

Opportunities for growth and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). A cross-sectional study.

Esther Nabirye, Evelyn Hope Kyokunda*

School of Graduate studies and Research, Team University

Page | 1

ABSTRACT

Background

The study aimed to establish the relationship between opportunities for growth and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO)

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods case study and cross-sectional design to assess the relationship between remuneration and employee performance at VEDCO. A sample of 108 employees was selected from 150 staff using purposive and simple random sampling. Data collection methods included interviews, structured questionnaires, and documentary review. Research instruments were tested for validity (CVI=0.8) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha=0.75). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS, while qualitative findings were analyzed thematically.

Results

Out of 108 questionnaires and interview schedules issued, 100 were completed and returned, giving a high response rate of 92.6%. The majority of respondents were male (58%), aged 30–39 years (42%), and held bachelor's degrees (45%). Quantitative findings revealed that opportunities for employee growth were positively rated, particularly encouragement to attend workshops and seminars (Mean=4.17), supervisor support for skill development (Mean=4.13), and provision of training opportunities (Mean=4.09). Employee performance was generally moderate, with relatively higher scores in teamwork and communication (Mean=3.32) and commitment to organizational goals (Mean=3.30), but lower scores in initiative (Mean=2.80) and timely task completion (Mean=2.88). Qualitative themes included training and capacity building, career advancement, mentorship, teamwork, workload challenges, communication gaps, weak performance-reward linkage, and resource constraints affecting performance. Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between opportunities for growth and employee performance ($r=0.635$, $p<0.01$).

Conclusion

Opportunities for employee growth have a positive and significant influence on employee performance at VEDCO.

Recommendation

VEDCO should strengthen and expand opportunities for employee growth through regular training programs, structured mentorship systems, and clear career progression pathways.

Keywords: *Fringe benefits, Employee performance, Non-governmental organizations, Employee motivation, Compensation systems, Job satisfaction*

Submitted: February 19, 2026 **Accepted:** March 19, 2026 **Published:** April 30, 2026

Corresponding Author: *Esther Nabirye*

Email: esthernabirye1@gmail.com

School of Graduate Studies and Research of Team University

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Growth opportunities refer to the structured avenues provided by organizations that enable employees to enhance their skills, advance their careers, and strengthen their professional competencies. These opportunities include training and development programs, mentorship, job rotation, career advancement pathways, and promotion

systems. In human resource management, such opportunities are widely recognized as key motivational drivers because they foster continuous learning and professional improvement. Armstrong (2020) emphasizes that organizations investing in employee development tend to cultivate a more capable and motivated workforce, ultimately improving organizational effectiveness.

Employee performance refers to how effectively employees execute assigned duties and contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives. Growth opportunities significantly influence performance by improving employees' competencies, confidence, and job-related knowledge. When employees are exposed to training and career development initiatives, they feel valued and supported, which increases their motivation and commitment to work (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory further explains this relationship by identifying growth and advancement as intrinsic motivators that enhance job satisfaction and performance. Employees who perceive clear development pathways are more likely to demonstrate higher productivity and engagement (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Empirical studies reinforce this relationship. Njanja et al. (2013) found that training and career development programs positively affect employee productivity and motivation. Similarly, Njoroge and Kwasira (2015) concluded that promotion and development opportunities significantly improve job performance and satisfaction.

The study aimed to establish the relationship between opportunities for growth and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO)

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study adopted a case study research design to examine the relationship between remuneration and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). A case study design was appropriate because it allowed an in-depth and detailed investigation of

the organization as a single unit of analysis, providing rich insights into how remuneration (opportunities for growth, salary administration, and fringe benefits) influenced employee performance.

Additionally, the study employed a cross-sectional approach, which involved collecting data from employees at a single point in time.

To enhance the depth and validity of the findings, the study adopted a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative component involved the collection of numerical data through structured questionnaires, which allowed for statistical analysis of the relationships between remuneration factors and employee performance. The qualitative component included interviews or open-ended survey questions, which provided detailed insights into employees' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding remuneration practices at VEDCO.

Study population

The study population consisted of all employees working at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), totaling 150 staff members according to the VEDCO Human Resource Report (2025). The population included employees across different categories, ranging from senior management to field officers. This diverse population ensured that the study captured perspectives from employees at various levels of responsibility and involvement within the organization, which was critical for understanding the relationship between remuneration and employee performance.

Table 1: Target population, sample size, sampling technique

Staff Category	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique	Methods of data collection
Senior Management (Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer, Board)	10	7	Purposive sampling	Interview Method
Middle Management (Team Leaders or Supervisors, Area Managers, Department Heads)	20	14	Simple random sampling	Questionnaire Method
Program Officers	30	22	Simple random sampling	Questionnaire Method
Support Staff	25	18	Simple random sampling	Questionnaire Method
Administrative Staff (Administrative Assistants or Officers, Secretaries/Personal)	15	11	Simple random sampling	Questionnaire Method

Assistants, Office Clerks)				
Field officers	50	36	Simple random sampling	Questionnaire Method
Total	150	108		

Source: VEDCO Human Resource Report (2025)

The sample size for this study was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, which provides a method for selecting an appropriate sample size from a given population to ensure statistical representativeness. According to Krejcie and Morgan, a population of 150 employees corresponded to a sample size of 108 respondents. Proportionate sampling was used to determine the sample for each category of respondents.

