

## Human Resource Hiring Process and cooperation in Greater Bushenyi Districts, Western Uganda

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### Abstract

*This study assesses the relationship between human resource hiring process (HRHP) and cooperation of Greater Bushenyi Districts Local Government (GBDLG). The Greater Bushenyi District Local Governments includes the Districts of Bushenyi, Buhweju, Mitooma, Rubirizi and Sheema. Using descriptive research design, a researcher generated questionnaire and an interview guide data was collected for the study. Primary data obtained from the five districts of Greater Bushenyi Local Governments was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Linear correlation coefficient (PLCC) and Regression analysis. The contribution of HRRP to cooperation was satisfactory as evidenced in terms of: bench marking, participatory democracy and empowerment. HRRP was found to be significantly correlated with cooperation (bench making, democracy and empowerment). It was concluded that HRRP positively and significantly influences cooperation in GBDLG. The researcher recommends that government should promote equal employment opportunities in terms of HRRP, ensure flexibility in rules and regulations; train employees, foster cooperation, reduce domination by central government in district affairs; and increase funding for sub-national governments.*

Key words: **Cooperation, Human Resource Hiring Process, Bias, Local Governments, Uganda**

### Introduction

Human resource hiring process (HRHP) is conceptualized as: Needs assessment, advertisement, short listing, selection and placement. Cooperation is conceptualized as: benchmarking, democracy and empowerment. The specific objectives in this study were: to assess the contribution of HRHP to benchmarking in GBDLGs, to evaluate the relationship between HRHP and democracy in GBDLGs and to correlate HRHP and empowerment in GBDLGs. The hypothesis was: there is no relationship between HRHP and cooperation of local governments in GBDLGs.

In many African countries human resource hiring process has been practiced with the aim of encouraging cooperation among the populace, efficiency, effectiveness and improves service provision in local governments (Gomez, 2001; Steven, 2000 and Kreitner, 2004). In Uganda, the cooperation 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 (Ssewakiryanga, 2003).

Many scholars, such as Kanyesigye (2001) and Maicibi (2007) have conducted studies concerning HRRP and other variables such as performance and productivity, but apparently no one has ever conducted a study relating together HRRP and cooperation. And Cooperation is relevant to service delivery in a sense that once a workforce is democratic, benchmarks with other organizations, and at the same time the same workforce is empowered to manage their own affairs according tailored to their local circumstances, then one would expect better service delivery to the citizenry. Cooperation is a prerequisite to better service delivery in any organization. Mutabwire (2012) opined that there is still poor service delivery in GBDLGs an indication that there is lack of cooperation necessary to engender the spirit of hard work and cohesion for development. Cooperation is likely to be brought about by respect for democracy, benchmarking and empowerment of local governments' officials.

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of human resource hiring process on cooperation in local governments of Greater Bushenyi District, Western Uganda.

### **The study problem**

The importance of cooperation is the realization of efficiency and effectiveness in an organization. However, there is a general lack of cooperation originating from human resource recruitment process in Greater Bushenyi Districts (Mutabwire, 2012). The gap that this study sought to fill was poor service delivery accruing from pseudo cooperation exhibited by local government officials. Under human resource hiring process there is a lot of bias and discrimination based on religion, political parties and sectarianism (Matte, 2008). Thus, cooperation among district officials does not exist in Greater Bushenyi Local Governments leading to poor service delivery. 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 was investigating the extent to which human resource hiring process account for the general failure of local government officials to cooperate together for development and suggesting specific general practices/processes that need to be adopted to foster cooperation for development in local governments.

### **Literature review**

In Africa, nations are characterized by dictatorship regimes, unaccountable leaders and other elites have co-opted democratic institutions for their own gain (Matte, 2008). Constraints on the free flow of information have supported African governments continued failure to honestly and effectively represent their peoples' interests (Sanyu, 2003). At the most basic levels, people have been shut out of decision making and have not been able to participate effectively because they have been unable to access key information. Recently, in Uganda because some legislators were able to access key information about corrupt people, many filthy things were unearthed in the legislature for the good of our country, Uganda.

