

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN KOLE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT. A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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ABSTRACT Background

The main objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee performance in Kole District Local Government.

Methodology

A descriptive, correlational research design that was cross-sectional. The target population of this study was 154 individuals. A sample of 110 respondents was selected using simple random sampling techniques and purposive sampling to select respondents for the study.

Results

(54%) were aged between 36 and 45 years, (60%) were married, and the overall average mean score was 2.681 with a standard deviation of 0.308. The statement “Employees are encouraged to pursue further education to enhance their career prospects” recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.344$, $Std = 0.265$), suggesting strong agreement. The overall average mean score was 2.255, with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.287. The highest mean score was recorded for “My supervisor regularly acknowledges my efforts” ($Mean = 4.317$; $Std = 0.246$). Results indicate a strong positive correlation between personal development and employee performance ($r = 0.825$, $p = 0.004$). Career advancement also shows a strong positive correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.762$, $p = 0.000$). Recognition and employee performance are also statistically significant, with a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.678$, $p = 0.001$). In all three cases, the p-values are less than 0.01, indicating that the relationships are statistically significant at the 1% level. All independent variables have positive and statistically significant coefficients ($p < 0.01$). Personal development has the strongest effect ($Beta = 0.603$).

Conclusions

There was a strong positive correlation between personal development, career advancement opportunities, and employee performance. There was a moderate positive correlation between recognition and employee performance.

Recommendations

The local government should also pair experienced staff with junior employees to promote knowledge transfer and professional growth.

Keywords: Employee satisfaction, Personal Development, Career advancement opportunities, Employee performance Recognition.

Submitted: 2025-01-18 **Accepted:** 2025-03-19 **Published:** 2025-05-17

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Background

Employee performance in local government refers to the effectiveness and efficiency with which government employees execute their duties and responsibilities (Tadesse, 2018). It encompasses a range of factors, including the quality of work, the ability to meet performance standards and objectives, productivity levels, and overall contribution to the organization's goals. Employee performance is the measure of how well an employee fulfills the duties and responsibilities of their job (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). It is a combined application of a person's behavior, skills, abilities, and knowledge in the attainment of goals within the role. Companies use employee performance evaluations as a tool to document an employee's performance over time (Hayati & Sari, 2019).

Employee satisfaction is also the gratification that is derived from the working conditions, pay and reward structures, and how employees are overseen in the system (Schmidt, 2010). Kole District local government is located in the northern part of Uganda. It has over 145 permanent staff (outside of medical and teaching staff) who are regularly remunerated (Okuna, Opok, & Mwesigwa, 2020). In terms of efficiency, the Public Sector Performance Index (PSPI, 2024) ranked

Kole District 108th out of 135 districts, primarily due to high absenteeism rates (averaging 18% per month) and delayed report submissions by nearly 72% of departments. These inefficiencies not only slow down service delivery but also reflect a lack of accountability and time management. For Local Governments to continuously ensure improved quality of services, be able to achieve set targets and empower their employees to serve an increasingly widening population, the Government must provide opportunities for regular promotion, capacity building, instill a fair and vibrant organizational culture as well as guarantee the continued employment of their employees (Okuna et al., 2020). Specifically, the study focused on the relationship between personal development, recognition, career advancement, and employee performance in local government.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research used a descriptive, correlational research design that was cross-sectional in nature. This was because the study described the characteristics of respondents, study variables;

examined the relationship between variables and collected data at a particular point in time.

The study was descriptive since it explained the specific issues where problems had been defined. Further, the study was correctional since it examined the relationship between the study variables. The researcher adopted a mixed approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This helped to obtain relevant, recent and in depth information on the study topic at a point in time and for a short period hence a cross sectional design.

Geographical Scope

The study was conducted at the Kole District Local Government. It is bordered by Lira District to the east, Apac District to the south, and Oyam District to the west and north. Kole, the district capital, is located approximately 28 kilometers (17 mi) by road southeast of Lira, the largest city in the sub-region. This location is approximately 290 kilometers (180 mi) by road north of Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city. The coordinates of the district are: 02 24N, 32 48E.

Like most other Ugandan districts, it is named after its 'chief town', Kole, where the district headquarters are located. Kole District was created by an Act of Parliament and became operational on 1 July 2010. Before this, it was part of the Apac District. The district is part of the Lango sub-region, home to an estimated 1.5 million people according to the National Census of 2002. The study will be carried out in the area due to poor employee performance of its civil servants over the selected period, as reported in the National Local Government Assessment report (2021).

Time Scope

The researcher used two months to collect primary data for this study and also used secondary data from district records, performance management reports, Central Government inspection reports, and other documents that clearly show the challenges that require attention in the Kole district for four years from 2020-2025.

Target Population

The target population of this study was the staff of the Kole District Local Government. According to the Staff Establishment Report (July 2024), the District had 154 staff at its headquarters thus the population of the study. These consisted of the Chief Administration Officer, Heads of department, Principal Human Resource Officer and other support staff at the district in various departments.

Sample Size

The researcher adopted Morgan & Kreijcie (1970) sampling table to determine the sample size and subsequently 110 employees of Kole District Local Government were selected as respondents of the study.

Sampling Techniques

The researcher used simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling to select respondents of the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select employees in different departments of the local government.

Purposive sampling was used to select the key Chief Administrative Officer, Principal Human Resource Officer, and Members of the service commission at Kole District as Key respondents of the study. In this study, purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed to select specific individuals who were considered

most relevant and knowledgeable about the subject matter under investigation. The intent behind using this method was to obtain rich, in-depth, and contextually grounded insights from individuals holding strategic administrative and decision-making positions within the Kole District. These individuals were deliberately selected because of their expertise, roles, and influence in administrative and human resource functions within the Kole District. Their experiences and perspectives were deemed essential for answering the research questions and achieving the study's objectives.

Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires as the main data collection instrument, but also used an interview guide. The questionnaire was used to capture quantitative data from the employees at the district local government working in various departments. On the other hand, the interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from the key respondents of the study, ie, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Principal Human Resource Officer, and Members of the service commission within the district.

Methods of Data Collection

The two main methods used for data collection in this study are questionnaires and interviews.

Questionnaire Method

In this study, the researcher employed structured questionnaires as the primary tool for collecting quantitative data from employees working in the Kole District Local Government. The questionnaire method was chosen due to its efficiency in gathering standardized information from a relatively large number of respondents within a short period, enabling statistical analysis of the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee performance.