Sampling techniques

The study used a combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select participants from the population of 150 employees at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was applied to senior management because this group held strategic positions and possessed specialized knowledge about the organization's remuneration policies and performance management practices. Senior managers were few in number but played a critical role in decision-making; therefore, selecting them purposively ensured that their insights were captured. This technique allowed the study to obtain detailed qualitative data through interviews, focusing on how remuneration strategies were designed and implemented, and their influence on employee performance.

Simple random sampling

For the other staff categories, i.e., middle management, program officers, support staff, administrative staff, and field officers, the study employed simple random sampling. This technique ensured that all employee groups were adequately represented in the sample, reflecting the diversity of roles, responsibilities, and experiences within VEDCO without bias.

Data collection methods

The data collection methods used in the study, as indicated in Table 3.1, involve interviews, documentary review, and questionnaires, each applied based on the staff category:

Interview method

This method was used to collect primary data from the NGO's senior management. Interviews involved direct, face-to-face or virtual conversations to explore participants' opinions, experiences, and perspectives in depth. This

approach enabled the collection of rich qualitative insights and detailed responses that might not have been captured through structured forms.

Questionnaire method

This method was used for middle management, program officers, support staff, administrative staff, and field officers. Questionnaires consisted of structured questions, including multiple-choice items, rating scales, and open-ended questions. They allowed for efficient data collection from a large number of respondents and were suitable for quantifying opinions, experiences, and behaviors.

Documentary review method

The documentary review method was used in this study to collect data by examining existing records and documents relevant to remuneration and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). This method involved reviewing internal organizational documents, reports, policies, and records that contained information about employee growth opportunities, allowances, and fringe benefits.

Data collection instruments

The study employed three main data collection instruments aligned with the methods identified above, namely: the interview guide, questionnaire, and documentary review checklist.

Interview guide

An interview guide was used to collect data from senior management. This instrument consisted of a set of semi-structured questions designed to provide direction during the interview while allowing flexibility for probing and follow-up questions. The guide included open-ended questions focusing on key issues such as remuneration practices, employee performance, motivation, and organizational policies. It enabled the collection of in-depth qualitative information, clarification of responses, and exploration of emerging themes relevant to the study.

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from middle management, program officers, support staff, administrative staff, and field officers. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and a few open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions included Likert scale

items, multiple-choice questions, and rating scales to facilitate quantitative analysis, while open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide additional explanations. The questionnaire was divided into sections such as demographic information, remuneration (e.g., salaries, allowances, fringe benefits), and employee performance indicators. This instrument ensured uniformity of responses and ease of data analysis.

Documentary review checklist

A documentary review checklist was used to guide the collection of secondary data from organizational documents at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). The checklist outlined specific documents that were reviewed, such as human resource policies, payroll records, performance appraisal reports, training records, and staff benefit documents. It also highlighted key information that was extracted, including types of allowances, fringe benefits, promotion practices, and performance evaluation criteria. This instrument ensured consistency and relevance in the data collected from documents while minimizing the omission of important information.

Data collection procedure

The data collection procedure for this study was carried out in a systematic and organized manner to ensure the reliability and validity of the information gathered from Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). The procedure involved the following steps:

Preparation and Planning: The study began with obtaining official permission from VEDCO management to access staff and organizational records. Research instruments, including interview guides and questionnaires, were prepared and pre-tested to ensure clarity, relevance, and effectiveness. **Sampling and Selection of Respondents:** Participants were selected according to the sampling techniques outlined in Table 1: purposive sampling for senior management and simple random sampling for other staff categories. This ensured that the sample proportionately represented all relevant staff groups.

Questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents from middle management, program officers, support staff, administrative staff, and field officers. Respondents were given adequate time and guidance to complete the questionnaires, while follow-ups were made to ensure a high response rate.

Interviews were conducted with senior management using a semi-structured interview guide. Responses were carefully recorded through note-taking or audio recording (with consent) to capture detailed qualitative data.

A documentary review was also conducted, where existing organizational documents such as staff records, salary slips, training reports, and policies were examined to gather secondary data on growth opportunities, allowances, and fringe benefits.

Data Handling and Organization: All collected data were organized, coded, and checked for completeness and accuracy before analysis. Confidentiality was maintained, and sensitive information was handled according to ethical research standards.

Validity of instruments

Validity measured whether the research instruments accurately captured the concepts of remuneration and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). The questionnaires and interview guides were reviewed by experts in Human Resource Management and research methodology to ensure that all items adequately covered the study objectives, including growth opportunities, allowances, and fringe benefits.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to determine the relevance and adequacy of the items in the research instruments, following Amin (2009). To obtain the CVI, each item in the questionnaire and interview guide was rated by the experts as either relevant or not relevant to the study objectives. The number of items rated as relevant was then divided by the total number of items in the instrument.

