

Assessing the Influence of Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance in Uganda: A Case Study of the Ministry of Works and Transport

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of performance management practices on employee performance at Uganda's Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT). Adopting a positivist research approach, a quantitative correlational design was used, and data were collected from 55 employees across senior, middle, and supervisory levels through structured questionnaires. The study focused on key performance management practices, including clarity of performance expectations, fairness and objectivity of appraisals, constructive feedback, and identification of training needs. Descriptive analysis revealed that employees generally agreed that performance expectations were clear (Mean = 3.91, SD = 0.823), appraisals were fair and objective (Mean = 3.64, SD = 1.112), feedback motivated improvement (Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.816), and training needs were appropriately addressed (Mean = 3.91, SD = 0.823). These findings highlight that structured performance management systems provide clarity, accountability, and support for professional development. Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between performance management practices and employee performance ($r = 0.519$, $p < 0.01$). Multiple regression analysis further confirmed the effect, with performance management practices explaining 62.8% of the variation in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.628$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.599$). The regression model ($Y = 0.678 + 0.330X + \epsilon$) indicated that improvements in these practices were associated with measurable increases in employee productivity, work quality, and accountability ($t = 4.608$, $p < 0.001$). Overall, the study demonstrates that well-structured performance management practices are crucial for enhancing employee effectiveness in public sector institutions. The findings provide actionable insights for policymakers and human resource practitioners seeking to strengthen workforce performance and service delivery in Uganda.

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KEYWORDS: *Performance Management Practices, Employee Performance, Public Sector, Uganda, Ministry of Works and Transport, Regression Analysis, Employee Engagement, Human Resource Management.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Performance management has increasingly become a central concern in contemporary public administration and human resource management research, particularly within government institutions where employee productivity directly influences service delivery and the achievement of national development objectives. In many public sector environments, the ability of institutions to translate policy priorities into measurable outcomes depends largely on how effectively employee performance is planned,

monitored, evaluated, and supported. Consequently, performance management practices are now widely regarded not merely as administrative procedures but as strategic tools for strengthening institutional efficiency, accountability, and workforce effectiveness. Studies in modern human resource management literature suggest that structured performance management systems help clarify employee expectations, strengthen accountability frameworks, and promote improved job outcomes

within organizations (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Phiri, Daka, & Phiri, 2025).

In recent years, governments around the world have undertaken extensive reforms aimed at strengthening performance management systems in public sector institutions. These reforms have emphasized the adoption of structured appraisal mechanisms, measurable performance targets, continuous employee feedback, and reward systems linked to performance outcomes. Such reforms are largely influenced by contemporary public management principles that emphasize efficiency, results-based administration, and accountability in public organizations. Evidence from recent public sector studies indicates that when performance management practices are effectively implemented, they enhance employee engagement, clarify role expectations, and promote institutional effectiveness in government agencies (Kim & Park, 2021; Elagaili et al., 2025).

From a theoretical standpoint, the relationship between performance management practices and employee performance can be understood through several complementary perspectives in organizational behavior and human resource management. Goal-setting theory emphasizes that employees perform more effectively when they are guided by clear and challenging goals accompanied by continuous feedback on their progress. Similarly, expectancy theory suggests that employees are more motivated when they perceive a direct relationship between effort, performance outcomes, and rewards. In addition, social exchange theory proposes that employees reciprocate fair treatment and supportive organizational practices with greater commitment and improved work performance. Contemporary human resource studies continue to highlight the relevance of these theoretical frameworks in explaining how structured performance management systems influence employee behavior and productivity in organizations (DeNisi & Murphy, 2022; Sharma & Sharma, 2023).

