The Effects of Human Resource Management Practices on the Performance of Decentralization in Kalungu District, Uganda. A cross-sectional study.

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Abstract
Background.
There is no significant work in decentralization in the context of human resource management, and the reason is that top management has never realized the needs and demands of their employees. This study examined the effects of human resource management practices on decentralization performance in Kalungu District, Uganda.

Methodology.
The study used a correlational research study design, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to the population of employees in Kalungu district decentralization. The study used both purposive and simple random sampling techniques, where 121 respondents were selected out of 201 employees.

Results.
(57.9%) of the respondents were male, (65.3%) of the respondents were married. There is a positive significant relationship between recruitment practices and Decentralization performance (0.444(**) and its significance level 0.000), there is a positive significant relationship between motivation and the Decentralization performance in Kalungu District (0.171(**) and its significance level 0.009) and there is a positive relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance in Kalungu District (0.366 and its significance level 0.000.).

Conclusion.
In the absence of proper recruitment practices, incompetent staff will be recruited and negatively affect the decentralization performance; training and development of employees are essential aspects for the realization of better employee performance in decentralization. Although wages are still important for staff motivation, nonmonetary incentives such as recognition need to be given consideration.

Recommendation.
The district management, with the district service commission, needs to put in place a rigorous selection criterion that will help to select and recruit qualified employees who will help to improve district performance. The district management and political leadership also need to recognize the achievements and contributions of employees to motivate them to perform, and a training needs assessment (TNA) should be carried out for better implementation of training.

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Background.

Recruitment refers to the range of organizational strategies and decisions aimed at attracting individuals who are willing to apply for and assume available positions. It, therefore, integrates selection and placement processes that facilitate individuals entering roles within the organization (Titeca, 2018). Before the decentralization of civil services in Uganda, decentralization authorities could transfer officials, and on occasion, all decentralized personnel systems were unified (Nabaho, 2012). With the onset of decentralization, there was a reallocation of civil servants from central to local governments, and personnel management at both district and lower local levels was handled by distinct District Service Commissions (DSCs). The 1995 Constitution of Uganda grants DSCs the authority to recruit, dismiss, and oversee personnel at the district level.

District councils are empowered to appoint members of the DSCs, while the district executive committees are responsible for recommending these members, subject to approval by the Public Service Commission (PSC) of the central government. However, following a constitutional amendment in 2006, Uganda encountered challenges that led to the partial re-centralization of certain human resource functions (Nabaho, 2012). Specifically, the authority to appoint and dismiss Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), their deputies, and municipal town clerks was shifted from

the DSCs back to the PSC. This was intended to promote accountability and enhance efficiency and effectiveness in decentralized governance (Nabaho, 2013).

Recruitment encompasses identifying all potential candidates for job openings within an organization. An effective recruitment process requires careful planning and implementation to avoid hastily selecting unsuitable candidates just to fill vacancies quickly (Oniwide, n.d.). The performance of decentralized institutions, especially in terms of service delivery—such as productivity, timeliness, service quality, adaptability, and communication—relies heavily on the technical staff's ability to manage complex tasks. This, in turn, depends on employee skill levels, competence, and professionalism. Therefore, mapping competencies and developing recruitment and retention policies are vital for improved performance in decentralized entities (Oniwide, n.d.).

To achieve organizational success, it is essential to hire individuals who are well-suited for their roles, as their contributions influence organizational performance (Othman, 2021). The main goal of employee selection is to identify the most suitable candidates for available roles (Fomude et al., 2020). Effective selection procedures increase the likelihood of recruiting individuals who will enhance productivity. Motivation among employees can be either financial or non-financial. Some workers are driven by financial incentives like salaries, bonuses, allowances, and other monetary benefits, while others are motivated by non-monetary rewards such as recognition, respect, training,

professional growth, and autonomy (John, 2017). In Sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda, reforms have been introduced to boost staff motivation through a combination of pay and pension reforms, performance-based pay, and strict enforcement of discipline (Therkildsen and Tidemand, 2019). This study specifically assessed how human resource management practices influence the performance of decentralization in Kalungu District, Uganda.

Methodology.
Research design.

An exploratory and descriptive cross-sectional study was employed. Using both the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Also, available literature and fieldwork will form an important source of data that will be needed.

Area of study.

Kalungu curved from Masaka. This district was taken as a sample for the study; it borders Mpigi, Sembabule, Masaka, Bukomansimbi, and Mityana. Kalugu has a land area of 14.635 square kilometers; 498.45 square kilometers of land under cultivation, 50,960 Ha covered by forest, and over 60 %of the land is underwater. It has a population of about 22524 as per the 2024 population census, and it is projected that in 2040 its population will be 928,421. Its density is 90 per square kilometer. 490,000 (55% are children below 18 years).

Table 1: The Study Population, Sample, and Sample Techniques

Strata	Population	Sample size	Sampling Techniques
Management	4	4	Purposive sampling
Internal Audit	5	5	Purposive sampling
District councillors	30	18	Simple random sampling
CDO	2	2	Purposive sampling
Production	54	28	Simple random sampling
Education and Sports Department	10	6	Simple random sampling
Health	25	15	Simple random sampling
Community-Based Services	12	10	Simple random sampling
Natural Resources	5	5	Purposive sampling
Planning and population	8	4	Simple random sampling
Technical services	4	4	Purpose sampling
Finance Department	22	14	Simple random sampling
Human Resource	8	5	Simple random sampling
Statutory Bodies	12	6	Simple random sampling
Total	**201**	**121**	

Source: *Adopted from Krejcie and Morgan's table (1980)*

Sample size and selection.

