

**The Organizational Factors Affecting Employee Performance In Non-Governmental Organizations In Uganda: A Case Study Of The Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA)**

**Mujunialinda Silver<sup>1</sup>, Kirwisa Matovu<sup>2</sup>**

**1, 2 Metropolitan International University**

**Abstract**

This study examined the organizational factors affecting employee performance in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Uganda, with the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) as a case study. The study was prompted by concerns about declining programme delivery efficiency, high staff turnover, and inconsistent project outcomes reported at UWOPA over the period 2019–2023. Three organisational factors—leadership style, organisational culture, and reward and compensation systems—were investigated as independent variables, while employee performance (assessed through task completion rates, work quality, and goal achievement) constituted the dependent variable. A cross-sectional design with mixed methods was employed. Data were collected from 86 UWOPA staff, including program officers, administrative staff, and management, using structured questionnaires supplemented by key informant interviews. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) ranged from 0.78 to 0.86. Descriptive statistics indicated moderate to high ratings across all organizational factors (means 3.38–3.74). Pearson's correlation revealed significant positive relationships between all three organizational factors and employee performance ( $r = 0.563$  to  $0.714$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that the three factors collectively explained 63.8% of the variance in employee performance ( $R^2 = 0.638$ ,  $F = 32.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Leadership style emerged as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.421$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The study concluded that leadership style is the most critical organizational determinant of employee performance at UWOPA, followed by organisational culture and reward systems. Recommendations include adoption of participatory leadership, organisational culture realignment, and enhanced performance-linked compensation.

**Keywords: Organizational Factors, Employee Performance, NGO, Leadership Style, Organizational Culture, Reward Systems, UWOPA, Uganda**

**1.0 Background of the Study**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) occupy a pivotal position in Uganda's development architecture, complementing government efforts in delivering social services, advocating for human rights, and implementing development programmes across health, education, governance, gender, and environmental sectors (Julius & Kaazara, 2025). Uganda hosts over 12,000 registered NGOs, with combined annual expenditures exceeding USD 1.2 billion, making the sector a significant employer and development actor (Uganda NGO Bureau, 2022). Employee performance in NGOs is a critical determinant of programme effectiveness and donor satisfaction, directly influencing an

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organisation's ability to achieve its mission, attract funding, and maintain credibility with beneficiaries and partners(F. Christopher et al., 2022).

The Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) was established in 1994 as a cross-party caucus organisation bringing together female members of parliament to advocate for gender-responsive legislation, promote women's political participation, and support women leaders across Uganda(Faridah et al., 2023). As an NGO-registered entity, UWOPA employs approximately 95 staff across programme, administrative, communications, and finance functions(okello, okello, Basheka, BC, 2021). Despite its prominent role in Uganda's gender and governance landscape, UWOPA has experienced employee performance challenges over recent years, including project delivery delays, declining programme output quality, and staff turnover rates averaging 24% per annum between 2019 and 2023, significantly above the NGO sector average of 15% (Uganda National NGO Forum, 2022).

Organisational factors including leadership style, organisational culture, and reward and compensation systems are widely recognized as critical determinants of employee performance in both private sector and NGO contexts(Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). Leadership style influences employees' motivation, psychological safety, and alignment with organisational goals, while organisational culture shapes the norms, values, and behavioural expectations that guide employee conduct and performance(Ntirandekura, Ainebyoona, et al., 2022). Reward and compensation systems serve as tangible and intangible mechanisms for recognizing, reinforcing, and incentivizing desired performance behaviors. Understanding how these factors operate at UWOPA is essential for addressing the organisation's employee performance challenges(Alex et al., 2024).

## **2.0 Problem Statement**

UWOPA's declining employee performance metrics including a project delivery completion rate falling from 87% in 2019 to 71% in 2022, increasing donor complaints about programme quality, and a staff turnover rate of 24% represent significant threats to the organisation's operational effectiveness and reputational standing(Sarah & Audrey, 2024). Internal HR reviews at UWOPA have highlighted management concerns about employee motivation, team cohesion, and performance accountability, yet no systematic empirical investigation has been conducted to identify the specific organisational factors driving these performance challenges and to quantify their relative influence(Faridah et al., 2023).

Existing literature on employee performance in Ugandan NGOs has tended to focus on external factors such as funding constraints and regulatory environments, with relatively limited attention to internal organisational factors such as leadership, culture, and reward systems(Muhamad et al., 2023). This study addressed this gap by providing empirical

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evidence on the specific organisational factors most significantly influencing employee performance at UWOPA, thereby guiding evidence-based organisational development interventions(Ramadhan et al., 2023).