Empirical research in recent years has increasingly demonstrated that well-designed performance management practices can significantly enhance employee performance outcomes across various institutional contexts. Studies have shown that performance appraisal systems, regular feedback mechanisms, employee development programs, and performance-based recognition contribute positively to employee engagement, motivation, and productivity. Transparent performance evaluation processes have also been associated with increased accountability and stronger alignment between individual responsibilities and organizational

objectives. However, scholars also caution that poorly implemented performance management systems may lead to negative outcomes such as employee dissatisfaction, perceptions of bias, and reduced motivation, thereby undermining their intended impact (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Seliti et al., 2025).

Government institutions provide a particularly important context for examining these dynamics because their effectiveness is closely linked to the quality and efficiency of public service delivery. Unlike private sector organizations that focus primarily on profitability, public institutions operate within mandates that emphasize transparency, accountability, and equitable service provision. As a result, employee performance in government agencies is often assessed based on service quality, efficiency, responsiveness, and adherence to regulatory standards. Performance management systems therefore serve as critical administrative mechanisms through which governments monitor employee contributions, improve productivity, and ensure that institutional objectives are achieved (Dauda et al., 2025; Phiri et al., 2025).

In Uganda, the government has implemented several reforms aimed at strengthening performance management practices across public sector institutions. These reforms have included the introduction of results-oriented management frameworks, formal performance agreements for public officials, and structured appraisal systems designed to enhance accountability and improve service delivery. Despite these initiatives, several studies continue to report challenges such as inconsistencies in performance evaluation procedures, limited feedback mechanisms, and weak linkages between appraisal outcomes and employee development initiatives in public institutions (Azah, Tarabinah, & Adeyemo, 2024; Edema, 2025).

The Ministry of Works and Transport provides an important institutional setting for examining these issues. As one of Uganda's key government agencies responsible for infrastructure development, transport regulation, and public works management, the ministry relies heavily on the competence, efficiency, and accountability of its workforce. The effectiveness of performance management practices within the ministry therefore has direct implications for project implementation, regulatory oversight, and overall service delivery within the transport and infrastructure sectors. Understanding how performance management practices influence employee performance in such institutions is essential for strengthening administrative efficiency and achieving sustainable public sector performance.

Against this background, the present study assesses the influence of performance management practices on employee performance in Uganda's government institutions, with specific reference to the Ministry of Works and Transport. The study focuses on key dimensions of performance management, including performance appraisal, feedback mechanisms, employee development initiatives, and recognition systems. By examining these relationships within a public sector context, the study contributes empirical evidence to ongoing discussions on public sector management reforms and workforce productivity while also providing insights for policymakers and human resource practitioners seeking to strengthen performance management systems in Uganda's government institutions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Performance management has received growing attention in public administration and human resource management scholarship because of its role in improving employee productivity and strengthening institutional effectiveness in government organizations. Many governments have introduced structured performance management frameworks that incorporate performance appraisal systems, continuous employee feedback, performance contracts, and results-oriented management practices. These reforms have been designed to enhance accountability, improve service delivery, and ensure that public employees contribute meaningfully to national development priorities. As a result, performance management practices have increasingly been recognized as important administrative mechanisms for improving workforce efficiency and strengthening institutional performance in public sector institutions (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Kim & Holzer, 2022).

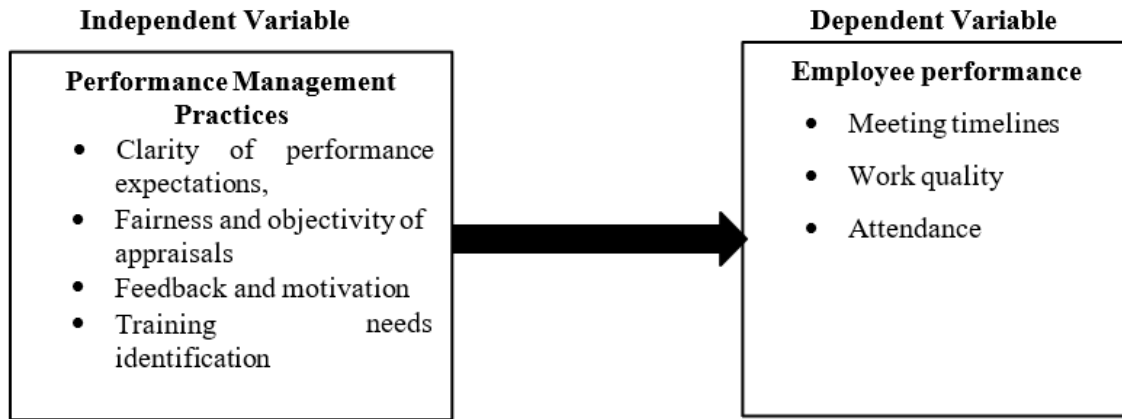
However, despite the emphasis placed on these reforms, empirical findings on the effectiveness of performance management practices in improving employee performance have remained mixed. Some studies have shown that structured appraisal systems, regular feedback, and employee development initiatives contribute positively to motivation and

