



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Examination of the relationship between change in work goals and the employee morale in private Universities in Western Kenya

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### Abstract

Literature suggests that various workplace changes in private universities, such as technology, communication methods, employee transfers, work goals, marketing, and operational costs, are interconnected. In Kenyan private universities, up to 50% of the workforce merely performs expected tasks, with research indicating that 47% of employees spend most of their work hours on social media. Employee turnover is recorded at 43%, but the underlying cause of these issues remains unknown (Kariuki, N. & Makori, M., 2015). It is also unclear whether these changes significantly impact employee morale in Kenyan private universities. This study specifically examined the relationship between changes in work goals and employee morale in private universities in western Kenya. The conclusions could be beneficial to various stakeholders in Kenya's private universities. The study was based on Goal Setting Theory, Job Characteristic Theory and used a correlational research design, targeting 1,440 faculty and staff members across four selected universities. Stratified random sampling was employed to select a sample of 313 workers from different departments. Data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Excel and SPSS tools, with frequency tables and charts used for data presentation. The results indicated a negative relationship between changes in work goals and employee morale ( $\beta = -.678$ ,  $p < .05$ ), accounting for 46.0% of the variance in employee morale ( $R^2 = .460$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The study concluded that changes in work goals significantly affect employee morale and recommended that private universities prepare their employees in advance for such changes.

**Keywords:** Change in work goals; Employee Morale; Higher Education in Kenya; Private Universities in Western Kenya

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Change in Work Goals

Workplace goals have evolved significantly over time as management theories, materials, and technologies have progressed. Creative thinking in the workplace fosters innovations and ideas that keep companies dynamic, engaging, and productive (Bruhn et al., 2017). The 2014 Oxford Economics Workforce 2020 study highlighted that South African businesses face challenges in talent management, leadership development, employee understanding, and promoting learning amidst rapid workplace changes. The study, commissioned by Systems Applications and Products (SAP), identified key trends such as the influx of millennials into the workforce (59%), evolving work environments (54%), and globalization of labor supply (43%) (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

Bruhn et al. (2017) discussed the long-term impacts of changing work goals, noting that morale can decline if employees consistently fail to meet unrealistic targets, leading to demotivation and high staff turnover. When goals are met, employees are motivated and content; failure to achieve goals, however, can result in employees feeling stagnant and

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seeking opportunities elsewhere. The study by Bruhn et al. (2017) examined these effects within organizational settings, but it remains uncertain if these findings would apply to private universities in Kenya. This research aims to explore the relationship between changes in work goals and employee morale in this specific context.

Globally, higher education is undergoing significant transformation due to shifting environmental dynamics. In Kenya, this has led to the adoption of new technologies, changes in communication and marketing strategies, and the recruitment of highly skilled personnel (Mathooko, 2013). Boston (2000) identified five major factors driving changes in higher education: increasing parental concern about educational quality, greater emphasis on college rankings, demographic shifts in the student population, and rising costs. To remain competitive, universities have focused on offering higher quality, advanced technology, effective communication, realistic work goals, and lower costs than their competitors (Watson, 1996).

Rael, Dinah, and Kipkebut (2019) investigated the impact of workplace changes on performance in Kenyan private universities. Their study found that universities have adopted various strategies to address these changes and improve performance. However, they could not explain the disparity in university rankings within Kenya, with some institutions performing better than others. Therefore, this research seeks to determine if there is a connection between workplace changes and employee morale in Kenyan private universities.

### **1.2. Higher Education in Kenya**

In Kenya, universities fall into two categories: public and private. Public universities are owned and funded by the government, while private universities are managed by private individuals or groups, including religious organizations. Most of the funding for private universities comes from student tuition fees and sponsorships. Like other universities globally, Kenyan private universities operate in a competitive and dynamic market, necessitating the abandonment of traditional practices in favor of innovative approaches to maintain their performance (Okenda, Thuo, & Kithinji, 2017).

The main areas of change in private universities involve strategic orientation, technology, human behavior, and organizational communication, with the adoption of new strategies varying by institution, potentially impacting their performance. The variation in university rankings remains puzzling; with some institutions consistently ranking lower while others rank higher (Okenda, Thuo, & Kithinji, 2017).

The transformation of higher education in Kenya has led to the adoption of new technologies, shifts in marketing strategies, and the recruitment of highly skilled personnel (Mathooko, 2013). According to Boston (2000), higher education is evolving due to several factors: increased parental concern about educational quality, greater emphasis on college rankings, demographic changes in the student population, and rising costs. To compete globally, universities have implemented changes such as improving quality, utilizing advanced technology, enhancing communication methods, and reorganizing their workforce in terms of skills, expertise, and talent management (Watson, 1996).