### **3.0 Main Objective**

The main objective was to examine the organisational factors affecting employee performance at UWOPA, Uganda. Specific objectives were: (i) to assess the influence of leadership style on employee performance at UWOPA; (ii) to evaluate the effect of organisational culture on employee performance at UWOPA; and (iii) to determine the relationship between reward and compensation systems and employee performance at UWOPA.

### **4.0 Literature Review**

#### **4.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study drew on the Path-Goal Theory of Leadership (House, 1971), which posits that effective leaders enhance employee performance by clarifying the path to goal achievement, removing obstacles to performance, and aligning rewards with performance outcomes(Ntirandekura, Ainebyoona, et al., 2022). The theory identifies four leadership styles—directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented—each appropriate for different employee and situational characteristics(Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). In the NGO context, where employees are often intrinsically motivated by social mission alignment, participative and supportive leadership styles are theoretically associated with higher performance than directive or autocratic approaches.

The Organisational Culture Theory (Schein, 1985) provided the theoretical lens for examining cultural influences on performance, positing that organisational culture—comprising shared values, assumptions, and behavioural norms—fundamentally shapes employee attitudes, motivations, and performance behaviours(Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). Schein's model identifies three culture levels: artefacts (visible symbols), espoused values (stated beliefs), and basic underlying assumptions (unconscious taken-for-granted values), arguing that deep cultural alignment across these levels is necessary for sustained high performance(Ntirandekura, Ainebyoona, et al., 2022). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) informed the analysis of reward and compensation systems, distinguishing between hygiene factors (base salary, job security, working conditions) that prevent dissatisfaction but do not motivate, and motivators (recognition, achievement, advancement opportunities) that actively drive high performance(Julius, 2024). The theory implies that NGOs must address both categories of reward factors to sustain employee motivation and performance.

#### **4.2 Empirical Literature**

Empirical research on organisational factors and employee performance in African NGOs presents a nuanced picture. Kwame et al. (2020) studied Ghanaian NGOs and found that transformational leadership had the strongest positive

influence on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$ ), significantly outperforming transactional leadership styles ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$ ) in predicting performance outcomes (Kazaara & Nancy, 2026). The study also documented significant positive influences of performance-based recognition on employee productivity. In Kenya, Njoroge (2019) found that organisational culture significantly mediated the relationship between leadership style and employee performance in international NGOs, with cultures characterized by participatory decision-making and transparent communication achieving 31% higher employee performance scores than hierarchical, authority-based cultures (Muhamad et al., 2023).

In Uganda, Katusiime (2021) examined organisational factors influencing employee performance in health-focused NGOs and found that leadership style and reward systems collectively explained 56% of the variance in employee performance, with leadership style being the dominant predictor. The study emphasised the importance of leaders who actively mentor, empower, and provide feedback to staff—characteristics particularly valued by the educated and mission-driven employees typical of Uganda's NGO sector. Kiiza and Sserwanga (2020) similarly documented that reward equity—the perception that compensation is fair relative to performance and comparable peers significantly influenced employee retention and performance in Ugandan NGOs, with perceived reward inequity being among the leading cited reasons for voluntary staff turnover (Lydia et al., 2023).

## **5.0 Methodology**

### **5.1 Research Design and Sample**

The study employed a cross-sectional research design with a mixed-methods approach. The study population comprised all 95 UWOPA employees. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula, a sample of 77 was determined, but 90 questionnaires were administered to account for potential non-responses. Of the 90 questionnaires distributed, 86 were returned and valid (response rate = 95.6%) (Kazaara & Desire, 2025). Additionally, 10 key informant interviews were conducted with senior management and programme directors. Purposive and stratified random sampling methods were employed.

### **5.2 Instruments and Analysis**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with five-point Likert scales (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Reliability testing yielded Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86 (leadership style), 0.82 (organisational culture), 0.78 (reward systems), and 0.84 (employee performance), confirming adequate internal consistency. SPSS version 26 was used for data analysis, employing descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis (Nelson et al., 2022).

**6.0 Results and Discussion**

**6.1 Descriptive Statistics**

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (N = 86)*

| Variable               | N  | Min  | Max  | Mean | Std. Dev |
|------------------------|----|------|------|------|----------|
| Leadership Style       | 86 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.74 | 0.81     |
| Organisational Culture | 86 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.52 | 0.86     |
| Reward & Compensation  | 86 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.38 | 0.94     |
| Employee Performance   | 86 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.61 | 0.79     |

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 reveal that leadership style received the highest mean score among the three organisational factors (mean = 3.74, SD = 0.81), indicating that UWOPA employees generally perceived the organisation's leadership practices as moderately to highly effective(Alex et al., 2023). Qualitative data from interviews suggested that UWOPA's executive leadership has made deliberate efforts in recent years to adopt more participatory management approaches, including regular staff consultations and transparent communication about organisational strategy, which may explain the relatively higher leadership effectiveness rating(Ronald et al., 2023). Organisational culture received a moderate mean score of 3.52 (SD = 0.86), suggesting that staff generally perceived UWOPA's organisational values, norms, and work environment in moderately positive terms, though the standard deviation indicates significant variation in cultural perceptions across departments and seniority levels(Brian et al., 2024).