This study was guided by the institutional theory by Scott (2004) which 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 behaviour (Scott, 2004).

Jennifer (2005) noted that managers use recruitment and selection, the first component of Human Resource Management system, to attract and hire new employees who have the abilities, skills, and experiences that will help an organization achieve its goals. Gomez (2001), Barlin (2002), Kreitner (2004) observed that an effective human resource recruitment process should create a pool of qualified applicants. As the word implied, selection is the screening process used to decide which of these applicants to hire. The ultimate objective is to hire individuals who will perform well based on the criteria the firm uses to evaluate employees. Rank (2002) further says that because no selection process is fool proof, some hires will turn out to be a mistake and others who would have made good employees may be rejected.

Top management in an organization can empower subordinate employees (Massie, 1994). It is 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.

There are legal constraints that govern the choice of applicants during selection (Young, 2000). For example, it is illegal to discriminate against applicants on the basis of colour, religion, sex, age, or national origin under certain situations. Selection committees should be familiar with the provision of the law in those areas. The primary aim of human resource hiring process is to fill existing vacancies with personnel who meet established qualifications who appear likely to succeed on the job, who will be effective contributors to the progress of the organization (Castetter, 2000).

## **Methodology**

The study used a descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to describe the situation and the sample. 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 (Yamane, 1967).

The target population comprised 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.

A questionnaire was used basing on the fact that the variables such as views, opinions, perceptions and feelings of the respondents on human resource recruitment process in Greater Bushenyi districts could not be observed (Amin, 2005). As one scholar observed, a questionnaire collects a lot of information within a short period of time. For quantitative data, stratified 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. These included administrators, political leaders, health workers, teachers, and support staff. The researcher also employed cluster sampling in order to select groups of participants from a statistical population for the easy conduct of the study.

Just like scholars advise, interviews were used to help the researcher collect information that cannot be directly observed or difficult to put down in writing (Karoro, 2004; Oso, 2002; Maicibi, 2007) on human resource recruitment process and cooperation in Greater Bushenyi Districts. The validity of the instrument (structured questionnaire) was ascertained using content validity Index by expert judges in the human resource management field. The reliability of the instrument (Structured Questionnaire) was established using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient formula.

The following statistical tools were used to analyze data; mean and item analysis concerning how human resource hiring process contributes to cooperation in Greater Bushenyi district; Pearson linear correlation coefficient (PLCC) and Regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Regression analysis and PLCC were used to establish the relationship between independent variable (HRHP) and dependent variable (cooperation). Human resource hiring process (HRHP) is conceptualized as: Needs assessment, advertisement, short listing, selection and placement. Cooperation is conceptualized as: benchmarking, democracy and empowerment. Qualitative data was analyzed by organizing data into meaningful themes for easy interpretation along a storyline (Gibbs, 2007).

The interpretation for quantitative data was guided by Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. For interpretation of responses, the following numerical values and descriptions were followed.

Mean	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

## Results

This research undertook an analytical perspective of the linkages between HRHP and cooperation in local governments of the Greater Bushenyi districts local governments. Data was therefore, collected using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. In this chapter therefore, the researcher explains how results were presented, analyzed and interpreted. Below is table 1 which shows the contribution of HRRP to cooperation in GBDLG.

