Training in leadership skills and performance of administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema local governments, western Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to establish whether training in leadership skills is associated with work performance of district administrative staffs in Bushenyi and Sheema district local government Western Uganda. A descriptive survey design with a sample of 289 district administrative staff, randomly selected from Bushenyi and Sheema Local Governments. Data was analyzed using Pearsons' Linear Co-relation Coefficient. The findings indicated that local government administrative staff in the two districts received a moderate level of training in leadership skills, and that training in leadership skills is positively and significantly correlated with work performance of administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema districts local government. This led to a conclusion that training in leadership skills influence work performance among district administrative staff. This implies that training in leadership skills has a direct link with work performance. It is therefore recommended that to increase on employees' performance the ministry of local government need to consider training administrators in leadership skills to improve the performance of employees which intern enhance delivery of improved services to the citizens.

Key words: Training, Leadership skills and work performance.

1. Introduction

Studies on Work Performance in Public Sector Administration were started in the early decades of the twentieth century by [22], [20], [21], and [7]. Most Public Sector Work Performance studies have traditionally come from the United States of America, New Zealand, Sweden and United Kingdom. Literature shows that many researchers especially in developed countries e.g., [16]; [15]; [17] have studied public sector work performance by examining many different factors namely; a departure from the traditional bureaucratic values, greater emphasis on entrepreneurialism, outcomes, efficiency, accountability, and commitment to work.

Low levels of employee work performance in Africa are increasingly becoming phenomena in the success of public sector organizations. Clearly, according to [6]; [2]; and [4] the key factors which contribute to inadequate work performance of employees in public sector

organizations include: lack of motivation, leadership styles, remuneration, inadequate training, the internal environment, mentoring, and recruitment policies, among others. While there are several factors contributing to low levels of work performance, this study we intend to link training in leadership skills with work performance of administrative staff.

This study intends to relate training in leadership skills to work performance among administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema local governments, western Uganda. In this study, training in leadership skills is conceptualized as imparting skills on influencing workmates to adopt new behaviors needed for emotional intelligence, mutual trust and respect, persuading workers to develop self-esteem and self-management, making clear rules and procedures, clarifying subordinates' work roles, sustaining organizational morale and on managing organizational resources. While work performance is understood to be how effective and efficient managers use organizational resources to satisfy customers and achieve organizational goals and resources.

2. Training in leadership skills and work performance

Leadership is described in many different ways; [12] observe that leadership is the process of influencing the behavior of others to give willing contributions towards organizational goals. assert that leadership is ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. Moreover, [11],

looks at leadership as a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal. This research argues that leadership should focus on organizational performance especially efficiency and effectiveness. This is in line with the argument of [9], who argued that leadership is about inspiring others to pursue your vision within the parameters you set, to the extent that it becomes a shared effort, a shared vision, and a shared success.

According to [5] leadership is the art of managing and a human factor skill which bind the group and motivates them towards common goals. Consequently, a manager can be a leader, if he/she has the ability to influence others. Leadership is thus a skill which enables him/her to inspire subordinate's potential to enhance efficiency and also meet their requirements in the process of achieving organizational goals. Leadership here implies that official leader has to motivate subordinates and guarantee them motivation, for them to work towards desirable goals. [2] Observe that leadership skill within an organization has a bearing on encouraging or inhibiting employee's performance. If management does not carefully analyze the needs of the organization and its employees, it may be difficult for the organization to understand the reasons why employees behave in a particular way.

[19] asserted that effective training in leadership skills provide: a) higher-

quality and more efficient services that produce a sense of cohesiveness, personal development, and higher levels of satisfaction among those conducting the work; and b) an overarching sense of direction and vision, an alignment with the environment, a healthy mechanism for innovation and creativity, and a resource for invigorating the organizational culture. With successful training, such leadership skills attributes can play a pivotal role in mobilizing and gaining the support of staff members.

3. Relationship between leadership skills and work performance

According to [14] employee work performance is associated with quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of output, presence / attendance on the job, efficiency of the work completed and effectiveness of work completed. In public sector organizations, employee work performance is about the timely, effective and efficient completion of mutually agreed tasks by the employee, as set out by the employer [18]. The study also observed that by reinventing government, strengthening government performance as well as improving productivity, quality, timeliness, responsiveness and effectiveness helped the beneficiaries of public service and taxpayers to receive improved services.

