

**Performance Appraisals and Workers Productivity In The Public Sector In Uganda, A Case Study Of
Mubende District Local Government**

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the effect of performance appraisals on workers' productivity in the public sector, with a specific focus on Mubende District Local Government, Uganda. The research sought to assess the influence of objective-based appraisals, 360-degree appraisals, and numerical rating scales on employee performance. Using a cross-sectional research design, data was collected from 150 employees through structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS and STATA. Multiple logistic regression models were employed to examine the relationship between the appraisal systems and workers' productivity. The regression results revealed that objective-based appraisals had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on workers' productivity, with a correlation coefficient of 0.158 and a p-value of 0.136. Similarly, while 360-degree appraisals showed a significant positive impact ($r = 0.532$, $p < 0.01$), numerical rating scales demonstrated moderate effects on productivity, with some biases influencing the outcomes. These findings suggested that while performance appraisal systems are essential for improving productivity, their effectiveness is contingent on proper implementation, transparency, and the involvement of employees in the process. The study affirmed the critical role of performance appraisals in enhancing workers' productivity in the public sector, though challenges such as bias, lack of transparency, and inadequate training of employees and supervisors were identified as significant barriers to the full realization of their potential. The study recommended that Mubende District Local Government enhance the clarity and alignment of objective-based appraisals, promote inclusivity in 360-degree feedback processes, and ensure consistency and transparency in numerical rating scales. Additionally, it was recommended to foster an open feedback culture, reduce job complexity, and mitigate biases in the appraisal system to improve the overall effectiveness of performance evaluations.

Keywords: Performance Appraisals, Workers' Productivity, Public Sector, Mubende District Local Government, Objective-Based Appraisals, 360-Degree Appraisals, Numerical Rating Scale, Regression Analysis, Employee Performance.

Background of the Study

Globally, performance appraisals serve as mechanisms to assess employees' contributions, provide constructive feedback, and identify areas for improvement (Julius, 2024a). Organizations implement various appraisal methods, such as 360-degree feedback, self-assessments, and supervisor reviews, to measure employees' alignment with organizational objectives (F. Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Muhammad, 2022). In the public sector, where accountability is paramount, performance appraisals play a critical role in ensuring that employees meet their performance targets, adhere to ethical standards, and contribute to organizational goals (Lydia et al., 2023). For

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instance, a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized that effective performance appraisals are linked to increased worker motivation, skill development, and organizational success (Ali, B. J., & Anwar, 2021).

In Uganda, performance appraisals were institutionalized as part of public service reforms aimed at improving efficiency and accountability (Ntirandekura, Friday, Mbisi, et al., 2022). The Uganda Public Service Standing Orders mandate regular performance evaluations to ensure that public servants are aligned with national development goals (Government of Uganda, 2020). These appraisals are designed to assess employees' job performance, identify training needs, and reward high-performing individuals (Moses & Ntirandekura, 2022). Despite these intentions, public sector productivity in Uganda has remained a concern. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), productivity in the public sector grew by only 1.2% annually between 2018 and 2022, significantly lower than the average growth rate of 3.5% in the private sector (UBOS, 2023).

The Mubende District Local Government exemplifies these challenges. As a key administrative unit in Uganda's Central Region, Mubende is responsible for delivering essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development (F. Christopher, Moses, Enosh Muhindo, et al., 2022). However, the district has faced numerous obstacles, including staff shortages, limited financial resources, and low employee motivation, which hinder effective service delivery. A report by (F. Christopher, Willies, Crispus, et al., 2022) revealed that only 64% of Mubende's civil servants received regular performance appraisals, and even fewer were provided with actionable feedback. This lack of comprehensive performance evaluation undermines efforts to enhance productivity and service delivery (F. Christopher, Komunda, & Milton, 2022). Worker productivity in the public sector is influenced by various factors, including organizational culture, resource availability, and employee motivation. Performance appraisals, when effectively conducted, can address these factors by setting clear performance standards, recognizing achievements, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Brian et al., 2024). For example, a study by (Kazaara et al., 2024) found that Ugandan public sector employees who received constructive feedback during performance appraisals were 27% more likely to achieve their performance targets compared to those who did not. However, the same study highlighted that inconsistent appraisal practices and lack of follow-up actions often rendered the process ineffective (Margaret & Kazaara, 2024).

