



Effect of Performance Appraisal on Employee Performance in Non-Governmental Organizations: A Case of World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR)

Jacqueline Mbabazi & Ruth Odengo

University of Kigali

Email: jmbabazi19@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study explores the impact of individual goal setting on employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR). A descriptive research design combining both quantitative and qualitative methods was employed. The target population consisted of 136 employees, with data collected using a census method, capturing responses from all members of the target population. Inferential analysis was conducted using SPSS software version 21. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between individual goal setting and employee performance, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.700$, indicating a significant relationship. Regression analysis further confirmed that individual goal setting is a key predictor of employee performance, with a standardized beta coefficient of 1.352. The study found that employees excelled in resource assessment, creating timelines, and prioritizing tasks to achieve their goals. However, challenges related to the clarity, specificity, and relevance of goals were observed, with some employees expressing dissatisfaction in these areas. The study highlights the importance of clear, measurable goals and adequate support systems, including resources and feedback, to improve performance. Additionally, balancing individual goals with team collaboration is essential to foster a cooperative work environment. The study concludes that well-defined individual goals are critical to enhancing employee performance and recommends refining goal-setting practices at WVIR to align individual and organizational objectives for better outcomes.*

Keywords: *Performance Appraisal, Individual goal setting, Employee Performance, Non-Governmental Organizations, World Vision International*

How to cite this work (APA):

Mbabazi, J. & Ondego, R. (2025). Effect of performance appraisal on employee performance in non-governmental organizations: A case of World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR). *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 9(1), 65 – 79. <https://doi.org/10.59765/ewsy74gt3>.

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive environment, organizations must focus on enhancing both employee motivation and operational efficiency to maintain a strong position in the marketplace. One key mechanism for achieving this is performance appraisal, which serves as an essential tool for managing and improving employee performance. Performance appraisals not only assess an employee's

contribution to the organization but also play a significant role in fostering job satisfaction and aligning individual goals with organizational objectives (Prasad, 2022). Historically, performance appraisals focused more on driving employees to excel without fully addressing their job satisfaction. However, there is a shift towards recognizing the importance of both performance and employee morale for organizational success.

Performance appraisal has become widely adopted across the globe, with both public and private sector organizations utilizing formal systems to evaluate and measure employee performance. Surveys indicate that between 74% and 89% of companies worldwide now have some form of performance appraisal system (Murphy & Cleveland, 2019). This is true not only in the private sector but also in the public sector, where the practice has become increasingly prevalent, as seen in countries like the UK, where the proportion of organizations linking pay to appraisal outcomes rose from 15% in 2004 to 24% in 2011 (Van Wanrooy et al., 2023). These appraisals are typically used to assess various factors such as time management, work quality, productivity, and cost efficiency, which are integral to determining an employee's overall contribution to the organization (Invancevich, 2019). This system not only helps assess past performance but also sets the stage for future development by identifying areas for improvement and providing feedback.

In developed countries, performance appraisals are a cornerstone of human resource management strategies and are widely used to drive both individual and organizational performance. For instance, in the United States, companies like Google and Microsoft have pioneered innovative performance management systems that focus on continuous feedback and employee development rather than annual reviews. These systems aim to provide real-time insights, allowing managers and employees to track performance and make adjustments throughout the year (Cleveland, Murphy, & Williams, 2020). In Germany, the practice is typically more structured, with a strong emphasis on achieving alignment between individual goals and company objectives. Moreover, in many European countries, performance appraisals are linked not only to career development but also to compensation, training, and promotions (Samson., 2023). However, challenges such as bias in evaluations and insufficient feedback still persist, even in these advanced systems.

In Africa, performance appraisals are increasingly seen as a crucial tool for driving employee performance and organizational success. However, the implementation and effectiveness of these systems vary widely across the continent. In countries like South Africa, performance appraisals are often part of a more formalized human resource management process in both the private and public sectors. Many organizations in South Africa now tie performance appraisals to financial incentives and training opportunities, reflecting a growing recognition of the role of human capital in achieving organizational goals. However, challenges such as cultural differences, limited resources, and inconsistent practices often hinder the effective implementation of these systems in other African countries (Kondrasuk, 2022). In East Africa, including Rwanda, performance appraisal systems are evolving, with many organizations, particularly NGOs, focusing more on

employee development and aligning individual goals with national development priorities. Nonetheless, challenges remain in terms of subjectivity in evaluations and the need for training in conducting fair and effective appraisals.

In Rwanda, the use of performance appraisals has gained significant traction as an essential tool for managing employee performance, particularly within the public and non-governmental sectors. As Rwanda strives to meet its development objectives, performance appraisals are being increasingly adopted by both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to foster a motivated, productive, and goal-oriented workforce. This growing recognition aligns with the country's Vision 2050, which emphasizes sustainable human capital development. Performance appraisals in Rwanda are designed to assess employees' contributions, track progress towards organizational goals, and identify areas for improvement. However, challenges persist in ensuring that these appraisals align with the developmental needs of employees and the expectations of organizations. Issues such as subjectivity in evaluations, lack of training for appraisers, and difficulties in linking appraisals to career development are common obstacles that need to be addressed for these systems to achieve their full potential (Nasud, 2019).

In the case of World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR), performance appraisals serve as a critical mechanism to bridge the gap between individual employee performance and the organization's broader goals, particularly in the context of Rwanda's development agenda. At WVIR, performance appraisals are intended to align employees' work with the organization's mission and objectives, providing feedback and guidance for improvement. However, challenges arise in aligning these appraisals with both the employees' developmental needs and organizational expectations. For instance, appraisals sometimes fail to provide actionable feedback or development opportunities, leading to employee dissatisfaction and disengagement. Furthermore, there is the issue of potential bias in evaluations, which can undermine the objectivity and fairness of the process. Despite these challenges, WVIR's experience highlights the importance of designing performance appraisal systems that are transparent, fair, and aligned with both individual and organizational goals. This approach would enable organizations to maximize the potential of their workforce while contributing to Rwanda's broader development objectives.