This study consisted of one hundred twenty-one (121) respondents, and when this number was reached, a point of saturation was reached, and data collection was stopped. The

researcher emphasized the issue of representativeness and, as such, people from different departments in the district and at selected sub-counties were selected. The lists of departmental staff were used as the frames for sampling

after being updated by the Human Resource Officer and the researcher. Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table (1970) was used for study sample size selection.

Sampling Techniques and Procedures.
Simple random sampling techniques and purposive sampling were employed. The technique of simple random sampling was employed to get the sample for 101 departmental staff in the district, and purposive sampling was employed for the 20 key informants. The non-probability sampling method.

Data Collection Methods.
Primary and secondary data were obtained by the researcher through conducting face-to-face interviews with the key informants and issuing questionnaires, which were self-administered, as well as reviewing important documents on Human resource management practices, which included recruitment and motivation about Decentralization performance. The documents included reports, minutes of meetings, and articles from authentic newspapers and journals, among others. The process was guided by the methods further explained hereunder.

Questionnaire Survey.
The questionnaire was administered to all 121 respondents at the upper and the lower Decentralizations. The respondents recorded the answers by completing the alternative questions provided by the researcher. The primary data was obtained from respondents through the use of a questionnaire, through questionnaire delivered to the respondents by the researcher himself.

Interview Method.
Interviews were used to obtain data from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Principal Human Resource Officer (PHRO), and other top Decentralization officers whom the researcher was able to meet. This helped the researcher to gather clear, information which is in-depth, and accurate information through thorough probing, which could not be easy with a questionnaire.

Documentary Review.
The checklist was developed to guide the information extraction from documents. This is made up of possible information sources that are needed to supplement the research findings by obtaining additional information and addressing controversy.

Data Collection Instruments.
The study particularly used three (3) instruments, these included: the questionnaire, the Interview guide, and the documentary review checklist to obtain the information needed for research**.**

Questionnaires.
Questionnaires were administered to the sample population of 121 respondents. The closed-ended questionnaire was used in the study and was divided into sections of background, recruitment, motivation, employee training, and performance of Decentralization. The research used a five-point standard questionnaire to gather primary data that can be quantified from respondents. The Likert scale used was (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) No comment, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree.

Interview Guide.
An interview guide was used by the researcher to conduct face-to-face interviews. This helped the researcher to get in-depth information on the relationship between Human Resource Management practices and Decentralization performance, taking a case study of Kalungu district. The researcher had to make records of the findings in a notebook, and later on, responses were analyzed, processed, and presented.

Documentary review checklist.
A documentary review checklist, which contains possible areas of information sources, was developed by the researcher to help in the extraction of information from the documents. This information was to supplement the findings by providing extra information and indicating the degree of controversy.

Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments.
Validity.
The Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to test the validity of instruments. The instrument's Content Validity index (CVI) was obtained by rational analysis of the instrument by the expert. The expert reviewed all items in the data collection instruments to measure if they could be read, clear, and easy to understand, and came to some level of agreement on each item, taking only items that scored above the scale of 0.70. This was calculated as follows:

CVI <u>Total Number of items rated by all respondents</u>
     Total Number of items in the Instrument

Table 2: Content Validity Results

Variable	Total No. Of Items	No. Of Items rated	CVI
Recruitment	13	10	**0.77**
Motivation	15	12	**0.8**
Employee training	16	14	**0.875**
Decentralization Performance	19	17	**0.89**

Source: Expert Judgement

Table 2 shows that recruitment produced a CVI of 0.77, motivation produced a CVI of 0.8, employee training produced a CVI of 0.875, whereas Decentralization performance produced 0.89. Since all variables produced a CVI of above 0.70, which is needed for social science research, it indicates that the instrument used was valid for measuring the variables.

Reliability.

The study instruments were pretested using 10% of respondents from Kalungu district Decentralization. Reliability measures the degree to which research instruments yield constant results when measuring variables (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2018). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed using the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) in this study to show the reliability of data. The results at 0.7 and above, as suggested by George and Mallery (2016), were accepted.

Table 3: Scale statistics

Scale Statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
1.9578E2	385.194	19.62637	53

Source: *Primary data*

Table 4. Cronbach's alpha reliability results

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.881	53

***Source:* Primary Data.**

Table 4 shows the scale statistics where the mean is 1.9578E2, the variance is 385.194, and the standard deviation is 19.62637 out of 53 items measured. Table 3.4 further shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.881 out of 53 items that were in the instrument. This indicates that the instruments were reliable since the variables yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value which is above 0.7, as accepted for social science.

The procedure of data collection.

When the proposal defense was successfully done, an introduction letter from the Department of Political and Administrative Science, Kampala University, was given to the researcher, introducing him to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Kalungu District Decentralization, requesting permission to conduct the research study with the Kalungu District Decentralization. Letters seeking permission were written by the researcher to be addressed to the proposed officers in the study to alert them to the research project being carried out.

A brief cover letter was attached to every questionnaire that was supplied to the participants, explaining briefly about the study, ethical issues to be followed while conducting the research study, and assuring the participants that their names would not be included on the questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and were collected from respondents when they were completed and checked for completeness and clarity. Each questionnaire was given a record number, and the responses were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. The data from the interview was transcribed during the interviews; thereafter, in each interview, the records were reviewed by the interviewer to ensure clarity and that no question was left unanswered.

Data Analysis.