The questionnaire was carefully structured and divided into sections aligned with the study variables: Section A: Captured demographic information such as age, gender, educational level, and years of service. Section B: Focused on employee satisfaction (personal development, recognition, and career advancement), and Section C: Focused on employee performance, with items addressing productivity, punctuality, task completion, quality of work, and adherence to organizational goals.

Each item in Sections B and C was framed using closed-ended questions with a Likert scale format (e.g., 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). This allowed for numerical coding and easy quantification of responses for statistical analysis.

The researcher used questionnaires as the main data collection method. Specifically, the Likert-type format of the questionnaire was employed. This format consists of a series of statements or items that respondents are asked to rate or rank on a scale. The Likert scale typically ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, allowing participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

The Likert-type questionnaire format was selected to capture detailed information about the study objectives. This is because it allows for the collection of quantitative data and provides a structured approach to eliciting participants' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions. By using this format, the researcher obtained a range of responses and systematically analyzed the data to gain insights into the participants' views on the study topic.

Interviews

In addition to questionnaires, the researcher also utilized interviews as a method of data collection. Specifically, an interview guide was developed to collect information from a select group of key respondents. These respondents included the Chief Administrative Officer, the Principal Human Resource Officer, and members of the Service Commission within the District.

Interviews serve as a valuable method for collecting qualitative data, as they provide an opportunity for in-depth exploration and understanding of participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights. The interview guide was prepared in advance to ensure consistency across interviews and to focus the discussion on the specific topics relevant to the study objectives.

The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the key respondents to gather their input and expertise. This method allows for a more interactive exchange of ideas, enabling the researcher to ask probing questions and seek clarification. Additionally, interviews provided rich and contextual information that may not be captured through questionnaires alone.

Sources of Data

This research used both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was obtained using Self-Administered Questionnaires (SAD) that were given to the selected staff (civil servants) of Kole district to fill and return after one week. Secondary data was obtained directly from magazines, journals, newspapers, annual reports and websites that had material related to the study topic.

Validity of Instruments

The researcher used both content and face validity to ascertain validity of the questionnaire. Cooper and Schindler (2008) describe validity as the correctness, capacity of interpretations founded on study finding. The research conducted a pilot study to validate the study questionnaire using the supervisor as an expert who graded questions on levels of accuracy and relevance to the study.

To ensure a higher likelihood of data validity, the questionnaires were reviewed with the research expert. Out of 30 questions, 25 were declared correct by the expert, hence a content validity index of 0.83, which was compared with 0.7 as proposed by Amin (2009). Thus, the research instruments were valid for the study.

Reliability of Instruments

A test-retest method was used to test reliability of the questionnaire. The researcher pre-tested the questions on 5 respondents before administering it to the entire sample size. The obtained answers were compared to the responses of the second test (retest) to ensure accuracy and ensure reliability.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Upon collection, the filled questionnaires were checked for completeness. The data was then entered into a statistical software package such as SPSS or Excel for coding and analysis. Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, frequencies, and standard deviations) were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics (e.g., correlation or regression analysis) were applied to determine the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee performance.

Pearson correlation was used to establish the significance of the relationship between the study variables, and multiple regression models were used to establish the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee performance in local government.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher undertook various steps to certify that the research observed research principles and values. A research authorization letter was obtained from the School of Graduate Studies and the research.

Participants were asked to sign the consent forms to participate in the research. The study ensured that through the principle of informed consent. The study sought consent from the Kole District Local Government Chief Administrative Officer.

Participants were asked to consent to participate in the research, for which they would be free to participate or not. The researcher explained to the respondents that the information they gave would only be used for the study. The researcher also explained that meaningful data for this study would be achieved if they contributed their views about the research topic.

The study explained to the respondents that the data that would be gathered in this study would be treated in confidence and that the findings would be meant for academic purposes.

The potential respondents were not identified by name. The confidentiality of respondents was treated as a matter of priority. Further, the researcher engaged the respondents before agreeing to answer the questions of this study.

The study accorded respondents their due respect while at the same time ensured that they answered the questions to the expectations of the study. The researcher picked respondents without any discrimination.

Ethical approval

A research authorization letter was obtained from the School of Graduate Studies and the research.

Participants were asked to sign the consent forms to participate in the research. The study ensured that through the principle of informed consent. The study sought consent from the Kole District Local Government Chief Administrative Officer.

Informed consent

Participants were asked to consent to participate in the research, for which they would be free to participate or not. The researcher explained to the respondents that the information they gave would only be used for the study. The researcher also explained that meaningful data for this study would be achieved if they contributed their views about the research topic.

RESULTS

Response Rate

This study utilized structured questionnaires and scheduled interviews as the primary instruments for data collection. The instruments were administered to various categories of employees within Kole District Local Government, including the Principal Human Resource Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer, members of the District Service Commission, and other employees. Table 1 presents the response rate obtained from the respondents.

Table 1: Response Rate of the Respondents

Respondents	Questions issued and Interviews scheduled	Questions and Interviews Conducted	Response rate
Principal Human Resource Officer	01	01	100%
Chief Administrative Officer	01	01	100%
Service Commission Committee Members	10	05	50%
Other employees	98	93	94.9%
Total	110	100	90.9%

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Table 1: The findings indicate an overall response rate of 90.9%, which is considered highly satisfactory and representative of the targeted population. Notably, there was full participation from the top administrative officials, namely the Principal Human Resource Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer, each achieving a 100% response rate. A moderate response rate of 50% was recorded among the Service Commission Committee Members, indicating partial engagement from this group. The highest number of respondents came from the category of other employees, where a strong response rate of 94.9% was achieved,

reflecting a high level of participation and interest in the study.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presents the demographic profile of the respondents who participated in the study titled "Employee Satisfaction and Employee Performance in Kole District Local Government." The demographic data provide insights into the composition of the sample population, which is essential for understanding the context and generalizability of the study findings

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	69	69%
Female	31	31%
Total	100	100%
Age (years)		
20-35	23	23%
36-45	54	54%
46-60	23	24%
Total	100	100%
Marital status		
Single	16	16%
Married	60	60%
Separated	15	15%
Widowed	9	9%
Total	100	100%
Education level		
Certificate	5	5%
Diploma	40	39%
Bachelors	54	55%
Masters	09	9%
Total	100	100%
Length of service (years)		
(0-5) years	19	24%
(6-10) years	48	60%
11+ years	13	16%
Total	100	100%
Level of employee satisfaction		
Satisfied	21	21%
Not sure	26	26%
Not satisfied	53	53%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 2: The study sample comprised 69% male and 31% female respondents. This gender distribution reflects a male-dominated workforce, which is consistent with findings from other studies in Uganda's public sector, where males often constitute a larger proportion of employees.