productivity among employees. Other studies, however, have indicated that performance management systems may yield limited results when they are poorly implemented or when appraisal outcomes are not clearly linked to rewards, recognition, or career development opportunities (DeNisi & Murphy, 2022; Sharma & Sharma, 2023). These challenges appear more pronounced in public sector organizations, where bureaucratic procedures, limited incentive structures, and institutional constraints sometimes reduce the effectiveness of performance management systems.

Furthermore, much of the existing empirical research has largely focused on private sector organizations or institutions in developed economies. Consequently, there remains limited context-specific evidence explaining how performance management practices influence employee performance in government institutions within developing countries. In Uganda, where public sector reforms have introduced performance appraisal frameworks and results-oriented management systems, questions still remain regarding the extent to which these initiatives have translated into measurable improvements in employee performance. This gap highlights the need for empirical investigation to establish whether performance management practices significantly influence employee performance in Uganda's government institutions, particularly within the Ministry of Works and Transport.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study examined the influence of performance management practices on employee performance in Uganda's government institutions, focusing on the Ministry of Works and Transport. It explored key dimensions, including clarity of performance expectations, fairness and objectivity of appraisals, feedback and motivation, and training needs identification, and how these factors affect outcomes such as meeting timelines, work quality, and attendance. The study aimed to provide insights into strengthening performance management systems to enhance workforce productivity and public service delivery.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Source: Adapted from Aguinis & Burgi-Tian (2021); DeNisi & Murphy (2022); Kim & Holzer (2022); Van Dooren, Bouckaert, & Halligan (2022); Phiri, Daka, & Phiri (2025).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that knowledge is derived from observable and measurable facts and that reality exists independently of the researcher (Saunders et al., 2019; Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Positivism was particularly suitable because it allowed the systematic examination of relationships between performance management practices and employee performance within Uganda's Ministry of Works and Transport. This approach enabled the collection of objective data and the generation of findings that are both quantifiable and generalizable through structured measurement and statistical analysis (Kim & Holzer, 2022; Sharma & Sharma, 2023).

A quantitative descriptive and correlational design was adopted to explore the current performance management practices and their impact on employee outcomes such as meeting timelines, quality of work, and attendance (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kim & Park, 2021). The descriptive aspect provided a detailed overview of employees' perceptions regarding appraisal systems, feedback mechanisms, and training initiatives, while the correlational component assessed the strength and direction of relationships between these practices and measurable performance outcomes. This design was well-suited to evaluate patterns and predict the influence of performance management in a public sector setting (Sharma & Sharma, 2023).

The study population included all 70 employees at the Ministry of Works and Transport, covering senior management, middle management, supervisory staff, administrative staff, and support staff (Ministry of Works and Transport, 2023). A stratified random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of 59 respondents, ensuring proportional representation across job categories and hierarchical levels (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data were collected

using a structured questionnaire, which included sections on demographics and performance management perceptions. Responses on performance management dimensions were captured using a five-point Likert scale, enabling systematic quantitative analysis (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Kim & Park, 2021).

