

# Empowerment in Greater Bushenyi Districts, Western Uganda

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**ABSTRACT----** *This article correlates the relationship between Empowerment and Motivation of human resources of Greater Bushenyi Districts Local Government (GBDLG). Using descriptive research design, a researcher generated questionnaire and an interview schedule were used to collect data which was used to answer the research question on how Empowerment contributes to Motivation of human resources in local government of Greater Bushenyi Districts. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, Fisher's one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson Linear correlation coefficient (PLCC) and Regression analysis. The contribution of Empowerment to Motivation of human resources was satisfactory. The practice of motivation of human resources in GBDLG was satisfactory: attracting potential employees, choosing the best applicants, and respect of legal procedures. Empowerment was found to be significantly correlated with Motivation of human resources. It was concluded that Empowerment positively and significantly influences motivation of human resources in GBDLG. The researcher recommends that government should encourage and support programmes like mentoring and training of employees for good governance, district officials should be allowed to exercise their power and authority, ensure flexibility in rules and regulations regarding Empowerment; reduce interference by central government in district affairs in relation to Empowerment; and increase funding for local governments.*

**Keywords----** Empowerment, human resource, motivation, local governments, Uganda

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Productivity gains powered by technological innovation have fueled expansion of the United States (US) economy since the 1990s. United States economic prosperity has led to labor shortages, which are pushing organizations to engage in creative recruitment, retention practices and Empowerment of lower government officials while employing workers from non-traditional sources, leading to a more diverse workforce (Gomez, 2001).

In many African countries Empowerment has been practiced with the aim of encouraging better Motivation of human resources among the districts and improvement in service provision in local governments. Leaders of organizations all over the cosmos are engaged in Empowerment and Motivation of human resources as part of their functions (Steven, 2000). A well accomplished exercise of Empowerment encourages development tailored to local circumstances. Kreitner (2004) noted that the ultimate goal of Empowerment is to realize efficiency and effectiveness in the operations of local governments.

In Uganda, Empowerment and system of local governments are clearly entrenched in the constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995). The amended 2010 Local Governments Act provides for a separate personnel system among the districts of Uganda. The system of Local Government in Uganda has alternated between loose and tight central control in the post-independence period. The central issue was how best to promote local development against the background of diverse peoples, some of whose corporate and cultural identities lay in elaborate and old age institutions of governance (Ssewakiryanga, 2003).

The government of Uganda decided in the late 1992 to devolve power to local governments to promote better practices of human resources, democracy and improve service provision in local government. Devolution as a form of decentralization is linked to human resources in a sense that political leaders at a district level do formulate policies which are implemented by civil servants found in local governments. All this is done to ensure harmony, cooperation and better service delivery in local governments. Subsequently, a new law, the local governments (Resistance Councils) statute (1993) was enacted. Among other things, the statute provided for the principle of non-subordination to prevent higher local governments from dominating lower ones. The statute further helped to analyze the decentralization system hence leading to the adoption of the majority of the provisions into the 1995 constitution. The constitution provided for further devolution of powers and functions (Ssewakiryanga, 2003). Matte (2008) observed that in Uganda, the devolution of powers and functions to local governments was tested as far back as 1987 and has been found to deliver.

Templar (2005) conceptualized empowerment as the process of having the legitimate right and power to use ones expertise at work, make decision, have control over one's own performance and contribute to organisational plans and

decisions that affect ones work. Dearlove (2001) further defined empowerment as a process of devolving decision-making, power, authority, responsibility, resources and rights to employees at the most appropriate level so that greater use can be made of each individual's potential. Lower level managers and administrators need to be given power and responsibility so that they can use their innovative ideas to make decisions. This can also help implement relevant policies for the growth and development of the organisations. Empowerment can be the best tool to improve efficiency and effectiveness in organisations.

Empowerment encourages employees to share responsibility and use their initiative to make decisions and solve problems. Barlin (2002) contends that given that we operate in a dynamic, uncertain and complex environment where the market is liberalized and competition is stiff, customers must be served quickly otherwise they may resort to competitors for the same goods and services. This requires empowering front line employees to make decisions and take appropriate action promptly (Stoner, 2001 ; Massie, 1994 ; Chandan, 1998).