Data was analyzed to obtain useful information. To identify the similarity among variables, compare variables, and find the difference between the intended outcomes of variables, the data was described and summarized by the analysis.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using Content and thematic analysis methods; information obtained from interviews was arranged in major themes of recruitment, motivation, employee training, and other related categories. The results

were presented using narratives, direct quotations, and paraphrases as deemed suitable. Implications, conclusions, and opinions of qualitative information on Human Resource Management and the performance of Decentralization were made. Cross-examinations were also made in qualitative data with the quantitative data findings to determine the level of agreement and disagreement.

Quantitative data analysis

The presentation of Quantitative data was done by the use of descriptive statistics, percentages, frequency, mean, and standard deviations for every variable that was used in the research study. There was a combination of strongly agree and agree show agree whereas disagree and strongly disagree were put together to show disagree. The relationships were tested at 99 and 95 percent confidence limits by the use of Pearson's correlation statistics. The positive relationship between variables is shown by a positive correlation, whereas a negative relationship between variables is shown by a negative correlation. A regression analysis with the use of ANOVA statistics of adjusted significance values, t values, 2R values, and beta was used in determining the magnitude of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Amin, 2005)

Measurement of Variables.

The variables that were used in the study were measured at the level of nominal and ordinal scales of the instruments. Specific members were assigned to different attributes of respondents nominally. "Bio-data" led to the arrangement of respondents into categories according to their attributes. Data on recruitment, motivation, employee training, and performance of Decentralization were measured at an ordinal level, where various questions on recruitment, motivation and employee training, and performance of Decentralization were responded to by respondents in Kalungu district Decentralization. Members were assigned various questions in a way that shows the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a specific view. In this way, a

five Likert scale of 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=No comment, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree was used as a measurement for both independent and dependent variables.

Ethical Approval.

Upon approval of the research proposal and successful defense, the researcher obtained all necessary clearances from relevant authorities. Permission was sought from the School of Graduate Studies to carry out the study, and an official letter was obtained to confirm this authorization. Each respondent who was contacted received an informed consent form, which they were asked to read and sign if they agreed to participate in the study. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were not coerced and were fully informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. This information was communicated both verbally and through the informed consent form. The data provided by respondents were treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The researcher ensured that identifying information, such as names of respondents or their family members, was not collected. All responses obtained through questionnaires and interviews were kept confidential and not disclosed to unauthorized individuals. Findings were reported in a generalized form, and raw data were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.

Informed consent

A consent form was filled out by the respondents after explaining the purpose of the study to them. The respondents were assured of confidentiality as no names would appear on the questionnaire. No participant was forced to participate in the study, and all the study materials used during the interviews were safely kept under lock and key, only accessible by the researcher.

Results.
Background Information of Respondents.

Table 5: Gender of the Respondents *N=121*

	Frequency	Percent
Male	70	56.5
Female	51	41.1
Total	**121**	**100.0**

Source: primary data (2024).

Table 5 indicates male respondents as the majority, making a percentage of 57.9%, whereas female respondents were 42.1%. This indicates the representation for gender shows a high variation between males and females, with 15.8 as the percentage difference. This indicates that views in this study were presented by both males and females, irrespective of the gender groups meant.

Table 6: Marital Status of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Married	79	63.7
Single	20	16.1
Divorced	6	4.8
Separated	9	7.3
Widowed	7	5.6
Total	**121**	**97.6**

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 6 indicates that the highest respondent number was for married (65.3%), a sign that they were responsible and settled. About the study, the married category of respondents raised a lot of issues on human resource management practices and the performance of decentralization in Uganda, than their counterparts in the 'single' category. The study had 16.5% respondents who were single, 5.0% divorced, 7.4% separated, and 5.8% widowed.

Table 7: Age Group of the Respondents. *N=121*

	Frequency	Percent
20-30	21	16.9
31-40	58	46.8
41-50	36	29.0
51 years and above	6	4.8
Total	**121**	**100.0**

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 7 indicates that the biggest number of respondents, 47.9% was between 31-40 years of age; this was followed by 29.8% respondents who were 41-50 years. 17.4% of the respondents were 20-30 years, while only 5.0% of the respondents were 51 years and above.

Table 8: Highest Respondent's Level of Education *N=121.*

	Frequency	Percent1
O. Level	1	.8
A. Level	4	3.2
Certificate	13	10.5
Diploma	60	48.4
Degree	32	25.8
Post graduate	11	8.9
Total	121	100.0

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 8 shows that the biggest number of respondents were diploma holders (49.6%) compared to 26.4% degree, 10.7% certificate holders, and 9.1% had a postgraduate, while .8% were O. Level holders. This showed a gap in qualifications since the minimum requirement for a position in any institution is a first degree. This shows that respondents were endowed with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform. In addition, the respondent was capable of reading, understanding the questionnaires, and providing suitable responses.

Recruitment practices and performance of Decentralization in Uganda

Human Resource Management practices have a bearing on the performance of Decentralization in Uganda. In this section, the research seeks to establish the relationship between human resource management practices and the performance of decentralization in Uganda. The Likert scale and standard deviations are used to analyze data for this specific section.