1.1. Problem Statement

A strong organization must ensure the continuity of relevant activities while fostering its long-term sustainability (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020). World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR), part of the global

humanitarian organization World Vision, is committed to improving the lives of children, families, and communities across Rwanda (World Vision Report, 2021). WVIR's efforts focus on key sectors such as education, healthcare, child protection, water, sanitation, and economic development, with the aim of creating lasting social value for its beneficiaries (Moura et al., 2022). As a non-profit, WVIR faces increasing pressure to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of its operations due to its complex nature and the dynamic external environment in which it operates (DeVaro et al., 2017).

Given its diverse workforce and multi-faceted organizational goals, performance appraisal systems are a crucial component of WVIR's internal monitoring and control mechanisms (Shinwari & Rahimi, 2018). These systems not only set clear expectations and provide feedback but also play a significant role in boosting employee motivation and commitment, which in turn positively impacts organizational outcomes (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2019; Biswakarma, 2017). However, poorly designed appraisal systems can have a detrimental effect, demotivating employees and undermining organizational performance. This underscores the importance of having fair, transparent, and mission-aligned performance management systems to maintain organizational effectiveness (Armstrong, 2019; Idowu, 2021).

For WVIR, which operates within Rwanda's post-genocide socio-economic context, implementing effective performance appraisal practices is especially crucial for ensuring alignment with its broader mission of fostering sustainable development and social change (Bulto & Markos, 2023; World Vision Rwanda, 2018). By analyzing WVIR's performance appraisal system, this study seeks to assess its impact on employee motivation and organizational effectiveness. Given Rwanda's supportive work environment and employee benefits, understanding the role of performance appraisals in this context offers valuable insights into enhancing both individual and organizational performance.

This study sought to achieve the following research objective:

- To determine the effect of individual goal setting on the performance of employees in World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR)

2. Literature Review

Today, many organizations strive to enhance the outlook and performance of their employees through complex training and educational programs. These programs are designed to equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their current roles and prepare them for future career advancement (Kumar, 2021). However, numerous academicians and professionals argue that a

more holistic development approach occurs when employees learn on the job, experiencing different facets of their role through practical work (DeVaro et al., 2017). On-the-job learning allows employees to develop their personalities, refine their decision-making abilities, and improve their problem-solving skills, which cannot always be cultivated through formal training programs alone (Biswakarma, 2017). This hands-on approach allows employees to gain a deeper understanding of their responsibilities, leading to better job performance and higher job satisfaction (Kumar, 2021).

Simultaneously, organizations can enhance the value of on-the-job learning by incorporating a systematic method of performance appraisal (PA) (Shinwari & Rahimi, 2018). A well-structured PA system provides regular, constructive feedback that informs employees about their strengths and areas for improvement, helping them fine-tune their skills and behaviors to better align with organizational goals (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2019). By linking performance appraisal to personal development, organizations ensure that employees not only meet current job expectations but also are groomed for future roles (Armstrong, 2019). Moreover, a good PA system benefits supervisors and management by offering insights into individual and team performance, which can be used for decision-making related to promotions, compensation, and training needs (Biswakarma, 2017). Despite some employees' resistance to performance appraisals, it remains an essential process in fostering continuous development and improving organizational performance (Kumar, 2021). The key to maximizing the benefits of performance appraisal lies in maintaining transparency, consistency, and fairness throughout the evaluation process (Idowu, 2021).

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal can be viewed as the process of assessing and recording staff performance for the purpose of making judgments about employees that lead to decisions. It is undertaken to discover how productive an employee is and whether they can continue to perform in the future to help achieve organizational goals. Performance appraisal constitutes an essential part of the Human Resource Management (HRM) process and is crucial in determining the important dimensions of both employee and organizational effectiveness for success (Decenzo & Robbins, 2023). An appraisal evaluates not only the employee's performance but also their potential for development. The primary objectives of an appraisal are to assess past performance, identify training needs, set and agree on future objectives and standards, as well as to facilitate the achievement of these goals. As Jon Clemens argued, "The purpose of reviews should be to drive better business results for the organization, making sure that the daily efforts of employees directly contribute to both their team's goals and the goals of the organization" (Heskett,

2017).

Rao (2015) opines that a properly designed performance appraisal system is critical as it helps employees understand their strong and weak areas in relation to their roles and responsibilities in the organization. Particularly, setting personal goals and aligning them with organizational objectives has been embraced in most organizations. According to Mullins (2019), performance appraisal is a process applied in businesses to assess the characteristics and contributions of employees in their teams. He argues that the appraisal of performance serves two purposes: an evaluative purpose and a developmental purpose. Williams (2018) describes performance appraisal as a systematic evaluation of staff by their supervisor in terms of job performance as prescribed by the job description, specification, and working environment. This process is usually carried out against agreed-upon criteria or conditions of evaluation. In this way, performance appraisal not only contributes to improving individual performance but also ensures that employees are aligned with the broader goals of the organization.

In addition to its role in evaluating current performance, performance appraisal also serves as a critical tool for employee development and organizational growth. Through regular feedback and goal-setting, appraisals help employees identify areas for improvement, which can then be addressed through targeted training, mentorship, and development programs. This process fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where employees are encouraged to enhance their skills and knowledge in line with the evolving demands of the organization. Moreover, performance appraisals are often linked to career progression and compensation, motivating employees to perform at their best while aligning their personal goals with organizational objectives (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2019). When executed effectively, performance appraisals not only enhance individual performance but also contribute to higher employee engagement and retention, ensuring that the organization can adapt to changing market conditions while maintaining a committed and skilled workforce. Ultimately, an effective appraisal system becomes a powerful tool that drives both individual growth and organizational success, reinforcing the importance of aligning employee contributions with the strategic vision of the organization (Shinwari & Rahimi, 2018).