Despite the explanations provided by Mathooko (2013), Boston (2000), and Watson (1996) regarding changes in higher education and the factors driving these changes, they did not explore the relationship between workplace changes, such as workforce reorganization, and employee morale in higher education institutions. Additionally, these authors did not specify whether their observations apply equally to both private and public higher education institutions. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between workplace transfers and employee morale in private universities in Kenya.

Rael, Dinah, and Kipkebut (2019), in their study "Effect of Workplace Changes on Performance in Kenyan Private Universities," found that universities have adopted various new strategies to address workplace changes, such as employee transfers, to influence their performance. However, the authors could not explain the disparity in university rankings in Kenya, with some universities consistently ranking lower than others. Consequently, the main objective of this research was to explore the link between workplace transfers and employee morale in Kenyan private universities.

### **1.3. Employee Morale**

Employee morale involves several elements, including an employee's perspective, positive mindset, self-perception, and confidence in both themselves and their organization. It is also shaped by the company's mission objectives, direction, daily decisions, and recognition of employees (Saxena, 2012). Key aspects of employee morale in the workplace include pride in work, attitude towards work, job satisfaction, and workplace relationships. Employee pride reflects the positivity and accountability they exhibit in their work. When a manager supports their employees and stands firm in defending staff productivity or actions, employees respond with increased pride, positively impacting employee morale (Linz & Huddleston, 2006).

Further, Shuck et al. (2010) suggest that to truly comprehend why employee morale is lacking in private universities, the literature on employee morale should pay greater attention to the workplace context. These authors have provided evidence of low employee morale in private universities in Kenya but have not explained the underlying causes or whether workplace changes contribute to this issue. Conversely, the HRO report from PUEA highlights the implications of low employee morale for organizations and individual workers but does not identify the causal factors of these signs and symptoms in Higher Learning Institutions. This research aims to fill these gaps by evaluating the relationship between workplace changes and employee morale in private universities in Kenya.

**1.4. Statement of the Problem**

In a dynamic work environment marked by frequent changes, private universities in Kenya have recently experienced high staff turnover, poor work performance, and low service levels. The primary challenge lies in identifying the causes of these issues and finding effective strategies to attract and retain creative and dedicated staff. Numerous studies have been conducted to assess employee morale in private universities in Kenya, consistently revealing a significant problem of low morale among employees despite high expectations from various stakeholders. Additionally, there are shortcomings in managing customer relations, student interactions, and public engagement within these institutions. The underlying causes of these issues remain unclear, which motivates this study. Researchers have suggested that workplace changes, such as the digitalization of functions, might be occurring in private higher education institutions, but it is not yet known if there is a relationship between these changes and employee morale. This study aims to explore this potential connection.

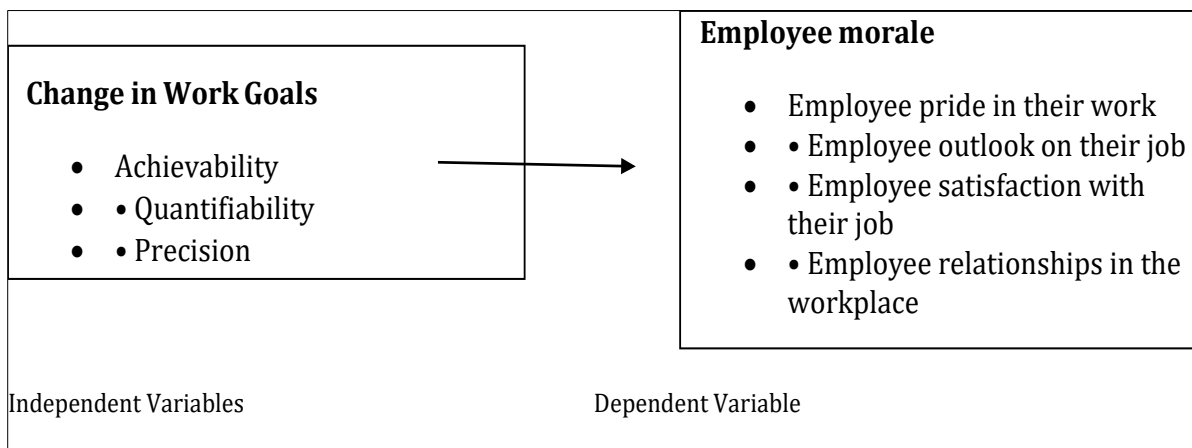
**1.5. Objective of the Study**

This research aimed to explore the connection between changes in work goals and employee morale in private universities in western Kenya.