There is need to empower people to do work independently of the manager's supervision (Templer, 2005). He was quoted as saying "Tell me and I will remember for an hour, show me and I will remember for a day, but let me do it and I will remember forever". He further observed that the best executive is one who has sense enough to pick good people to do what he wants done, and self restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.

Prior to empowerment, there was delegation influenced by classical theories in organizations (Dearlove, 2001). In delegation managers told subordinates what to do, how to do it which was and still is a hallmark of delegation. But with empowerment, subordinates are given more powers and authority to do the work on their own. Empowerment began in 1970's and when subordinates were becoming as knowledgeable and as skilled as their supervisors.

Empowerment is imperative due to the following factors: to gain a competitive advantage, allowing frontline employees to be innovative and review the work plans accordingly; to encourage interdepartmental and cross functional cooperation, need to nurture talented people, perform optimally and foster the decentralization policy (Templer, 2005). Top management in an organization can empower subordinate employees (Massie, 1994) as follows; formulating a corporate strategy to guide the performance of subordinates, devolve operational responsibilities to subordinates, providing human material, financial and information resources to subordinates, disseminating information on corporate strategy, plans, policies, values, rules, and procedures to employees including subordinates. He said that there should be training; coaching, mentoring and developing frontline employees to enable them acquire job knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies to perform the work better.

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of Empowerment on Motivation of human resources in local governments of Greater Bushenyi Districts, Western Uganda. The study aimed at suggesting remedial strategies to the motivation of human resources problem in local governments of Greater Bushenyi Districts, Western Uganda.

The importance of Motivation of human resources being the realization of efficiency and effectiveness in an organization cannot be overemphasized. However, there is a general bias originating from Empowerment in Greater Bushenyi Districts (Mutabwire Report, 2012).

Under Empowerment, there is a lot of bias based on religion, political parties and sectarianism in GBDLGs. Thus, better practices of motivation of human resources do not exist in Greater Bushenyi Local Governments. The constructs included in this study under Empowerment and Motivation of human resources were not mainly concerned by the past studies. Many studies that investigated Motivation of human resources in local governments dwelt on cost and productivity, thus, necessitating the need to carry out this study to fill the foregoing gaps

The consequences of this scenario may engender dysfunctional conflicts, corruption, in- house fighting; intrigue, poor quality services delivery and underdevelopment of local areas.

Therefore, the researcher investigated the extent to which Empowerment account for the general failure of local government officials to practice in a better way the motivation of human resources for development and suggested specific general practices/processes that need to be adopted to foster development well free from bias and discrimination in local governments.

## **2. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

### **2.1 Data Capturing**

The data used for the study was obtained using both primary and secondary sources .Primary data was obtained by use of questionnaires distributed to participants and carrying out interviews to selected focal participants. Secondary data was

obtained through documentary analysis. The study used a descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to describe the situation and the sample. The researcher also used the combination of the positivism paradigm and interpretivism paradigm to sail through his research process. Amin (2005) observed that descriptive research design is normally used to describe a phenomenon and its data characteristics [6]. The study selected a total of 377 respondents (sample size) out of 6488 participants (target population). The sample size was reached at by using the sloven's formula.

## **2.2 Sampling methods**

In order to acquire the necessary information, the researcher used stratified and purposive sampling methods. The target population comprised of all workers of Greater Bushenyi Districts which were made up of 573 administrators, 4935 teachers, 716 health workers, 127 political leaders and 138 support staff. A sample of 377 respondents was administered questionnaires while 25 respondents were interviewed. The 377 respondents were selected using the cluster stratified simple random sampling techniques while the 25 interviewees were purposively selected.

## **2.3 Structured questionnaire and interviews**

A questionnaire was used based on the fact that the variables such as views, opinions, perceptions and feelings of the respondents on empowerment and motivation of human resources in Greater Bushenyi districts could not be observed. Amin (2005) noted that a questionnaire collects a lot of information within a short period of time. For quantitative data, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling techniques were used. The researcher employed stratified random sampling in order to have representation of participants from each strata or category of respondents. The researcher also employed cluster sampling in order to select groups of participants from a statistical population. The respondents were provided with a list of factors and were required to rate each one, using a 4 point likert scale (4= strongly agree-SA, -3=agree -A,-2=disagree -D,-and 1=strongly disagree-SD.). The descriptive study was carried out during January to September 2013.

