

**EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
IN UGANDA: A CASE OF UGANDA REGISTRATION SERVICES BUREAU**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of employee contracts on employee Performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau. Specifically, the study was guided by three specific objectives, namely: to examine the effect of job targets on employee performance, to investigate the effect of reward system on employee performance and to examine the effect of contract obligation on employee Performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau. The study used a cross-sectional design that adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Questionnaires, interview guide, and the documentary review guides were used to collect data from 100 participants. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, regression analysis to establish and determine the association between the study variables. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was analysed using thematic and content analysis. Findings revealed that job targets, reward system, and contract obligation had a significant influence on the employee performance at URSB. The study recommended that there is need for Uganda Registration Service Bureau to specify in each contract the hours of engagement instead of relying on the Public Standing Orders, to enable employees know the actual period of job engagement. The study also recommended that government entities like URSB should uphold their reward systems by providing both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that would influence employee performance. It was recommended that government organizations should enhance job protection for employees on fixed term contracts to better their employment experience in their placement. Conclusively, the study affirmed that fixed term contracts should be embedded with job targets, reward systems, and contractual obligations that are set to guide employees within the specified tenure of service and also help them understand their roles and responsibilities but most importantly creates job protection and assures them of job security.

Key words: **employment contracts and employee performance, public institutions and Uganda registration services bureau**

Background to the study

Globally, performance has always been in contentious both the private and public sectors (Winny et al., 2023). With the evolution of workers' performance dating back to the construction of the pyramids in Egypt, the trend has been advancing on the path of efficiency, productivity, effectiveness, timely service delivery and commitment to the day-to-day work activities (Racheal, Kazaara, et al., 2023). As stated by Millán et al (2011) that the heightened interest in performance management in the 1980s was entailed to channel employers' urge to manage performance from the onset at contract signing. The implementation of performance management systems traced back in the 1980s and 90s brought to light the need to continuously assess employee efficiency and effectiveness in executing their routine activities (S. J. Mark & Jacob, 2023). In the legal perspective, employee performance has evolved as an inherent factor of consideration to hire and fire within contract law based on the prevailing and relevant legislations (Winny et al., 2023).

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In the African context, employee performance has been a critical aspect of socio-economic development since the colonial times. Its attribution to government performance has from that time involved different modalities including employment contracts (Oromo et al., 2023).

An employment contracts sets out job targets, rewards, and obligations to be fulfilled by the employee. (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022) defined an employment contract as a reciprocal contract in which a worker places their services at the disposal of an organization or person at a determined remuneration whereby the employer has authority over the worker on to whom he or she exercises supervision (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). At Uganda Registration Services Bureau, employment contracts fall under the Ministry of Public Service which fall into three major categories; permanent contract, fixed-term contract, and casual contracts (Uganda Registration Services Bureau Annual Report, 2018/19). In this study, employment contracts were measured by job targets, reward systems and contract obligations at Uganda Registration Services Bureau (Omotunde et al., 2013).

The Uganda Registration Services Bureau (Uganda Registration Services Bureau) is a public semiautonomous statutory body established in 1998 by an act of parliament Chapter 210 of the laws of Uganda. The body is responsible for registrations including; civil, business, patents, intellectual property rights plus any other deemed by the laws of Uganda (Uganda Registration Services Bureau Annual Report, 2018/19). The Bureau employs 313 personnel out of the required 524 as per the Ministry of Public Service across its eight directorates (Lucky et al., 2023). Employees have distinctive employment contracts including permanent contracts, fixed-term, and casual. The creation of departments at Uganda Registration Services Bureau suggested differentiated employment contracts tagged to the expected outcomes for each individual. Uganda Registration Services Bureau's organizational and administrative structure illustrates different hierarchies of management depicting varied targets and outcomes (Isaac et al., 2023). 214 employees are on fixed-term employment contract, 43 are on permanent contract while 68 are casual employees (Uganda Registration Services Bureau Annual Report, 2017/18).