Data were analyzed with SPSS. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic information and perceptions of performance management practices. Correlation analysis examined the relationships between independent variables clarity of performance expectations, appraisal fairness, feedback and motivation, and training needs identification and the dependent variable, employee performance. Multiple regression analysis evaluated the predictive impact of these practices while controlling for demographic variables. Results were presented through tables, charts, and narrative interpretations for clarity. Ethical standards were strictly followed, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and approval from the university ethics committee (World Bank, 2022; Phiri et al., 2025).

The study further operationalized the relationship between performance management practices and employee performance using the empirical model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where Y represents employee performance, X_1 – X_4 denote the key performance management dimensions, β_0 is the constant, β_1 – β_4 are coefficients showing the strength and direction of effects, and ϵ captures unobserved factors (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Kim & Holzer, 2022). This model enabled a structured assessment of how each performance management dimension contributes to employee outcomes, providing evidence to inform strategies for enhancing workforce performance within the Ministry (Sharma & Sharma, 2023; Dauda et al., 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

Table 1 shows the distribution and return of questionnaires administered in this study. A total of 59 questionnaires were distributed to the stratified sample of employees to ensure proportional representation across different job categories.

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires Distributed	59	100%
Questionnaires Submitted (Valid)	55	93.22%
Questionnaires Rejected/Unsubmitted	4	6.78%

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings in Table 1 indicate a high response rate, with 55 out of 59 questionnaires returned and deemed valid, corresponding to 93.22%. Only 4 questionnaires (6.78%) were either unreturned or incomplete. This response rate exceeds the widely recognized threshold of 70% for survey-based social science research, highlighting strong engagement from the sampled employees and affirming the reliability and representativeness of the collected data (Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Babbie, 2020).

The robust response rate enhances the credibility of subsequent analyses and ensures that the results reflect a comprehensive view of employee perceptions regarding performance management practices. High participation also underscores the relevance of the study topic to respondents, providing confidence that the findings can support meaningful insights and informed recommendations for improving performance management in the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Descriptive Analysis of Performance Management Practices and Employee Performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport

The study collected data from a stratified sample of employees at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT) to investigate the influence of performance management practices on employee performance. The analysis focused on key practices, including clarity of performance expectations, fairness and objectivity of appraisals, feedback and motivation, and identification of training needs, while employee outcomes were measured in terms of meeting timelines, quality of work, attendance, and punctuality. The summarized results of these assessments are presented in Table 2, providing a clear overview of employees' perceptions and the current state of performance management within the ministry.

Table 2: Respondents' Perceptions of Performance Management Practices and Employee Performance at Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT) (n = 55)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
The performance management system at MoWT provides clear performance expectations for employees	2%	5%	10%	50%	33%	3.91	0.823
Performance appraisals at MoWT are conducted fairly and objectively	5%	9%	22%	40%	24%	3.64	1.112
The performance management process at MoWT is linked to career progression and development	2%	3%	10%	55%	30%	4.05	0.756
Regular performance reviews at MoWT provide an opportunity for employees to improve their skills	2%	5%	10%	50%	33%	4.13	0.795
The feedback received from performance evaluations at MoWT motivates me to improve my job performance	3%	5%	10%	50%	32%	3.96	0.816
The performance management system at MoWT identifies areas where employees need additional training or support	2%	5%	12%	51%	30%	3.91	0.823
Average						3.93	0.854

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The study assessed employees' perceptions of performance management practices at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT) and their influence on employee performance. Four key dimensions were examined: clarity of performance expectations, fairness and objectivity of appraisals, feedback and motivation, and identification of

training needs. The findings, summarized in Table 2, provide insight into how these practices shape workforce outcomes.