The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

H01: There is no significant relationship between changes in work goals and employee morale in private Universities in western Kenya.

**1.6. Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1** A Conceptual Framework on the relationship between change in work goals and employee morale.

**2. Theoretical Review**

**2.1. Goal-Setting Theory**

According to goal-setting theory, developed by Edwin A. Locke in 1968, setting specific and measurable goals is more effective than setting broad goals. Locke’s essay, "Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentive," demonstrated that specific and measurable goals enhance employee motivation and the likelihood of achieving these goals (Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P., 2002). Locke stressed the importance of clear goals and assigning challenging tasks to employees. By working hard and developing their skills to meet these challenging goals, employees receive positive feedback and a

sense of accomplishment, potentially boosting their satisfaction, productivity, and engagement at work. This study aimed to explore the relationship between changes in these goal-setting aspects and employee morale.

Locke and Latham (2002) identified five key principles for effective work goals:

- **Clarity:** Goals must be specific and unambiguous to prevent misunderstandings; ensuring employees understand project objectives and deadlines.
- **Challenge:** Goals should be challenging enough to keep employees engaged and focused. Goals that are too easy or too difficult can be demotivating.
- **Commitment:** Employees must understand and support the goals from the start to enjoy the process and achieve the goals.
- **Feedback:** Regular feedback throughout the goal-achieving process is essential to keep tasks on track.
- **Task Complexity:** Goals should be broken down into smaller, manageable tasks, with reviews after each smaller goal is completed to keep employees informed of overall progress.

The theory suggests that measurable and challenging goals are valuable and more likely to be achieved when employees are committed and receive regular feedback. Managers should align task complexity with the position and the employee's capabilities to guide them toward success (Borgogni L. & Dello Russo S. 2012).

However, goal-setting theory has faced criticism. Critics argue that the benefits of goal setting have been overstated, and its potential harms, such as "tunnel vision," distorted risk preferences, incentives for unethical behavior, reduced learning, weakened group culture, and lower intrinsic morale, have been overlooked (Borgogni L. & Dello Russo S., 2012). Additionally, the theory does not address the conflicts between organizational and managerial goals or the impact of complex goals on performance and morale if employees lack the necessary skills. The researcher aimed to investigate these debates and explore the connection between workplace changes, particularly changes in work goals, and employee morale.

## 2.2. Job Characteristics Theory

Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory, developed in 1975, underscores the significance of the task itself in driving employee motivation. According to this theory, job satisfaction arises when the workplace cultivates inherently motivating characteristics. Skill diversity, task identity, autonomy, and feedback influence three psychological states, which, in turn, impact various outcomes such as job satisfaction, absenteeism, and workplace motivation (Hackman, 1975). These psychological states, namely meaningfulness of work, responsibility, and knowledge of outcomes, are deemed crucial for fostering high workplace motivation. Enhancing the finer aspects of core job functions is anticipated to lead to an improved workplace environment and heightened employee morale from an organizational perspective (Hackman, 1975).

Hackman (1975) identified three fundamental psychological states that underpin numerous positive personal and professional outcomes:

- **Skill Variety:** This pertains to the breadth of tasks and abilities required in a job. Roles demanding a diverse skill set tend to be more meaningful to employees compared to routine tasks.
- **Task Identity:** This refers to the extent to which a job requires completing a task with a clear outcome. When employees are accountable for the entire process, their work gains greater significance.
- **Task Importance:** This measures how a task impacts others' lives or the immediate environment. Employees find their work more meaningful when it positively affects people's well-being.

Additionally, autonomy and feedback play significant roles:

- **Autonomy:** Employees experience a sense of freedom and responsibility in organizing their work and making decisions. Autonomy fosters accountability and ownership, contributing to a sense of control over outcomes.
- **Feedback:** Clear and actionable information about job performance enables employees to understand their impact and make improvements, enhancing overall job satisfaction.

These factors collectively influence the experienced meaningfulness of work and responsibility for outcomes. The theory suggests that intrinsic job characteristics affect internal motivation, job satisfaction, absenteeism, turnover, and performance quality, thereby influencing employee morale. Understanding these intrinsic features can elucidate how changes in the workplace impact employee morale and the relationship between the two variables.

While Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model is supported by empirical evidence, it has been criticized for overlooking critical psychological states in some studies (Behnson, 2010). Nonetheless, its focus on the interplay between job characteristics and psychological states renders it relevant for contemporary research endeavors.

### **2.3. Empirical Review**

#### *2.3.1. Change in Work Goals and Employee Morale*

In 1968, Edward A. Locke introduced a goal-setting theory as an alternative approach to setting work goals. The theory posits that consciously setting goals is highly effective in enhancing productivity and motivation, especially in the workplace. According to Gary P. Latham (2002), the former President of the Canadian Psychological Association, this theory is based on the idea that our conscious goals significantly impact what we accomplish, as they serve as the focal point of our actions. Research indicates that deadlines also enhance the efficacy of work goals. A study by Locke and Latham (2002) supports the notion that the most effective performance often arises from goals that are specific and challenging, and that a focus on learning goals tends to yield better outcomes compared to performance-oriented goals. Goals exert a significant influence on employee behavior, morale, and performance within organizations and management practices.

Recent experimental research by Akinlabi, B. H. (2021) explored the relationship between goal setting and employee performance among registry workers in Nigerian universities. The findings underscored that work goals strongly shape human behaviors, leading to performance improvements and facilitating progress in predetermined directions within organizations. Moreover, the study revealed that goal setting can enhance performance at both individual and organizational levels. The literature review, data analysis, and study outcomes collectively suggest that involving university registry workers in the goal-setting process can enhance their motivation and performance. The study emphasized the importance of setting goals collaboratively, as mutually agreed-upon goals have a more positive impact on employee morale compared to goals imposed from the top down. Engaging workers in goal setting fosters a sense of ownership and commitment, thereby enhancing their performance.

Bruhn et al. (2017) propose that altering work goals can lead to several long-term effects. They suggest that when employees achieve their goals, it boosts their mood, serving as a powerful motivator. Conversely, setting unattainable goals may initially drive employees to strive for them, but ultimately leads to demotivation and resignation. This cycle can contribute to high staff turnover, as employees seek opportunities where they can progress and feel fulfilled. While Bruhn et al. (2017) discuss these effects within an organizational context; it remains unclear if similar outcomes would occur in different settings, such as private universities in Kenya. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the relationship between changing work goals and employee morale specifically in this context.

Borgogni and Dello Russo (2012) emphasize the significant impact of work goals and curiosity on job performance. Their study reveals that 71% of employees believe that easily achievable goals enhance performance more than challenging ones, with 53% prioritizing personal development over goal attainment. Additionally, 61% consider curiosity crucial for job improvement. However, there is a dearth of research on how changing work goals affect employee morale in private universities in Western Kenya, underscoring the need for this study to contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

### **2.4. Employee Morale**

Linz and Huddleston (2006) define employee morale as the reflection of emotions, contentment, and overall perspective toward a workplace. They suggest that high morale is associated with satisfaction and happiness, while low morale is linked to dissatisfaction and unhappiness. The concept encompasses four key elements: pride in work, attitude toward work, job satisfaction, and workplace relationships. In her research titled "Relationship of Employees Morale and Retention within Higher Learning Institutions in Kenya," Caren Ouma (2017) contends that the Kenyan university environment exhibits signs of subpar work performance, diminished service quality, and elevated turnover rates. She observes a surge in junior staff enrolling in part-time programs, possibly signaling intentions to depart from their current roles, as well as lecturers seeking additional teaching opportunities elsewhere. Moreover, she notes a lack of enthusiasm in job duties and inadequacies in customer, student, and public interactions. However, Caren's study fails to identify the underlying causes behind these instances of low employee morale within Kenyan universities.

Deidra and Gary (2004) conducted a study highlighting the pivotal role of organizations in shaping employee morale, emphasizing its impact on productivity and job satisfaction. They stressed the importance of cultivating a positive work environment to foster happiness and motivation among employees. The study underscored that contented employees exhibit high morale, job satisfaction, and resilience in managing workloads. Moreover, it pointed out that employees

with elevated morale tend to demonstrate creativity, initiative, and commitment towards organizational objectives. Deidra and Gary identified key factors such as inclusion, effective communication, trust, acknowledgment, and leading by example as critical drivers influencing employee morale and their ability to deliver quality work.

