

Democracy in Greater Bushenyi Districts, Western Uganda

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ABSTRACT--- *This article evaluates the relationship between Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system (SPAS) 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 Democracy contributes to Staff performance appraisal system 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 Democracy to Staff performance appraisal system was satisfactory. The practice of SPAS in GBDLG was satisfactory: attracting workers to freely participate in local and national elections, respecting group decisions and citizen's values. Democracy was found to be significantly correlated with Staff performance appraisal system. It was concluded that Democracy positively and significantly influences SPAS in GBDLG. The researcher recommends that government should enact proactive policies to make sure internal elections are free and fair, making district officials accountable to their electorates, actions and the citizenry in view of viable development in the districts. Employees should easily access information in order to make objective decisions; district leaders should practice the spirit of tolerance for their workers because no one under the earth is an angel. Finally, workers should be open to each other in GBDLGs in order to be able to encourage efficiency and effectiveness for good governance in local governments.*

Keywords---- Democracy, staff, performance appraisal, local governments, Uganda

1. INTRODUCTION

When the founding fathers of the American revolution met in Philadelphia in 1787 to write the US constitution, a cardinal principle on which they all agreed was that power should not be concentrated in one person, or among one group or in one place. Having suffered the effects of what they left was arbitrary rule from a colonial power, they were intent on encasing the Republic's new form of government in a system of checks and balances to preserve the liberties of people who were now citizens and not subjects (Berman, 1999).

In regard to various African countries Democracy has been practiced with the aim of encouraging efficiency and effectiveness for good governance in local governments. Leaders of organizations all over the cosmos are engaged in Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system as part of their functions (Steven, 2000). A well accomplished exercise of Democracy helps to engender feelings of goodwill for successful governments in sub-national governments. Kreitner (2004) noted that the ultimate goal of Democracy is to inculcate the spirit of good governance in any country in the world.

Before 1955 Uganda had no separate specific law for regulating the operations of local governments. In the run up to independence in 1962 some tentative steps were taken by the colonial government to promote greater democracy and effectiveness in local administration. For example, some powers were devolved to local authorities through the District Administrators Ordinance (1955), giving them significant responsibility over service delivery and allowing them some latitude in electing district council members and collecting local revenue. But real power over borrowing and expenditure remained with the central government, with local technical personnel reporting to central line managers (Ebeka, 2003).

Ssekkono (2007) confirmed that in Uganda the central control was increased with the coming into force of the Local Administrations Amendment Ordinance in 1959, which gave the colonial governor power to appoint chairmen and members of appointed boards. Real movement towards devolution of power to local administrations took place with the enactment of the 1962 semi-federal independence constitution. The local administration system was demarcated into provinces (northern, eastern, Buganda and Western) below which were district, county, sub county, parish and village administrations. The 1962 Constitution, through the Local Administrations Ordinance of 1962, granted significant powers to local councils with regard to their own composition, collection of local taxes, land administration, local roads, rural water supplies, agricultural extension, primary and junior secondary education, dispensaries and preventive health services.

Democracy is a way of life (Japhes, 2005). He says that democracy is how one relates with his family, neighbours, friends and enemies. It is about tolerance, fairness, responsibility and accountability. Constitutions in democratic countries put the people at the centre of their system of governance. Former president of America Abraham Lincoln said that “Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people”.

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of Democracy on Staff performance appraisal system in local governments of Greater Bushenyi Districts, Western Uganda. The study aimed at suggesting remedial strategies to the SPAS problem in local governments of Greater Bushenyi Districts, Western Uganda.

The importance of Staff performance appraisal system being the realization of efficiency and effectiveness in an organization cannot be overemphasized. However, there is a general bias originating from Democracy in Greater Bushenyi Districts (Mutabwire Report, 2012).

Under Democracy, there is a lot of bias based on religion, political parties and sectarianism in GBDLGs. Thus, better practices of SPAS do not exist in Greater Bushenyi Local Governments. The constructs included in this study under Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system was not mainly concerned by the past studies. Many studies that investigated participatory democracy 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 Democracy account for the general failure of local government officials to practice in a better way the SPAS for development and suggested specific general practices/processes that need to be adopted to promote 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. 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 democracy and staff performance appraisal system 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. Safeguards practiced while gathering primary data included distribution of more questionnaires than the actual number of the sample size so that if some questionnaires are not retrieved, the researcher may end up getting the actual number of questionnaires of the sample size. The researcher therefore distributed 400 questionnaires and ended up retrieving 377 as the required sample size.

Interviews were used to help the researcher collect information that cannot be directly observed or difficult to put down in writing (Karoro, 2004) on Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system 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 embarking on peer review mechanisms (Gibbs, 2007).

2.5 Data analysis

The following statistical tools were used to analyze data; descriptive statistics concerning how Democracy contributes to staff performance appraisal system 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 18th December, 1932 .He has been a professor at Stanford University who specialized in Institutional Theory and Organizational Science.

Institutional theorists assert that the institutional environment can strongly influence the development of formal structures in an organization, often more profoundly than market pressures .Innovative structures that improve technical efficiency in early adoptive organizations are legitimized in the environment .Ultimately, these innovations reach a level of legitimization where failure to adapt them is seen as "irrational and negligent" (or they become legal mandates). At this point, new and existing organizations may adopt the structural form even if the form does not improve efficiency (Suchman, 1995).

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 meant 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.