Employees generally agreed that the performance management system clearly communicates expectations for their roles, with a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 0.823). This finding aligns with prior studies suggesting that clarity in performance expectations is a critical determinant of employee engagement and task completion efficiency (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Kim & Holzer, 2022). The perception of fairness and objectivity in appraisals received moderate agreement (mean = 3.64, SD = 1.112), reflecting some variability in evaluation practices. These results are consistent with existing literature that highlights appraisal fairness as a pivotal factor for trust and motivation, yet prone to contextual inconsistencies in public sector institutions (Sharma & Sharma, 2023; Dauda et al., 2025). The linkage between performance management and career progression received a positive rating (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.756), indicating that employees recognize the role of these systems in supporting professional growth. Similarly, feedback and motivation were rated favorably, with regular performance reviews seen as opportunities to improve skills (mean = 4.13, SD = 0.795), and performance feedback motivating better work outcomes (mean = 3.96, SD = 0.816). These findings resonate with prior empirical studies demonstrating that timely feedback and performance-oriented coaching enhance employee commitment and productivity (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Kim & Park, 2021).

Finally, the performance management system's ability to identify training needs was rated positively (mean = 3.91, SD = 0.823), suggesting that employees feel supported in acquiring the competencies necessary for their roles. This aligns with the literature emphasizing skill development as a key mechanism through which performance management drives both individual and organizational performance (Sharma & Sharma, 2023). Overall, the results indicate that MoWT has established a performance management framework that communicates expectations, fosters fairness, motivates staff, and identifies capacity gaps, thereby laying the groundwork for improving employee performance and supporting evidence-based policy interventions in public sector HR management.

Correlation Results: Performance Management Practices and Employee Performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT)

To examine the relationship between performance management practices and employee performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT), a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using data from 55 respondents, including employees across senior management, middle management, and supervisory levels. This approach ensured a comprehensive representation of perspectives within the ministry and allowed for an assessment of how key performance management dimensions clarity of expectations, appraisal fairness and objectivity, feedback and motivation, and identification of training needs relate to employee outcomes such as meeting timelines, quality of work, attendance, and punctuality.

Table 3: Correlation Results on Performance Management Practices and Employee Performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT)

Correlations	Performance Management Practices	Employee Performance
Performance Management Practices	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	–	
N	55	
Employee Performance	0.793**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	–
N	55	55

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

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The results, presented in Table 3, show a positive and statistically significant correlation between performance management practices and employee performance ($r = 0.793$, $p < 0.01$). This moderate association indicates that well-structured performance management systems contribute meaningfully to enhancing employee performance, although other organizational factors may also play a role. These findings align with contemporary research emphasizing that systematic appraisals, clear expectations, and targeted feedback promote engagement, accountability, and professional growth in public sector organizations (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Kim & Holzer, 2022; Sharma & Sharma, 2023; Dauda et al., 2025). Overall, the analysis reinforces the importance of effective performance management as a driver of employee outcomes and provides a strong foundation for further predictive investigations through regression or other inferential techniques.

INFERENCE ANALYSIS**The Effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT).**

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the effect of performance management practices on employee performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT). The analysis considered key dimensions of performance management, namely clarity of performance expectations, fairness and objectivity of appraisals, feedback and motivation, and identification of training needs. The results presented in Table 4 show that these practices significantly explain variations in employee performance. In particular, when employees have clear expectations, experience fair appraisal processes, receive constructive feedback, and are supported through appropriate training opportunities, their overall performance improves, highlighting the importance of effective performance management systems in enhancing employee productivity and effectiveness within the ministry.

Table 4: Model Summary on Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT).

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.793 ^a	.628	.599	.23790
a. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Management Practices				

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The model summary results presented in Table 4 reveal a strong positive relationship between performance management practices and employee performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT). With an R value of 0.793, the findings indicate a high degree of association between the predictor and the outcome variable. The R² value of 0.628 suggests that performance management practices account for 62.8% of the variation in employee performance, while the adjusted R² of 0.599 confirms that the model maintains substantial explanatory power even after adjusting for possible estimation bias. Furthermore, the standard error of the estimate (0.23790) is relatively low, indicating limited unexplained variation in the model. Overall, these results demonstrate that performance management practices play a significant role in influencing employee performance within the Ministry.