Table 9: Recruitment practices and performance of decentralization in Uganda

Statements	RESPONSES						
	SA	A	NC	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
	%	%	%	%	%		
The management attracts suitable, qualified candidates for the position	39.7	19.8	16.5	12.4	11.6	2.363	1.408
The attraction of suitable qualified candidates helps to improve the district	47.9	19.8	8.3	12.4	11.6	2.198	1.441
The requirements for positions are indicated while attracting candidates	16.5	51.2	16.5	11.6	4.1	2.355	1.023
The management has put up selection methods that are in line future performance of the district	51.2	15.7	16.5	16.5	-	1.983	1.161
The management set enough time for employee selection, which can enable the district to have the right employees	41.3	16.5	13.2	11.6	17.4	2.471	1.538
The set-up standards for employee selection are being followed by the selecting team	45.5	12.4	4.1	13.2	24.8	2.595	1.710
There are potential equal opportunity problems, like discrimination and corruption during the selection period	41.3	13.2	13.2	13.2	19.0	2.553	1.580
Employment is offered to the most suitable qualified candidates in Kalungu district.	66.1	15.7	18.2	-	-	1.520	.7863
Once the selection is made, successful candidates are informed earlier for better preparation	47.9	12.4	11.6	16.5	11.6	2.256	1.248
Performance inductions are carried out upon offering jobs to new employees	39.7	16.5	28.9	8.3	6.6	2.314	1.489

Source: *Primary Data 2024*

Table 9 indicates from the respondents that the management attracts suitable qualified candidates for the position, 39.7% strongly agreed, 19.8% agreed, 16.5% were neutral, 12.4% disagreed, and 11.6% strongly disagreed. This meant that Kalungu District Decentralization recruited qualified candidates for its positions.

During interviews, a respondent remarked;

When qualified employees are recruited, this helps to improve the performance in different departments for the benefit of the local people. The District endeavors to recruit qualified employees who can get the job done, because employee performance is critical to the overall success of any Decentralization.

The respondents were asked to state whether the attraction of suitably qualified candidates helps to improve the district's performance. The respondents were 121 in number, a total of 47.9% strongly agreed, 19% agreed, 8.3% were neutral, 12.4% disagreed, and 11.6% strongly disagreed. The tendency of responses was greatly inclined to agreement, as further reflected through the mean of 2.198

and the corresponding standard deviation of 1.441. This means that the attraction of suitable, qualified candidates improves district performance.

The respondents were requested to state whether the requirements for positions are indicated while attracting candidates, regarding item three. The responses were put in SPSS for computation. The test figures resulting from the computation revealed that the mean is 2.355 and the standard deviation is 1.023. The respondents were 121 in number, a total of 16.5% strongly agreed, 51.2% agreed, 16.5% were neutral, 11.6% disagreed, and 4.1% strongly disagreed

In an interview, a respondent lamented;

"The Service Commission advertises all posts in newspapers and the district official notices board. This helps to attract a lot of people to create a pool where the district selects the most qualified and suitable candidates to enable the district to perform, no wonder we are one of the best performing in Uganda."

The respondents were required to state whether the management has put up selection methods that are in line with future performance. The computed test figures reveal that the mean is 1.983 and the standard deviation is 1.161. The total number of respondents was 121 a total of 51.2% strongly agreed, 15.7% agreed, 16.5% were neutral, and 16.5% disagreed.

In connection with the above, a member of the District Service Commission noted that the District Service Commission established a framework that is used to select the employees; this ensures that the district recruits competent staff for the performance of the district.

Item five required the respondents to state whether the management set enough time for employee selection, which can enable the district to have the right employees. The total number of respondents was 121, a total of 41.3% strongly agreed, 16.5% agreed, 13.2% were neutral, 11.6% disagreed, and 17.4% strongly disagreed.

The respondents were further asked whether the set-up standards for employee selection are being followed by the selecting team. Item means of 2.595 and standard deviations of 1.710, measuring a level of agreement, were computed from the respondents' responses. The number of respondents was 121, and those who strongly agreed were 45.5%, 12.4% agreed, 4.1% were neutral, 13.2% disagreed, and 24.8% strongly disagreed with the question.

The study established that 41.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that there are potential equal opportunity problems, like discrimination and corruption, during the selection period. 13.2% agreed with the statement, another 13.2% were neutral, 13.2% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 19.0% strongly disagreed.

The researcher required the study to state whether employment is offered to the most suitable qualified candidates in Kalungu District. The majority of the respondents, 66.1% strongly agreed with the statement, 12.4% agreed with the statement, and 18.2% of the respondents were undecided. A tabulation of results revealed a mean of 1.50 and a standard deviation of 0.786.

The study further required the respondents to state whether, once the selection is made, successful candidates are informed earlier for better preparations. Results revealed majority of the respondents, 47.9% strongly agreed with the statement, 12.4% agreed with the statement, 11.6% were undecided, 16.5% disagreed with the statement, and 11.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. Tabulations reviewed a mean of 2.256 and a standard deviation of 1.248.

Lastly, the respondents were required to state whether performance inductions are carried out upon offering jobs to new employees. The majority of the respondents, 39.7% strongly agreed with the statement, 16.5% agreed, 28.9% were undecided, 8.3% disagreed, and 6.6% strongly disagreed.

Hypothesis One: Recruitment significantly influences Decentralization performance

The hypothesis was verified using the Pearson correlation coefficient, and the results of the hypothesis are given below.

Table 10: Correlation matrix for Recruitment practices and Decentralization performance

Correlations			
		Recruitment practices	Decentralization performance
Recruitment practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.444**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	121	121
Decentralization performance	Pearson Correlation	.444**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	121	121
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: primary data (2015)

Table 10 shows that the correlation coefficient is 0.444(**) and its significance level is 0.000. This implied that recruitment practices influence Decentralization performance in Kalungu District. This shows that there is a significant positive relationship between recruitment practices and Decentralization performance in Kalungu District. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that was earlier postulated is upheld (H1 upheld).