Individual Goal Setting

Goal setting refers to the process of setting specific, attainable targets for individuals or groups. It is a motivational technique that helps employees understand business goals and motivates them to rise to challenges. For

goal-setting to be effective, it needs to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (Gandi, 2019). This approach is rooted in the S.M.A.R.T. criteria, which ensure clarity and feasibility while providing a roadmap for achieving success. Setting goals empowers employees to focus on what matters most, helps direct their efforts toward organizational objectives, and fosters a sense of accomplishment as they achieve milestones along the way.

Gandi (2019) emphasizes that individual goal setting, or personal goal setting, involves defining specific objectives that an individual wishes to achieve within a certain timeframe. These goals are unique to each person, reflecting their aspirations, values, and priorities. The process of individual goal setting typically includes several steps. First, individuals need to identify objectives, which involves reflecting on what they want to accomplish in various aspects of life, such as career, education, health, relationships, personal development, and leisure. Next, setting specific goals within each objective ensures that the targets are clear and measurable. This step is crucial as it enables individuals to break down larger objectives into actionable tasks, setting them up for success in achieving both personal and professional milestones.

The third step in the process is establishing priorities, as not all goals carry the same weight or urgency. It is essential to prioritize goals based on their importance, impact, and alignment with personal values. Following this, creating action plans involves outlining the steps needed to accomplish each goal, which may include deadlines, resources, and potential obstacles. Regular progress tracking and staying motivated are vital for maintaining momentum toward goal achievement. Individuals should monitor their progress, make adjustments as needed, and celebrate small victories along the way (Dave, 2020). Periodic reviews of goals allow individuals to reassess their objectives and adjust their plans accordingly, ensuring continued growth and personal development. By engaging in this process, individuals enhance their sense of purpose, satisfaction, and overall well-being, taking control of their lives and working toward realizing their full potential.

In the context of World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR), individual goal setting plays a significant role in aligning employee objectives with the broader organizational mission of sustainable development and humanitarian aid. For an NGO like WVIR, where the focus is on improving the lives of vulnerable communities, employees' individual goals must be closely aligned with the organization's goals of community empowerment, child protection, and poverty reduction. When staff members set personal goals that are congruent with WVIR's mission, it not only enhances their individual motivation but also drives collective progress toward the

achievement of organizational objectives. At WVIR, the process of goal setting is actively encouraged through regular performance appraisals and feedback mechanisms, which allow employees to reflect on their contributions, assess their performance, and adjust their goals in line with the dynamic needs of the communities they serve. By adopting a goal-setting approach that is tailored to the unique aspirations and responsibilities of its employees, WVIR ensures that its staff remain motivated, engaged, and aligned with the organization's mission, ultimately contributing to greater organizational effectiveness and impact

Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to how effectively individuals execute their responsibilities and contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives. Armstrong and Taylor (2022) define performance as the means of obtaining better results from organizational teams and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards, and competency requirements. It is a crucial aspect of human resource management (HRM) processes, directly influencing an organization's ability to achieve its strategic goals. Mutsuddi (2020) emphasizes that performance management involves creating a work environment where employees can perform to the best of their abilities. A well-designed performance management system enhances both individual and team productivity by ensuring employees are aligned with the organization's broader objectives and are working as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Organizations often employ various frameworks to measure and manage performance. One widely used tool is the Balanced Scorecard, which Armstrong and Taylor (2021) argue is effective for aligning performance with strategic goals. The Balanced Scorecard helps organizations balance four key perspectives: customer, finance, internal business processes, and growth and development. Improving any one of these perspectives can lead to improved results across the others. For example, improving internal processes can lead to better customer outcomes and financial performance. Additionally, Smith (2015) suggests that organizations should undertake both self-assessments and external evaluations to gain a complete understanding of their performance. This process encourages organizational ownership of feedback and greater acceptance of recommendations for improvement. In this study, employee performance was operationalized using indicators such as productivity, morale, and efficiency, which formed the basis for examining the impact of individual goal-setting on performance.

In organizations like World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR), effective employee performance is critical for achieving the organization's mission of improving the lives of children, families, and communities across Rwanda. As a humanitarian organization, WVIR is committed to providing services in sectors such as education, health, child protection, and economic development. Given its complex, multi-sectoral focus, ensuring that employees are performing at their best is crucial for driving the impact of the organization's initiatives. Armstrong and Taylor (2022) explain that employee performance in such organizations must be managed within a framework of planned goals, standards, and competency requirements, aligning each individual's efforts with the broader organizational objectives. This alignment is particularly important for NGOs like WVIR, where resources are limited, and maximizing impact is a central priority.

2.2. Theoretical Review

theoretical framework provides a structured foundation for research by linking concepts and guiding the analysis of key variables within a study. It helps identify which factors to measure and the relationships to explore in order to address the research problem (Trochim, 2018). In this study, the theoretical framework is grounded in goal-setting theory, which serves as the lens through which the impact of individual goal setting on employee performance will be examined.

Goal Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory, first proposed by Edwin Locke in 1968, emphasizes the crucial role of individual goals in motivating employees to achieve superior performance. The theory suggests that employees who set clear and specific goals are more likely to be motivated and improve their performance to meet those goals. When these goals are not achieved, employees may either enhance their performance or modify their goals to make them more realistic, which ultimately contributes to the achievement of performance management objectives (Salaman, 2019). Locke and Latham's refined version of the theory emphasizes the relationship between goal specificity and performance outcomes, positing that difficult, clear goals, when coupled with feedback and support, lead to higher levels of motivation and achievement. In this regard, organizations like World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR), which focus on child well-being and community development, can leverage goal-setting to enhance employee motivation and align individual contributions with organizational objectives.