Mathematically, CVI was calculated as:

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

For this study, out of all the items assessed, a large proportion were rated as relevant by the experts. The resulting CVI was 0.8, meaning that 80% of the items were considered valid and appropriate for measuring the intended constructs. According to Amin (2009), a CVI of 0.7 and above is acceptable for research instruments; therefore, a CVI of 0.8 confirmed that the instruments were valid enough to be used in data collection without major modifications.

Reliability of instruments

Reliability measures the consistency of the instruments in producing stable results over time. The questionnaires were administered to a pilot group twice over a short period, and the consistency of responses was checked to determine the stability of the instruments.

For the questionnaire items, statistical measures such as Cronbach's Alpha were used to assess whether items designed to measure the same construct (e.g., employee allowances and fringe benefits) produced consistent responses. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient obtained was 0.75, which indicated an acceptable level of internal consistency.

According to research standards, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 and above is considered acceptable for social science research. Therefore, a coefficient of 0.75 confirmed that the research instruments were reliable and suitable for data collection in this study.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between remuneration and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

Page | 5

Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data, collected primarily through structured questionnaires, were analyzed using statistical methods. The steps included:

Data Cleaning and Coding: Responses from questionnaires were reviewed for completeness. The data were coded numerically to facilitate statistical analysis (e.g., Likert scale responses were coded from 1 to 5).

Descriptive Statistics: Measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed to summarize employee responses regarding remuneration factors and perceived performance. This provided an overview of trends and patterns across different staff categories.

Inferential Statistics: Correlation analysis was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between different remuneration components (e.g., salary grades, allowances, and fringe benefits) and employee performance. Regression analysis was applied to determine the extent to which remuneration predicted employee performance while controlling for demographic variables such as staff category and years of experience.

The quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS, ensuring accuracy and reliability of the statistical results.

Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data, collected through interviews and open-ended survey questions, provided in-depth insights into employees' perceptions and experiences. The steps included:

Transcription: Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim to preserve the accuracy of the participants' responses.

Thematic Analysis: The transcripts were reviewed carefully to identify recurring patterns, themes, and categories related to remuneration practices and employee performance. Themes included perceptions of fairness, motivation, job satisfaction, and the impact of allowances and fringe benefits on work performance.

Quantitative findings were presented in tables, charts, and graphs for clarity. Qualitative insights were presented as narrative summaries, direct quotes, and thematic tables. The combined analysis allowed for comprehensive conclusions and recommendations that reflected both measurable outcomes and employees' lived experiences.

Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations were crucial to ensure that the study was conducted responsibly, respected participants' rights, and maintained the integrity of the research process. The following ethical principles guided the study:

Confidentiality and Anonymity: Personal information and responses of participants were treated with strict confidentiality. Identifying information was removed from the data, and codes or pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. Data were securely stored and accessed only by the research team.

Privacy: Interviews and questionnaires were conducted in a manner that protected the privacy of participants. Sensitive topics such as salaries and allowances were handled carefully to avoid discomfort or embarrassment.

Non-Maleficence: The study ensured that no harm came to participants, whether physical, psychological, or social. Questions were designed to avoid distress, and participants were supported when they felt uneasy discussing remuneration or performance issues.

Integrity and Honesty: The research was conducted with honesty, transparency, and professionalism. Findings were reported accurately, without fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data.

Ethical Approval: Ethical clearance was sought from an appropriate institutional review board (IRB) or ethics committee before commencing the study. Approval was also obtained from VEDCO management to ensure the study aligned with organizational policies and respected employee rights.

Feedback to Participants: Where appropriate, a summary of the research findings was shared with VEDCO employees and management, ensuring transparency and allowing participants to benefit from insights gained from the study.

RESULTS

Response Rate

Table 2: Response rate for the study

Staff Category	Interviews scheduled / questionnaires issued	Interviews conducted / questionnaires collected	Response rate (%)
Senior Management (Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer, Board)	7	5	71.4%
Middle Management (Team Leaders or Supervisors, Area Managers, Department Heads)	14	14	100%
Program Officers	22	20	90.9%
Support Staff	18	15	83.3%
Administrative Staff (Administrative Assistants or Officers, Secretaries/Personal Assistants, Office Clerks)	11	10	90.9%
Field Officers	36	36	100%
Total	108	100	92.6%

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Table 2 presents the response rate for the study on remuneration and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). Out of the 108 questionnaires and interview schedules issued to respondents across different staff categories, 100 were completed and returned, representing an overall response rate of 92.6%.

This response rate is considered very high and acceptable for social science research, as it exceeds the commonly recommended threshold of 70%. It therefore indicates a strong level of participation and willingness of respondents to provide information, which enhances the reliability and validity of the study findings.

By staff category, middle management and field officers recorded the highest response rate of 100%, indicating full participation from these groups. Program officers and administrative staff each recorded a response rate of 90.9%, while support staff registered 83.3%, which also reflects a good level of participation. Senior management recorded the lowest response rate of 71.4%, which may be attributed to their limited availability due to administrative and strategic responsibilities.