Regression was also carried out to measure the strength of the relationship between recruitment and Decentralization performance.

Table 11: Regression Analysis for recruitment practices and Decentralization performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.312(a)	.559	.441	2.5400

Predictors: (Constant), Technical roles
Source: primary data (2024)

Table 11: The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R   earlier that states that recruitment significantly influences

Statements on Motivation	RESPONSES						
	SA %	A %	NS %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std. Dev.
Intrinsic motivation							
The management has put up selection methods that are in line future performance of the district	47.9	19.8	8.3	16.5	7.4	2.471	1.538
The district has set up avenues for career development	16.5	52.9	13.2	11.6	5.8	2.595	1.710
The district organizes capacity development meetings for the employees	17.4	14.0	22.3	9.1	37.2	2.553	1.580
The district provides avenues for work-life balance for the employees to perform better	57.9	-	13.2	19.8	9.1	1.520	.7863
The district organizes workshops and seminars to help employees improve the district's performance	49.6	12.4	-	31.4	6.6	2.256	1.248
There is a good relationship between managers and other employees	14.9	40.5	36.4	8.3	-	2.314	1.489
The district has provided favorable working conditions to employees, hence improving the district's performance	33.1	33.1	16.5	17.4	-	2.157	1.372
The district has provided employees with requirements that enhance its performance	39	19.8	16.5	12.4	11.6	3.347	1.520
Extrinsic motivation							
The salary structure attracts the employees and enables them to work towards improving the district's performance	47.9	19.8	8.3	12.4	11.6	2.223	1.513
The allowances given to employees enable them to work hard towards improving the district's performance	16.5	51.2	16.5	11.6	4.1	3.347	1.520
The district provides employees with promotion opportunities that enhance improvement on its performance	51.2	15.7	16.5	16.5	-	2.223	1.513
Provision of work vehicles and motorcycles, plus other tangible gifts, increases employee morale for work, hence improving the district's performance	41.3	16.5	13.2	11.6	17.4	2.330	1.502

square) value is 0.441; this implies that recruitment practices explained only 44.1% of the Decentralization performance. Based on the results, the alternate hypothesis postulated Decentralization performance, is therefore upheld (H1 upheld).

Motivation and Decentralization Performance.

Table 12 shows the responses on whether motivation influences the performance of Decentralization.

Table 12 shows that the respondents were asked whether there has been motivation through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to influence Decentralization performance. Item means of 2.444 and standard deviations of 1.440, measuring a level of agreement, were computed from the respondents' responses. The number of respondents was 121, and those who strongly agreed were 6.1%, 24.6% agreed, 15.1% undecided, 14.8% disagreed, and 9.2% strongly disagreed with the statements in this section.

In connection with the above, a respondent said:
It has been revealed that motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, is responsible for the high performance rate at Kalungu District Decentralization. The local council members have supported the further education of staff, always laboring to create a good work environment.
Based on survey findings, it was established from the respondents about item 1 that management recognizes the achievements and contributions of the employees, 47.9%

strongly agreed, 19.8% agreed, 8.3% were neutral, 16.5% disagreed, and 7.4% strongly disagreed.

In support of the above, a key informant shared;

"The district leaders recognize the tremendous contribution of the district employees; they have supported them to further their education, among others, promoting them on merit".

Another respondent noted that the leaders of Kalungu DLG value the workers, which is why they make sure that each district employee receives his/her salary on time.

Item three required the respondents to state whether the district organizes capacity development meetings for the employees. The total number of respondents was 121, a total of 17.4% strongly agreed, 14.0% agreed, 22.3% were neutral, 9.1% disagreed, and 37.2% strongly disagreed.

A respondent about the above said;

Masses have been mobilized for several activities under the CSO projects. For example, the Foundation for Urban and Rural Advancement (FURA) has extended capacity-building workshops. The district lacks funds to organize capacity-building workshops; if they don't get a partner, the district rarely organizes capacity-building workshops.

The respondents were asked to state whether the district provides avenues for work-life balance for the employees to perform better. The total number of respondents was 121, a total of 9.1% strongly disagreeing, 19.8% disagreeing, 13.2% neutral, and 49.6% strongly agreeing. The trend of responses, which was more inclined to agreement, was further reflected through the mean of 1.520 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.7863. Relatedly, a respondent shared that the leaders had created time for lunch, break, and finishing work by 5 pm, which helps to create time to rest, refresh, and be able to perform better.

About item five, the respondents were required to state whether the district organizes workshops and seminars to help employees improve the district's performance. Statements in this question were fed into SPSS. The computed test figures reveal that the mean is 2.256 and the standard deviation is 1.248. The total number of respondents was 121, a total of 49.6% strongly agreed, 12.4% agreed, 31.4% disagreeing, and 6.6% strongly disagreed.

In item six, the respondents were asked to state whether there is a good relationship between managers and other employees; the majority of the respondents, 40.5% agreed, followed by 36.4% who were undecided, 14.9% strongly agreed, while 8.3% disagreed with the statement. A tabulation of results revealed a mean of 2.314 and a standard deviation of 1.489.

The next item required the respondents to state whether the district has provided a favorable working condition to employees, hence improving the district's performance; 33.1% of the respondents strongly agreed, 33.1% agreed, 16.5% were undecided, and 17.4% disagreed.

Item eight and the last one on the statements on intrinsic motivation asked the respondents to state whether the district has provided employees with requirements that enhance its performance; 39% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 19.8% agreed, 16.5% were undecided, 12.4% disagreed, while 11.6% strongly disagreed.