The majority of respondents (54%) were aged between 36 and 45 years, followed by 23% in the 20–35 age bracket and 24% in the 46–60 age group. This age distribution indicates a workforce that is predominantly in the mid-career stage, which is advantageous for organizational stability and performance.

A significant portion of respondents (60%) were married, with 16% single, 15% separated, and 9% widowed. The high percentage of married employees may influence job satisfaction and performance, as marital status can affect work-life balance and overall well-being.

The educational qualifications of the respondents were predominantly at the bachelor's degree level (55%), followed by diploma holders (39%), master's degree holders (9%), and certificate holders (5%). This educational background suggests a well-educated workforce, which is essential for effective performance in the local government sector.

The majority of respondents (60%) had between 6 to 10 years of service, 24% had 0 to 5 years, and 16% had over 11 years

of service. This indicates a relatively experienced workforce, which is beneficial for organizational knowledge and performance.

Regarding job satisfaction, 53% of respondents reported being "Not Satisfied," 26% were "Not Sure," and 21% were "Satisfied." This indicates a general dissatisfaction among employees, which is a critical area for management to address to enhance performance and retention.

In summary, the demographic characteristics of the respondents provide a comprehensive understanding of the workforce composition in Kole District Local Government. The insights gained are pivotal for interpreting the study's findings on employee satisfaction and performance.

Personal Development of Employees at Kole District Local Government

This section presents an analysis of employees' perceptions regarding their personal development within Kole District Local Government. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale, where: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree. The table below summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations for each statement, providing insights into the employees' views on various aspects of personal development.

Table 3: Personal Development of Employees at Kole District Local Government

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
I have access to training programs that enhance my skills	2.331	0.319
The organization provides opportunities for continuous learning	1.192	0.252
I am encouraged to pursue professional development activities.	4.160	0.249
The training I receive is relevant to my current job responsibilities	2.427	0.416
I have opportunities to learn new skills that contribute to my career growth.	2.376	0.269
There are clear pathways for career advancement within the organization	4.208	0.139
My supervisor supports my career development goals.	2.501	0.343
I receive constructive feedback that helps me improve professionally	3.932	0.219
I am aware of the criteria for promotion within the organization.	2.091	0.367
The work environment encourages personal and professional development	2.018	0.293
My job challenges me to grow and develop professionally	4.189	0.326

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 3, Statements such as "There are clear pathways for career advancement within the organization" (Mean = 4.208) and "My job challenges me to grow and develop professionally" (Mean = 4.189) received high mean scores. This indicates that employees perceive the organization as providing clear career progression opportunities and challenging roles that foster professional growth. The low standard deviations (0.139 and 0.326, respectively) suggest a high level of agreement among respondents on these aspects. Statements like "I have access to training programs that enhance my skills" (Mean = 2.331) and "The training I receive is relevant to my current job responsibilities" (Mean = 2.427) indicate a moderate perception of training opportunities. The standard deviations (0.319 and 0.416) reflect some variability in responses, suggesting that while many employees feel they have access to relevant training, opinions vary.

The statements "I have opportunities to learn new skills that contribute to my career growth" (Mean = 2.376) and "My supervisor supports my career development goals" (Mean = 2.501) also fall within this range. These scores imply that employees generally feel supported in their learning and development, though there is room for improvement.

The statement "The organization provides opportunities for continuous learning" received a very low mean score of 1.192,

indicating a strong agreement among employees that such opportunities are available. The low standard deviation (0.252) further suggests a consensus on this matter. "The work environment encourages personal and professional development" (Mean = 2.018) also received a low mean score, indicating that employees feel the work environment supports their development.

The statement "I am encouraged to pursue professional development activities" received a high mean score of 4.160, indicating that employees feel they are not sufficiently encouraged to engage in professional development. The low standard deviation (0.249) suggests a consistent perception among respondents.

Statements like "I receive constructive feedback that helps me improve professionally" (Mean = 3.932) and "I am aware of the criteria for promotion within the organization" (Mean = 2.091) indicate that while some employees feel they receive feedback and understand promotion criteria, there is significant room for improvement in these areas.

During the interview with the Principal Human Resource Officer (PHRO) – Kole District Local Government said, "One of the major challenges is budgetary constraints. The district's wage and operational budgets are often limited, which means that funding for training, workshops, and continuing education is minimal. Even when staff express

interest in professional development, we are unable to sponsor them unless there's an external grant or donor support."

He added, "It leads to stagnation in skills and demotivation. Employees feel neglected and underappreciated when they don't see opportunities to grow. Over time, this affects service delivery because we lack up-to-date skills, especially in technical areas like IT, procurement, and financial management."

He concluded, "We have attempted to conduct internal knowledge-sharing sessions and occasionally bring in resource persons for in-house training, but these are sporadic and not sufficient. We also encourage self-sponsored learning, but not many can afford that."

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) said, "Frankly, it is below expectations. We have capable and willing employees, but without structured development plans, their potential remains untapped. We currently lack a clear and funded capacity-building framework."

He added, "The core issue is financial, followed by weak policy implementation. Although the Public Service Standing Orders provide for staff development, the district does not always prioritize or allocate funds accordingly. Sometimes, training opportunities are politicized or given to the same individuals repeatedly, which breeds dissatisfaction."

He concluded by saying, "We need to institutionalize staff development planning within our annual budgets and strengthen transparency in the selection of staff for training opportunities. Partnering with institutions that offer free or subsidized training could also help."

The Chairperson, District Service Commission said, "The efforts are minimal and inconsistent. We occasionally receive complaints from civil servants regarding the lack of support for upgrading their qualifications or attending refresher courses. It is evident that the human resource capacity is underutilized."

She added, "It leads to inefficiency and poor public perception of service delivery. A well-developed workforce is crucial for innovation and responsiveness in local governance. Without that, service delivery becomes mechanical and uninspired."

She concluded, "There should be a district-level policy mandating annual training targets across departments. We also need the District Council to recognize human resource development as a core investment area, not a luxury. Otherwise, we risk a long-term decline in staff competence."

