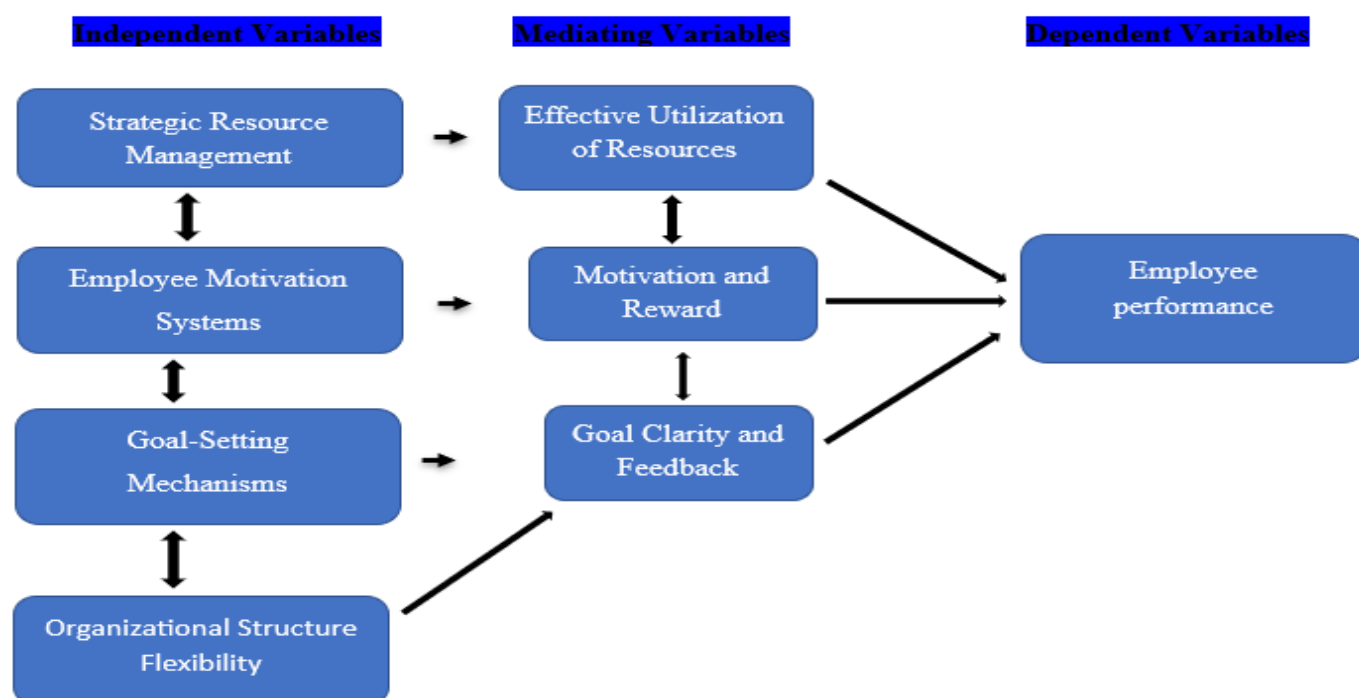


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by positivism and interpretivism as research philosophies. Positivism assumes that reality can be objectively measured using structured methods such as surveys and statistical analysis, aligning with the quantitative component (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Interpretivism focuses on understanding subjective experiences, making it relevant for the qualitative component, which explored employees' perceptions of strategic management practices through interviews and thematic analysis (Bryman, 2016). A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative paradigms, with a deductive approach for quantitative analysis and an inductive approach for qualitative analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The study was conducted at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA) in Lusaka, Zambia, with a target population of ground handling personnel and management staff responsible for strategic management implementation and operational efficiency. A sample size of 60 (30%) was selected from a total population of 200 employees, following Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) guidelines. Stratified and simple random sampling were used for quantitative surveys, while purposive sampling was used for semi-structured interviews. SPSS version 27 was used for quantitative analysis, applying descriptive statistics, while NVivo software facilitated thematic analysis of qualitative data. Ethical clearance was obtained from the university's ethics committee, and informed consent was sought from all participants. The study adhered to confidentiality and data protection policies, ensuring that collected information was securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.