In response to the above, a key respondent revealed as follows:

The district has provided conducive office space, provides stationery, and although sometimes we run out of stock, they do provide it, and this helps us to perform our duties well. In our department, they have provided us with free internet, which has eased our work.

The researcher also put forward four statements on the extrinsic motivation of employees in the Kalungu district. The first item required the respondents to state whether the salary structure attracts the employees and enables them to work towards improving the district's performance; the majority of the respondents, 47.9% strongly agreed with the statement, 19.8% agreed, 12.4% disagreed, and 11.6% strongly disagreed, while 8.3% were undecided.

Item two required the respondents to state whether the allowances given to employees enable them to work hard towards improving the district's performance; the majority of the respondents, 51.2% agreed with the statement, 16.5% strongly disagreed, 16.5% were undecided, and 11.6% disagreed, while 4.1% strongly agreed.

Item three required the respondents to state whether the district provides employees with promotion opportunities that enhance the improvement of its performance; 51.2% strongly agreed with the statement, 15.7% agreed, 16.5% were undecided, and another 16.5% disagreed with the statement. Tabulation of results revealed a mean of 2.223 and a standard deviation of 1.513.

The last item tasked the respondents to state whether the provision of work vehicles and motorcycles, plus other tangible gifts, increases employee morale for work, hence improving the district's performance. The majority of the respondents, 41.3% strongly agreed with the statement, 17.4% strongly disagreed, 16.5% agreed with the statement, and 13.2% were undecided. Tabulation of results revealed a mean of 2.330 and a standard deviation of 1.502.

Hypothesis Testing Two: Motivation significantly affects Decentralization performance

Table 13: Correlation matrix for motivation and its influence on Decentralization performance

Correlations			Motivation	Decentralization performance
Motivation	Pearson Correlation		1	.171**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N		121	121
Decentralization performance	Pearson Correlation		.171**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N		121	121
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: primary data (2015)

Table 13 indicates that the correlation coefficient is 0.171(**) and its significance level is 0.009. This implied that motivation influences the Decentralization performance in Kalungu District. Therefore, according to the results, there is a significant positive relationship between motivation and the Decentralization performance in Kalungu District. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that was earlier postulated is upheld (H2 upheld).

The strength of the relationship between motivation and Decentralization performance was also determined by using regression analysis.

Table 14: Regression Analysis for motivation and Decentralization performance A Predictors: (Constant), political roles.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.223(a)	.555	.445	1.0340

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 14: The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R square) value is 0.445; this implies that motivation explained only 44.5% of the Decentralization performance. Based on the results given, the alternate hypothesis postulated earlier that stated that motivation significantly affects Decentralization performance in Kalungu District is therefore upheld (H2 upheld).

The relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance

Table 15: Showing responses on whether Employee training has a relationship with Decentralization performance

Statements	RESPONSES					Mean	Std. Dev.
	SA %	A %	NS %	D %	SD %		
Identify training needs							
The district provides employee training based on the needs of its	45.5	12.4	4.1	13.2	24.8	2.59	1.71
The district provides all the necessary training materials	41.3	13.2	13.2	13.2	19.0	2.55	1.58
The district sets up a source to mobilize resources for employee training	66.1	15.7	18.2	-	-	1.52	0.78
The district has equitable training and development opportunities for its employees, hence improving the district's performance	39.7	16.5	28.9	8.3	6.6	2.25	1.24
The district provides employee capacity development training to enhance the district's performance	47.9	12.4	11.6	16.5	11.6	2.31	1.48
The management organizes workshops and seminars for the employees, which enables improvement in the district's performance	47.9	19.8	8.3	16.5	7.8	2.15	1.37

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Plan training programmes							
The district has flexible schedules for employee training	16.5	52.9	13.2	11.6	37.2	2.37	1.07
The training programmes organized by the district human resource management are in line with the district's need for performance improvement	17.4	14.0	22.3	9.1	37.2	2.37	1.52
The training programmes are equitably distributed to all employees	57.9	13.2	19.8	-	9.1	3.34	1.51
Implement training							
The trainings are facilitated within the district premises	49.6	12.4		31.4	6.6	2.22	1.50
The training is facilitated outside the district	14.9	40.5	36.4	8.3	-	2.33	1.08
The trainings facilitated by both external and internal facilitators	33.1	33.1	16.5	17.4	-	2.18	1.40
External trainings are carefully provided after assessing the need for new skills that will enable performance in the district	39.7	19.8	16.5	12.4	11.6	2.36	0.83
The district monitors the performance of trained employees to observe their impact on the district's need for performance	47.9	19.8	8.3	12.4	11.6	2.38	1.44

Source: Primary Data 2024

Table 15 shows that the researcher sought to establish the views of the respondents on the relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance. The findings are presented below. In the first item, the researcher required the respondents to state whether the district provides employee training based on the need for it; responses indicate that the majority of the respondents 45.5% strongly agreed with the statement, 24.8% strongly disagreed with the statement, 13.2% disagreed, 12.4% just agreed with the statement while 4.1% were undecided. The tabulation revealed a mean of 2.5950 and a standard deviation of 1.7106. Item two required the respondents to state whether the district provides all the necessary training materials; the majority of the respondents, 41.3% strongly agreed with the statement, 19.0% strongly disagreed with the statement, 13.2% disagreed with the statement, 13.2% agreed with the statement, while another 13.2% were undecided. The tabulation revealed a mean of 2.5537 and a standard deviation of 15808.