Another study by Bunnk and Hopsaken (1993) explored extrinsic factors influencing employee morale, elucidating various aspects of the work environment and managerial practices. The study outlined elements like a conducive work environment, supportive supervisors, manageable workloads, and positive interpersonal dynamics as contributors to high morale. Conversely, it highlighted factors such as inadequate staffing, verbal abuse, limited avenues for voicing opinions, and the threat of violence as detrimental to morale. The study further identified indicators of low morale including high turnover rates, increased absenteeism, labor disputes, missed deadlines, interpersonal conflicts, and customer dissatisfaction.

### 3. Research Methodology

The research utilized a correlational approach, chosen for its ability to thoroughly examine a contemporary issue within its specific context. Gathering accurate data was facilitated by tailored questions aimed at eliciting respondents' thoughts and feelings on pertinent study topics (Orwaru, 2014). Conducted in the Western Kenya region comprising 14 counties—Kakamega, Kericho, Kisumu, Kisii, Migori, Nyamira, Nandi, Siaya, Trans Nzoia, Vihiga, Bomet, Bungoma, Busia, and Homa Bay—the study targeted employees of four private universities. The total target population was 1440 employees across the selected universities: University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (Nandi County), Kenya Highlands University (Kericho County), Great Lakes University of Kisumu (Kisumu County), and Uzima University (Kisumu County). This included 140 department heads, 230 supervisors, and 1070 operational staff, encompassing both teaching and non-teaching personnel. The demographic diversity of the target population encompassed variations in gender, age, ethnicity, work experience, and educational backgrounds.

To ensure representative sampling across diverse employee categories, a stratified sampling method was employed. This approach aimed to maintain proportional representation of each stratum within the total sample, aligning with their respective proportions in the overall target population. By employing stratified sampling, the researcher sought to minimize potential biases in sample selection from the population at hand (Kothari, 2009). The researcher followed Yamane's formula (cited in Njagi & Muna, 2021) to determine the sample size, as follows:

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

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size and e is the margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{1440}{1 + 1440(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 313$$

Therefore, a sample of 313 was selected from a population of 1440 employees

This research employed a Likert scale questionnaire as its primary data collection tool, aligning with the study's objectives. The decision to use a self-administered questionnaire stemmed from the respondents' familiarity with the subject matter, as noted by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). These questionnaires were distributed across various departments to gather insights on the correlation between workplace transfers and employee morale within private universities in Western Kenya. Prior to distribution, respondents were afforded sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. To ensure validity, experts in human resource management and higher education assessed the questionnaire's tools. Utilizing the split-half method, researchers computed a reliability coefficient of 0.78, indicating a reliable measure for data collection. Data analysis utilized the regression model adapted from the works of Fairchild and Mackinon (2008).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where; Y = Employee morale in private universities

$\beta_0$  = The constant or coefficient of intercept.

$X_1$  = Change in work goals.

$\varepsilon$  = Error term

$\beta_1$  =Corresponding coefficients for the respective independent variables.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Prior to conducting any analysis, the demographic attributes of the respondents were examined. These encompassed factors such as gender, educational attainment, and professional background. The results are depicted in the following table. 1

**Table 1** Demographic Characteristics

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	128	42.8
Male	171	57.2
Total	299	100.0
Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	34	11.4
Degrees	62	20.7
PHDs	124	41.5
Masters	79	26.4
Total	299	100.0
Occupation	Frequency	Percent
HODs	30	10
Supervisors	48	16.1
Operational Workers	221	73.9
Total	299	100.0
Work experience in years	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	71	23.7
6-10 years	51	17.1
11-15 years	123	41.1
over 15 years	54	18.1
Total	299	100.0

The results indicate that most of the participants were male, comprising 171 individuals (57.2%), with females making up the minority at 128 individuals (42.8%). Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of respondents, accounting for 124 individuals (41.5%), held PHDs, followed by 79 individuals (26.4%) with Masters Degrees, 62 individuals (20.7%) with bachelor's degrees, and finally, 34 individuals (11.4%) with diplomas. Additionally, the majority of respondents, totaling 221 individuals (73.1%), were operational workers, while 48 individuals (16.1%) held supervisory roles, and 30 individuals (10%) were Heads of Departments (HODs).

These findings offer an accurate portrayal of university staff, predominantly consisting of PHD holders. The demographic characteristics are pivotal to the study as they depict the profile of the participants, indicating a presence of individuals with advanced degrees like PHDs, suggesting a deeper understanding of university dynamics among respondents. Moreover, the experience reflected in the demographics suggests that respondents are well-versed in university affairs, thereby enhancing the reliability of the information provided.