Problem statement

Employment contracts are intended at providing strong basis for protecting the rights and interest of either party in employment relations (Flavia et al., 2023). The general belief from both theory and practice is that contracts for employees will reciprocate in employee performance (Soonae & Sungjoo, 2020). It is in the same pursuit that Uganda Registration Services Bureau employs its staff on well-defined contracts designed to promote their performance levels through job target setting, rewards and clear contract obligations (Emmanuel et al., 2023). The Uganda Registration Services Bureau offers employment contracts including the following; fixed term contracts and short-term contracts. Despite the said employment contract arrangement described above, employee performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau is still a subject for debate (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). There is evidence that of the 214 employees on fixed-term contract, 35% of them scored low in

the annual performance appraisal in the post lockdown period earmarking low efficiency, effectiveness, and untimely service delivery contrary to their job targets and obligation as per the contract (Uganda Registration Services Bureau Annual Report, 2017/18) (Allan et al., 2023). The efforts by the personnel department in conducting performance evaluations, setting job targets for each employee and setting out rewards notwithstanding, employee's productivity remains low with routine untimely service delivery (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022). Although Uganda Registration Services Bureau has committed to offer FTCs to its employees with clear obligations prescribed, their performance has not fully surpassed the set expectations. It is, therefore, imperative that the Uganda Registration Services Bureau devises means of setting clearer job targets, reward system, and also endeavor to urge employee to commit to the contract obligations (Uganda Registration Services Bureau Annual Report, 2018/19). It is against this apprehension that the researcher seeks to determine the effect of employment contracts on employee performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effect of Job targets on employee performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau.
2. To determine the effect of reward system on employee Performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau.
3. To establish the influence of contract obligation on employee Performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau

Hypotheses of the study

H₀ Job targets have a significant effect on employee performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau

H₀ Reward system significantly influences employee Performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau

H₀ Contract obligations significantly affect employee Performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau

Literature

A study by Vettori (2016) on the employment contract and the changed world of work revealed that clear contract obligations motivate employees to engage in discretionary behaviors which stir up efficiency in service delivery (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). The employees' perceptions and attitudes towards the FTCs are psychological ingredient of their ability to be productive in their respective job duties and responsibilities (Ong'eta & K. Employment contracts reflect socio-emotional aspects of employees' feelings towards the job in question and thus determine the degree of efficiency and effectiveness they would exhibit. In the set of trust, employee performance is increase if contract obligations are clearly set and seem plausible to uphold (Musaibah et al., 2023). The CIPD (2020) revealed that employment protection highlights the need for a lawyer in any contract management discussions (Racheal, Enock, et al., 2023). Although managing contracts in Uganda is overlooked, the interaction between managers and employees would initiate discussions that can ostensibly reveal situations that relate to the employment protection which would demand revision of

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the set contract terms (Bananuka et al, 2018; Sales, 2019). There is no evidence that employment protection at Uganda Registration Services Bureau is fully known and this sets foundation for this study.

Methodology

Research design

A cross-sectional design was used to describe the effect of employee contracts on employment performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau. This design was adopted because it involved observation of a sample once; it was cheap and timely as it involved observation of a sample of a population at one point in a time as asserted by Bryman and Bell (2014). The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect detailed information. To quantify the number of respondents, a quantitative approach was used while qualitative was used to explore in-depth how rewards affect employee performance.

Study Population

The population for this study was 159 generated from Uganda Registration Services Bureau. The study population comprised of the top management (6), department heads (8), field operatives (36), and operational employees (109). The study population is distributed as per table 1.

Table 1: Sample Size and Selection

Employee Groups	Population	Sample	Sampling Technique
Top management	6	6	Purposive Sampling
Departmental heads	8	8	Purposive Sampling
Field-based operatives	36	32	Simple Random Sampling
Operational employees	109	80	Simple Random Sampling
Total	159	126	

Source: Uganda Registration Services Bureau Annual Report 2019/20 as adopted from Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

Sampling Design, Techniques and Procedure

Cox and Hassard (2010) defined a sampling design as the road map that guides how sampling for a study will be conducted. In this study, sample design included sample frame, and sample size. Kothari (2011) defined sampling technique as a plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. In the study, both purposive and simple random sampling were employed. This study adopted a purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Simple random sampling refers to a sampling done randomly within a study population so as to give every member equal opportunity of being sampled.