An empirical study by [8], reported that leaders with communicative skills influence employee attitudes, their wellbeing and performance, and outperform non-communicative leaders. Additional empirical studies on leadership skills and organizational performance by [13] also established that leaders with effective leadership skills have the capability to influence the behavior of an individual or group towards the direction of improved work performance. [10] Investigated a set of approaches of leadership skills in San Francisco and concluded that there are five fundamental practices of exemplary skills in leadership. They are: 1) challenge the process (i.e. challenge the status quo); 2) inspire a shared vision (i.e. have a vision for the future which is shared by everyone); 3) enable others to act (i.e. the ability to make others follow you); 4) model the way (i.e. leaders practice what they preach, thereby showing an example to others); 5) encourage the heart (i.e. the ability to carry on even with challenges and hurdles).

4. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design based on a sample of 289 district administrative employees selected in Bushenyi and Sheema Local Governments. Descriptive studies are employed when the interest is to describe variables, testing of hypotheses and development of generalizations. This design therefore enabled researchers to collect data in a short time from a large sample. This is in line with [1] who contend that descriptive surveys are quantitative in nature with the intention to describe the responses using numerical values to make sense out of the data collected. Data was collected using researcher made questionnaires that were

tested for validity and reliability before being administered. The data was analyzed statistically using Pearson leaner co-efficient to achieve the purpose of the study.

5. Findings

Findings in table 1 present descriptive statistics on responses about training in leadership skills. The results revel that training in leadership skills is low in the context were the study was conducted. This is shown by a small mean values on each of the items presented in the questionnaires.

Table 1: Administrative Staff Levels of Training in Leadership Skills (289)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
You receive training on persuading workers to develop self esteem	4.06	1.18	To a greater extent
You are trained on influencing workmates to adopt the new behavior needed for the district through emotional intelligence	4.04	1.01	To a greater extent
You are trained to always show mutual trust and respect to subordinates and others	3.95	1.17	To a greater extent
You are trained to influence workmates toward the attainment of the district goals by use of self management.	3.93	1.04	To a greater extent
You are trained on influencing workmates to pursue self motivation	3.89	1.22	To a greater extent
You are trained on sensitizing workmates about integration of head and heart	3.82	1.20	To a greater extent
You are trained to use interpersonal relations to affect the behavior of workmates toward the development of the district	3.79	1.28	To a greater extent
I am trained to widen my leadership skills applications	3.74	1.37	To a greater extent
You are trained on making clear rules and procedures for others to follow	3.69	1.39	To a greater extent
You are trained on clarifying subordinates work roles.	3.61	1.43	To a greater extent
You require additional training in communication, persuasion & policy interpretation to do your job.	3.29	1.46	To some extent

You are trained on transparency and accountability	3.27	1.41	To some extent
You receive training on sustaining organizational morale	2.08	0.86	To a little extent
You are trained in skills of management of financial resources.	1.98	0.79	To a little extent
You always receive training in administrative autonomy and sovereignty	1.97	0.78	To a little extent
Average Index	**3.40**	**1.17**	**To some extent**

Source: Field Data

Mean scores in Table 1 indicate that to a greater extent most administrators were trained in leadership skills on ten out of the fifteen characteristics with training in persuading workers to develop self esteem rating (mean = 4.06, s.d = 1.18) interpreted as sufficient training, followed by influencing workmates to take on new behaviors needed for the district through emotional intelligence (mean = 4.04, s.d = 1.01), at all times showing mutual trust and respect to subordinates and others (mean = 3.95, s.d = 1.17), influencing workmates to the attainment of the district goals by use of self management (mean = 3.93, s.d = 1.04), influencing workmates to pursue self motivation (mean = 3.89, s.d = 1.22), sensitising workmates regarding integration of head and heart (mean = 3.82, s.d = 1.20), using interpersonal relations to influence the behaviour of workmates toward development of the district (mean = 3.79, s.d = 1.28), constantly having wider leadership skill application (mean = 3.74, s.d 1.37), making clear rules and procedures for others to follow (mean = 3.69, s.d 1.39), clarifying subordinates work roles (mean = 3.61, s.d

1.43) all interpreted as adequate training on the ten mentioned attributes.

Most staff, however, indicated that to some extent they received training in communication, persuasion and policy interpretation to do their tasks (mean = 3.29, s.d = 1.46) and transparency and accountability (mean = 3.27, s.d = 1.41) which by description in the study refers to average training.

On the other hand, most of the respondents indicated that they received little training on sustaining organizational morale (mean = 2.08, s.d = 0.86), skills of managing financial resources (mean = 1.98. s.d = 0.79). This implies that they do not receive sufficient training on managing organizational morale and management of financial resources.

Similarly, most respondents rated themselves as having had little training on administrative autonomy and sovereignty (mean = 1.97, s.d = 0.78). This implies that they lack independence in executing their roles, which is likely to affect the protection

of the commonwealth from poor performance and fraud, and to protect the citizens from lawless, arbitrary and whimsical actions by the state's surrogate administrators.