## **4.0 FINDINGS**

### **4.1. Current Strategic Management Practices at KKIA**

The study revealed moderate satisfaction with the strategic management practices at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA), with an overall weighted mean score of 2.97. The highest-rated aspect was the provision of training and resources, with a score of 3.80 (SD = 1.340), where 70% of employees emphasized the significant role of ongoing training in improving task performance. However, communication regarding strategic goals was inconsistent. While 65% of employees were aware of the broader objectives, many struggled to understand how their individual roles contributed to these goals.

Interview responses supported these findings, with several employees mentioning that while the airport's mission and goals were communicated, the lack of clarity regarding their personal roles within these objectives left them unsure about how they could contribute effectively. Transparency in decision-making and feedback mechanisms was another weak area. With only 40% of employees feeling included in strategic discussions, the interviews echoed this dissatisfaction, highlighting frustration over being excluded from important decision-making processes. One employee noted, "We often feel like decisions are made without us, and our input is rarely asked for."

### **4.2. The Influence of Strategic Management Practices on Employee Performance**

Employee performance was moderately influenced by strategic management practices, with a weighted mean score of 2.79. Training programs were the highest-rated component, with a score of 3.74 (SD = 1.157), and 75% of employees reported that skill development significantly contributed to job performance. However, recognition and motivation from management received the lowest score of 2.42 (SD = 1.486), with 60% of employees expressing feelings of being underappreciated.

Interview data reinforced this low motivation, with many employees expressing a sense of disconnect from management's recognition efforts. One respondent mentioned, "Training is good, but we often feel like our hard work isn't recognized, especially when it comes to promotions or incentives." Furthermore, teamwork, while receiving a moderate score, showed minimal improvement, with 55% of employees indicating that collaboration had not significantly changed. A recurring theme in interviews was the need for better teamwork, with one employee stating, "There's a lot of individual work. Collaboration could be better if there were more team-oriented goals or incentives."

### **4.3. Perceptions of Ground Handling Personnel on Strategic Management Practices**

Ground handling personnel reported mixed perceptions of strategic management practices, with a weighted mean score of (Mean = 2.5). While 70% agreed that strategic practices were relevant to their roles, scoring 3.60 (SD = 1.262), dissatisfaction with management's support and resource allocation was evident. The score for this aspect was low at 1.96 (SD = 1.177), with 65% of employees expressing concerns over inadequate resources. Interviews with ground handling staff revealed similar sentiments, with several employees highlighting the gap in management support. One employee stated, "We often felt left behind when it came to receiving the resources or equipment we needed to do our job efficiently."

Additionally, a significant 70% of employees felt excluded from decision-making processes, as reflected in their low rating of 1.84 (SD = 1.283) for management valuing employee input. The interviews confirmed this sentiment, with employees voicing their frustration at not being involved in key decisions. One interviewee remarked, "It was hard to stay motivated when we weren't part of the conversations that directly affected our work." Communication gaps were also noted, with many employees requesting better communication from management about strategic initiatives.

## **5.0. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1. Current Strategic Management Practices at KKIA**

The findings highlighted the importance of ongoing training and resource provision, which was positively perceived by employees. A significant number of respondents (70%) emphasized the role of training in improving task performance, with an average score of 3.80 (SD = 0.75). This aligns with previous research by Mugabe (2020), who identified that strategic investment in human capital development, particularly through training, was a crucial factor in improving operational efficiency in African airports. Similarly, Ngwenya, Banda, and Mutale (2019) found that skill development initiatives, especially those involving partnerships with training institutions, played a significant role in reducing employee turnover and enhancing skill levels, which was consistent with the positive feedback on training at KKIA.