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaire

The data is the systematic gathering of data (Cooper, 2014). This study used a structural questionnaire to collect primary data. Saunders et al (2012) noted that a questionnaire is a research tool containing structured

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questions upon which data or information is collected. The study questionnaire was divided into five sections: section I collected bio data from respondents, section II collected data on job targets, section III contained questions on reward system, section IV comprised of questions on contract obligations, and section five contained questions on employee performance.

Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaire to collect data from the respondents and from archived sources.

Questionnaires

The researcher chose questionnaire as an instrument because of the descriptive nature of the study to enable easy data collection. Questionnaires containing close-ended questions were developed and fed into a phone. Close ended questions were opted for because of their high response rate. Questionnaires are time saving and cost effective according to Saunders et al (2012). Questionnaires were administered to 112 respondents.

Data Analysis Techniques

The instruments that were used to collect information from the field yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. The raw data were cleaned, stored, edited for accuracy and clarity. Data analysis was done using a Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022).

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected mainly from close ended questions. Data was arranged, scrutinized, edited, word processed to eliminate errors and ensured accuracy of data collected to avoid misinterpretation of information. The variables to be quantitatively evaluated include job targets, rewards and contract obligations as they affect employee performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau. Further data was presented in form of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation as units of measures using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the population sampled. Correlational analysis and regression analysis was applied to establish the relationship between the study variables. Correlation coefficient was used to indicate the degree to which variables are related to one another. This enabled the researcher to find out the direction whether positivity or negativity. Regression analysis was carried out to establish the linear relationship between the employment contracts and employment performance.

RESULTS

Correlation results for job targets and employee performance in URSB

Spearman correlation coefficient (r) was used to find the relationship between job targets and employee performance. Table 1 presents the test results.

Table 4. 5: Correlation results for job targets and employee performance at URBS

		Job Targets	Employee Performance
Job Targets	Pearson Correlation	1	.687**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.687**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

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

Source: Primary data (2023)

The results in Table 1 shows that, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for job targets and employee performance at URSB was $r = 0.687^{**}$, which was significantly positive with probability value ($p = 0.000$) that is less than $\alpha = 0.01$ level of significance showing a positive relationship between job targets and employee performance at the 1% level of significance. The correlation results indicate a significant positive relationship between job targets and employee performance at URSB. The statistics indicate that job targets is positively and statistically associated with employee performance in URSB. In other words, job targets significantly led to employee performance. In terms of strength, the relationship was strong as indicated by the Pearson correlation of 0.687.

The positive nature of the correlation implied that job targets enhance employee performance in URSB.

Regression results for Job Targets and Employee Performance in URSB

To test the effect of job targets on employee performance at URSB, a regression analysis was done by the study to find coefficient of determination and the results are shown in Table 4.6 below the first hypothesis stated, *"Job targets have a significant effect on employee performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau"*.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.687 ^a	.472	.467		.44890

a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Targets

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	17.661	1	17.661	87.642	.000 ^a
1 Residual	19.748	98	.202		
1 Total	37.410	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Target

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.005		-.016	.987
1 Job Target	.889	.687	9.362	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) indicating the variation in employee performance accounted by job targets was 0.467 (Nelson et al., 2023). This statistic meant that job targets explain 46.7 % of the variation in employee performance in URSB. The 53.3% of variation in employee performance is explained by other factors. Regarding significance of the regression model, the p-value for the F-statistic was less than 1% significant level implying that job targets explain a significant effect on employee performance at URSB. It means that the model was significant in explaining employee performance implying that job targets effect employee performance. In terms of magnitude of effect; the b-coefficient was 0.687 indicating that job targets would affect employee performance in URSB by 68.7%.

The earlier hypothesis of Job targets having a significant effect on employee performance at Uganda Registration Services Bureau is accepted.

Reward System and Employee Performance in URSB

This section gives a description of research objective two of determining the influence of reward system on employee performance at URSB and was assessed using a variety of questions as per Section C of the Instrument (Appendix I) using 8 questions, each respondent was required to give the extent to which he agreed with statements provided. The resulting summary statistics are in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive results for Reward system

	SDA %	DA %	NR %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Dev
Reward System							
Uganda Registration Services Bureau employees under FTC have control over their job task	76.0	17.0	0.0	7.0	0.0	1.38	0.814
Uganda Registration Services Bureau senior managers regularly delegate tasks to their	54.0	31.0	1.0	13.0	1.0	1.76	1.05
Efforts by employees under FTC are recognized at Uganda Registration Services Bureau	52.0	31.0	1.0	15.0	1.0	1.82	1.095
Line managers at Uganda Registration Services Bureau appreciates efforts by employees under FTC	52.0	34.0	2.0	11.0	1.0	1.75	1.009