The theory further stresses the importance of setting goals that challenge individuals to push their limits, thereby

driving knowledge and skill acquisition to improve their work output (Cascio, 2018). In organizations like WVIR, where employees work towards complex, socially impactful objectives, managers are tasked with establishing clear and challenging goals that are not only attainable but also aligned with the broader mission of the organization. The role of managers in setting specific, measurable, and realistic goals is crucial for fostering high-performance cultures. Managers should work with their teams to set expectations and define what success looks like, ensuring that these goals are challenging but achievable, and regularly assessed (Cascio, 2018). This approach is integral in achieving desired outcomes, particularly in a development-focused environment such as WVIR, where social goals like community empowerment require collective, high-level performance.

Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory has been widely validated by research, which supports the notion that the most effective performance is seen when goals are specific and challenging, coupled with regular feedback on progress (Locke & Latham, 2018). This has direct relevance to performance appraisals at WVIR, where individual performance goals should be designed to align with the organization's mission of improving child welfare and fostering sustainable development in Rwanda. Clear, measurable goals allow employees to understand what is expected of them and provide them with a roadmap to track their progress. Feedback mechanisms, integral to the goal-setting process, help maintain motivation and foster a commitment to achieving these goals. Integrating goal-setting theory into the performance appraisal system at WVIR can significantly enhance employee performance, ensuring that individual efforts are aligned with organizational objectives and ultimately contributing to the achievement of broader social impacts (Locke & Latham, 1990). This focus on goal alignment also corresponds with the first objective of the study, which aims to determine the effect of individual goal-setting on the performance of employees in World Vision International Rwanda. By adopting this theory, WVIR can create a motivated workforce capable of driving sustainable development initiatives across the country.

2.3. Empirical Literature

The empirical literature review examines previous research on the impact of individual goal-setting on employee performance, highlighting key findings that demonstrate how clear, specific goals and feedback contribute to enhanced motivation and productivity in organizational settings.

Individual Goal Setting and Employee Performance

In a study conducted in the United States, Stephenson (2019) explored the influence of individual goal setting on employee performance within a technology firm. Using a quasi-experimental design, 150 employees were randomly assigned to a goal-setting group or a control group without specific goals. Over a six-month period, performance metrics such as sales figures, project completion rates, and customer satisfaction scores were tracked. The findings revealed that employees in the goal-setting group exhibited a 30% improvement in sales, a 25% increase in project completion rates, and a 20% higher customer satisfaction score compared to the control group. Regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between goal setting and performance (coefficient = 0.42, $p < 0.05$), indicating that goal-setting had a measurable impact on performance outcomes. This study highlights the positive effects of clear goal-setting on motivation and overall employee performance in a developed context. However, a gap exists in the literature regarding the specific role of feedback mechanisms and long-term sustainability of these performance improvements.

In an African context, a longitudinal study conducted by Adesanya et al. (2022) examined the effects of individual goal setting on employee performance in a large financial institution in Nigeria. The study tracked the performance of 180 employees over a one-year period, focusing on goal-setting interventions between supervisors and employees. Performance evaluations were conducted quarterly, measuring metrics such as productivity, client retention, and service quality. The study found that employees who actively participated in goal-setting saw an 18% improvement in productivity, 14% improvement in client retention, and 12% higher service quality compared to those who did not set goals. The model summary indicated that goal-setting accounted for 32% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$). This study emphasizes the importance of goal-setting practices in an African business context, but it also suggests that further research is needed to explore the role of cultural factors and organizational support in enhancing goal-setting outcomes.

In Rwanda, a study by Musoni (2023) investigated the impact of individual goal setting on employee performance in a non-governmental organization, World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR), which focuses on community development and child welfare. Using a sample of 120 employees, the study employed ANOVA to assess performance variations between employees who participated in goal-setting and those who did not. The findings revealed that employees who set specific, challenging goals achieved 22% higher performance scores

in community development projects, with a 16% improvement in client satisfaction, compared to their counterparts. ANOVA results showed a significant difference in performance between the two groups ($F = 4.57, p < 0.01$). This study underscores the positive effects of individual goal-setting in Rwanda's unique organizational and social context. However, a gap exists in understanding the long-term effects of goal-setting and its integration with other motivational practices, such as feedback and rewards, which should be further explored in future studies.

3. Methodology

The research design served as a blueprint for data collection and analysis (Kothari, 2011). This study used a descriptive design with both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the impact of performance appraisals on employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR). The design was chosen for its ability to

explore the relationships between variables such as goal setting, performance assessment, feedback, and their effects on employee performance. Quantitative methods measured the extent of these influences, while qualitative methods captured employees' perceptions and experiences of performance appraisals. Combining both approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of how different components of performance appraisals affect employee performance at WVIR.

The target population consisted of 136 staff members from WVIR Headquarters in Nyarugenge District, selected to provide insights into how performance appraisals impact employee performance. According to Roger (2003), the target population is the group from which samples are drawn. Employees from various departments were included to ensure a broad perspective on the effects of performance appraisals across different roles within the organization. The following table gives details:

Table 1. Table representing total population

Category	Total population
Top-level staff	10
Middle-level staff	28
Low-level staff	98
Total	136

Source: World Vision International Rwanda, 2023

In this study, employees at World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR) were categorized into three distinct levels to provide a comprehensive analysis of how performance appraisals affect staff at different managerial hierarchies. Top-level staff are senior executives and managers who hold positions of significant authority and responsibility within the organization, such as the CEO, Country Director, and Senior Directors. These individuals are responsible for strategic decision-making, setting organizational goals, and overseeing major functions within WVIR. They have considerable influence over the direction of the organization and typically possess extensive experience and leadership skills. Middle-level staff, on the other hand, serve as the bridge between top management and lower-level employees. This group includes department heads, program managers, and supervisors who implement the policies and strategies set by top management, manage teams, and ensure that daily operations align with broader organizational goals. Their role is crucial in translating high-level directives into actionable plans for their teams. Finally, low-level staff are the employees who directly carry out the day-to-day tasks of the organization. This includes field staff, project

officers, administrative assistants, and support staff such as drivers and technicians. They are not involved in managerial decision-making but are responsible for executing specific tasks that contribute to the overall success of the organization's operations.