Table 1: Human Resource Hiring Process (HRHP) contribution to cooperation in Greater Bushenyi Districts Local Governments (GBDLG)

HRHP	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
My organization employs qualified people	3.65	Very satisfactory	1
My district advertises vacant jobs in the media	3.41	Very satisfactory	2
My organization follows legal procedures	3.29	Very satisfactory	3
District leaders usually conduct induction training for new workers	3.21	Satisfactory	4
My organization places workers in their respective positions	3.18	Satisfactory	5
Job entry interviews are always transparent	3.03	Satisfactory	6
There are many vacant posts to fill	2.98	Satisfactory	7
New employees take time to get used to work place	2.68	Satisfactory	8
Some employees are incompetent on their jobs	2.56	Satisfactory	9
There is corruption in HRRP in my district	2.27	Fair	10
Average mean	3.02	Satisfactory	

Source: Primary data

Results in table 1 show that the contribution of HRHP to cooperation of local government in GBDLG was satisfactory on the whole (mean = 3.02). The interpretation is that GBDLG officials clearly follow central government policies on human resource recruitment process laid down by public service. This exhibits cooperation among government officials that results in better service delivery. The results in table 1 above indicate what is actually measured about HRRP including: Needs assessment, advertisement, selection, placement, and induction training. On the whole, the contribution of HRHP was found to be satisfactory leading to cooperation and better service delivery. 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: “Corruption has become the order of the day among the district officials, however, the political wing is trying to put policies in place to stop the vice ...” 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.

All the components of HRHP indicated that district Organisation employs qualified people was highly rated item (mean = 3.65), followed by advertising vacant posts on media (mean = 3.41), and district organization follows legal procedures (mean = 3.29) came last, all fell in a very satisfactory category. This meant that there is cooperation the district officials necessary for better service delivery in local governments.

The rest of the items were satisfactory and the poorly rated was corruption in the HRHP in the district (mean = 2.27). Participants were satisfied on the practice of GBDLG employing competent and qualified staff to occupy the various vacant positions in the districts. In addition, the attraction of competent persons to express their interest whenever a vacant position exists and the following of legal procedures in all the activities and operations of the district boosted

the level of human resource recruitment process. This meant that new applicants were being attracted in Bushenyi local governments due to better service delivery accruing from the existing cooperation. No one can be attracted to work in an organization when there is chaos, intrigue and in house fighting.

Cooperation of local government in the GBDLGs was broken down in three major categories; benchmarking, participatory democracy and empowerment. This section was devoted on describing how these three aspects of cooperation contribute to building synergies for development in local governments. Staff were asked to rate themselves on their cooperation on each of the items or questions asked on the four indicators. Below is table 2 which shows the level of cooperation in GBDLG.

Table 2: Cooperation in Greater Bushenyi Districts

Bench marking	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
We normally hold staff meetings	3.29	Very Satisfactory	1
Government policies guide action plans	3.24	Satisfactory	2
District officials are cooperative in work schedules	3.21	Satisfactory	3
District leaders insist on performance results	3.19	Satisfactory	4
My district compares level of service delivery with other districts	3.15	Satisfactory	5
Management practices flexibility in service delivery	3.11	Satisfactory	6
Management accepts ideas from its workers	3.09	Satisfactory	7
We normally borrow ideas from other organizations	2.93	Satisfactory	8
We normally have exchange visits with other districts	2.77	Satisfactory	9
Management is rigid on procedures	2.55	Satisfactory	10
Average mean	3.05	Satisfactory	
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	
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
Average mean	<b>2.77</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	
Overall mean	<b>2.90</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	

Source: *Primary data*

The means in Table 2 revealed that Local government staff in GBDLGs rated themselves on cooperation as very satisfactory on the three components. Conversely, of all the three measures, Benchmarking was the highest (mean=3.05), followed by (participatory democracy (mean=2.89) and empowerment (mean=2.77). The overall mean for all the three subcomponents (mean=2.90) confirming that staff in GBDLGs local government perceived the cooperation as satisfactory. The interpretation here is that local government's officials do try their best to cooperate despite inadequate funds and the central governments interference in the affairs of local governments. Otherwise the citizens are patriotic, industrious and focused. All this has led to more cooperation in local governments accruing from the better practices of HRHP.