Salaries at Uganda Registration Services Bureau is paid in time	2.0	1.0	0.0	20.0	77.0	4.69	0.720
Allowances and salaries for employee under FTC are competitive	82.0	11.0	0.0	7.0	0.0	1.32	0.803
Uganda Registration Services Bureau employee under FTC is offered incentives such as hampers	5.0	85.0	0.0	9.0	1.0	2.16	0.692
Professional qualifications for employees under FTC improve employee knowledge and skills to perform	4.0	3.0	1.0	16.0	76.0	4.57	0.967

Source: Primary data (2023)

The results in table 2 revealed that 76.0% of respondents strongly disagreed to the statement that Uganda Registration Services Bureau employees under FTC have control over their job task and 54.0% strongly disagreed that Uganda Registration Services Bureau senior managers regularly delegate tasks to their subordinates while 31.0% disagreed to the statement (N. Mark et al., 2023). The findings in Table 2 further indicated that 52.0 % of respondents strongly disagreed to the statement that efforts by employees under FTC are recognized at Uganda Registration Services Bureau while 31.0% disagreed; 52.0% strongly disagreed that Line managers at Uganda Registration Services Bureau appreciate efforts by employees under FTC while 34% disagreed. However, 77.0% strongly agreed that salaries at Uganda Registration Services Bureau are paid in time and 20.0% agreed; 82.0 % of respondents strongly disagreed that allowances and

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salaries for employee under FTC are competitive and 11.0% disagreed (Oscar et al., 2023); 85.0% disagreed that Uganda Registration Services Bureau employee under FTC are offered incentives such as hampers; and 76.0% strongly agreed to the statement that Professional qualifications for employees under FTC improve employee knowledge and skills to perform and 16.0% agreed. The above findings were supplemented by findings from qualitative research where the researcher continued to interrogate managers and supervisors by interviewing them on the influence of reward system on employee performance in URSB (Faridah et al., 2023).

Correlation of results on reward systems and employee performance in URSB

To find the relationship between reward system and employee performance in URSB, a spearman correlation coefficient was done by the study and the results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Correlation results on reward systems and employee performance in URSB

		Reward System	Employee Performance
Reward System	Pearson Correlation	1	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.575	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

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

The correlation results indicate a significant positive relationship between reward system and the employee performance in URSB. This is because the p-value (0.000) for the person correlation coefficient (0.575) is less than 1% significance level. The statistics indicate that reward system positively and statistically associate with employee performance at URSB. In other words, reward system significantly enhances employee performance in URSB. In terms of strength, the relationship is moderate as indicated by the Pearson correlation of 0.575.

Table 4: Regression results on reward system and employee performance in URSB Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.575 ^a	.235	.232	.54379

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reward System

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.431	1	8.431	28.510	.000 ^a
Residual	28.979	98	.296		
Total	37.410	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant): Reward System

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Beta		
(Constant)	1.158		4.006	.000
Reward System	.624	.575	5.75	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) indicating the variation in employee performance accounted by reward system was 0.232. This statistic meant that reward systems explain 23.2% of the variation in employee performance in URSB. The 76.8% of variation in employee performance is explained by other factors. Regarding significance of the regression model, the p- value for the F-statistic was less than 1% significant level implying that reward systems explain a significant effect on employee performance in URSB. In terms of magnitude of effect; the b- coefficient was 0.575 indicating that reward systems would affect employee performance in URSB by 57.5%.

Correlation results on contract obligations and their effect to employee performance in URSB

To find out the relationship between contract obligation and employee performance in URSB, a spearman correlation coefficient was done and the results are shown in Table 4.10 below.