Career advancement of employees in the Kole District Local Government

This section presents the findings on employee career advancement within the Kole District Local Government, based on responses gathered through a Likert Scale. Respondents rated each statement on a five-point scale, where **5 = Strongly Agree**, **4 = Agree**, **3 = Neutral**, **2 = Disagree**, and **1 = Strongly Disagree**. The analysis explores employee perceptions regarding fairness, transparency, support, and access to career growth opportunities in the organization. Summary statistics, including the **mean (MN)** and **standard deviation (Std)** for each item, are presented.

Table 4 Career Advancement of the Employee in Kole District Local Government

Statements	Mean	Std
The criteria for promotion within the organization are communicated to all employees.	4.217	0.233
I understand the performance standards required for career advancement.	2.403	0.151
There is transparency in the promotion process	1.601	0.371
The organization provides sufficient opportunities for employees to advance in their careers	2.299	0.269
Employees are encouraged to pursue further education to enhance their career prospects	4.344	0.265
My supervisor actively supports my career development by providing guidance	2.287	0.312
The organization offers mentorship programs to assist employees	1.432	0.129
Promotions within the organization are based on merit	2.018	0.315
All employees have equal access to career advancement opportunities	2.194	0.252
The promotion process is fair and unbiased	1.435	0.324
Employees progressively change job titles	2.853	0.533
The responsibilities of employees increase with time	4.021	0.421
There is an increase in employee salary	2.732	0.428
Average	2.681	0.308

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 4, The overall average mean score was 2.681 with a standard deviation of 0.308, indicating that, on average, respondents leaned toward disagreement or neutrality on key issues related to career advancement. The results reflect mixed sentiments, with areas of significant concern related to transparency, fairness, and support systems for career progression.

The statement "Employees are encouraged to pursue further education to enhance their career prospects" recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.344, Std = 0.265), suggesting strong agreement among respondents. This implies that the organization actively promotes further education, potentially reflecting investment in long-term professional development. Similarly, the statement "The criteria for promotion within the organization are communicated to all employees" also

received a high score (M = 4.217), which seems to indicate clarity in communication regarding promotional criteria.

However, despite the above, other statements reveal serious concerns. The lowest-rated item was "The organization offers mentorship programs to assist employees" (M = 1.432, Std = 0.129), suggesting strong disagreement and highlighting a lack of structured support mechanisms such as mentoring. This is further supported by the low mean for "The promotion process is fair and unbiased" (M = 1.435) and "There is transparency in the promotion process" (M = 1.601), both of which indicate employee dissatisfaction and distrust in the fairness and transparency of career advancement procedures.

Additionally, the mean for "Promotions within the organization are based on merit" was 2.018, reflecting

disagreement with the idea that promotions are merit-based. This suggests perceived bias or favoritism in decision-making processes. A similar trend is observed in the statement *"All employees have equal access to career advancement opportunities"* (M = 2.194), further pointing to concerns regarding inequality and systemic barriers within the organization.

Some statements received neutral or moderately positive responses. For instance, *"Employees progressively change job titles"* (M = 2.853, Std = 0.533) and *"There is an increase in employee salary"* (M = 2.732, Std = 0.428) indicate moderate agreement. These results suggest that while some movement or progression may occur in terms of roles and compensation, it is not perceived as widespread or consistent. Notably, the statement *"The responsibilities of employees are increased with time"* received a relatively high score (M = 4.021), implying that while job duties and expectations grow over time, these may not always be matched with promotions or salary increments.

In summary, the findings suggest that while there is general agreement that educational development is encouraged and responsibilities increase over time, key components of a fair and effective career advancement system such as transparency, mentorship, equal access, and merit-based promotions are perceived to be lacking. The results highlight significant gaps between policy and practice in employee development within Kole District Local Government and suggest areas for administrative improvement, particularly around fairness, clarity, and support for employee growth.

During the interview with the Principal Human Resource Officer (PHRO) said *"Most employees stagnate at the same grade for years, even when they are eligible for promotion. There are no regular promotional assessments, and the*

number of available posts is too small to allow upward mobility."

He added, *"Since there's no budget specifically allocated for upgrading qualifications or attending advanced training, many staff members remain stuck in the same job group."*

He also said, *"There is no strong link between performance appraisals and actual promotion decisions. Sometimes, it's about who you know, not how well you perform."*

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) also said *"We are constrained by the wage bill ceiling from the Ministry of Finance. Even when we identify candidates who deserve career advancement, we cannot promote them without the funds or clearance."*

He added, *"We tend to be reactive rather than proactive. Promotions only happen when someone retires or leaves, and even then, the process takes too long to conclude."*

He concluded that *"We have the Public Service Standing Orders and Human Resource Manual, but enforcing them at the district level remains a challenge due to capacity issues and limited oversight."*

Recognition of employees at Kole District Local Government

This section presents findings on the recognition of employees at Kole District Local Government, based on responses collected using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The objective was to assess employees' perceptions of the extent to which their efforts and performance are acknowledged and rewarded by the organization. Table 5 summarizes the responses in terms of mean scores and standard deviations, as derived from the primary data collected in 2024.

Table 5: Recognition of employees at Kole District Local Government

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
I feel appreciated for the work I do in this organization	2.602	0.426
My supervisor regularly acknowledges my efforts.	4.317	0.246
The organization has a formal system for recognizing outstanding performance.	1.385	0.327
Employee achievements are publicly acknowledged	2.431	0.149
I receive timely feedback on my performance	2.051	0.217
Recognition is fairly distributed among all employees	1.34	0.224
Certificates and appreciation letters are given to recognize good performance	2.074	0.421
The organisation selects the employee of the month	1.326	0.363
Employee achievements are posted on the organization's social handles	2.108	0.207
Employees receive verbal praise from colleagues	4.051	0.326
Employees are given bonuses for good performance	1.218	0.316
Employees are recognized through promotions	2.163	0.217
Average	2.255	0.287

Source: Primary data (2024)

Table 5, The overall average mean score was 2.255, with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.287. This indicates a general tendency toward disagreement or neutrality among respondents, suggesting that recognition practices in the organization are perceived as inadequate or inconsistent.