In agreement to the above findings, a participant from Bushenyi district stated: *“political leaders look at civil servants as corrupt people and civil servants look at political leaders as ignorant people due to little learning”*. This implied that political leaders and bureaucrats have no better cooperation in whatever they are doing to steer development in GBDLGs. Relatedly, a participant from Rubirizi district confirmed: *“Local governments have meager resources for them to be able to implement very well the government programmes. The issue of meager resources has tremendously affected exercise of staff motivation and the general development of local areas”*. The interpretation here is that local governments have got a long way to go in order to be stable financially. There are no viable projects from where they can get money for development.

The results indicated that whereas staff in Greater Bushenyi districts local governments use benchmarking, this has helped them to be democratic and use the freedom for participatory democracy resulting from empowerment. A participant from Sheema district had this to say: *“Regarding benchmarking, we rarely have study visits to other organizations. This would be an occasion to borrow “a leaf” in administration in order to improve on our management styles. Also study visits improve on cooperation among districts”*. The interpretation is that local governments do not allocate enough money in their budget for study visits and this is an impediment to development and cooperation of local governments.

A question regarding whether a district normally holds staff meetings, a participant from Mitooma district observed: *“Meetings are normally held not on a regular basis. Meetings are normally held when there is need. Meetings help to foster cooperation and harmony among workers of an organization and they also help in the achievement of the objectives of an organization”*. The interpretation is that district officials are not yet fully aware of the importance of meetings in fostering cooperation, efficiency and effectiveness in an organization.

Regarding empowerment, a participant from Buhweju district stated: *“Central government normally issues guidelines for local governments to follow because there are bosses. However, some inconsistencies involved do interfere with the development of local areas, for example when there is a ban on human resources recruitment process when actually the people need services seriously”*. The implication is that Local governments are not yet fully empowered. They do not fully exercise their legitimate rights and their independence is eroded by the interventions of central government. Below is table 3 which shows the analysis of significant relationship between HRHP and cooperation in GBDLG.



*Table 3: Analysis of significant relationship between human resource recruitment process and cooperation in local governments of GBDLG (level of significance = 0.05)*

Variables correlated	R-value	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Human resource recruitment process Vs cooperation of local governments	0.32	0.000	Positive and significant relationship	Rejected

**Source:** Primary data

Pearson linear correlation coefficient results in table 3 indicated that human resource recruitment process conceptualized as: Needs assessment, advertisement, short listing, selection, placement and induction) was positively correlated with the cooperation (which was conceptualized as : benchmarking, democracy and empowerment) of local government employees in GBDLG ( $r=0.32$ ,  $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ). Basing on these results, null hypothesis was rejected and a conclusion was made that an improvement in the human resource hiring process increases the cooperation of each local government employees. For example, an improvement in human resource recruitment process by one, increases employees' cooperation by 0.32 and vice versa. Regression analysis helped explain the effect of human resource recruitment process on cooperation of local governments in GBDLG. Table 4 shows the results of this test.

*Table 4: Regression analysis for cooperation of local governments and HRRP in Greater Bushenyi Districts (level of significance = 0.05).*

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

**Source:** Primary data

The results in Table 4 suggested that human resource recruitment process positively and significantly affect local government cooperation ( $F = 710.434$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$ ). The regression adjusted  $r^2 = 0.316$ . The interpretation is that human resource recruitment process contributes over 32 percent towards variations in the cooperation of local governments (adjusted  $r^2 = 0.316$ ). the description of the effect is once HRHP components (Needs assessment, advertisement, short listing, selection, placement and induction training) are properly implemented by local government officials, they have the capacity to increase cooperation (benchmarking, democracy and empowerment) by almost 32 percent in GBDLGs. This means that 68 percent is contributed to cooperation by other factors apart from HRHP. These other factors may include motivation of human resources and staff performance appraisal system.