Item three required the respondents to state whether the district sets up a source to mobilize resources for employee training; 66.1% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 15.7% agreed with the statement, and 18.2% were undecided. The tabulation revealed a mean of 1.5207 and a standard deviation of 0.7863.

Item four required the respondents to state whether the district has equitable training and development opportunities for its employees, hence improving the district's performance. The majority of the respondents, 39.7% strongly agreed with the statement, 28.9% were undecided, 16.5% agreed with the statement, 8.3% strongly disagreed, and another 8.3% strongly disagreed with the statement. The tabulation revealed a mean of 2.2562 and a standard deviation of 1.2485. With item five, respondents were required to state whether the district provides employee capacity development training to enhance the district's performance; the majority of the respondents 47.9% strongly agreed with the statement, 16.5% disagreed with the statement, and 12.4% agreed with the statement,

11.6% were undecided, while another 11.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. Tabulation revealed a mean of 2.3140 and a standard deviation of 1.4890.

Item six required the respondents to state whether the management organizes workshops and seminars for the employees who enable improvement in the district performance; results show that the majority of the respondents 47.9% strongly agreed with the statement, 19.8% agreed with the statement, 8.3% were undecided, 16.5% disagreed with the statement while 7.4% strongly disagreed with the statement. The tabulation revealed a mean of 2.1570 and a standard deviation of 1.3724. Item seven sought to establish whether the district has flexible schedules for employee training; the majority of the respondents, 52.9% agreed with the statement, 13.2% were undecided on this statement, 16.5% agreed with the statement, 11.6% disagreed with the statement, while only 5.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. The tabulation revealed a mean of 2.3719 and a standard deviation of 1.0734.

Item eight required the respondents to state whether the training programs organized by the district human resource management are in line with the district's need for performance improvement; 17.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, 14.0% agreed, 22.3% were undecided, 9.1% disagreed, while 37.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. The tabulation revealed a mean of 2.3719 and a standard deviation of 1.5204. In the ninth item, the researcher sought to know whether the training programs are equitably distributed to all employees; 57.9% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 13.2% agreed with the statement, 19.8% were undecided, while 9.1% strongly disagreed with the statement. Tabulation of results revealed a mean of 3.3471 and a standard deviation of 1.5137.

The tenth item required the respondents to state whether the trainings are facilitated within the district premises; 49.6% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 12.4% agreed to the statement, 31.4% disagreed with the statement,

and 6.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. The tabulation revealed a mean of 2.2231 and a standard deviation of 1.5021. Item eleven sought to establish whether the training was facilitated outside the district; 14.9% strongly agreed with the statement, 40.5% agreed with the statement, 36.4% were undecided, and 8.3% disagreed with the statement. Tabulation of results revealed a mean of 2.3306 and a standard deviation of 1.0801.

Item 12 required the respondents to state whether the trainings were facilitated by both external and internal facilitators; 33.1% strongly agreed with the statement, to which another 33.1% agreed, 16.5% were undecided, and 17.4% disagreed with the statement.

Tabulation of results for item second-to-last item revealed a mean of 2.3636 and a standard deviation of 0.8393. The total number of respondents was 121, of which 39.7% strongly agreed, 19.8% agreed, 16.5% were undecided, 12.4% disagreed with the statement, and 11.6% strongly agreed with the statement. The last statement called on the respondents to state whether the district monitors the performance of trained employees to observe their impact on the district's need for performance; 47.9% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 19.8 agreed with it, 8.3% undecided, 12.4% disagreed while 11.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. Tabulation revealed a mean of 2.3802 and a standard deviation of 1.4411.

Hypothesis Three: There is a significant relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance.

Table 16: Correlation matrix for the relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance. *N=121*

Correlations			
		Employee training	Decentralization performance
Employee training	Pearson Correlation	1	.366**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Decentralization performance	Pearson Correlation	.366**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: primary data (2024)

Table 16 shows that the correlation coefficient is 0.366 and its significance level is 0.000. This implied that employee training influences the Decentralization performance in Kalungu District. Therefore, according to the results, there is a positive relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance in Kalungu District.

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that was earlier postulated is upheld (H3 upheld).

Regression was further done to determine the strength of the relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance.

Table 17: Regression Analysis for employee training and Decentralization performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.331(a)	.662	.338	2.5400

a Predictors: (Constant), civil society roles, *N=121*
Source: primary data (2015)

Table 17 indicates that the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R square) value is 0.338; this implies that employee training explained only 33.8% of the performance of Decentralization. From all the results, the alternate hypothesis postulated earlier that stated that there is a significant relationship between employee training and Decentralization performance in Kalungu District is therefore upheld (H3 upheld).

Discussion of Findings
Recruitment process and decentralization.

The study established a significant positive relationship between recruitment practices and decentralization performance. This includes the processes of identifying vacancies, defining job requirements, attracting candidates, screening applications, conducting interviews and tests, evaluating candidates, checking references, offering positions, and following up (Armstrong, 2014). In Kalungu District Local Government (DLG), similar to many districts across Uganda, public service is generally not perceived as an appealing employment option due to uncompetitive salary structures, except for those individuals who are particularly committed to working in public service. This observation aligns with Armstrong's (2016) assertion that highly competent, skilled, and professional individuals often gravitate toward the private sector, where recruitment is competitive and recruiters actively market the organization. Similarly, Byaruhanga (2011) supports this finding, arguing that many employees who enter public service, particularly in decentralized systems, do not remain for long periods. Rather, they either return to academic institutions or transition to other sectors once they have acquired marketable experience and skills. Supporting this perspective, Bitarabeho (2017) notes that innovative recruitment strategies are gradually being adopted in public sector institutions. Although recruitment in some areas is still conducted manually, there is a shift towards automation, with systems being established to support this evolution. These efforts aim to attract the most competent and dedicated staff.