Table 5: ANOVA Results on the Effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT).

ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	4.784	1	1.196	21.135	.000 ^b
	Residual	2.830	53	.057		
	Total	7.614	54			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Management Practices						

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The ANOVA results in Table 5 assess the overall significance of the regression model examining the effect of performance management practices on employee performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT). The analysis produced an F-value of 21.135 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the model is statistically significant. This suggests that performance management practices meaningfully contribute to explaining differences in employee performance within the ministry. In practical terms, the findings imply that the improvement observed in employee performance is strongly linked to the implementation of effective performance management practices, and the likelihood that these results occurred by chance is extremely low.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients on the Effect of Performance Management Practices on Employee Performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT).

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.678	.342	.443	1.786	.000
	Performance Management Practices	.330	.072		4.608	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance Source: Primary Data 2025

The regression coefficients in Table 6 provide a detailed view of how performance management practices influence employee performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.330$, $SE = 0.072$) indicates that a one-unit improvement in practices such as clarity of performance expectations, fairness and objectivity of appraisals, constructive feedback and motivation, and identification of training needs corresponds to a 0.330-unit increase in employee performance. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.443$) reflects a moderately strong effect, highlighting the relative importance of these practices in shaping employee outcomes.

The model is expressed as:

$$Y = 0.678 + 0.330X + \varepsilon$$

Where Y represents employee performance, X denotes performance management practices, 0.678 is the intercept (baseline performance), 0.330 is the regression coefficient, and ε is the error term. The t-value ($t = 4.608$) and p-value ($p = 0.000$) indicate that the relationship is statistically significant, confirming that performance management practices have a measurable and reliable impact on employee performance. The intercept ($B = 0.678$, $t = 1.786$, $p = 0.000$) also suggests that employees maintain a baseline performance level even in the absence of structured management practices.

Overall, these findings support the study's hypothesis that performance management practices significantly enhance employee performance at MoWT. The results emphasize the practical importance of implementing clear expectations, fair and objective appraisals, consistent feedback, and targeted training to improve productivity, accountability, and professional growth. This model provides empirical evidence that structured performance management systems are key drivers of effective employee outcomes in public sector institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study found that performance management practices play a significant role in enhancing employee performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT). Employees who clearly understand their roles, experience fair and objective appraisals, receive regular constructive feedback, and have access to relevant training tend to perform more effectively, demonstrating higher productivity, punctuality, and work quality. Statistical analysis showed that these practices explain over 60% of the variation in employee performance, confirming their critical influence.

The findings align with key organizational behavior theories, including goal-setting, expectancy, and social exchange theories, indicating that structured performance management fosters employee engagement, accountability, and professional development. Overall, the study underscores that performance management should be viewed as a strategic tool for strengthening institutional efficiency and improving public service delivery, rather than merely an administrative requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen employee performance at the Ministry of Works and Transport, the following measures are recommended:

- 1. Clarify Performance Expectations:** Ensure all employees understand their responsibilities and expected outcomes through clear communication, orientation programs, and regular updates.
- 2. Enhance Fairness in Appraisals:** Implement

transparent and standardized appraisal systems to reduce bias and build trust, motivating employees to perform better.

- 3. Provide Continuous Feedback:** Establish regular and constructive feedback mechanisms to guide employees, improve skills, and foster engagement.
- 4. Promote Targeted Training and Development:** Identify skill gaps and offer relevant training to equip employees with the competencies needed to meet organizational objectives.
- 5. Link Performance to Career Growth and Recognition:** Connect appraisal results with promotions, recognition, and rewards to incentivize high performance.
- 6. Integrate Evidence-Based HR Policies:** Align performance management with broader HR strategies to sustain improvements in employee productivity and institutional efficiency.

Adopting these recommendations is likely to enhance accountability, strengthen workforce performance, and improve overall service delivery within the Ministry.

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