

Communication and Employee Performance at the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD) – Uganda

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Abstract

In organizations, communication is an important component of organization activity because organization need to meet their needs by passing information from one person/unit to the other through communication. Markedly, the importance of communication as an essential tool in work environment seems to be neglected by both employers and employees, which has led to ineffective performance and poor performance. Therefore, the present study sought to examine the effect of effective communication on employee performance in Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development. The objective of this research was to determine the impact of effective communication on employees' performance in Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development. The study adopted a descriptive survey design on a target population of 208 staffs of Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development out of which a sample of 194 was drawn using stratified random sampling techniques. Data was collected from 194 employees by means of a questionnaire supplemented with interviews, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data under Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to examine the effects of the variables i.e., effective communication and employee performance. The study results showed that first, organizational and job characteristics have a positive and statistically significant relationship with effective communication by the correlation coefficient of 0.667 with p-value of 0.000. Secondly, organizational and job characteristics have a positive and statistically significant relationship with employee performance as showed by the correlation coefficient of 0.596 with p-value of 0.000. Also, it indicated that there is a significant and positive impact of the predictors on the response variable with an adjusted R² of 54%. The I.V of effective communication has a significant and positive effect on employee performance in MLHUD but from a negative perspective unfortunately. The recommendations given for this study therefore, are that on top of face-to-face communication channel, Ministry should also to improve on the use of email/internet communication as well as emphasizing open and candid communication to ensure effective communication for better organizational performance.

Keywords: communication, employee performance, organization

Background

Communication is an integral part of the organizational process as the flow of communication up and down the organizational hierarchy has its effects on efficiency, decision- making and morale of organizations. Thus, effective communication is regarded as the foundation of organizations today (Von Krogh, Ichijo, & Ikujiro, 2000) or communication continues to be the life-blood of all business organizations. All organizations, both private and public entities like Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD) rely on some form of communication to send their messages across to their target audience, or

inform their target audience of the mission and vision of their entity. Employee mostly hypes performance at the work place when effective communication is at its ultimate for instance, when the information about an organization's policies and procedures are at its optimum level with openness and accuracy; and also, when the information provided is adequate, factual and has good feedback (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012).

The mandate of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD) is "policy making, standards setting, national planning, regulation, coordination, inspection, monitoring and back-up technical support relating to lands, housing and urban development; promoting and fostering sustainable human settlement; and, managing works on government buildings" in the country. The Ministry is in charge of Land Administration and Management; Physical Planning and Urban Development; Housing; Policy, Planning and Support Services; and Government Land Administration (Uganda Land Commission). All this is structured under three Directorates of Land Management, Physical Planning and Urban Development and Housing; twelve Departments; sections, Ministry Zonal offices and district offices, which all are manned by over 400 employees. The Ministry being a social structure needs the life-blood of the organization (communication) which is a common language that social structures such as human groups, working groups and teams have developed in order to interact with each other effectively and efficiently.

Communication is one of the concepts defined in many ways in the literature. For example, Hoben, Varley, and Cox (2007) consider communication as a whole concept comprising of speech and verbal symbols thereby constituting an exchange process, while according to Kekelis and Andersen (1993), communication denotes the process when the parties understand each other. Barnlund (2008) explains that communication is the exchange process in which the parties send and receive messages simultaneously. According to Ince and Gül (2011) communication is the exchange of ideas, emotions and opinions through words, letters and symbols among two or more people. Despite these different definitions, the main point in communication lies within sharing. It is, therefore, the process of sharing emotions, thoughts and information between two or more parties and thus, uncovering common meanings (Karakütük, 2011).

On the other hand, Altinöz (2008) defines communication as a means through which the task and the resources needed to carry out an assignment, the roles and duties and the expected results are made known to the subordinates. This means that communication is the transfer of information (a message) from one person to another. Thus, effective communication is therefore the transfer of message, followed by feedback, from the receiver to the sender, indicating an understanding of the message. This brings in a new dimension of looking at communication from the business or organization perspective. Therefore, this is why writers like Gupta and Kumar (2010) defined communication as the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organization to its members and among members of the organization, and Ayatse (2005) observed that communication is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. Multidimensional aspect of the notion of communication along with its analyses from different viewpoints affects its definition, communication is needed to review, conceptualize and direct interaction in an organization.