### Discussion of results

The study was intended to establish the effect of human resource recruitment process (HRHP) on cooperation in local governments of GBDLGs. The contribution of human resource recruitment process to cooperation in GBDLGs has the average mean of 3.02, which generally means that it was satisfactory. This implied that GBDLGs officials clearly follow or implement

the central government policies on HRHP laid down by Public Service Ministry, save for corruption, bias and discrimination that may be involved in HRHP.

Nonetheless, the findings about HRHP 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. The multi -sectoral nature of the undertakings do not contain the effectiveness and the timely implementation of the programmes in local governments. This could also be due to the fact that local governments have meager resources for them to be able to execute their policies and programmes timely.

The hypothesis involving HRHP was tested and rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This suggested that the practice of HRHP in each district was different due to corruption and local circumstances. However, the findings were in consonance with the study conducted by (Lwamafa, 2007) who conducted a study on public service programme strategy. He pointed out that people attach a lot of value to their local environments in making decisions leading to corruption tendencies in local areas. For example if one is not born in the area cannot get a job in the same district.

The findings under HRHP 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 recruiting new 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 HRHP and cooperation of local governments was tested and rejected. This implied that HRHP and cooperation are closely associated. Better practices of HRHP lead to cooperation of all the workers of an organization and the reverse is true.

Nevertheless, 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.

Cooperation was satisfactory in terms of benchmarking (average mean = 3.05); participatory democracy; (average mean = 2.89) and empowerment (average mean = 2.77). On overall, the cooperation in GBD was found to be satisfactory (overall average mean = 2.90). This suggested that on the whole, there is cooperation among the workers of local governments in GBDs, though some individuals may be selfish emanating from personality differences. This study disagreed with the findings of the study conducted by Wapakhabulo (2009) on management and conflict resolution. Wapakhabulo found out that there were still workplace conflicts in Kakira sugar works affecting management process.

In the current study the results indicated that whereas staff in Greater Bushenyi district local government uses benchmarking, this has helped them to be democratic and use the freedom for participatory democracy resulting from empowerment. This study also concurred with Taremwa (2011) who found out that cooperation improves development and growth among employees in an organization.

Regarding benchmarking, respondents said that management is rigid on procedures and this was in agreement with Bunyansi (2009) who conducted a study in Kisumu City council and found out the challenges of inflexibility and red-tapism and external political influences. His study revealed that performance management was much valued in Kisumu City council for better services delivery which concurs with the findings of this study.

The study findings differed from Wapakahabulo (2009) who said that delegation was never practiced in Kakira sugar works limited. He asserted that effective communication in management to employees as an indicator of good management system remains paramount and this concurs with this study under participatory democracy where respondents agreed that employees easily access information.

In relation to interview data from the qualitative approach, a participant from Buhweju district concurred with the study conducted by Kanyesigye (2001) on training and retention in Mbarara district. The study found out that local government does rely on policies from central government for perfectionism.

## **Conclusions**

The study concluded that HRHP leads to cooperation if managers do not practice bias and discrimination based on religion, political parties and sectarianism in HRHP. However, if district officials engage in bias and discrimination in the practice of HRHP, the outcome might be corruption tendencies that do not foster cooperation in local governments. The institutional theory advanced by (Scott, 2004) was validated in a sense that local governments also practice and value all related tendencies of local isomorphism.

## **Recommendations**

Greater Bushenyi Local Government District Service Commissions should eliminate the vice of discrimination amongst employees by giving equal chances to workers and new applicants in terms of promotion and employment opportunities. This is because the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Article 21) and Employment Act 2006 are strongly against discrimination of any form in both public and private institutions. Section 6 of the Employment Act 2006 stipulates that discrimination in employment shall be unlawful and for the purposes of this Act, discrimination includes any distribution, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion or social origin.

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 percent for sub-national governments for them to be able to execute their agreed programmes effectively and efficiently. 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 percent is so important in a sense that growth and development of local governments is a spring board for national development.

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