To generate a summary picture on how district administrative staff rated themselves on training in leadership skills, an average index (i.e. Average) was computed for all the fifteen items on the construct, which turned out to be (mean = 3.40; s.d = 1.17) indicating that, overall, most district administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema local governments are to some extent trained in leadership skills. This implies that: they possess some skills on sharing information with workmates;

consider using empathy with others by supporting and making clear work roles of their subordinates in order to reduce subordinate dissatisfaction. Their nature of leadership skills is highly affected by their inadequate capability in administrative autonomy, management of financial resources and sustaining organizational morale which are vital aspects in leadership.

6. Level of Work Performance of District Administrative Staff in terms of Work Efficiency

Table gives the descriptive statistics (i.e. means and standard deviations) on the district administrative staff's self rating in terms of work efficiency.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics on District Administrative Staff Level of Work Performance in terms of Work Efficiency (n=289)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
You always give clear explanations and guidelines to your clients.	3.94	1.30	High
You always emphasize tasks which help your department to accomplish the set objectives	3.87	1.34	High
You always have high preference to fulfill your responsibilities.	3.87	1.36	High
You usually give constructive recommendations to save your District image	3.82	1.31	High
You usually take personal initiatives to accomplish work tasks	3.75	1.33	High
You always save the department by minimizing errors and mistakes even among fellow staff	3.74	1.23	High
You usually feel that your output adds great value to your district	3.57	1.44	High
You always choose to do the most rewarding	2.75	1.63	High

tasks			
You have helped your district to save some money	3.41	1.40	High
You do not usually use district resources on your personal/family matters	1.87	0.82	Low
Average Index	**3.46**	**1.32**	**High**

Source: Field Data

The study findings in Table 4.11 suggest that most respondents rated themselves high on seven items of work performance in terms of efficiency, especially on giving understandable explanations and guidelines to clients (means = 3.94; s.d = 1.30), generally taking personal initiatives to accomplish work tasks (mean = 3.87; s.d = 1.34), always having high preference in fulfilling their responsibilities (means = 3.87; s.d = 1.36), giving constructive recommendations to save your district image (mean = 3.82; s.d = 1.31), generally taking personal initiatives to accomplish work tasks (mean = 3.75; s.d = 1.33), minimizing errors and mistakes (mean = 3.74; s.d = 1.23), believing that your output adds great value to the district and its elimination may lead to a big loss (mean = 3.57; s.d = 1.44) and particularly doing the most rewarding tasks (mean = 275; s.d = 1.63).

Most respondents in the study rated high on whether they have helped their district to save some money (mean = 3.41;

s.d = 1.40). On the other hand, the study established that most respondents rated them themselves low on the aspect of not using district resources on their personal/family matters (mean = 1.87; s.d = 0.82).

To establish a general picture on how the respondents rated their work performance in terms of work efficiency of their job, an average index (i.e. average total) on the 10 items of the construct was computed, which turned out to be mean = 3.46; s.d = 1.32, suggesting that district administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema LGs produce satisfactory results.

7. Relationship between Training in Leadership Skills and Work Performance of District Administrative Staff

Table 3 gives results on the relationship between training in leadership skills and work performance of district administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema local governments Western Uganda.

Table 3 Relationship between Training in Leadership Skills and Work Performance of District Administrative Staff (289)

Variables correlated	r-values	p-value	Interpretation
Training in Leadership	0.780	0.000	Strong positive

skills Vs work performance Work performance			correlation

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 shows a significant positive and perfect correlation between training in leadership skills and work performance of district administrative staff, (0.780; p = 0.000). This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis to the effect that training in leadership skills is significantly and positively correlated with work performance of district administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema Local Governments. The findings imply that being trained in leadership skills is highly associated with high work performance of district administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema local governments.

8. Conclusion

This led to the conclusion that the level of training in leadership skills is unsatisfactory among district administrative staffs in Western Uganda, hence the recommendation that there is need for additional skilling in being autonomous and exercising independence as well as boosting organizational morale through such ways as bottom-up approach, and delegation that allows all-inclusive participation in decision making.

The second objective of the study was to establish the relationship between training in leadership skills and work performance of district administrative staff in Bushenyi and Sheema district local governments in Western Uganda. Pearson Linear co-efficient indicated a significant positive and perfect correlation between training in leadership skills (r = 0.780, p = 0.000). This collaborates with the finding by [13] who reported that leaders with effective leadership skills have the capability to influence the behavior of individuals and groups towards the direction of improved work performance. This led to a conclusion that training in leadership skills is associated with work performance of district administrative staff, hence the recommendation that the Ministry of Local Government provide specific training on principles of proper accountability and the central government to follow the real decentralization policy of devolution of power.

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