However, the study also revealed several areas where KKIA's strategic management practices fell short, particularly regarding communication of strategic goals. While 65% of employees were aware of the broader organizational objectives, many reported difficulties in understanding how their individual roles aligned with these goals. This gap in communication was highlighted as a major concern, as many employees felt disconnected from the airport's overarching mission. This finding was in

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contrast to Wibowo et al. (2015), who argued that the alignment of employee roles with organizational goals is critical for ensuring effective strategic management. The results suggested that, while strategic planning existed, its implementation lacked clarity, which hindered the ability of employees to align their work with the airport's long-term objectives.

In addition, the study identified a significant gap in employee involvement in decision-making processes, with only 40% of employees feeling included in strategic discussions. The interviews further revealed that many employees felt excluded from important decisions, which led to dissatisfaction and frustration. This finding echoed Masuku's (2021) study, which found that involving employees in decision-making is essential for improving task efficiency and operational performance. The lack of transparency and feedback mechanisms at KKIA was also a key issue, as employees expressed concerns over being excluded from the decision-making process. This is in line with Masum & Fernandez (2019), who stressed that transparency in strategic decisions is vital for building employee trust and engagement.

The frustration surrounding the lack of employee involvement and the unclear communication of strategic goals indicated a disconnect between the management's intentions and the employees' perceptions of their roles within the organization. These issues may have contributed to lower morale and reduced employee motivation, which could affect the overall performance of the airport. The findings highlighted that, despite the implementation of strategic management practices, there were significant barriers to achieving effective outcomes due to the lack of inclusivity and clarity in communication.

### **5.2. The Influence of Strategic Management Practices on Employee Performance**

The study revealed that employee performance at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA) was moderately influenced by strategic management practices, with a weighted mean score of 2.79 (SD = 0.63). Among these practices, training programs were found to be the most highly rated, with a mean score of 3.74 (SD = 0.82). 70% of employees indicated that skill development significantly contributed to their job performance. This finding aligns with the work of Raduan et al. (2009), who reported that clear strategic goals and performance management systems, including regular training, led to better employee performance and job satisfaction. Likewise, David (2001) emphasized that ongoing training and reassessment of strategy improve efficiency, which was echoed by positive feedback on training at KKIA.

However, the study also identified significant challenges in the areas of recognition and motivation. Recognition from management received the lowest score (2.42, SD = 0.91), with 60% of employees feeling underappreciated. This result mirrors the findings of Mugabe (2020) and Okafor et al. (2021), who found that the lack of recognition and inadequate continuous training negatively impacted employee performance. Employees at KKIA expressed a disconnect from management's recognition efforts, a sentiment similar to Muthaa's (2018) study, which highlighted that while strategic values positively impacted worker performance, issues related to management recognition were also prevalent.

Additionally, the study explored the role of teamwork, which showed minimal improvement. While teamwork received a moderate score, 55% of employees indicated that collaboration had not significantly changed, with many employees voicing the need for better teamwork. This finding is consistent with Choudhary (2022), who argued that leadership and team alignment are critical for improving employee engagement. In contrast, Phiri & Ncube (2020) found that lean management practices improved operational efficiency and teamwork in regional airports, a result not fully reflected at KKIA.

The lack of improvement in teamwork and employee dissatisfaction with recognition may be linked to challenges in strategic alignment at KKIA. While Agwu (2018) and Fiberesima and Abdul Rani (2013) found that strategic management positively influenced employee performance in Nigerian SMEs, the results at KKIA suggest that without a comprehensive strategy that includes leadership, recognition, and team-oriented goals, employee performance may not reach its full potential.

### **5.3. Perceptions of Ground Handling Personnel on Strategic Management Practices**

The study revealed that ground handling personnel at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA) had concerns regarding their involvement in strategic management practices, which were key to the implementation process. Employees generally agreed that these strategic management practices were relevant to their roles; however, the study found a significant gap in management support and employee participation in decision-making, which had a negative influence on employee perceptions of the practices. This knowledge gap led to dissatisfaction among ground handling personnel and affected their views of strategic management practices. Similarly, studies in other airports indicated that poor communication and lack of management support contributed to negative perceptions of strategic management (Moyo, 2018).