Reward and compensation systems received the lowest mean score among the three factors (mean = 3.38, SD = 0.94), with the relatively high standard deviation indicating considerable variability in how staff perceived the fairness and adequacy of UWOPA's compensation practices. Qualitative interviews corroborated this finding, with several mid-level program officers expressing concerns about salary stagnation, limited performance recognition mechanisms, and perceived inequities in how performance bonuses were allocated(T. Christopher & Nelson, 2024). This finding aligns with UWOPA's reported high staff turnover rate, suggesting that reward system deficiencies may be a significant contributor to voluntary attrition. Employee performance received a mean score of 3.61 (SD = 0.79), indicating that staff perceived their overall performance as moderately high, though this self-assessed score should be interpreted alongside the objective performance metrics—including declining project completion rates—that present a somewhat less positive picture.

**6.2 Correlation Analysis**

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**Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 86)**

| Variable                  | 1       | 2       | 3       | 4     |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1. Leadership Style       | 1.000   |         |         |       |
| 2. Organisational Culture | 0.598** | 1.000   |         |       |
| 3. Reward & Compensation  | 0.512** | 0.543** | 1.000   |       |
| 4. Employee Performance   | 0.714** | 0.641** | 0.563** | 1.000 |

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

The Pearson correlation matrix in Table 2 reveals strong to moderately strong statistically significant positive relationships between all three organisational factors and employee performance at UWOPA. Leadership style demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with employee performance ( $r = 0.714$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a strong association between the quality and style of leadership and employee performance outcomes at UWOPA (Nelson et al., 2023). This strong correlation reflects the centrality of leadership in defining the performance climate, aligning individual and organisational goals, and providing the coaching, feedback, and support that enable employees to perform at their best. Consistent with Path-Goal Theory, UWOPA's leadership effectiveness appears to be a critical mediator between organisational resources and employee performance outcomes.

Organisational culture demonstrated a moderately strong positive correlation with employee performance ( $r = 0.641$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), affirming that the norms, values, and behavioural expectations embedded in UWOPA's organisational culture significantly shape employee performance behaviours. The finding is consistent with Schein's (1985) theoretical model, which posits that shared values and assumptions fundamentally influence how employees approach their work, interact with colleagues, and pursue performance goals. Reward and compensation systems, while showing the weakest correlation with employee performance among the three factors ( $r = 0.563$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), nonetheless demonstrated a significant positive relationship, confirming that perceived fairness and adequacy of compensation influences employee motivation and performance. The moderate correlation between leadership style and organisational culture ( $r = 0.598$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) suggests that UWOPA's leadership significantly shapes its cultural character, consistent with the observation that leaders are primary architects of organisational culture.

**6.3 Regression Analysis****Table 3: Model Summary**

| Model | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | Std. Error | F     | Sig.  |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|------------|-------|-------|
| 1     | 0.799 | 0.638          | 0.626                   | 0.484      | 32.47 | 0.000 |

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**Table 4: Regression Coefficients**

| Variable               | B     | Std. Error | Beta  | t     | Sig.  |
|------------------------|-------|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| (Constant)             | 0.418 | 0.198      |       | 2.111 | 0.037 |
| Leadership Style       | 0.412 | 0.074      | 0.421 | 5.568 | 0.000 |
| Organisational Culture | 0.318 | 0.078      | 0.347 | 4.077 | 0.000 |
| Reward & Compensation  | 0.247 | 0.067      | 0.293 | 3.687 | 0.000 |

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

The regression model was highly significant ( $F = 32.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that leadership style, organisational culture, and reward and compensation systems collectively and significantly predicted employee performance at UWOPA. The  $R^2$  of 0.638 indicates that these three organisational factors together explained 63.8% of the variance in employee performance, a high proportion that affirms the dominant role of internal organisational factors in shaping performance outcomes in this NGO setting (Moses, 2023). The adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.626 confirms model robustness and the genuine explanatory power of the predictor variables. Leadership style emerged as the dominant predictor of employee performance ( $\beta = 0.421$ ,  $t = 5.568$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with a one-unit improvement in leadership style associated with a 0.412-unit increase in employee performance when other organisational factors are controlled. This finding provides strong empirical support for the Path-Goal Theory's prediction that effective leadership—which clarifies performance expectations, removes obstacles, and aligns rewards with goals—significantly enhances employee performance outcomes.