Interviews were used to help the researcher collect information that cannot be directly observed or difficult to put down in writing (Karoro, 2004) on Empowerment and Motivation of human resources in Greater Bushenyi Districts. The total number of 25 participants was interviewed out of the 6488 target population in order to supplement quantitative data. Purposive sampling was used in order to obtain focused information from participants (Oso, 2002). The common motivation for cluster sampling is to reduce the total number of interviews and costs given the desired accuracy (Maicibi, 2007).

## **2.4 Validity and reliability of instruments**

The validity of the instrument (structured questionnaire) was ascertained using content validity Index by expert judges in the human resource management field. From the testing of the validity of the instruments, the researcher obtained content validity index (CVI) of 1 which was well above 0.75 indicating that the instrument was valid to collect data for the study (Amin, 2005). However, the validity of the unstructured interview was obtained by interviewing only key informants to validate the filled questionnaires (Gibbs, 2007).

The reliability of the instrument (Structured Questionnaire) was established using cronbach's alpha coefficient formula considering the variables that had an alpha coefficient of value more than 0.70. Since the reliability test conducted by the researcher yielded 0.937 alpha value, it meant that the instrument was reliable in eliciting the data required for the study. However, the reliability of the unstructured interview was obtained by prolonged engagements with participants (Gibbs, 2007).

## **2.5 Data analysis**

The following statistical tools were used to analyze data; descriptive statistics concerning how Empowerment contributes to motivation of human resources in Greater Bushenyi district; Fisher's one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson linear correlation coefficient and Regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data was analyzed by organizing data into meaningful themes, sub themes or categories for easy interpretation along a storyline (Gibbs, 2007).

# **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **3.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on the Institution Theory by Scott (2004). Scott W. Richard was an American sociologist born on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1932. He has been a professor at Stanford University who specialized in Institutional Theory and Organization Science. He has been awarded several honorary doctorates.

Institutional Theory focuses on the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure. It considers the processes by which structures, including schemes, rules, norms, and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior (Scott, 2004). Different components of Institutional Theory explain how these elements are created, diffused, adopted, and adapted over space and time, and how they fall into decline and disuse.

### 3.2 Demographic Characteristics

Results from questionnaires revealed that more than 53% of Greater Bushenyi Districts Local Governments (GBDLG) staff were male; mostly diploma holders; majority 39 years; over 73% were married, with experience of 5 years and most of them were administrators. These findings suggested that females in GBDLG still lag behind in education, the majority of local government staff are young people, a good number of respondents were married which is a requirement for many African Societies in terms of attitudinal issues, and many respondents had enough experience implying that there is a high level of retention of employees able to give the researcher pertinent data for the study. Data from interviews indicated that most people interviewed were of one year and above in their work stations at the districts. A Chief Administrative Officer from Mitooma District confirmed;

*“I have been in Mitooma District for years and most of the Chief Administrative Officers who are currently serving in the Greater Bushenyi District (GBD) have completed one year and above in their districts.”*

This meant that the participants included in the study were the right ones to collect focused information for true results.

### 3.3 Legend for interpretation

The interpretation for quantitative data was guided by likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. These self ratings were analyzed using means intervals which indicated the extent to which they agree on each item as shown in Table 3..