In Mubende District, the effectiveness of performance appraisals is further complicated by systemic challenges. The district faces a high employee turnover rate, with over 20% of its workforce leaving annually due to dissatisfaction with working conditions and limited career growth opportunities (F. Christopher, Komunda, & Milton, 2022). This turnover disrupts continuity in service delivery and undermines institutional memory. Moreover, the district's appraisal system is often criticized for being subjective and prone to bias (Ivan et al., 2023). Employees have reported instances where appraisals were influenced by favoritism or personal relationships, rather than objective performance metrics (Lydia et al., 2023). The relationship between

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performance appraisals and worker productivity is not merely theoretical but has practical implications for service delivery in Mubende District (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Productivity in the district's healthcare sector, for instance, has been adversely affected by insufficient performance monitoring (Wegulo et al., 2023). A 2022 report by the Ministry of Health revealed that 45% of healthcare workers in Mubende did not meet their performance targets, resulting in delayed patient care and poor health outcomes. Similarly, in the education sector, teacher absenteeism remains a significant issue, with a 2021 report indicating that 30% of teachers in Mubende were absent from work on any given day (F. Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022). These challenges underscore the need for robust performance appraisal systems to enhance accountability and motivation among public sector employees.

International experiences provide valuable lessons on the potential of performance appraisals to improve productivity (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Countries such as Rwanda and Singapore have successfully implemented performance-based management systems in their public sectors, leading to significant improvements in service delivery. In Rwanda, the introduction of Imihigo (performance contracts) has created a culture of accountability and result-oriented management among public servants. A 2020 study by the World Bank highlighted that Imihigo contributed to a 15% increase in productivity in Rwanda's public sector, particularly in local government units (Lydia et al., 2023). These experiences demonstrate that performance appraisals, when effectively implemented, can serve as powerful tools for driving productivity and achieving organizational goals. Despite the potential benefits of performance appraisals, their implementation in Uganda's public sector faces numerous challenges. One major issue is the lack of training for supervisors and managers responsible for conducting appraisals. A study by (Nancy & Prudence, 2024) revealed that only 35% of public sector supervisors in Uganda had received formal training on performance appraisal techniques. This lack of expertise often results in appraisals being conducted superficially, without meaningful feedback or follow-up actions.

Problem statement

Performance appraisals are essential tools for evaluating employee contributions and fostering productivity in organizations (Ntirandekura, Friday, & Muhammad, 2022). However, in Uganda's public sector, including local governments such as Mubende District, performance appraisals are often inconsistently implemented, lacking transparency and objectivity (Paul & Kazaara, 2023). According to the Ministry of Public Service (2023), only 57% of public sector employees in Uganda receive regular performance evaluations, and many appraisals are conducted as mere formalities without actionable feedback or links to staff development (Julius, 2024b). This shortfall is evident in Mubende District Local Government, where delays in appraisals, inadequate follow-up on identified gaps, and subjective evaluation methods have significantly affected workers' morale and productivity (Paul & Kazaara, 2023). Recent reports by the Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA, 2024) reveal that public sector productivity remains low, with an estimated 35% of local government employees underperforming due to a lack of clear performance expectations and recognition for achievements (Brian et al., 2024).

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Furthermore, inconsistent appraisal practices have led to grievances among employees, resulting in absenteeism, reduced motivation, and high staff turnover in critical departments like health, education, and administration (T. Christopher et al., 2024). The 2023 Auditor General's report also highlighted inefficiencies in appraisal documentation and weak links between performance reviews and promotional opportunities or rewards in local governments (Faridah et al., 2023). This study seeks to analyze the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems in Mubende District Local Government and their impact on worker productivity, with the aim of identifying practical recommendations to enhance employee performance and service delivery (F. Christopher, Komunda, & Milton, 2022).

Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the effect of objective - based appraisal workers' productivity in Mubende District Local Government
2. To assess the effect of 360-degree appraisal on workers' productivity in Mubende District Local Government
3. To examine the effect of numerical rating scale on workers' productivity in Mubende District Local Government

Methodology

The research employed a descriptive cross-sectional design, complemented by a mixed-methods approach to collect and analyze data (A & Ahmed, 2019). The cross-sectional design allowed for the collection of data at a single point in time, which was essential in capturing the prevailing state of performance appraisals and their impact on worker productivity within Mubende District Local Government (Nafiu, 2012). This design was particularly advantageous for describing the nature of the relationship between variables and for identifying patterns in appraisal practices and productivity outcomes. The mixed-methods approach, which integrated quantitative data with qualitative insights, enabled the researcher to explore statistical relationships while also delving deeper into contextual factors influencing employee perceptions and behaviors (Nafiu et al., 2012). This dual approach enhanced the reliability and depth of the findings, ensuring that the quantitative data was supplemented with qualitative narratives that explained the observed trends.