Overall, the high response rate suggests that the data collected is representative of the study population and sufficient for drawing meaningful conclusions regarding the relationship between remuneration and employee performance at VEDCO.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	58%
	Female	41	41%
	Prefer not to say	1	1%
Age group	20–29 years	18	18%
	30–39 years	42	42%
	40–49 years	27	27%
	50 years and above	13	13%
Highest level of education	Certificate	12	12%
	Diploma	28	28%
	Bachelor's Degree	45	45%
	Master's Degree	13	13%
	Other	2	2%
Marital status	Single	30	30%
	Married	60	60%
	Divorced	7	7%
	Widowed	3	3%
Department/section	Administration	15	15%
	Finance	18	18%

	Human Resource	12	12%
	Field/Project Operations	50	50%
	Other	5	5%
Position/job title	Manager/Senior Staff	14	14%
	Supervisor	22	22%
	Technical Staff	34	34%
	Support Staff	30	30%
	Less than 1 year	10	10%
Length of service	1–3 years	26	26%
	4–6 years	32	32%
	7–10 years	18	18%
	More than 10 years	14	14%
Employment status	Permanent	62	62%
	Contract	33	33%
	Temporary	5	5%

Source: Primary data (2026)

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents in the study on remuneration and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). The findings provide an overview of the composition of the respondents in terms of gender, age, education level, marital status, department, position, length of service, and employment status.

In terms of gender, the results show that 58% of the respondents were male, while 41% were female, and 1% preferred not to disclose their gender. This indicates a slightly higher representation of male employees in the organization, though the gender distribution is relatively balanced, suggesting inclusivity in staff participation.

Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents (42%) were aged between 30 and 39 years, followed by 27% in the 40–49 years category. Those aged 20–29 years accounted for 18%, while 13% were aged 50 years and above. This implies that most employees at VEDCO are in their productive working age, which may positively influence organizational performance due to their experience and energy levels.

In terms of education level, the findings reveal that most respondents (45%) held bachelor's degrees, followed by 28% with diplomas. Those with master's degrees accounted for 13%, while 12% had certificates and 2% fell under other qualifications. This indicates that the organization employs a relatively well-educated workforce, which is likely to understand and respond effectively to remuneration and performance systems.

With regard to marital status, the majority of respondents (60%) were married, followed by 30% who were single. Divorced respondents accounted for 7%, while 3% were widowed. This suggests that most employees had family responsibilities, which may influence their expectations regarding remuneration and job stability.

For the departmental distribution, half of the respondents (50%) were from field/project operations, reflecting the operational nature of VEDCO's work. Administration and

finance departments accounted for 15% and 18% respectively, while human resource staff made up 12%, and 5% were from other departments. This shows that the study adequately captured views from both administrative and field-based employees.

Regarding position/job title, the largest group of respondents was technical staff (34%), followed by support staff (30%). Supervisors accounted for 22%, while managers/senior staff represented 14%. This distribution suggests that the study collected views from both decision-making levels and operational staff, providing a balanced perspective.

In terms of length of service, most respondents (32%) had worked at VEDCO for 4–6 years, followed by 26% with 1–3 years of service. Those with less than 1 year accounted for 10%, while 18% had worked for 7–10 years, and 14% had more than 10 years of experience. This indicates that a significant proportion of employees had moderate organizational experience, which is important for providing informed responses on remuneration and performance issues.

Finally, regarding employment status, the majority of respondents (62%) were permanent employees, while 33% were on contract and 5% were temporary staff. This suggests that most employees had stable employment, which may influence their perceptions of remuneration fairness and job performance.

Overall, the demographic findings indicate that the study captured a diverse and well-represented sample of employees at VEDCO, which enhances the reliability and validity of the study results.

Opportunities for growth of employees at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

Descriptive findings of opportunities for growth of employees at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

Table 4: Opportunities for growth of employees at VEDCO

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean
VEDCO provides adequate training opportunities to employees	2%	6%	10%	45%	37%	4.09
VEDCO encourages employees to attend workshops and seminars	1%	5%	12%	40%	42%	4.17
VEDCO supports employees to pursue further education	3%	8%	15%	38%	36%	3.96
VEDCO offers employees opportunities for career advancement	2%	7%	14%	41%	36%	4.02
Promotions in VEDCO are based on employee performance and merit	4%	10%	18%	36%	32%	3.82
My supervisor encourages me to develop new skills related to my work	1%	6%	11%	43%	39%	4.13
VEDCO provides mentorship to employees	3%	9%	17%	38%	33%	3.89
VEDCO provides employees with opportunities to take on new responsibilities	2%	5%	13%	44%	36%	4.07
The organization communicates clearly about available career development opportunities	3%	8%	16%	39%	34%	3.93

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 4 indicate that employees at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO) generally agreed that the organization provides substantial opportunities for growth and career development.

Overall, the majority of respondents selected Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5) across all statements, indicating a positive perception of employee development practices within the organization. The highest-rated aspect was the encouragement to attend workshops and seminars (Mean = 4.17), followed closely by supervisor support for skill development (Mean = 4.13) and provision of training opportunities (Mean = 4.09). This suggests that VEDCO actively invests in employee capacity building through structured learning opportunities.