Mean range	Response mode	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Strongly agree	Very satisfactory
2.51-3.25	Agree	Satisfactory
1.76-2.50	Disagree	Fair
1.00-1.75	Strongly disagree	Poor

### 3.4 Influence of empowerment on motivation of human resources

Table 1- The contribution of Empowerment to Motivation of human resources in Greater Bushenyi Districts Local Governments (GBDLG)

Empowerment			
Management encourages workers to go for further training in higher institutions of learning	3.24	Satisfactory	1
District officials exercise their power and authority	3.12	Satisfactory	2
The majority of the workers are conversant with national policies and corporate strategies	2.99	Satisfactory	3
Officials enjoy their legitimate rights	2.96	Satisfactory	4
In my district, there is interdepartmental cooperation	2.95	Satisfactory	5
Clients get quick services	2.90	Satisfactory	6
Workers do their work independently of the manager’s supervision	2.60	Satisfactory	7
Workers have a say in decisions that affect them	2.60	Satisfactory	7
Employees now possess similar skills and knowledge like their bosses	2.54	Satisfactory	8
Central government interferes with district decisions	2.45	Fair	9
Resources are adequate for district operations	2.15	Fair	10
<b>Average mean</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	

Results in table 1 showed that the contribution of Empowerment to motivation of human resources of local governments in Greater Bushenyi Districts local Governments (GBDLG) was satisfactory on the whole (mean = 2.77). The interpretation is that GBDLG officials clearly follow central government policies on Empowerment and Motivation of human resources laid down by public service.

However, sporadic elements of corruption still exist in GBDLG. The same views were echoed by the principal personnel officer of Sheema district in the following statement:

*“Whatever guidelines public service commission puts in place including Empowerment and Motivation of human resources like mentoring and sponsoring of training of workers--- we do execute to the letter.”*

This suggested that even if central government puts in place policies or guidelines, the personalities of district officials do betray them and they engage in corruption tendencies for survival due to the meagre salaries that they receive every month.

All the components of Empowerment indicated that management encourages workers to go for further training in higher institutions of learning which was a highly rated item (mean = 3.24), followed by district officials exercising their powers and authority (mean = 3.12), and indicating that the majority of the workers are conversant with national policies and corporate strategies (mean = 2.99) coming third in ranking.

The rest of the items were satisfactory and the poorly rated items in ranking were central government interfering in with district decisions (mean = 2.45) and resources being adequate for district operations (mean=2.15). Participants were satisfied on the practice of GBDLG regarding Empowerment in relation the support given to the workers for their training and the relative autonomy given to districts local governments to manage their affairs. In addition, clients getting quick services, officials enjoying their legitimate rights and having the interdepartmental cooperation boosted the level of Motivation of human resources.

The study was intended to establish the effect of Empowerment on Motivation of human resources in local governments of GBDLGs. The contribution of Empowerment to Motivation of human resources in GBDLGs has the average mean of (2.77), which generally means that it was satisfactory. This implied that GBDLGs officials clearly follow or implement the central government policies on Empowerment laid down by Public Service Ministry, save for corruption, bias and discrimination that may be involved in Empowerment and motivation of human resources.

However, the findings about Empowerment did not concur with the study conducted by (Matte, 2008) on the Joint Annual Review of Decentralization in Uganda. He pointed out that local governments in Uganda do not enhance policy and programmes implementation. That the multi -sectoral nature of the undertakings do not contain the effectiveness and the timely implementation of the programmes in local governments.

### 3.5 Hypothesis

The Fisher's one way ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis that Empowerment does not significantly differ according to districts. Results of this test are indicated in table 4.

Table 2: Analysis of variance of difference in Empowerment of districts

	District	Mean	F	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
	Sheema	2.84	2.489	0.043	Significant difference	Rejected
	Bushenyi	2.74				
	Mitooma	2.73				
	Rubirizi	2.65				
	Buhweju	2.86				
	Total	2.77				

Source: Primary data

Results in table 2 indicated that Empowerment significantly differed among the five districts of GBDLG (Sig. < 0.05). The interpretation is that each district in Greater Bushenyi Districts Local Governments practices Empowerment differently. Each district follows different guidelines or parameters as may be tailored to local circumstances.

The hypothesis involving Empowerment was tested and rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This suggested that the practice of Empowerment in each district was different due to corruption and local circumstances. The findings under Empowerment are linked with the Institutional Theory by (Scott, 2004) in a sense that officials in each district do comply with normative pressures resulting from local circumstances and legitimating isomorphism especially in motivating employees in local governments as long as they achieve their individual and corporate objectives. If one is not born in the area or district may not be given a job. The hypothesis involving significant relationship between Empowerment and motivation of human resources of local governments was tested and rejected. This implied that Empowerment and motivation of human resources are closely associated. Better practices of Empowerment lead to better practices of motivation of human resources of workers of an organization and the reverse is true.