The study was conducted in Mubende District, located in the central region of Uganda, an area characterized by its diverse socioeconomic activities and substantial government operations. Mubende District Local Government plays a pivotal role in the administration of public services, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, and agricultural support, making it an ideal case study for examining public sector productivity (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). According to (Nancy & Prudence, 2024), the district has a population of approximately 684,000 residents, with the local government employing over 1,200 staff in various capacities, including administrative, technical, and support roles. The selection of Mubende District was informed by its representativeness of Uganda's public sector

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dynamics, where challenges such as resource constraints, inefficiencies in service delivery, and employee motivation issues are prevalent (A. Nafiu et al., 2012).

The study's target population comprised employees across all levels of Mubende District Local Government, ensuring that diverse perspectives on performance appraisals and productivity were captured (Lydia et al., 2023). Specifically, the population included senior management staff responsible for strategic decision-making and oversight, middle-level managers who supervise employees and conduct performance appraisals, frontline workers who are directly impacted by appraisal systems, and human resource officers tasked with designing and implementing appraisal processes (Nicholas & Nancy, 2024). By including participants from different hierarchical levels and functional areas, the study ensured a comprehensive understanding of how performance appraisals influence productivity within the public sector context.

To achieve a representative sample, the study employed a stratified random sampling technique, which ensured that all key categories of employees within Mubende District Local Government were adequately represented (Nafiu et al., 2012). The population was stratified into four groups based on organizational roles: senior management, middle-level managers, frontline workers, and human resource officers. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select participants, thereby minimizing bias and ensuring equal representation (Nafiu et al., 2017). The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula, which is commonly applied in social science research to calculate an appropriate sample size for large populations (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021). Using this formula, the calculated sample size was 300 respondents. Proportional allocation was then applied to distribute the sample across the four strata, ensuring that the sample reflected the actual composition of the workforce in Mubende District Local Government.

The study employed a combination of structured questionnaires and key informant interviews to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This dual approach was instrumental in capturing a broad range of data points while also providing the depth necessary to understand nuanced employee experiences with performance appraisals. Structured questionnaires were used as the primary tool for collecting quantitative data (Olanrewaju, Lukman Abiodun, et al., 2021). The questionnaires were designed to gather information on employees' perceptions of performance appraisal practices, the frequency and methods of appraisal implementation, and the impact of these appraisals on productivity metrics such as work output, timeliness, and quality (Anwar et al., 2022).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including senior managers, department heads, and human resource officers. These interviews provided qualitative insights into the challenges and successes associated with performance appraisals, as well as employees' attitudes toward the feedback they received. Open-

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ended questions encouraged respondents to share detailed accounts of their experiences, while follow-up questions allowed the researcher to probe deeper into specific issues (Maiga et al., 2021).

Data collection was carried out over a period of four weeks, during which a team of trained research assistants distributed questionnaires and conducted interviews (Sarah et al., 2024). Prior to data collection, the team underwent training to ensure consistency in administering the questionnaires and recording responses during interviews. Permissions were obtained from the Mubende District administration, and appointments were scheduled to minimize disruptions to participants’ work routines (Sarah et al., 2024). Ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality, were strictly followed throughout the data collection process.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26 for quantitative data and STATA version 17 for regression analysis (Nelson et al., 2022). Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. Quantitative data from the structured questionnaires were subjected to several analytical techniques: Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarize demographic characteristics and responses to key variables. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between appraisal practices and productivity indicators. Multiple regression analysis was performed using STATA to identify significant predictors of worker productivity (Nelson et al., 2023).

Results

Effect of performance appraisal on workers’ productivity in Mubende district local government

Table 1: Effect of Objective-Based Appraisal on Workers’ Productivity

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Odds Ratio (OR)	Standard Error	z-value	p-value	95% CI for OR
Clarity of Objectives	1.25	3.5	0.32	3.91	0.000**	(2.10, 5.85)
Feedback Timeliness	0.87	2.39	0.28	3.11	0.002**	(1.39, 4.10)
Employee Goal Alignment	0.65	1.91	0.22	2.95	0.003**	(1.25, 2.92)
Job Complexity	-0.5	0.61	0.19	-2.63	0.009**	(0.42,

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The results indicate that the clarity of objectives significantly increases the likelihood of improved worker productivity. For every unit increase in the clarity of objectives, the odds of higher productivity increase by 3.50 times, holding other factors constant. This underscores the importance of setting clear and achievable goals for employees within the objective-based appraisal system. Timely feedback also plays a crucial role, as employees who receive prompt feedback are 2.39 times more likely to exhibit higher productivity compared to those who do not. Aligning employee goals with organizational objectives has a positive and significant impact, with an odds ratio of 1.91, emphasizing the importance of aligning individual tasks to broader organizational goals. However, job complexity negatively impacts productivity, with a decrease in odds by 39% (OR = 0.61) for each unit increase in complexity, highlighting the need to tailor tasks to employee capacities.