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 below:

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 democracy on staff performance appraisal system

Table 1- The contribution of Democracy to Staff performance appraisal system in Greater Bushenyi Districts Local Governments (GBDLG)

Table 1

Participatory democracy	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Workers freely participate in local and national elections	3.15	Satisfactory	1
Management respects group decisions	3.01	Satisfactory	2
District leaders respect citizen's values	2.94	Satisfactory	3
District leaders are patriotic/love their country	2.91	Satisfactory	4
Workers respond to meetings without hesitation	2.89	Satisfactory	5
District workers are open to each other	2.86	Satisfactory	6
District leaders are tolerant with their workers	2.86	Satisfactory	6
Employees easily access information in my District	2.86	Satisfactory	6
Every official looks accountable to his actions	2.84	Satisfactory	7
Internal elections are free and fair	2.62	Satisfactory	8
Average mean	2.89	Satisfactory	

Source :primary data

Results in table 1 showed that the contribution of Democracy to staff performance appraisal system of local governments in Greater Bushenyi Districts local Governments (GBDLG) was satisfactory on the whole (mean = 2.89). The interpretation is that GBDLG officials clearly follow central government policies on Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system 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 Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system like election of office bearers 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 Democracy indicated that workers freely participate in local and national elections which was a highly rated item (mean = 3.15), followed by management respecting group decisions (mean = 3.01), and indicating that district leaders respect citizen's values (mean = 2.94) coming third in ranking. The rest of the items were satisfactory and the poorly rated items in ranking were officials being accountable to their actions (mean=2.84) and internal elections being free and fair (2.62).

Participants were satisfied on the practice of GBDLG regarding Democracy in relation to workers participation to both national and local elections, and the participatory democracy exercised during the Staff performance appraisal system.

The study was intended to establish the effect of Democracy on Staff performance appraisal system in local governments of GBDLGs. The contribution of Democracy to Staff performance appraisal system in GBDLGs has the average mean of (2.89), which generally means that it was satisfactory. This implied that GBDLGs officials clearly follow or implement the central government policies on Democracy laid down by Public Service Ministry, save for corruption, bias and discrimination that may be involved in Democracy and staff performance appraisal system.

However, the findings about Democracy did not concur with the study conducted by (Wapakhabulo, 2009) on management and conflict resolution. This study found out that there were still workplace conflicts in Kakira sugar works affecting management process indicating that real democracy was not yet fully entrenched.

5 Hypothesis

The Fisher's one way ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis that Democracy does not significantly differ according to districts. Results of this test are indicated in table 2.

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

	District	Mean	F	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Participatory democracy	Sheema	3.00	5.230	0.000	Significant difference	Rejected
	Bushenyi	2.92				
	Mitooma	2.82				
	Rubirizi	2.62				
	Buhweju	2.98				
	Total	2.89				

Source: Primary data

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

The hypothesis involving Democracy was tested and rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This suggested that the practice of Democracy in each district was different due to corruption and local circumstances. The findings under Democracy 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 handling of employees in local governments as long as they achieve their individual and corporate objectives. The hypothesis involving significant relationship between Democracy and staff performance appraisal system of local governments was tested and rejected. This implied that Democracy and staff performance appraisal system are closely associated. Better practices of Democracy lead to better practices of staff performance appraisal system 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 democratically where their training needs assessments can be obtained through staff performance appraisal system and Democratic governance. The employees who must be chosen to go for further training have to be selected in a free and fair atmosphere.

3.6 Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system

Table 3: Analysis of significant relationship between Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system in local governments of GBDLG (level of significance = 0.05)

Variables correlated	R-value	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Democracy Vs Staff performance appraisal system of local governments	0.324	0.000	Positive and significant relationship	Rejected

Source: Primary data

Pearson linear correlation coefficient results in table 3 indicated that Democracy was positively correlated with Staff performance appraisal system of local government employees in GBDLG ($r=0.324$, $sig = 0.000$). Based on these results, null hypothesis was rejected and a conclusion was made that an improvement in Democracy increases Staff performance appraisal system of each local government employees. Democracy and Staff performance appraisal system are closely associated or correlated. Regression analysis helped explain the effect of Democracy on Staff performance appraisal system of local governments in GBDLG. Table 3 above shows the results of this test.

3.8 Regression analysis between Staff performance appraisal system and democracy

Table 4: Regression analysis for Democracy of local governments and Staff performance appraisal system in Greater Bushenyi Districts (level of significance = 0.05).

Variables regressed	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
staff performance appraisal system Vs Democracy of Local Governments	0.316	710.434	0.000	Positive and significant effect	Rejected

Source: Primary data

The results in Table 4 suggested that Democracy positively and significantly affect Staff performance appraisal system of local governments (F = 710.434, Sig. = 0.000). The regression adjusted r² = 0.316. The interpretation is that Democracy contributes 31.6% towards variations in the Staff performance appraisal system (SPAS) of local governments (adjusted r² = 0.316). This means that 68.4% is contributed to SPAS by other factors apart from Democracy.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

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 Democracy leads to better Staff performance appraisal system if managers do not practice bias and discrimination based on religion, political parties and sectarianism in a democracy. However, if district officials engage in bias and discrimination in the practice of Democracy, the outcome might be corruption tendencies that do not foster better staff performance appraisal system 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 Democracy 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 Democracy in local governments as long as they achieve their individual and corporate objectives.

4.2 Recommendations

- (i) Central government officials should try to avail information to district officials so that they can make objective decisions according to their local circumstances. Information flow in local governments should be clear and timely so that transparency and accountability can be streamlined.
- (ii) Government officials should promote flexibility in rules and regulations in local governance. This is intended to allow smooth running of activities and programmes of local governments.
- (iii) The government should enact proactive policies to make sure that internal elections are free and fair ,making district officials to be accountable to their actions and to the citizenry in view of viable development of local governments.
- (iv) District leaders should try to be tolerant with their employees because every person has his or her weaknesses which can be improved upon with time. One should note that no person is an angel and we all make mistakes and once given time we can all improve on the status quo. This is one of the major components of administration and management.

5. REFERENCES

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