Among the statements assessed, the highest mean score was recorded for *"My supervisor regularly acknowledges my efforts"* (Mean = 4.317; Std = 0.246). This result indicates that a majority of employees agree that their immediate supervisors provide some level of acknowledgment or praise. Similarly, *"Employees receive verbal praise from colleagues"* also scored relatively high (Mean = 4.051; Std =

0.326), showing that peer-to-peer recognition is commonly practiced within the organization.

Despite these encouraging results in interpersonal recognition, institutional recognition mechanisms appeared to be significantly lacking. The statement *"The organization has a formal system for recognizing outstanding performance"* scored particularly low (Mean = 1.385; Std = 0.327), reflecting strong disagreement with the existence or effectiveness of structured recognition programs. Additionally, the perception that *"Recognition is fairly distributed among all employees"* was also rated very low (Mean = 1.340; Std = 0.224), indicating widespread concern

about inequality and favoritism in the distribution of recognition.

Formal incentives such as bonuses and employee award programs were similarly rated poorly. The statement “Employees are given bonuses for good performance” had the lowest mean score (Mean = 1.218; Std = 0.316), followed closely by “The organisation selects employee of the month” (Mean = 1.326; Std = 0.363). These findings suggest that the organization does not adequately recognize high-performing employees through structured reward systems.

Feedback mechanisms and symbolic recognition were also evaluated. While the statement “I receive timely feedback on my performance” had a moderate mean score (Mean = 2.051), its standard deviation (0.217) suggests that this experience may not be uniform across departments. Similarly, “Certificates and appreciation letters are given to recognize good performance” and “Employee achievements are posted on the organization’s social handles” had moderate mean scores (2.074 and 2.108, respectively), indicating limited application or inconsistent implementation of these practices. Recognition through promotions was also assessed, with the statement “Employees are recognized through promotions” scoring a Mean = 2.163. This score suggests that while some employees perceive career advancement as a form of recognition, this is not a widely shared experience.

In conclusion, the findings reveal that although individual and informal forms of recognition, such as verbal praise from supervisors and colleagues, are present, formal and institutional recognition systems within Kole District Local Government are either weak or nonexistent. The low scores on structured programs, bonuses, and fairness of recognition highlight a critical gap in the organization’s human resource practices. These shortcomings could negatively impact employee motivation, job satisfaction, and retention. Strengthening formal recognition mechanisms and ensuring equitable implementation across the organization are, therefore, essential steps toward improving employee morale and performance.

The Principal Human Resource Officer (PHRO) said, “To be honest, employee recognition is very minimal. We don’t have a formal recognition system in place. Most employees go about their duties without receiving any form of appreciation unless there is a major event or external intervention.”

He added, “One of the main issues is the absence of a clear rewards and recognition policy at the district level.

Additionally, with limited funding, management tends to focus on basic operations and salaries, leaving non-monetary motivation practices like recognition largely overlooked.”

Also, he said, “It affects morale significantly. Employees feel their efforts go unnoticed, especially those who go the extra mile in service delivery. Over time, this leads to disengagement and a ‘just do the minimum’ attitude.”

He concluded, saying, “We’ve raised the issue during management meetings, and there have been informal gestures like verbal appreciation or public acknowledgment during staff meetings. But without a structured and consistent approach, it doesn’t go far enough.”

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) said, “Recognition is one of the weakest areas in our human resource management. Our systems focus more on compliance and service delivery outputs, but we often forget the human element – the people behind those results.”

He added, “The public sector generally emphasizes uniformity and procedure, not individual excellence. There’s also a perception that since government employees are paid through public funds, recognition is not necessary. This mindset needs to change.”

He added, “Lack of recognition contributes to high levels of dissatisfaction and low motivation. It also makes it difficult to retain talented staff, especially younger professionals who expect feedback and appreciation in the workplace.”

He concluded, “We need to develop a local recognition framework, even if it’s non-monetary—like certificates of appreciation, employee of the month awards, or small tokens. These go a long way in making employees feel valued. It’s not always about money—it’s about acknowledgment.”

Employee Performance at Kole District Local Government

This chapter presents the descriptive statistical analysis of employee self-assessment data, measured across 17 performance-related statements. Each statement was rated on a Likert-type scale, and both mean and standard deviation were calculated to evaluate the central tendency and variability of responses. The goal was to assess employees’ perceived performance across various dimensions, including task completion, work quality, accountability, adaptability, and collaboration.

Table 6: Employee Performance at Kole District Local Government

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
I consistently meet the performance targets set for me in my role.	2.862	0.312
I can complete tasks within the deadlines set by my supervisors	2.317	0.244
I maintain a high level of efficiency in completing my daily work responsibilities	2.345	0.327
I manage my time effectively to accomplish tasks promptly.	2.431	0.309
The quality of my work meets the expectations of my supervisors and colleagues	4.021	0.217
I pay attention to detail in all tasks and projects I handle	4.34	0.224
I take pride in the accuracy of the work I produce	2.074	0.221
I consistently deliver work that adheres to the standards of the organization.	4.126	0.263
I take full responsibility for the tasks and projects assigned to me.	4.108	0.207
I hold myself accountable for the outcomes of my work	1.051	0.326
I take initiative in solving problems that arise in my role.	2.218	0.316
I am proactive in seeking guidance when faced with challenges in my work	2.163	0.217
I collaborate effectively with my colleagues to achieve organizational goals	3.230	0.634
I actively contribute to team discussions and projects	2.026	0.382

I can adapt quickly to changes in my work environment.	4.263	0.129
I am flexible and open to new ways of doing things when necessary	2.415	0.346
I am capable of handling unexpected challenges without significant disruption	2.127	0.210
Average	2.830	0.276

Source: Primary data (2024)

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Table 6, The mean scores across all 17 items ranged from a low of 1.051 to a high of 4.340, with an overall average mean score of 2.830. The standard deviation values ranged from 0.129 to 0.634, with an average standard deviation of 0.276, indicating relatively low variability in responses across most items.

High mean scores were recorded for statements relating to quality of work and adaptability, such as: "I pay attention to detail in all tasks and projects I handle" (Mean = 4.340, SD = 0.224), "I can adapt quickly to changes in my work environment" (Mean = 4.263, SD = 0.129), "I consistently deliver work that adheres to the standards of the organization" (Mean = 4.126, SD = 0.263). These high scores suggest a strong self-perception of quality-oriented behaviors and adaptability among respondents.