The census method was also used, gathering data from the entire target population of 136 employees. Since the sample size was relatively small, this approach was deemed suitable to capture data from all members of the target population. This ensured that every participant's perspective was included, contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the impact of performance appraisal practices on employee performance. The goal was to provide detailed insights into performance dynamics across different roles within the organization.

Data collection methods for the study included both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through two key instruments: the questionnaire survey and the interview method. Secondary data were sourced through a documentary review of published and

unpublished documents related to the study's context. These mixed methods provided a robust approach to understanding the research problem, offering both statistical data and qualitative insights. The questionnaire survey was structured using a modified Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" (5), "Agree" (4), "Neutral" (3), "Disagree" (2), and "Strongly Disagree" (1)." This scale allowed respondents to indicate their level of agreement with various statements related to performance appraisals and their impact on employee performance. The survey instrument was designed to quantify the study variables, enabling statistical analysis of the relationships between goal setting, feedback, and employee performance.

Unstructured interviews were also conducted with top-level management to gain deeper insights into the organizational culture and its impact on employee performance. The unstructured format of the interviews allowed participants to provide more detailed, open-ended responses, reflecting their experiences and perceptions of the performance appraisal system. This qualitative data complemented the quantitative findings, offering a more comprehensive view of the research topic.

Before data collection, a pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. A small group of participants tested the instrument to identify any unclear or misleading questions and to estimate the time required to complete the survey. Based on feedback, the questionnaire was revised to ensure clarity and effectiveness. Reliability was further assessed using Cronbach's alpha, measuring internal consistency to ensure the instrument's stability and reliability across repeated measurements.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data, primarily collected through questionnaires, were analyzed using statistical techniques in SPSS version 21. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and tables, were employed to summarize the data and explore the relationships between variables like individual goal setting and employee performance. Correlation analysis was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationships between these variables, while regression analysis helped investigate how these factors collectively influenced employee performance.

The study used inferential statistics, including regression models, to assess the impact of organizational practices on

employee performance. A multiple regression model was applied to explore how variables like goal setting, performance review, performance assessment, and feedback predicted employee performance. The regression equation was formulated as follows:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where Y represents employee performance, X_1 is the independent variables (Individual goal setting), β_1 is the regression coefficients, and ϵ is the error term capturing unexplained variability.

For the qualitative data, collected through interviews, thematic analysis was applied. The responses were transcribed and coded to identify recurring themes and patterns related to employees' perceptions and experiences with performance appraisals. The analysis focused on uncovering how feedback, goal setting, and the overall performance appraisal process impacted employee motivation and performance. The themes derived from the qualitative data complemented the quantitative findings, offering deeper insights into the subjective experiences of the staff and how performance appraisals were perceived at World Vision International Rwanda.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Findings

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study in relation to the research hypothesis.

4.1.1. Response rate

The survey targeted 10 top-level staff members, 28 middle-level staff, and 98 lower-level staff from World Vision International Rwanda. Questionnaires were distributed to middle-level and lower-level staff, totaling 136 respondents, while 10 top-level staff members were interviewed separately. Out of the 126 distributed questionnaires, 118 were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 93.6%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate below 40% is considered unreliable, 40%-50% is poor, 50%-60% is acceptable for analysis, 60%-70% is good, 70%-80% is very good, and over 80% is excellent. With a response rate of 93.6%, the study achieved an excellent and representative rate for drawing conclusions. Table 4.2 below summarizes the response rate of the respondents:

Table 2: Response rate of the respondents

Response Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaires Returned	118	93.60%
Questionnaires Not Returned	8	6.40%
Total	126	100%

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 2 above indicates that the high response rate of 93.6% reflects strong engagement from respondents and suggests that the sample is highly representative of the target population. The relatively low 6.4% non-response rate indicates minimal non-response bias. As a result, the collected data is comprehensive and reliable, enhancing the credibility and validity of the study's findings.

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics of Individual Goal Setting

This section examines the research question regarding the effect of Individual Goal Setting on the performance of employees in World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR). It also explores the perceptions of respondents based on the survey questions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, providing a meaningful summary and presentation of the results. In this study, a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was employed: 5 representing "Strongly Agree," 4 for "Agree," 3 for "Neutral," 2 for "Disagree," and 1 for "Strongly Disagree." This scale enables a clear interpretation of respondents' attitudes and perceptions. The findings from the descriptive analysis are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Level of Agreement on How Individual Goal Setting Affects Employee Performance

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
My goals are clear, simple, and detailed	118	2.48	0.87
I create a timeline for achieving set goals	118	4.16	0.37
I assess my resources and capabilities when setting goals	118	4.71	0.71
My goals should be relevant to the individual's overall objectives and values	118	3.94	0.4
My goals have deadlines or timeframes attached to them	118	3.42	0.82
I prioritize tasks that contribute to goal attainment	118	4.4	0.49
My goals are specific and measurable	118	4.06	0.35
Aggregate Score		3.88	

Source: Field Data, 2024- Key: M: Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Table 3 provides valuable insights into how individual goal-setting practices influence employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda. The results indicate that employees excel in assessing their resources and capabilities when setting goals (Mean = 4.7119, SD = 0.70531) and in creating timelines for goal achievement (Mean = 4.1610, SD = 0.36911), demonstrating strong practical management skills. Furthermore, employees generally perceive their goals as specific and measurable (Mean = 4.0593, SD = 0.35307) and prioritize tasks that

contribute to goal attainment (Mean = 4.3983, SD = 0.49164).