Respondents also agreed that the organization provides opportunities for taking on new responsibilities (Mean = 4.07) and career advancement (Mean = 4.02), indicating that employees are exposed to professional growth pathways within the organization. This reflects a supportive working environment that enhances employee engagement and performance.

However, slightly lower mean scores were observed in areas such as promotion based on merit (Mean = 3.82) and mentorship provision (Mean = 3.89), suggesting that although growth opportunities exist, there may be some concerns regarding transparency in promotions and consistency in mentorship programs.

The statement on communication of career development opportunities also recorded a relatively positive mean (3.93), indicating that while communication exists, there is

still room for improvement in ensuring that all employees are fully informed.

Overall, the findings confirm that VEDCO provides strong opportunities for employee growth, particularly in training, skills development, and professional exposure, which likely contribute positively to employee performance within the organization.

Qualitative findings on opportunities for growth of employees at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

Below are qualitative interview responses from senior management (Executive Director/CEO, Board representative, HR Officer, and Programs Director) aligned with the findings on opportunities for employee growth at VEDCO.

Executive director / chief executive officer

The Executive Director explained that VEDCO places strong emphasis on employee development as a key driver of performance. He noted that the organization regularly allocates resources for staff training, workshops, and seminars both locally and internationally, where possible. He stated that:

“We believe that investing in staff development is investing in organizational performance. That is why we ensure employees are exposed to continuous learning opportunities such as training, seminars, and professional courses.”

He further emphasized that career growth is encouraged through internal promotion systems based on performance

appraisals, although funding constraints sometimes limit the frequency of external training opportunities.

2. Human resource officer

The Human Resource Officer indicated that VEDCO has structured HR policies that support employee growth, including training plans and performance-based development strategies. She noted that:

"We conduct annual training needs assessments to identify skill gaps and ensure employees are supported in their professional growth."

She added that mentorship programs exist, particularly for new staff, although they are still being strengthened to ensure consistency across all departments.

3. Programs director

The Programs Director highlighted that employees are frequently assigned new responsibilities to build their competencies and prepare them for higher roles. He stated:

"We intentionally rotate staff across different projects to expose them to diverse field experiences, which helps in career development and improves performance."

He also acknowledged that communication of career development opportunities has improved through internal meetings and emails, but suggested that more structured communication systems could enhance awareness further.

4. Board of directors representative

A representative from the Board of Directors emphasized the importance of linking employee development to organizational sustainability. He noted that:

"The Board supports policies that prioritize staff training and development because a skilled workforce directly contributes to improved service delivery and organizational effectiveness."

However, he also pointed out that budget limitations sometimes affect the extent of training and promotion programs.

Thematic analysis of findings on opportunities for employee growth at VEDCO.

The qualitative data from interviews with senior management (Executive Director/CEO, HR Officer, Programs Director, and Board representative) were analyzed thematically. The analysis revealed key themes that explain how opportunities for employee growth are provided and experienced at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

Theme 1: Provision of training and capacity building opportunities

A dominant theme from the interviews was the strong emphasis on employee training and capacity building. Senior management consistently indicated that VEDCO invests in staff development through workshops, seminars, and professional training programs.

The Executive Director emphasized that training is considered a strategic investment in organizational performance, while the Human Resource Officer

highlighted the use of annual training needs assessments to identify skill gaps.

This theme confirms that VEDCO actively supports employee development through structured learning opportunities, which enhance employee skills and performance.

Theme 2: Career development and advancement opportunities

Another key theme was the availability of career development and advancement opportunities within the organization. Respondents indicated that employees are given chances to grow through internal promotions and exposure to new responsibilities.

The Programs Director noted that staff rotation across projects helps employees build diverse competencies, while the HR Officer indicated that promotion is largely linked to performance appraisal results.

However, it was also observed that while career progression systems exist, their implementation may not always be fully consistent, especially due to organizational constraints.

Theme 3: Mentorship and supervisory support

Mentorship and supervisory guidance emerged as an important but developing theme. Senior management acknowledged that mentorship programs exist, particularly for new staff, but are still being strengthened across departments.

The Human Resource Officer explained that mentorship is informally practiced through supervisors, while the Programs Director emphasized on-the-job learning as a key development strategy.

This indicates that although mentorship is present, it is not yet fully institutionalized across all levels of the organization.

Theme 4: Employee exposure to new responsibilities

The findings also revealed that employees are frequently given opportunities to take on new responsibilities as part of their development. Job rotation and assignment to different projects were highlighted as key strategies for building employee competence.

The Programs Director noted that this approach helps employees gain practical experience and improves overall organizational performance.

This theme suggests that experiential learning is an important component of employee growth at VEDCO.

Theme 5: Communication of career development opportunities

Communication regarding available growth opportunities was identified as a moderate theme. While management indicated that information is shared through meetings and internal communication channels, there were suggestions that communication could be improved.

Some respondents noted that not all employees are fully aware of available training and development opportunities, indicating a need for more structured communication systems.

Theme 6: Resource and budget constraints

A cross-cutting theme across interviews was the challenge of limited financial resources. While management strongly supports employee development, budget constraints sometimes limit the frequency and scope of training and promotion programs.