Conversely, the lowest mean scores were observed in: "I hold myself accountable for the outcomes of my work" (Mean = 1.051, SD = 0.326), "I take pride in the accuracy of the work I produce" (Mean = 2.074, SD = 0.221), "I actively contribute to team discussions and projects" (Mean = 2.026, SD = 0.382). These figures indicate a potential concern with accountability and active team engagement, suggesting areas for further investigation or targeted improvement.

The highest standard deviation was found in the statement "I collaborate effectively with my colleagues to achieve organizational goals" (SD = 0.634), which may reflect varying degrees of collaboration practices across different teams or departments.

During the interview with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), he said, "Generally, performance is below expectations. While some individuals are committed, many employees show minimal initiative and work at the bare minimum level required. There's a clear gap between what's expected and what is delivered."

He added "There are several contributing factors. First, poor supervision and lack of accountability systems. Secondly, limited training and development means staffs are not equipped with the skills needed to perform effectively. Lastly, low motivation—salaries are low, recognition is lacking, and promotion is rare."

On monitoring, he said, "We use performance appraisal forms, but they are largely procedural and not tied to any meaningful action. There's no feedback loop or follow-up, which undermines the entire process."

A member of the District Service Commission said, "There is a lack of commitment among some staff, often driven by poor

leadership and weak supervision. Some departments do not enforce work plans or timelines strictly, and this creates a culture of laxity."

He added, "Sometimes we recruit based on minimum qualifications without fully assessing the applicant's competence or passion for service. The process needs to be more merit-based, and follow-up evaluations should be done after recruitment."

Another member of the District Service Commission said, "Absolutely. Most of our offices lack basic tools and facilities. When an employee has no computer or even transport to reach the field, it becomes hard to expect full performance. The environment must be conducive for productivity."

He said, "We need stronger enforcement of the performance appraisal process, introduction of sanctions for non-performers, and rewards for achievers. Right now, there are no consequences, whether someone performs well or poorly."

The Principal Human Resource Officer (PHRO) said "The main challenge is the lack of reliable performance data. Supervisors often rate all staff as satisfactory or above without real justification, just to avoid conflict. That distorts the entire system."

He added, "We've started to review job descriptions and introduce clearer performance targets in some departments. However, implementation is still slow, and without full management support, it's hard to make a significant shift."

He said "Most take it lightly because they know it doesn't influence their salary, promotion, or transfer. We need to strengthen the linkage between performance, career growth, and rewards if we are to see improvement."

Correlation between Personal Development, Recognition, Career Advancement, and Employee Performance in Kole District Local Government

This section presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between three key independent variables: personal development, recognition, and career advancement, and the dependent variable, employee performance within Kole District Local Government. The purpose of this analysis was to determine the strength and significance of the association between employee development practices and performance outcomes. Table 7 summarizes the Pearson correlation coefficients (r), significance levels (p-values), and sample size (N = 100).

Table 7: Correlation on Personal Development, Recognition, Career advancement, and Employee Performance in Kole District Local Government

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Personal Development & Employee Performance	0.825	0.004	100
Recognition & Employee Performance	0.678	0.001	100
Career advancement & Employee Performance	0.762	0.000	100

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7, The results indicate a strong positive correlation between personal development and employee performance ($r = 0.825$, $p = 0.004$). This suggests that as opportunities for personal development increase, such as through training,

mentorship, and skill enhancement, employee performance tends to improve significantly. The strength of this relationship highlights the importance of continuous learning

and capacity-building initiatives in driving public service delivery and organizational effectiveness.

Similarly, the variable career advancement also shows a strong positive correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.762$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that when employees perceive clear and fair opportunities for career advancement—such as promotions, salary increases, and expanded responsibilities—their motivation and performance levels are likely to rise. Career advancement therefore emerges as a critical factor in retaining talent and fostering productivity within the public sector.

The relationship between recognition and employee performance is also statistically significant, with a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.678$, $p = 0.001$). This suggests that acknowledgment of employee efforts, whether through praise, awards, or other incentives, positively influences performance. Although the correlation is slightly lower than that of personal development and career advancement, recognition remains an essential component in employee engagement and satisfaction.

In all three cases, the p-values are less than 0.01, indicating that the relationships are statistically significant at the 1% level. This provides strong evidence to support the conclusion that personal development, recognition, and career advancement are all significantly and positively associated with employee performance in the Kole District Local Government.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that employee performance is highly dependent on internal human resource

practices, particularly those that focus on developing skills, recognizing efforts, and providing pathways for growth. The implications for management are clear: investment in these areas is likely to yield measurable improvements in performance and service delivery. These results support the need for policy reforms and strategic interventions to institutionalize employee development and recognition systems across local government structures.

Regression Analysis of Employee Satisfaction and Employee Performance at Kole District

This section presents the results of the linear regression analysis conducted to examine the impact of employee satisfaction (personal development, recognition, and career advancement) on employee performance within the Kole District Local Government. The aim was to assess how these independent variables (factors of employee satisfaction) influence the dependent variable, which is employee performance.

Linear Regression Model Dependent Variable (Y):

- Employee Performance

Independent Variables (X):

- Personal Development
- Recognition
- Career Advancement

Table 8: Regression findings on employee satisfaction and employee performance at Kole District Local Government

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	0.894	0.211		4.237	0.000
Personal Development	0.452	0.087	0.603	5.195	0.000
Recognition	0.278	0.093	0.417	2.989	0.004
Career advancement	0.312	0.091	0.478	3.429	0.001

$$R = 0.867$$

$$R^2 = 0.752$$

$$\text{Adjusted } R^2 = 0.741$$

$$F(3, 96) = 96.221, p < 0.001$$

Table 8, The R^2 value of 0.752 indicates that approximately 75.2% of the variance in employee performance is explained by the three predictors: personal development, recognition, and career advancement.

All independent variables have positive and statistically significant coefficients ($p < 0.01$), meaning that increases in any of these satisfaction-related factors are associated with improvements in employee performance.

Personal development has the strongest effect ($Beta = 0.603$), followed by career advancement and then recognition. The F-statistic confirms that the overall model is statistically significant.

The regression coefficient for personal development is 0.452, indicating that for every unit increase in personal development (e.g., training, skill enhancement, or career growth opportunities), employee performance increases by 0.452 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.603 shows that personal development has the strongest positive effect on employee performance compared to the other factors. The t-value of 5.195 and a p-value of 0.000 confirm

that this effect is statistically significant at the 1% level. Thus, efforts to enhance personal development are highly likely to improve employee performance.