Table 5: Correlation results on Contract obligations and employee performance in URSB

		Contract Obligation	Employee Performance
Contract Obligation	Pearson Correlation	1	.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.702**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

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

The results in Table 5 shows that, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for contract obligation and employee performance at URSB was $r = 0.702^{**}$, which was significantly positive with probability value ($p = 0.000$) that is less than $\alpha = 0.01$ level of significance showing a positive relationship between contract obligation and employee performance at the 1% level of significance. The correlation results indicate a significant positive relationship between contract obligation and employee performance at URSB. The statistics indicate that contract obligation is positively and statistically associated with employee performance in URSB. In other words, contract obligation significantly led to employee performance. In terms of strength, the relationship was strong as indicated by the Pearson correlation of 0.702.

The positive nature of the correlation implied that contract obligations enhance employee performance in URSB.

Regression results on contract obligations and employee performance in URSB

Table 5: Regression results on contract obligations on employee performance in URSB

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.702 ^a	.493	.488	.43991

a. Predictors: (Constant), contract obligations

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.445	1	18.445	95.315	.000 ^a
1 Residual	18.965	98	.194		
Total	37.410	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), contract obligations

b. Dependent variable: Employee performance

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Beta		
(Constant)	.603		2.785	.000
1 Contract Obligation	.899	.702	9.763	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) indicating the variation in employee performance accounted by contract obligation was 0.488. This statistic meant that contract obligation explains 48.8% of the variation in employee performance in URSB. The 51.2% of variation in employee performance is explained by other factors. Regarding significance of the regression model, the p-value for the F-statistic was less than 1% significant level implying that contract obligations explain a significant effect in employee performance in URSB. In terms of magnitude of effect; the b-coefficient was 0.702 indicating that contract obligation would affect employee performance in URSB by 70.2%.

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Table 6: Multiple regression model

Model Summary

		Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.748 ^a	.560	.546

a. Predictors: (Constant), Contract Obligations, Reward System, Job Targets

ANOVA^b

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	20.933	3	6.978	40.655	.000 ^a
Residual	16.477	96	.172		
Total	37.410	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Contract Obligations, Reward System, Job Targets b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Coefficients^a

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.105	.284		-.370	.712
Job Targets	.469	.131	.362	3.592	.001
Reward System	.068	.111	.323	3.231	.003
Contract Obligations	.521	.135	.407	3.861	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Table 4.12 shows multiple correlation coefficient $R = .748$ which suggest a significant very strong positive relationship between employee contracts (job targets, reward systems and contract obligation) and employee performance in URSB. It further shows $R^2 = 0.560$ which suggests that employee contract accounted for 56.0% of the variance in employee performance in URSB while the remaining 44.0% is explained by other variables. The ANOVA statistics $F(3, 96) = 40.655$, $\text{sig} = .000$ confirms that employee contract significantly affects employee performance in URSB through job targets, reward systems and contract obligation. The overall model is significantly useful in explaining employee performance in URSB since the p-value is less

than 0.05. The standardized coefficient statistics shows that contract obligations had the highest effect on employee performance in URSB as per the ($\beta = .407$, $t = 3.861$, $\text{Sig.} = .000$) which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that a significant change in contract obligation would result into a significant 0.407-unit change in employee performance in URSB. The standardized coefficient statistics shows that job targets were the second strongest predictor of employee performance in URSB as per the ($\beta = .362$, $t = 3.592$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.001$) which is less than 0.05. This implies that a significant change in job targets would result into a significant 0.362-unit change in employee performance in URSB. The standardized coefficient statistics shows that reward system had a significant effect on employee performance in URSB as per the ($\beta = 0.323$, $t = 3.231$, $\text{Sig.} = .003$) which is lesser than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that a significant change in reward system would result into a significant 0.323-unit change in employee performance in URSB.

Conclusions

The clear definition of employment terms and targets for employees on FTC at URSB was targeted to trigger high efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, commitment and timeliness in their daily job roles. The study established that FTCs are embedded with job targets that are set to guide employees within the specified tenure of service. The time-bound premium of service provision under FTCs at URSB remains a significant contributor to employee performance in the realm of setting job targets. While the contracts specify the expected outcomes, employee performance may not be a guarantee for all employees on FTC. Any failure to set job targets for employees may reciprocate into poor employee performance at URSB. The study concluded therefore that job targets have a significant influence on employee performance in government entities

Recommendations

There is need for government organizations to uphold result-oriented specifications that may trigger employee morale to deliver to the best of their potential during their contract tenure.

Public institutions in Uganda should set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound goals and targets that act as a yard stick for good performance for employees on contract.

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