However, this study concurred with the findings of Kanyesigye (2001) who conducted a study on Training and retention. The findings indicated that local governments need to rely on guidelines to effectively handle training and retention of their employees. He further contended that all stakeholders should participate where their training needs assessments can be obtained through staff performance appraisal and Empowerment.

### 3.6 Empowerment and motivation

Table 3: Analysis of significant relationship between Empowerment and Motivation of human resources in local governments of GBDLG (level of significance = 0.05)

Variables correlated	R-value	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Empowerment Vs Motivation of human resources of local governments	0.974	0.000	Positive and significant relationship	Rejected

Source: Primary data

Pearson linear correlation coefficient results in table 5 indicated that Empowerment was positively correlated with Motivation of human resources of local government employees in GBDLG ( $r=0.974$ ,  $sig = 0.000$ ). Based on these results, null hypothesis was rejected and a conclusion was made that an improvement in Empowerment increases Motivation of human resources of each local government employees. Empowerment and Motivation of human resources are closely associated or correlated. Regression analysis helped explain the effect of Empowerment on Motivation of human resources of local governments in GBDLG. Table 4 shows the results of this test.

### 3.7 Regression analysis between motivation and empowerment

Table 4: Regression analysis for Empowerment of local governments and Motivation of human resources in Greater Bushenyi Districts (level of significance = 0.05).

Variables regressed	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
motivation of human resources Vs Empowerment of Local Governments	0.316	710.434	0.000	Positive and significant effect	Rejected

Source: Primary data

The results in Table 4 suggested that Empowerment positively and significantly affect Motivation of human resources of local governments ( $F = 710.434$ ,  $Sig. = 0.000$ ). The regression adjusted  $r^2 = 0.316$ . The interpretation is that Empowerment contributes 31.6% towards variations in the Motivation of human resources of local governments (adjusted  $r^2 = 0.316$ ). This means that 68.4% is contributed by other factors apart from Empowerment.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Conclusions

Of the demographic variables ,gender ,age ,educational level,marital status,experience and position were identified as significant influential variables to the study. The study concluded that Empowerment leads to better Motivation of human resources if managers do not practice bias and discrimination based on religion, political parties and sectarianism in

Empowerment. However, if district officials engage in bias and discrimination in the practice of Empowerment, the outcome might be corruption tendencies that do not foster better motivation of human resources in local governments.

Under this study the Institution Theory has been validated because all that has been found in this study matches with the same theory under which the study was anchored. The findings under Empowerment are linked with the Institutional Theory by Scott (2004) in a sense that officials in each district do comply with coercive or normative pressures resulting from central government legal mandates, local circumstances and legitimating isomorphism especially in Empowerment in local governments as long as they achieve their individual and corporate objectives.

#### 4.2 Recommendations

- (i) Central government intervention (domination) in district affairs should be regulated or reduced in terms of Empowerment by allowing district officials make decisions concerning their local affairs.
- (ii) Government officials should promote flexibility in rules and regulations in local governance.
- (iii) The Resistance Council statute of 1993 contained the fact that there should be the principle of non-subordination to prevent higher authorities from dominating lower local authorities. This is because development in local government must be tailored to local circumstances, already known by local government officials. Thus, the Local Government Finance Commission should advise the central government to that effect.
- (iv) Central government officials should increase on the budget given to districts to ensure excellent service delivery in these districts. Local government Finance Commission (LGFC) should advise government to augment the allocation of funds in the budget by 100% for sub-national governments for them to be able to execute their agreed programmes effectively and efficiently. Such augmentation of funding can help local government officials to facilitate Empowerment programmes aimed at good governance. This is because article 194 of the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda ,subsection 4(a) LGFC advises the President on all matters concerning the distribution of revenue between the government and local governments and the allocation to each local government of moneys out of the consolidation fund. The augmentation of funds for local governments by 100% is so important in a sense that growth and development of local governments is a spring board for national development.

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