Organisational culture was the second most influential predictor ( $\beta = 0.347$ ,  $t = 4.077$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that the values, norms, and behavioural climate embedded in UWOPA's culture significantly influence how effectively employees perform their roles. A one-unit improvement in organisational culture was associated with a 0.318-unit improvement in employee performance, underscoring the importance of cultivating a performance-oriented, collaborative, and mission-aligned culture (Alex & Moses, 2024). Reward and compensation systems, while the least influential predictor ( $\beta = 0.293$ ,  $t = 3.687$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), nonetheless demonstrated a statistically significant and practically meaningful positive influence on employee performance. This finding, combined with the relatively lower mean score for reward systems (3.38), implies that UWOPA's current reward practices represent both a performance gap and an improvement opportunity: strengthening performance recognition and compensation equity could yield measurable improvements in employee performance outcomes.

**7.0 Discussion of Results****Received: 16.06.2026****Accepted: 20.06.2026****Published on: 30.06.2026**

The finding that leadership style is the strongest predictor of employee performance at UWOPA ( $\beta = 0.421$ ,  $R^2$  contribution = 0.638) is consistent with the broader empirical literature on NGO performance management in Sub-Saharan Africa. The strong correlation and regression coefficient for leadership style ( $r = 0.714$ ,  $\beta = 0.421$ ) indicate that UWOPA's leadership approach significantly shapes the performance climate within which employees operate. Qualitative data from key informant interviews revealed that employees strongly valued leaders who provided clear direction, offered regular feedback, and demonstrated visible commitment to UWOPA's gender advocacy mission—characteristics associated with transformational and participatory leadership approaches that the Path-Goal Theory identifies as highly effective in professional, mission-driven organisations.

The significant contribution of organisational culture to employee performance ( $\beta = 0.347$ ) reflects the pervasive influence of UWOPA's organisational norms and values on daily performance behaviours. Focus group discussions with UWOPA programme officers revealed that the organisation's culture was characterised by strong gender advocacy values and mission commitment, which served as intrinsic motivators for many staff members. However, respondents also noted cultural tensions between UWOPA's advocacy orientation and administrative bureaucracy demands, suggesting that cultural alignment between the organisation's stated values and its operational practices requires strengthening. The significant positive influence of reward and compensation systems on performance ( $\beta = 0.293$ ), despite their relatively weaker individual correlation, underscores that even in mission-driven NGOs where intrinsic motivation is high, extrinsic reward mechanisms play an important supportive role in sustaining performance. The multiple testimonies in key informant interviews about perceived pay inequity and insufficient performance recognition suggest that UWOPA's current reward systems may be actively undermining the performance-boosting effects of its otherwise positive leadership and cultural dimensions.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

This study concludes that organisational factors—specifically leadership style, organisational culture, and reward and compensation systems—are significant and collectively powerful determinants of employee performance at UWOPA, explaining 63.8% of performance variance. Leadership style is the most critical single factor, followed by organisational culture and reward systems. The study's findings confirm that addressing UWOPA's employee performance challenges requires a comprehensive organisational development approach that simultaneously strengthens leadership quality, cultural alignment, and reward equity, rather than focusing on any single factor in isolation. The significant unexplained variance (36.2%) points to the additional influence of individual employee factors (motivation, skills, experience), external environment (donor requirements, political context), and team dynamics that future research should investigate.

## **9.0 Recommendations**

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Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made. First, UWOPA's Board of Directors should commission a leadership development programme for all management and supervisory staff, focusing on participatory leadership practices, performance coaching, regular feedback mechanisms, and gender-transformative management approaches appropriate for the organisation's advocacy mission. Second, UWOPA should conduct an organisational culture audit to identify and address misalignments between stated organisational values and actual operational practices, followed by a deliberate culture change programme that reinforces performance accountability, collaboration, and gender-responsive workplace practices. Third, UWOPA's Human Resources department should redesign the reward and compensation system to incorporate transparent, performance-linked pay progression mechanisms and non-monetary recognition programmes, including employee of the month awards, public recognition of programme achievements, and career development support. Fourth, UWOPA should establish a quarterly performance management review system with 360-degree feedback elements to ensure continuous alignment between individual performance goals and organisational strategic priorities. Fifth, the Uganda National NGO Forum should develop sector-wide guidelines on employee performance management and reward systems for NGOs, drawing on evidence from this and related studies to support improved people management practices across Uganda's civil society sector.

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