The coefficient for recognition is 0.278, which means that for every unit increase in employee recognition (e.g., acknowledgment, praise, awards, or bonuses), employee performance is expected to increase by 0.278 units. The standardized Beta coefficient of 0.417 suggests that recognition also has a positive effect on performance, though it is weaker than personal development. The t-value of 2.989 and p-value of 0.004 indicate that recognition is statistically significant, but its impact is less pronounced compared to personal development.

The coefficient for career advancement is 0.312, meaning that as opportunities for career advancement (e.g., promotions, salary increases, job responsibilities) increase, employee performance improves by 0.312 units. The Beta coefficient of 0.478 shows that career advancement has a strong positive effect on performance, stronger than recognition but slightly weaker than personal development.

The t-value of 3.429 and p-value of 0.001 indicate that the effect of career advancement on employee performance is statistically significant at the 1% level.

$R^2 = 0.752$: The R-squared value indicates that approximately 75.2% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by the combined effect of personal development, recognition, and career advancement. This suggests that these three factors are crucial in influencing employee performance within the Kole District Local Government.

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.741$: The adjusted R-squared takes into account the number of predictors in the model and adjusts for any potential overfitting. An adjusted R^2 of 0.741 confirms that the model.

Remains strong and meaningful after accounting for the number of variables used.

F-statistic (3, 96) = 96.221 and p-value < 0.001: The F-statistic tests the overall significance of the regression model. With a p-value of less than 0.001, the model is statistically significant, indicating that personal development, recognition, and career advancement collectively have a significant effect on employee performance.

The findings of this regression analysis provide strong evidence that employee satisfaction factors, such as personal development, recognition, and career advancement, are significant predictors of employee performance at the Kole District Local Government. Among these, personal development has the strongest influence, followed by career advancement, and then recognition. These results highlight the importance of fostering a culture of development, providing recognition for employees' contributions, and creating opportunities for career growth to improve employee performance.

Discussions

Personal Development and Employee Performance in Kole District Local Government.

The findings of the study indicate a strong positive correlation between personal development and employee performance ($r = 0.825$, $p = 0.004$). This statistically significant relationship confirms what has been consistently emphasized in the literature — that personal development is a key determinant of employee performance, particularly within local government contexts.

As outlined by Zainudin et al. (2021), personal development initiatives such as training and mentorship programs enhance employees' confidence and professional competence. These attributes are essential in helping local government employees adapt to evolving job demands and perform more effectively. The strength of the correlation in this study affirms this assertion, demonstrating that employees who are offered opportunities to grow professionally are better positioned to meet and exceed performance expectations.

The positive impact of personal development on job performance is also supported by Udo (2018) and Ali et al. (2020), who found that individuals who engage in continuous learning exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and productivity. This aligns with observations in the Kole District Local Government, where limited personal development was linked.

With low employee motivation and poor performance. The present findings reinforce the notion that investing in employee development translates directly into improved work outcomes.

Furthermore, the role of structured training programs, as highlighted by Zhang & Xie (2021) and Tessema et al. (2018), is critical in equipping employees not only with technical skills but also with soft skills such as leadership, problem-

solving, and communication. These are particularly vital in local government, where service delivery involves frequent interaction with the public and coordination among departments. The data from this study suggests that enhancing these competencies through targeted development initiatives can significantly boost employee effectiveness.

The findings also support the argument by Hafeez & Akmal (2020) that local governments that prioritize personal development tend to experience improved employee retention and engagement. In Kole District, however, the lack of formal and consistent training programs has been a persistent challenge, as echoed in interview responses. This points to a critical gap between policy and practice that needs to be addressed through strategic planning and budget allocation.

Moreover, Jiang & Lee (2020) and Agyemang et al. (2022) emphasize that personal development contributes not only to individual employee capacity but also to institutional performance and public trust. The results of this study support this broader view, suggesting that well-trained and continually developed employees are more responsive to community needs, which enhances the legitimacy and service quality of local government institutions.

Nevertheless, as noted by Ali et al. (2020), structural and financial barriers often hinder the effective implementation of personal development programs. These challenges were also identified in the qualitative interviews conducted in the Kole District, where officials cited inadequate budgets, lack of strategic training plans, and minimal support from leadership as significant constraints. Therefore, while the correlation between personal development and performance is clear, the realization of its benefits is contingent on deliberate investment and commitment from district leadership.

Career Advancement and Employee Performance in Kole District Local Government.

The results of the study conducted in Kole District Local Government revealed a strong positive correlation between career advancement and employee performance ($r = 0.762$, $p = 0.000$). This statistically significant relationship affirms that employee perceptions of fair and accessible career advancement opportunities are a major driver of job performance within the district's public service. The findings align with extensive literature, which underscores the vital role career advancement plays in enhancing workforce engagement, motivation, and productivity.

As Wang & Liu (2019) suggest, employees who perceive clear pathways for career growth tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment and engagement. In Kole District, however, qualitative data from interviews with key informants—including the Principal Human Resource Officer and members of the District Service Commission—revealed that many employees experience career stagnation due to limited promotional opportunities, budgetary constraints, and bureaucratic delays. This disconnect between expectations and opportunities can diminish morale and deter high performance, a concern also echoed by Bashir & Zafar (2021), who link career stagnation with weakened psychological contracts and reduced organizational loyalty.

The positive correlation observed in the study supports the findings by Malik et al. (2020) and Uddin et al. (2018), which highlight that employees who see tangible career advancement prospects tend to report higher job satisfaction and are more likely to go above and beyond in their roles. In Kole District, the lack of structured and predictable promotion systems may contribute to underperformance, as staff feel unrecognized and demotivated. The implication is

clear: without upward mobility, even competent and dedicated staff may disengage.

The literature also highlights that implementing career development programs is a viable way to bridge career advancement gaps in public institutions. Suleiman et al. (2023) emphasize that such programs help identify and prepare future leaders, while Huang et al. (2022) note that local, context-specific training initiatives can build the competencies required for career advancement. The absence of such programs in Kole District is likely a key contributor to the observed performance challenges. Interviews revealed that employees rarely receive targeted training or mentorship, and there is no systematic process for grooming staff for higher responsibilities.

Furthermore, the study's findings support Nanjundeswaraswamy et al. (2021), who argue for the necessity of transparent and consistent performance evaluations. In Kole District, performance appraisals are seen largely as administrative formalities with little connection to promotions or salary increments. This lack of accountability and feedback undermines motivation, as high-performing staff do not see their efforts translated into recognition or career advancement.