**4.2. Findings on the relationship between Change in work goals and employee morale**

The study aimed to explore how shifts in work objectives impact employee morale. Initially, respondents rated changes in work goals by indicating their level of agreement with four statements on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 4 represented "strongly agree." The results are detailed in the Table below:

**Table 2** Relationship between Change in work Goals and employee morale

Statement	1	2	3	4	M	SD
Do you agree or disagree that work goals which are not easily measurable lead to low employee morale in private universities in western Kenya?	18(6)	52(17.4)	142(47.5)	87(29.1)	3.0	0.84
Do you agree or disagree that new work goals which are unattainable reduce employee morale in private universities in western Kenya?	11(3.7)	39(13)	190(63.5)	59(19.7)	3.0	0.69

Overall mean 2.9.47; Source, (Field Survey, 2022); Key-1= strongly disagree (SD), 2= disagree (D), 3= agree (A) and 4= strongly agree (SA), M-Mean, STD-Standard deviation 8(2.7) 32(10.7)178(59.5)81(27.1)3.1.69 34(11.4)44(14.7)173(57.9)48(16.1)2.8.8

The research findings revealed that in private universities in western Kenya Region, work goals lacking easy measurability were associated with decreased employee morale, according to a majority of respondents (142 out of 300, accounting for 47.5%). Similarly, a significant number of respondents (190 out of 300, 63.5%) highlighted that unattainable work goals also contributed to reduced morale among employees. Furthermore, the data showed that vague work goals negatively impacted employee morale, with 178 respondents (59.5%) expressing this sentiment. These trends were supported by high mean values (M=3.0 to 3.1) and moderate to low standard deviations (SD=.69 to .84), indicating a level of agreement among respondents.

Additionally, the research indicated that unfeasible work goals were linked to diminished morale, with an overall high mean (M=2.90) and a small standard deviation. This suggests a consensus among respondents regarding the negative impact of unrealizable work goals on morale. Regarding hypothesis testing on the relationship between changes in work goals and employee morale, the study employed simple linear regression and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analyses. These analyses, along with the descriptive results provided in Table below, are discussed in detail

**Table 3** Relationship between Change in Work Goals and Employee Morale

**Model Summary**

Model R R Adjusted Std. Error Change Statistics

	Square R Square of the Estimate	R Square F	df1 Change	Change	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.678a .460 .458 .37275	.460	253.0421		297	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), change in work goals Coefficients a

Model Unstandardized Coefficients Standardized change in work goals

t	Sig. Coefficient B	Std. Error	Beta constant
3.660	0.056		64.796 0.000
-.302	.019	-.678	-15.907 .000

a. Dependent Variable: employee morale; Source, (Field Survey, 2022)



The results indicate that alterations in work objectives detrimentally influence employee morale ( $\beta = -.678, p < .05$ ). This suggests that changes in work goals occur in a manner that disheartens employees, resulting in a decrease in morale. Specifically, each negative adjustment in work goals corresponds to a decrease in employee morale. Moreover, the analysis reveals that variations in work goals explain 45.8% of the variability in employee morale, which is statistically significant,  $R^2 = .460, F(1, 297) = 253.0421, p < .05$ . This indicates a substantial decrease in employee morale due to changes in work goals.

Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept an alternative hypothesis positing that alterations in work goals have a notable impact on employee morale. These findings are consistent with prior research, such as Bruhn et al. (2017), who observed that changes in work goals over time contribute to a decline in employee mood. Similarly, Borgogni and Dello Russo (2012) demonstrated that work goals significantly influence job performance. Thus, having appropriate work goals is crucial for both performance and employee morale. In this study, the absence of suitable work goals results in adverse effects on employee morale.

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## 5. Discussion

The findings suggest that in private universities in western Kenya, unclear and unattainable work goals lead to decreased employee morale, according to a majority of respondents. Additionally, vague and unrealistic new work objectives were reported to have a negative impact on morale. Overall, it was agreed that imposing unachievable work targets contributes to low morale among employees.

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## 6. Conclusion

In summary, the study aimed to explore how changes in work goals affect employee morale in private universities. While such changes are crucial for organizational and individual growth, they don't automatically ensure high morale. In fact, they can undermine morale and subsequently, organizational performance, particularly in private universities. Thus, it can be concluded that there's a significant correlation between employee morale and changes in work goals.

### *Recommendations*

Based on these findings, it's recommended to implement positive changes in work goals that foster employee motivation and morale. This may involve introducing flexible work arrangements to enhance morale among employees.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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