However, there is noticeable variability in certain aspects of goal-setting. The clarity, simplicity, and level of detail in goal formulation received a lower average rating (Mean = 2.4831, SD = 0.87445), suggesting that some employees find these elements less effective or satisfactory. Similarly, the relevance of goals to individual objectives and values (Mean = 3.9407, SD = 0.39855) and the use of deadlines or timeframes (Mean = 3.4237, SD = 0.82074) were rated lower than other goal-setting factors such as resource

assessment and task prioritization. The higher standard deviations in these areas suggest a broader range of opinions among employees.

These findings imply that while employees at World Vision International Rwanda are proficient in creating timelines and assessing available resources, enhancing the clarity, simplicity, and relevance of goal-setting practices could further improve overall employee performance. Moreover, aligning individual goals more closely with

personal values and organizational objectives may foster greater motivation and improve performance outcomes across the organization.

4.1.3. Correlation Analysis

The findings of the correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variables are summarized and presented in Table 4

Table 4: Correlation between independent variable and dependent variable

		Individual Goal Setting Employee performance	
Individual Goal Setting	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	118	
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.700**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	118	118

Source: Field data, 2024

The correlation analysis in Table 4 reveals a strong positive relationship between individual goal setting and employee performance, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.700. This indicates that as individual goal setting improves, employee performance tends to increase as well. The relationship is statistically significant, as evidenced by the p-value of 0.000, which is well below the conventional significance threshold of 0.05. This suggests that the correlation observed is not due to random chance but reflects a true, meaningful association between these variables. The high correlation coefficient implies that goal-setting practices are a substantial driver of employee performance within the organization.

The findings highlight the importance of well-structured and effective goal-setting mechanisms in enhancing employee productivity and performance. The fact that individual goal setting explains a significant proportion of the variance in employee performance suggests that

employees who set clear, measurable, and actionable goals are likely to perform better. This insight is particularly valuable for management at World Vision International Rwanda, as it emphasizes the need to prioritize and refine goal-setting practices to boost overall organizational performance. The strength and significance of this relationship highlight goal-setting as a critical factor in achieving higher employee performance levels.

4.1.4. Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed in this section to identify the predictor and its contribution towards the criterion. It aims to determine the prediction of a single dependent variable from a group of independent variables. The multiple regression analysis was performed with all the assumptions complied with. Table 5 shows the model summary of the results

Table 4. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.700 ^a	.490	.486	1.06744

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individual goal Setting

Table 4 presents the model summary for the regression analysis, showing how well individual goal setting predicts employee performance. The R-value of 0.700 indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between the independent variable (individual goal setting) and the dependent variable (employee performance). The R Square

value of 0.490 reveals that approximately 49% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the individual goal-setting practices in the model. This suggests that while individual goal setting plays a significant role, there are other factors influencing employee performance that are not captured by this model.

Additionally, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.486 is very close to the R Square value, indicating that the model's fit remains relatively stable even when adjusting for the number of predictors. This suggests that individual goal setting is a relatively strong predictor of employee performance within this dataset. The Standard Error of the Estimate of 1.06744 represents the average distance that

the observed values fall from the regression line. While the value is moderate, it shows that the model is fairly accurate in predicting employee performance, with a reasonable degree of variability remaining. Overall, the regression model demonstrates that individual goal setting is an important factor in explaining employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda.

Table 5. Summary of ANOVA results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	127.150	1	127.150	111.592	.000 ^b
	Residual	132.172	116	1.139		
	Total	259.322	117			

- a. Dependent Variable: Individual Goal Setting
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee performance

Table 5 summarizes the results of the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) for the regression model, which evaluates the overall significance of the relationship between employee performance (the independent variable) and individual goal setting (the dependent variable). The Regression Sum of Squares is 127.150, which represents the variation in individual goal setting explained by the model. The Residual Sum of Squares is 132.172, indicating the unexplained variation in individual goal setting that is not accounted for by employee performance. The total variation is 259.322, combining both explained and unexplained variation.

The F-value of 111.592 is highly significant (p-value = .000), which indicates that the regression model as a whole is statistically significant. This means that the relationship between employee performance and individual goal setting is not due to random chance, and that employee performance is a meaningful predictor of individual goal setting at World Vision International Rwanda. The significance level of 0.000 (less than the threshold of 0.05) further supports this conclusion, demonstrating that the model has a strong explanatory power in predicting individual goal setting based on employee performance. This suggests that improving employee performance can positively influence individual goal setting within the organization.

Table 6. Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	1.529		
	Individual Goal Setting	1.352	.128	.700	10.564	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Table 6 provides the regression coefficients for the relationship between individual goal setting (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable). The unstandardized coefficient (B) for individual goal setting is 1.352, meaning that for each unit increase in individual goal setting, employee performance is expected to increase by 1.352 units, holding other factors constant. The standard error of the coefficient is 0.128, indicating the precision of this estimate. The large t-value of 10.564 (calculated as the coefficient divided by its standard error) and the corresponding p-value of 0.000 suggest that the relationship between individual goal setting and employee performance is highly statistically significant. The standardized coefficient (Beta) for individual goal setting

is 0.700, which indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables. This means that individual goal setting has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. The higher the goal-setting practices in the organization, the better the employee performance tends to be. Since the p-value for both the constant and the individual goal setting variable is 0.000, which is well below the typical significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that both the overall regression model and the individual predictor (individual goal setting) are highly statistically significant and contribute meaningfully to predicting employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate how individual goal setting affects employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda (WVIR). The findings of this study indicate a significant positive relationship between individual goal setting and employee performance, highlighting the crucial role that goal-setting practices play in enhancing performance within the organization.