The study also confirms challenges identified by Abdul & Muneer (2020) and Ali & Ahmad (2021) regarding the barriers to career advancement in local government, including bureaucratic procedures, limited budgets, and unclear promotion criteria. These barriers are present in the Kole District and contribute to a sense of career stagnation among employees, which in turn impacts their productivity and long-term commitment to the organization.

Recognition and Employee Performance in Kole District Local Government.

The study findings from Kole District Local Government indicate a moderate positive correlation between recognition and employee performance ($r = 0.678$, $p = 0.001$). This statistically significant result underscores the importance of recognizing employee efforts as a driver of improved job performance in the public sector. While the correlation is slightly lower than that of personal development and career advancement, recognition remains a critical motivational factor, especially in resource-constrained environments like local government institutions.

According to Raza et al. (2018) and Abdul & Muneer (2020), recognition contributes directly to increased job satisfaction and performance by making employees feel valued and appreciated. The same pattern was evident in the Kole District, where qualitative interviews revealed that most employees perceive recognition as lacking or inconsistent. The absence of structured and meaningful appreciation mechanisms—whether verbal, symbolic, or financial has led to a general sense of neglect, demotivation, and reduced enthusiasm among staff.

The literature further identifies both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of recognition as important performance drivers. As Mansoor et al. (2019) emphasize, verbal praise and public acknowledgment can be as impactful as financial incentives. Interviews with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Principal Human Resource Officer noted that while informal expressions of appreciation (such as verbal commendation during meetings) occur sporadically, there is no standardized system for acknowledging exemplary performance. Furthermore, the relationship between recognition and job satisfaction, as highlighted by Uddin et al. (2020) and Bashir et al. (2022), is particularly relevant. In the Kole District context, employees who received occasional

acknowledgment reported higher motivation and were more inclined to exceed performance expectations. However, the lack of consistency and inclusiveness in recognition efforts has led to perceptions of favoritism and inequality, which can erode trust and hinder team cohesion.

Recognition also plays a transformative role in organizational culture. According to Ali & Ahmed (2021) and Yusof & Yusof (2021), structured recognition programs—such as "Employee of the Month" awards or peer recognition systems—foster a culture of appreciation and performance excellence. The absence of such programs in Kole District suggests untapped potential for improving morale and performance through relatively low-cost, high-impact initiatives. This supports the notion that local governments, even with budget limitations, can implement non-monetary recognition frameworks to promote engagement.

Despite the demonstrated value of recognition, the challenges identified by Raza et al. (2018) including bureaucratic inertia, budget constraints, and lack of supervisor training are clearly present in Kole District. Supervisors are often not equipped with the skills or authority to effectively recognize employee contributions, and recognition is not integrated into formal performance appraisal or human resource policies. This undermines employee engagement and diminishes the motivational impact that recognition could otherwise provide.

Conclusions

The study concluded that there was a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.825$, $p = 0.004$) between personal development and employee performance in Kole District Local Government, indicating that employees who have access to training, mentorship, and skill-building opportunities are more likely to perform effectively. Personal development enhances confidence, competence, and adaptability, all of which are crucial in a dynamic local government environment. However, findings also revealed that personal development opportunities in Kole District are limited due to inadequate funding and strategic planning. Addressing this gap is essential for improving employee capabilities and service delivery outcomes.

The study concluded that there was a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.678$, $p = 0.001$) between recognition and employee performance in Kole District Local Government. This confirms that acknowledgment, whether through verbal praise, awards, or symbolic gestures, positively affects motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn enhances performance. In Kole District, the lack of a formal recognition framework limits the effectiveness of this motivational tool. Structured and consistent recognition practices could therefore help improve morale and promote a high-performance culture within the district.

The study also concluded that there was a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.762$, $p = 0.000$) between career advancement opportunities and employee performance. Employees who perceive opportunities for promotion, salary growth, and increased responsibilities tend to be more committed and productive. However, in Kole District, the study revealed that career advancement is hindered by bureaucratic delays, limited vacancies, and the absence of a clear promotion strategy. These barriers contribute to employee stagnation and low morale. Prioritizing transparent and merit-based career advancement mechanisms could significantly enhance employee engagement and output.

Limitations of the Study

Limited Access to Key Informants. Some senior officials (e.g., members of the District Service Commission) were not

always readily available for interviews due to their busy schedules, which may have limited the depth and scope of qualitative data.

Reluctance to Share Honest Opinions. Some respondents may have been hesitant to express critical views about the local government for fear of reprisal or job insecurity, leading to potential social desirability bias in their responses.

Time Constraints. The time allocated for data collection was limited, which may have restricted the number of participants involved and the richness of the data obtained.

Limited Documentation and Records. In some cases, inadequate HR records or a lack of access to internal performance data made it difficult to triangulate employee performance trends or validate self-reported responses.

Budgetary Constraints. Financial limitations may have restricted the scope of the study, including travel to sub-counties, printing of data collection tools, or follow-up visits for clarification.

Generalizability of Findings

Since the study focused on only one district (Kole), the findings may not be generalizable to all local governments in Uganda due to contextual differences in structure, leadership, and resource availability.

Recommendations

Kole District should establish a comprehensive annual training calendar based on identified skill gaps and departmental needs, while also supporting staff in pursuing external training and academic advancement through partnerships and study leave policies.

Pair experienced staff with junior employees to encourage knowledge transfer, professional growth, and continuity in service delivery.

Introduce structured recognition programs such as "Employee of the Month," commendation certificates, and departmental awards, and train supervisors on simple but impactful appreciation methods like verbal praise and team celebrations.

Allocate dedicated budgetary funds for staff development and utilize performance tracking tools, including dashboards and supervisor reviews, to monitor and enhance individual and departmental productivity.

Publisher Details:

List of abbreviations

SAD: Self-administered questionnaire

SPSS: Special Statistical Package for Social Sciences

Source of funding

The study was not funded.

Conflict of interest

The author did not declare any conflict of interest.

Data availability

Data is available upon request.

Author contributions

Fred Ojok Ongom collected data and drafted the manuscript of the study

Evelyn Hope Kyokunda supervised the study

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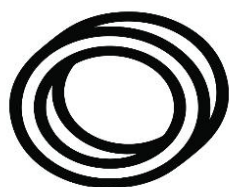
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