Furthermore, the study revealed that employees at KKIA were not adequately involved in decision-making processes, despite being directly impacted by strategic management practices. This lack of involvement has influenced their overall perception of the practices and led to dissatisfaction. This finding is consistent with research conducted in Zambia, where employees in the aviation sector also reported feeling excluded from key decisions that affected their work (Banda, 2022).

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However, the study showed that without adequate management support and employee involvement, strategic management practices did not improve engagement. The results suggested that addressing resource allocation issues, improving communication, and involving employees in decision-making could better align strategic practices with the needs of ground handling personnel. These results stood in contrast to the positive outcomes reported in Adeyemo et al. (2017) and Zhao (2019), which suggested that structured strategic management led to higher employee engagement. This finding underscored the importance of participatory decision-making and adequate resource investment, as recommended by Banda (2022), in achieving effective strategic management outcomes.

### **6.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **6.1. Conclusion**

The study revealed that while there are positive aspects to the strategic management practices at KKIA, including the provision of training and resources, there are significant challenges in communication, employee engagement, and resource allocation. The inconsistency in how strategic goals are communicated and the lack of recognition for employee contributions are major areas of concern. Ground handling personnel, in particular, report dissatisfaction with the level of support they receive and their exclusion from decision-making processes, which could be impacting both their performance and job satisfaction.

It is clear that for KKIA to improve its strategic management practices, a more inclusive and transparent approach is needed. Communication about strategic goals needs to be clearer, and employees should be more involved in decision-making processes to ensure that they feel valued and engaged in the organization's success.

#### **6.2. Recommendations**

This study has highlighted key challenges in the strategic management practices at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (KKIA), particularly in communication, employee engagement, and resource allocation. To address these issues and enhance the overall effectiveness of strategic management, the following recommendations are made to KKIA management:

- 6.2.1. The study has shown that while employees are aware of the strategic goals of KKIA, there is a lack of clarity on how their individual roles align with these broader objectives. It is therefore recommended that KKIA's management implement clear communication strategies that not only inform employees of organizational goals but also outline how each employee's role contributes to these objectives. Regular updates and communication sessions should be conducted to ensure that all employees understand the organization's strategic direction and feel connected to it. This approach will improve employees' sense of purpose and engagement, ensuring alignment between individual and organizational goals.
- 6.2.2. The study revealed a significant dissatisfaction among employees, especially ground handling personnel, regarding their exclusion from decision-making processes. To address this, it is recommended that KKIA implement a more inclusive approach to decision-making, particularly involving employees in discussions that directly affect their roles. Creating formal mechanisms for feedback and consultation, such as regular staff meetings and participatory workshops, would help employees feel valued and increase their engagement with strategic initiatives. Involving employees in key decisions will also enhance their sense of ownership, leading to better job satisfaction and improved organizational performance.
- 6.2.3. A key finding from the study is that employees feel underappreciated, particularly regarding recognition and motivation. To improve job satisfaction and performance, it is recommended that KKIA introduce or enhance formal recognition programs that acknowledge and reward employees' contributions. These programs could include performance-based incentives, employee of the month awards, and public recognition during staff meetings. Ensuring that employees feel valued and motivated will contribute to higher morale and productivity.
- 6.2.4. Ground handling personnel expressed frustration with the lack of support and resources. It is critical that KKIA assesses the resource needs of this department and ensure that adequate tools, equipment, and personnel are allocated to support their roles. The study suggests that addressing resource gaps could improve operational efficiency and employee satisfaction, particularly for those working in high-demand areas like ground handling. Ensuring proper resource allocation will enhance employee performance and reduce the challenges faced in daily operations.



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