Findings revealed that individual goal setting plays a crucial role in influencing employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda. Employees demonstrated strong abilities in assessing their resources and capabilities when setting goals, as well as in creating timelines for achieving those goals, indicating effective practical management skills. They also generally considered their goals to be specific and measurable, and they prioritized tasks that contributed to goal attainment. However, notable variability was observed in other aspects of goal setting. The clarity, simplicity, and detail of goals received relatively lower ratings, suggesting some dissatisfaction in these areas. Moreover, the relevance of goals to personal objectives and values, as well as the use of deadlines or timeframes, were rated lower compared to resource assessment and task prioritization, with higher standard deviations indicating diverse opinions among employees.

These findings suggest that while employees excel in certain aspects of goal setting, such as resource assessment and task prioritization, there is room for improvement in enhancing the clarity and detail of goals. Focusing on these areas could help further improve employee performance and better align their efforts with the organization's overall objectives. The variability in responses also highlights the need for more consistent and clear goal-setting practices across the organization to ensure greater alignment and effectiveness in achieving both individual and organizational goals.

Interviews with top management staff highlighted varying perspectives on the impact of individual goal setting on project performance. One management member emphasized that aligning personal goals with organizational objectives boosts accountability and motivation, citing the "WASH in Schools" project as an example where personal goals directly contributed to project success. However, another management perspective suggested that while individual goal setting is beneficial, it must be accompanied by adequate support systems and clear communication. The challenges faced in the "Child Protection" project, where personal targets led to misalignment due to resource and coordination gaps, underscored the importance of aligning individual goals

with team objectives. A more cautious viewpoint also emerged, suggesting that individual goal setting could lead to competition rather than collaboration among team members, which could hinder teamwork. This viewpoint highlighted the need to balance individual goals with collective team goals to promote collaboration and improve overall project outcomes. These insights suggest that while goal setting is an effective tool for enhancing employee performance, its success depends on clear communication, adequate support, and ensuring alignment with both individual and team objectives.

Besides, findings from multiple regressions highlight that individual goal setting plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda. The strong positive relationship between these two variables suggests that well-defined, measurable, and achievable goals are a significant predictor of employee performance. Organizations that invest in structured goal-setting frameworks can expect better alignment between employee efforts and organizational objectives, which in turn leads to increased productivity and efficiency. This finding underscores the importance of fostering a culture where employees not only understand the goals set for them but are also motivated and supported in achieving those goals. Furthermore, the statistically significant results highlight the need for organizations to treat goal-setting practices as a strategic tool for improving employee outcomes. Since individual goal setting has a meaningful impact on performance, managers and HR professionals should prioritize the creation of clear and relevant goals for employees, ensuring these goals align with individual capabilities and broader organizational priorities. By refining goal-setting processes, World Vision International Rwanda can enhance employee motivation, engagement, and performance, ultimately driving organizational success and achieving desired outcomes more effectively.

These findings are in agreement with Toussaint and Holland (2021), who emphasize the importance of clear, specific, and measurable goals in driving employee performance. Their research highlights that well-defined goals not only help employees stay focused and motivated but also provide a clear path to success. The results of this study align with their assertion that when employees can assess their resources and capabilities effectively, as well as create achievable timelines, they are better positioned to accomplish their objectives. Additionally, Toussaint and Holland (2021) argue that the clarity and relevance of goals are critical for ensuring alignment with personal and organizational values, which is reflected in the current study's findings on the lower ratings of goal clarity and relevance. Furthermore, like Toussaint and Holland (2021), this study underscores the need for organizations to provide clear guidelines and support for goal setting. Inconsistent perceptions of goal clarity, as highlighted by the variability

in employee responses, mirror their conclusion that ambiguity in goal-setting can hinder employee performance. Thus, while employees may excel in some areas of goal setting, such as prioritization and resource assessment, enhancing the clarity and relevance of goals could lead to even greater alignment with organizational objectives and improved overall performance.

In contrast, the findings of this study diverge from those of Locke and Latham (2019), who argue that the specificity and clarity of goals are fundamental for achieving high performance. Locke and Latham emphasize that specific, clear, and challenging goals motivate employees and enhance task performance by providing precise directions and expectations. However, in this study, the relatively low ratings for goal clarity and specificity suggest that many employees at World Vision International Rwanda struggle to understand or articulate their goals in a clear and detailed manner. This misalignment with Locke and Latham's theory points to the potential limitations of current goal-setting practices at the organization, where employees may face challenges in pursuing their goals effectively without clear and comprehensive objectives.

In the same vein, Kitabi (2023) also disagreed with the notion that goal specificity alone leads to high performance, arguing that factors such as organizational culture and employee engagement play a crucial role in shaping how goals are perceived and achieved. Kitabi's research highlights that while specific goals are important, the broader organizational environment and the support employees receive in achieving those goals are just as significant. This supports the notion that without clear guidance and resources, even well-defined goals may not be effectively pursued, aligning with the findings of this study that employees at WVIR encounter challenges in goal clarity and achieving alignment with organizational objectives.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This study concludes that individual goal setting has a significant and positive impact on employee performance at World Vision International Rwanda. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation of 0.700 and a statistically significant coefficient of 1.010 ($p = 0.000$), indicating that well-defined, measurable goals are strongly linked to improved performance outcomes. These results emphasize the importance of setting clear, specific objectives that not only motivate employees but also drive higher productivity. The findings suggest that when employees have a clear understanding of what they need to achieve and how to measure their progress, their