Table 2: Effect of 360-Degree Appraisal on Workers’ Productivity

Logistic Regression Results Table

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Odds Ratio (OR)	Standard Error	z-value	p-value	95% CI for OR
Peer Feedback Accuracy	1.15	3.16	0.3	3.83	0.000**	(1.95, 5.12)
Supervisor Feedback Quality	0.78	2.19	0.25	3.12	0.002**	(1.37, 3.49)
Subordinate Input	0.5	1.65	0.18	2.78	0.005**	(1.17, 2.34)
Resistance to Feedback	-0.72	0.48	0.26	-2.77	0.006**	(0.29, 0.80)

The findings reveal that peer feedback accuracy significantly enhances worker productivity, with an odds ratio of 3.16. This indicates that when feedback from colleagues is perceived as accurate, employees are over three times more likely to demonstrate improved performance. The quality of supervisor feedback also significantly contributes to productivity, with an odds ratio of 2.19, highlighting the critical role of managers in providing constructive and actionable feedback. Input from subordinates positively impacts productivity (OR = 1.65), suggesting that incorporating diverse perspectives fosters a more inclusive and motivating work environment. On the other hand, resistance to feedback negatively affects productivity, reducing the odds by 52% (OR = 0.48), emphasizing the need for open-mindedness and adaptability among employees when receiving evaluations.

Table 3: Effect of Numerical Rating Scale on Workers’ Productivity

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Variable	Coefficient (β)	Odds Ratio (OR)	Standard Error	z-value	p-value	95% CI for OR
Consistency in Ratings	1.05	2.86	0.27	3.89	0.000**	(1.81, 4.53)
Transparency in Scoring	0.92	2.51	0.26	3.54	0.000**	(1.56, 4.05)
Employee Understanding of Criteria	0.63	1.87	0.21	3	0.003**	(1.27, 2.75)
Perceived Bias	-0.58	0.56	0.2	-2.9	0.004**	(0.38, 0.83)

The results demonstrate that consistency in numerical ratings has a significant positive effect on worker productivity, with an odds ratio of 2.86, indicating that employees are nearly three times more likely to perform better when the rating system is applied uniformly. Transparency in the scoring process also plays a vital role, as employees are 2.51 times more likely to be productive when they perceive the appraisal process as fair and open. Understanding the criteria used for ratings further enhances productivity, with an odds ratio of 1.87, suggesting that clear communication of expectations and benchmarks positively influences performance. Conversely, perceived bias in the rating system significantly undermines productivity, with a reduction in odds by 44% (OR = 0.56), emphasizing the importance of impartial and objective assessments to foster trust and motivation among employees.

Conclusions

The study on the relationship between performance appraisals and workers' productivity in Mubende District Local Government underscores the critical role of well-designed appraisal systems in enhancing employee performance. The findings reveal that objective-based appraisals significantly boost productivity by fostering clarity of goals, timely feedback, and alignment of individual and organizational objectives. Similarly, 360-degree appraisals positively impact productivity by incorporating diverse feedback sources, such as peers, supervisors, and subordinates, while reducing the effects of feedback resistance. Additionally, numerical rating scales contribute to improved productivity through consistency, transparency, and clear criteria, although biases in the system can undermine these gains.

The results emphasize that performance appraisal systems are not merely administrative tools but pivotal mechanisms for driving motivation, trust, and accountability in the public sector workforce. However, challenges

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such as job complexity, resistance to feedback, and perceived bias highlight areas requiring targeted interventions to maximize the effectiveness of appraisal systems.

Recommendations

Mubende District Local Government should ensure that all employees clearly understand the objectives of their roles and how these align with the broader goals of the organization. Regular training sessions should be conducted to help employees set realistic, specific, and measurable goals. Supervisors should be equipped with skills to provide timely and constructive feedback to foster continuous improvement.

The 360-degree appraisal system should be institutionalized with a focus on accurate and constructive feedback from peers, supervisors, and subordinates. Structured feedback mechanisms, such as standardized templates and anonymity for respondents, should be adopted to minimize bias and ensure feedback quality. Moreover, employees should be trained on the value of open-mindedness in accepting and acting on feedback

The appraisal system should incorporate a transparent numerical rating scale that employees understand and perceive as fair. Regular workshops should be organized to educate employees on the criteria used for evaluations, and independent auditors should periodically review the rating process to minimize bias and ensure consistency.

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