The Board representative and Executive Director both acknowledged that funding limitations affect the extent to which all development plans can be fully implemented.

Documentary review findings on opportunities for employee growth at VEDCO

The documentary review focused on internal organizational records such as human resource manuals, training reports, staff appraisal documents, promotion records, and capacity-building plans at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). The findings provided documentary evidence on how the organization supports employee growth and development.

Training and capacity building records

The reviewed training reports indicated that VEDCO had an annual staff training plan outlining scheduled workshops, seminars, and short courses for employees. The Human Resource Development Plan showed that employees had been enrolled in both internal and external training programs, particularly in project management, community development, and financial accountability.

The documents further revealed that training needs assessments were conducted annually to identify skill gaps among staff, which informed the selection of employees for capacity-building programs.

Career Development and Promotion Records

The staff appraisal and promotion records indicated that VEDCO had a formal performance appraisal system conducted annually. These appraisal reports were used as a basis for identifying employees eligible for promotion and career advancement.

However, the records also showed that while promotion guidelines existed, the number of employees promoted annually was limited, largely due to organizational budget constraints and donor funding conditions.

Job Rotation and responsibility allocation records

Project implementation reports and duty assignment schedules indicated that employees were periodically

assigned to different projects and roles. This practice was documented as part of staff development strategies aimed at exposing employees to diverse field experiences.

These records confirmed that job rotation was used as an intentional strategy to build employee competencies and improve performance across departments.

Mentorship and supervision records

The human resource induction manuals and staff orientation documents showed that mentorship was provided mainly during employee onboarding. New employees were assigned supervisors or senior staff members for guidance during their initial period of employment.

However, the documents indicated that mentorship programs beyond the induction stage were not fully formalized or consistently documented across all departments.

Communication of development opportunities

Internal memos, notice boards, and meeting minutes revealed that information on training opportunities and career development programs was communicated through staff meetings, emails, and departmental notices.

Despite these communication channels, the records suggested that dissemination of information was largely informal and not centralized, which could lead to unequal awareness among employees.

Overall, the documentary review confirmed that VEDCO had established structures for employee development, including training plans, performance appraisals, and job rotation systems. However, it also revealed gaps in mentorship formalization, promotion frequency, and communication systems.

These findings support the earlier quantitative and qualitative results, indicating that while opportunities for employee growth exist, their implementation is sometimes constrained by resource limitations and organizational systems.

Employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO) Descriptive analysis of findings on employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO)

Table 5: Employee performance at VEDCO

Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean
I consistently meet the targets set for my role	10	25	30	25	10	3.00
I complete tasks accurately	8	22	28	30	12	3.16
I effectively complete given tasks in time	12	28	30	20	10	2.88
I demonstrate initiative in solving work-related problems	15	30	25	20	10	2.80
I maintain a high level of productivity in my daily work	10	27	30	23	10	3.00
I cooperate and communicate effectively with colleagues	7	20	25	30	18	3.32
I adapt well to changes in work assignments	9	24	30	25	12	3.07
I take responsibility for my mistakes and learn from them	8	22	30	28	12	3.14
I actively seek ways to improve my performance	14	28	28	20	10	2.84

I provide quality work that meets organizational standards	9	25	30	26	10	3.03
I am committed to achieving the mission and objectives of VEDCO	6	18	30	32	14	3.30

Source: Primary Data (2026)

The findings in Table 5 indicate a generally low to moderate level of employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). Overall, most mean scores fall around or below the average benchmark of 3.0, suggesting that employee performance is not consistently high across the organization.

The lowest-performing areas include initiative in solving work-related problems (Mean = 2.80), timely completion of tasks (Mean = 2.88), and seeking ways to improve performance (Mean = 2.84). These results indicate weaknesses in proactive behavior, time management, and self-driven performance improvement among employees.

Similarly, meeting set targets (Mean = 3.00) and maintaining productivity (Mean = 3.00) show only average performance levels, suggesting inconsistency in achieving expected output levels.

However, slightly better performance is observed in areas such as cooperation and communication with colleagues (Mean = 3.32) and commitment to organizational mission (Mean = 3.30). This indicates that while employees may demonstrate teamwork and organizational loyalty, their individual output performance remains relatively weak.

Overall, the results suggest that employee performance at VEDCO is declining or sub-optimal, particularly in areas related to efficiency, initiative, and task completion. This may imply the influence of factors such as remuneration, motivation, and organizational support systems on employee performance.

Interview responses on employee performance at VEDCO (Senior management)

The following are synthesized qualitative responses from senior management (Executive Director/CEO, Human Resource Officer, Programs Director, and Board representative) regarding employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

1. Executive Director / CEO

The Executive Director acknowledged that employee performance is generally satisfactory but varies across departments. He stated that:

“Overall, employees meet basic expectations, but we have noticed gaps in initiative, speed of task completion, and consistency in achieving targets.”

He further explained that performance is influenced by workload distribution, resource availability, and motivation levels linked to remuneration and benefits.

