

COMPETENCY, WORK ATTITUDES AND PERFORMANCE OF SUB-COUNTY CHIEFS IN THE UGANDAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

By

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ABSTRACT

Good governance in Ugandan Local Government seems to concentrate only on the mechanistic aspects of efficient service delivery instead of also focusing attention on qualitative and equity aspects of recruiting and empowering the people managing the service delivery. This has resulted in having human resources without adequate competencies or ability to meet performance expectations, leading to a work force with unfavorable work attitudes, which in turn affects individual performance.

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between competencies, work attitudes and job performance of sub-county chiefs under the implemented decentralized system in Uganda. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the first phase, competency profiling, using a semi-structured interview guide to obtain key performance areas and competencies, used the qualitative approach. The second phase, which was the main data collection exercise, employed the quantitative approach by using the questionnaire to obtain data to test the hypotheses.

Results indicated that the job of a sub-county chief has seven key performance areas, which include: human resource management, revenue mobilization, monitoring, supervision, budgeting, accountability, and financial management. Competency was positively and significantly related to all work attitudes and job performance. Apart from job satisfaction, job performance was positively and significantly related to the other three work attitudes of organizational commitment, job involvement, and work ethic. Demographic variables of sex, age, educational level and tenure were found to be weak predictors of work attitudes and job performance. All work attitudes were positively and significantly related to each other. Job involvement and the three organizational commitment components significantly intervened in the relationship between work ethic (independent variable) and job satisfaction (dependent variable). Work attitudes of job involvement and organizational commitment partially mediated the relationship between competency and job performance. The findings of this study are in agreement with the commitment-performance model (Steers, 1977) and the commitment model (Yousef, 2000), but not in agreement with Yilmaz's (2002) extended model of individual performance.

Competencies are expected to augment positive attitudes toward work, and drive positive behaviors and better outcomes. Employees who value hard work, and are committed and highly participate in organizational activities are likely to be outstanding (good) performers. However, targeting one employee attitude in order to improve performance may not be enough. It is very important to focus on a combined pattern of work attitudes to obtain the desired goals. Future researchers should, among other things, explore the 'performance→satisfaction' model. The theoretical rationale for the 'performance→satisfaction' relationship is quite different from the basis for the opposite link.