performance tends to improve. Therefore, organizations should prioritize and continually refine their goal-setting processes to ensure they are aligned with both individual aspirations and broader organizational objectives. This alignment will foster greater employee engagement and ultimately lead to superior performance outcomes across the organization.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. Enhance goal clarity and specificity:** World Vision International Rwanda should ensure that employee goals are clear, specific, and measurable. This will help staff better understand their objectives and remain focused, which can lead to improved performance outcomes.
- 2. Integrate support systems into goal setting:** World Vision International Rwanda should provide necessary resources, tools, and regular feedback to employees to support their goal achievement. This will enhance motivation and ensure that staff can effectively meet their targets.
- 3. Promote balance between individual goals and team collaboration:** World Vision International Rwanda should align individual goals with broader team objectives. This will foster collaboration, ensuring that personal achievements contribute to the collective success of the organization and improve overall performance.

References

- Adesanya, A., Oladipo, T., & Akintoye, A. (2022). The effects of individual goal setting on employee performance in a Nigerian financial institution: A longitudinal study. *Journal of African Business*, 23(2), 135-151.
- Al-Jedaia, A., & Mehrez, F. (2020). Sustainability and strategic management in non-profit organizations. *Journal of Strategic Management*, 22(4), 58-76.
- Armstrong, M. (2019). *Armstrong's handbook of performance management: An evidence-based guide to delivering high performance*. Kogan Page.
- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2021). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (15th ed.). Kogan Page.

- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2022). *Human resource management: A contemporary approach* (11th ed.). Kogan Page.
- Biswakarma, R. (2017). The relationship between employee development programs and organizational performance in the service sector. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 7(3), 45-61.
- Bulto, S., & Markos, S. (2023). Performance appraisals and their role in development in post-genocide Rwanda. *Rwandan Journal of Human Resources*, 14(2), 24-36.
- Cascio, W. F. (2018). *Managing human resources: Productivity, quality of life, profits* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Cleveland, J. N., Murphy, K. R., & Williams, R. E. (2020). *Performance appraisal and management: Perspectives on improving practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Decenzo, D. A., & Robbins, S. P. (2023). *Fundamentals of human resource management*. Wiley.
- DeVaro, J., Gorry, A., & Kaul, A. (2017). Incentives and performance management in non-profit organizations. *Journal of Nonprofit Management*, 25(1), 11-27.
- Dave, P. (2020). *Personal goal setting: Techniques for achieving success in work and life*. Wiley.
- Gandi, R. (2019). *Setting goals for success: A practical guide for individuals and organizations*. Sage Publications.
- Heskett, J. L. (2017). *The service-profit chain: How leading companies link profitability and growth to loyalty, satisfaction, and value*. Free Press.
- Idowu, A. A. (2021). Assessing the impact of performance appraisals on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Business and Human Resource Journal*, 39(6), 84-98.
- Kondrasuk, J. R. (2022). The challenges of performance management systems in African organizations. *African Journal of Management Studies*, 10(2), 99-112.
- Kothari, C. R. (2011). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Age International Publishers.
- Kumar, P. (2021). On-the-job learning and employee performance in large organizations. *Global Journal of Management and Organizational Studies*, 8(4), 51-64.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting & task performance*. Prentice-Hall.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2018). Goal setting theory: A century of progress. *American Psychologist*, 73(9), 1092-1104.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2019). Goal setting theory: An overview and current directions. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 6, 77-105.
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Acts Press.
- Moura, L., Martins, C., & Silva, M. (2022). Non-profit organizations and employee motivation: Case studies from Rwanda. *Non-Profit Management Review*, 29(2), 121-138.
- Musoni, F. (2023). The impact of individual goal setting on employee performance in World Vision International Rwanda. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 28(4), 62-78.
- Murphy, K. R., & Cleveland, J. N. (2019). *Performance appraisal: An organizational perspective*. Routledge.
- Mutsuddi, A. (2020). Performance management systems in development-oriented organizations. *Human Resource Management Review*, 36(3), 45-56.
- Nasud, L. (2019). Rwanda's vision 2050 and the integration of performance management systems in non-governmental organizations. *Rwanda Development Studies Journal*, 6(3), 101-118.
- Prasad, L. (2022). Enhancing job satisfaction through performance appraisals: A comprehensive review. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 8(1), 25-38.
- Rao, P. (2015). *Performance management and appraisal: A holistic approach*. Oxford University Press.
- Roger, D. (2003). *Sampling methods in social research*. Sage Publications.

- Salaman, G. (2019). The role of goal setting in improving employee motivation and performance. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 28(2), 123–135.
- Samson, D. (2023). Performance management practices in Europe: A comparative study. *European Journal of Human Resource Management*, 34(1), 10-23.
- Selvarajan, T. T., & Cloninger, P. A. (2019). *Strategic performance management in organizations*. Wiley.
- Shinwari, M. A., & Rahimi, M. (2018). The importance of transparent and fair performance appraisals in enhancing employee performance. *Journal of Human Resources and Development*, 19(5), 74-87.
- Stephenson, M. (2019). Individual goal setting and employee performance in technology firms: A quasi-experimental study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(6), 754-765.
- Smith, J. (2015). *Measuring and managing employee performance: A holistic approach*. Wiley.
- Trochim, W. M. (2018). *Research design: The logic of the scientific method* (2nd ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Toussaint, C., & Holland, L. (2021). The relationship between goal setting and employee performance: The role of goal clarity. *Journal of Applied Organizational Psychology*, 42(3), 152-167.
- Van Wanrooy, B., Warhurst, C., & Green, F. (2023). *Pay for performance: A global perspective on performance-related pay*. Oxford University Press.
- Williams, S. (2018). *Performance management: Perspectives and approaches*. Sage Publications.