Motivation and decentralization performance.

The study found a significant positive correlation between employee motivation and decentralization performance. Consistent with the findings, Bandhu et al. (2024) describe motivation as a set of forces that energize, direct, and sustain behavior within an organization. These forces contribute to employee commitment by encouraging individuals to pursue their goals effectively.

Armstrong (2016) also supports the study's results, stating that recognition of employee efforts leads to increased motivation and better performance. He further elaborates that reward management is not limited to financial incentives such as salaries and benefits; it also includes non-financial rewards like recognition, professional development opportunities, and job enrichment. The study revealed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors contribute to enhanced decentralization performance, as seen in the case of Kalungu District.

Employee training and decentralization performance.

The findings also demonstrated a significant positive relationship between employee training and decentralization performance. Armstrong (2014) supports this conclusion by emphasizing that training is essential in today's competitive and dynamic work environment. Training enhances work efficiency, ensures smooth operations, and contributes to employee satisfaction and organizational growth.

Training can be categorized into various types. The study revealed that Kalungu District Decentralization implements on-the-job training, which was found to positively influence the district's performance. Furthermore, the study indicated that Kalungu District also provides employee development through workshops aimed at enhancing staff competencies. This aligns with Dick-Sagoe's (2020) view that off-the-job training can be delivered through various methods such as experiential learning, programmed instruction, audio-visual tools, lectures, discussions, simulations, business games, workshops, case studies, vestibule training, behavioral modeling, computer-based training, and role-playing—all of which contribute to organizational performance improvements.

Additionally, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG, 2019) concurred with these findings, highlighting the importance of training in strengthening decentralization performance. This is reflected in the National Decentralization Capacity Building Policy (2016), which provides a strategic framework to ensure both elected and appointed officials receive the necessary training and skills to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of decentralized systems across Uganda.

Conclusions.

The study concluded that without proper recruitment practices, incompetent staff will be recruited and negatively affect the Decentralization performance. Therefore, recruitment practices have a relationship with Decentralization performance.

Whereas the district employees get a salary, this alone cannot motivate the district employees to perform. Although wages are still important for staff motivation, nonmonetary incentives are also essential. It was therefore concluded that recognition of the achievements and contributions of employees can motivate them and increase their performance.

Employee training includes identifying training needs, planning training programs, and implementing training. The study concluded that employee training was one of the key elements that can bring about employee motivation and enhance Decentralization performance.

Limitations of the Study

The fact that the research was conducted among Decentralization employees, including those who are field-based based such as the Community Development Officers

(CDOs), Health workers, and veterinary officers, made it somewhat complicated because it was hard to find them at the office due to the nature of their work.

The CDOs always move in the morning to farmer groups and the groups that benefited from the Community-driven development program (CDD), and the health workers move out for research. It was also hard to reach certain areas due to poor roads, and this resulted in high costs in terms of transport. Such areas include: Ssi- Bukunja Sub-county, and even the district is hard during rainy seasons, yet a lot of information was needed from Decentralization employees in such areas.

Some employees were not willing to give in the information, and they feared that previously, they had helped to give master's researchers information, but most of them set their questionnaires with difficult questions. However, the researcher assured that the questionnaires were easy to fill out and questions were easy to answer, and, in the end, the researcher was able to obtain the necessary information.

Recommendations.

The District management team, together with the District service commission, needs to make clear job descriptions to attract suitable, qualified candidates for positions in the district. This will improve the district's performance.

The District management with the District Service Commission, needs to put in place a rigorous selection criterion that will help to select and recruit qualified employees who will improve district performance.

The District management and political leadership need to recognize the achievements and contributions of employees to motivate them to perform.

The district management needs to organize capacity development meetings for the employees; this will help them to perform better.

Management needs to identify training that matches the specific needs of your staff and business goals. You can carry out a training needs analysis (TNA). This method helps in identifying the requirement for specific training based on the available resources. It involves training needs evaluation and assessing priority areas for training at different levels of the organization. Training needs analysis forms the first step of the training development cycle, and it will help in improving the performance of the Decentralization.

Acknowledgment.

List of abbreviations.

KDLG Kalungu District Decentralization
KDSC Kalungu District Service Commission
CAO: Chief Administrative Officer
CBP Capacity Building Plan
CF Conceptual Framework
CSOs: Civil Society Organizations
DSC District Service Commission
ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning
FY Financial Year
HR Human Resource
HRM Human Resource Management
HRMS Human Resource Management System
IFMS Integrated Financial Management System
IPPS Integrated Personnel and Payroll System
LAN Local Area Networks
LC Local Council
LG Decentralization
LGMSD Decentralization, Management, and Service Delivery Projects
LLG Lower Decentralization
MoLG Ministry of Decentralization
MoPS Ministry of Public Service
NDP National Development Plan
Decentralization Non-Governmental Organization
NLGCBP National Decentralization Capacity Building Policy
SPSS Statistical Package for Social Scientists
T/C Town Council
UBOS Uganda Bureau of Statistics
KU Kampala University
UNDP United Nations Development Programme

Source of funding.

Conflict of interest.

Availability of data.

Data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Authors contribution.

AB designed the study, conducted data collection, cleaned and analyzed data, and drafted the manuscript, and NW supervised all stages of the study from conceptualization of the topic to manuscript writing and submission.

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