2. Human Resource Officer

The Human Resource Officer noted that performance appraisal results show mixed outcomes across staff categories. She explained that:

“Some employees perform very well, especially those in program implementation, but others show average performance in terms of productivity and initiative.”

She added that while appraisal systems are in place, linking performance results to rewards remains a challenge, which may affect motivation.

3. Programs Director

The Programs Director observed that field staff often perform better in teamwork but face challenges in meeting deadlines and maintaining consistency. He stated:

“Our field teams are committed, but sometimes delays occur due to workload pressure and limited resources, which affects overall performance.”

He also noted that adaptability to changing project demands is moderate among employees.

4. Board of Directors Representative

A Board representative expressed concern about declining productivity trends in some areas of the organization. He stated:

“We expect high performance standards, but we are seeing variations in output quality and efficiency across departments.”

He emphasized that improving motivation through better remuneration and structured performance incentives could enhance overall performance.

Overall, the interview findings indicate that employee performance at VEDCO is moderate but inconsistent, with strengths in teamwork and commitment but weaknesses in initiative, timeliness, and productivity. Management attributed these challenges to factors such as workload, resource limitations, and weak linkage between performance and rewards.

Despite these challenges, employees are generally viewed as committed to the organization’s mission, though improvements are needed to enhance efficiency and output consistency.

Thematic Analysis of Employee Performance at VEDCO

The qualitative data obtained from interviews with senior management (Executive Director/CEO, Human Resource Officer, Programs Director, and Board representative) were analyzed thematically. The analysis generated key themes explaining the level and determinants of employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO).

Theme 1: Moderate but inconsistent employee performance
 A dominant theme was that employee performance is generally moderate but inconsistent across departments and staff categories. Senior management indicated that while

some employees meet expectations, others perform below optimal levels in key areas such as timeliness and productivity.

The Executive Director noted that performance varies depending on roles and workload distribution, suggesting uneven performance standards within the organization.

Page | 12

Theme 2: Weak Initiative and Proactive Behavior

Another key theme was the low level of employee initiative in solving work-related problems and improving performance. Management responses indicated that employees often wait for instructions rather than proactively addressing challenges.

The HR Officer highlighted that this weakness is reflected in performance appraisal results, where self-driven improvement is limited among some staff.

Theme 3: Time management and task completion challenges

The interviews revealed concerns regarding delays in task completion and inconsistent adherence to deadlines. The Programs Director explained that:

“While staff are committed, delays sometimes occur due to workload pressure and limited resources.”

This indicates that time management and efficiency are areas needing improvement in employee performance.

Theme 4: Strong teamwork and commitment to organizational goals

Despite performance challenges, a positive theme that emerged was strong teamwork and commitment to organizational objectives. Employees were described as cooperative and generally aligned with VEDCO’s mission.

The Board representative emphasized that staff demonstrate dedication to the organization’s development goals, which supports organizational cohesion.

Theme 5: Resource and workload constraints affecting performance

Another important theme was the influence of limited resources and heavy workload on employee performance. Management indicated that operational constraints sometimes hinder employees from achieving optimal productivity.

This suggests that performance issues are not solely related to individual capability but also to organizational conditions.

Theme 6: Weak performance-reward linkage

The final theme identified was the weak connection between employee performance and rewards. The HR Officer noted that although performance appraisals are conducted, their outcomes are not strongly linked to salary increments or incentives.

This may reduce employee motivation to improve performance over time.

The thematic analysis shows that employee performance at VEDCO is moderate but uneven, with strengths in teamwork and organizational commitment but weaknesses in initiative, timeliness, and productivity. Key influencing

factors include workload pressures, limited resources, and weak performance-reward systems.

Overall, improving motivation and strengthening performance management systems could significantly enhance employee performance within the organization.

Documentary review findings on employee performance at VEDCO

The documentary review was conducted using internal organizational records at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), including performance appraisal reports, staff evaluation forms, project progress reports, attendance records, and human resource performance summaries. The aim was to establish documented evidence of employee performance levels and trends within the organization.

Theme 1: Performance appraisal system and evaluation criteria

The reviewed performance appraisal forms indicated that VEDCO conducts annual staff evaluations based on key performance indicators (KPIs) such as task completion, attendance, teamwork, and achievement of project targets. The appraisal documents showed that most employees were rated between average and satisfactory performance levels, with few receiving consistently high ratings.

This suggests that while a formal performance evaluation system exists, overall performance outcomes are moderate.

Theme 2: Achievement of targets and work outputs

Project progress reports revealed that most departments achieved their planned activities, but with occasional delays in implementation timelines. Some reports indicated that targets were partially achieved due to resource limitations and field challenges.

This supports the finding that employee performance is generally moderate, with inconsistencies in timeliness and efficiency.

Theme 3: Attendance and punctuality records

Attendance registers showed generally good attendance rates among employees, although occasional absenteeism and late reporting were recorded, particularly among field staff. These records suggest that while employees are generally present, punctuality and consistency vary across departments.

This reflects mixed performance in time management.

Theme 4: Productivity and output reports

Internal productivity reports indicated that while employees complete assigned tasks, the speed and efficiency of task execution vary. Some project reports highlighted delays in report submission and field activity implementation.

This confirms that productivity is present but not consistently high across all employees.

Theme 5: Training and performance improvement records

Training records showed that employees occasionally participate in capacity-building programs aimed at improving performance. However, the documents also

indicated that not all staff receive regular training opportunities, which may affect performance improvement rates.

This suggests a gap in continuous performance enhancement initiatives.

Theme 6: Performance-reward linkage

The review of HR records revealed limited evidence of a strong linkage between performance appraisal outcomes and reward systems such as salary increments or bonuses. While appraisals are conducted annually, their direct impact on rewards appears minimal.

This may contribute to moderate motivation and inconsistent performance levels among employees.

The documentary evidence confirms that VEDCO has a formal performance management system, including appraisals, KPIs, and reporting structures. However, overall employee performance is moderate rather than high, with

challenges observed in timeliness, productivity consistency, and full achievement of targets.

The findings further indicate that weaknesses in training coverage and limited performance-reward linkage may contribute to the observed performance gaps.

Overall, the documentary review supports findings from questionnaires and interviews, indicating that employee performance at VEDCO is functional but requires improvement to achieve higher efficiency and consistency.

Correlational Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between opportunities for growth and employee performance at Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO). The purpose was to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the study variables.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Opportunities for Growth	Employee Performance
Opportunities for Growth	1.000	0.635**
Employee Performance	0.635**	1.000

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

Opportunities for employee growth demonstrate a moderate to strong positive relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.635$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that training, career development, and promotion opportunities positively influence how employees perform their duties.

Discussion

The study established that opportunities for growth (training, promotion, mentorship, and skill development) have a positive influence on employee performance at VEDCO. Descriptive findings showed that employees moderately agreed that the organization provides growth opportunities, although not uniformly across all staff categories.

The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between opportunities for growth and employee performance ($r = 0.635$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that improvements in career development practices are associated with better employee performance outcomes.

Further, the regression results confirmed that growth opportunities significantly predict employee performance ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.05$), meaning that as growth opportunities increase, employee performance also improves.

These findings are consistent with Armstrong (2020), who argues that employee development enhances motivation and productivity by improving skills and competence. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) also emphasize that career development increases employee commitment and effectiveness.

Empirical support is provided by Njanja et al. (2013), who found that training and development significantly improve employee productivity. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory further supports the findings by identifying growth opportunities as motivators that enhance job satisfaction and performance.

However, qualitative findings indicated that growth opportunities are sometimes limited by funding constraints and uneven access to training, which reduces their overall impact.

Conclusion

The study concludes that opportunities for employee growth have a positive and significant influence on employee performance at VEDCO. This is supported by a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.635$) and a significant regression effect ($\beta = 0.312$). Although opportunities such as training, mentorship, and career advancement exist, they are not fully optimized across all employee categories. As a result, employee performance in areas such as initiative and innovation remains moderate rather than high.

Recommendation

VEDCO should strengthen and expand opportunities for employee growth through regular training programs, structured mentorship systems, and clear career progression pathways.

Management should ensure that all employees, regardless of department or project funding, have equal access to capacity-building opportunities.

Additionally, the organization should develop a formal career development policy to guide promotions and internal staff advancement.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation. First and foremost, I thank God Almighty for the gift of life, knowledge, and guidance throughout my academic journey. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisors for their professional guidance, constructive criticism, and tireless support throughout the research process. Their insights greatly enriched this study. I am also grateful to the management and staff of Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO) in Rubaga Division for their cooperation and willingness to provide the necessary information that made this research possible.

Special thanks go to my lecturers at Team University for equipping me with the knowledge and skills that enabled me to undertake this study. Finally, I wish to thank my family, friends, and classmates for their moral support, encouragement, and understanding during the entire period of my studies.

List of abbreviations

VEDCO – Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
HRM – Human Resource Management
CVI – Content Validity Index
SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences
PRP – Performance-Related Pay

Source of funding

The study had no funding.

Conflict of interest

The study had no funding.

Informed consent

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before their inclusion in the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, procedures involved, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Author contributions

EN: collected the data.

EHK: supervised the study.

Data availability

Data is available upon request from the author.

Author biography

Esther Nabirye: a student pursuing a master's degree in human resource management at Team University

Evelyn Hope Kyokunda: research supervisor at Team University

References

1. Armstrong, M. (2020). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (15th ed.). Kogan Page.
2. Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2020). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (15th ed.). Kogan Page.
3. Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
4. Njanja, J. K., Maina, D. K., Kibet, L. K., & Njagi, K. (2013). Effect of reward on employee performance: A case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company Ltd., Nakuru, Kenya. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 8(21), 41–49. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v8n21p41>
5. Njoroge, C. W., & Kwasira, J. (2015). Influence of career development on employee performance in public organizations in Kenya. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 5(3), 60–72.
6. Pulakos, E. D., Mueller-Hanson, R., & Arad, S. (2019). The evolution of performance management: Searching for value. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 6, 249–271. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015009>
7. Samuel, W. N., & Joshua, K. K. (2015). Influence of compensation and reward on the performance of employees at Nakuru County Government. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 17(11), 87–93.