Communication covers all activities that an individual does when he wants to make a transformation in someone else mind. This is a meaning bridge between an individual or individuals and organization. Similarly, emphasizing social aspect of communication, communication that takes part on the base of social life and forms the content of organizational structure is a process which aims at conducting good relationships between groups and organizations (Dogan, 2005). This is because the competencies and skills they possess will enable them to exhibit work behaviours appropriate and relevant to the performance of the job. It is further theorized that employees are likely to be more productive if their performance is rewarded assuming that the reward received has value to them, as argued by the expectancy theory (Armstrong, 2012 quoting Vroom, 1964).

Theoretical Background

The concepts of effective communication on employees' performance and its studies have been based on several theories of which the Systems Theory is one among others. These theories describe organizational

behaviour, its communication and more specifically the organizations effectiveness on communication. Essentially in this context, the theory gives the approaches from which the researcher can use the effectual communication to measure employee performance within an organization. In view of this, Systems Approach gives a holistic view of an organization. The system theory sees the organization as a system with interrelated parts, which are connected to each other. According to Booth (1986) the systems theory has more valid and applicable stance in internal communication. This is because the systems approach recognizes the role that communication plays in facilitating efficient functioning between the various components of the organizations.

Contextual Background

In this context, organizational communication was discussed in the study and its effect on employee performance taken as the subject. After this brief introduction to communication, it would be appropriate to revert to the concept of organizational communication. Organizational communication denotes the communication occurring in organizational environment and the main objectives thereof are to communicate organizational policies, establish a continuous coordination among organizational members, solve the organizational problems and share information (Karakütük, 2011). The variety of communication aids/techniques used in an organization depends on the nature of the organization, its kind and range of personnel that best suits the management and also the location of the workplace. In MLHUD like in most organizations, managers/supervisors often leave that aspect of communication to the organization structure authority as the Ministry is a typical structure organization with three directories composed of various departments, sections and Ministry Zonal Offices all organized under a hierarchical structure.

Statement of the Problem

Employee Interaction is a principal and essential endeavour in organizations as the sustainability of an organization is based on effective communication among employees and relationships develop based on effective communication. However, in the context of MLHUD, communication has been largely left to the organization structure authority and not given strategic importance letting the major channels of communication not being used effectively. This has resulted into feed forward communication where top employees refuse to listen to the contemplations of lower employees because of cumbersome reporting lines hence poor communication, which are difficult for the employee to abide; such as conflicting authorities, and obligations thereby making some subordinates become answerable to more than one superior (MLHUD, 2017). In some cases, the communication gap that exist between supervisors and employees makes them to generally sense not trustworthy, respected or valued to be responsible in their field of work (GoU, 2012).

Intra- communication facilities such as intranet are rarely used and this deprives subordinates from knowing some important information hence ineffective communication. Therefore, the absence of effective communication channels tends to under-utilize the expertise and vital information from the employees, which could be a critical input for formulating an effective communication strategy to reduce or eliminate apathy in performing their roles (GoU, 2016). Considering the problems stated above, the study intends to aid MLHUD by expounding on the way effective communication would improve employee performance.

The main research objective was to determine the impact of effective communication on employee performance using MLHUD as a case. However, the specific objectives of the study are; to examine various communication processes, types and channels in the MLHUD, to assess the impact of effective communication on employee performance in MLHUD and to establish the effect of organizational and Job characteristics on effective communication and employee performance in MLHUD.

Hypotheses

H₁: The organizational and job characteristics have a direct impact on effective communication.

H₂: The organizational and job characteristics have a direct impact on employee performance.

H₃: Effective communication has a positive impact on employee performance

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study in figure 1 below shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables mediated by the intervening variable. According to the framework, the independent variables are communication channels, types of communication, communication process, communication skills and ICT, whereas employee performance is the dependent variable. The independent and dependent variables are influenced by the organizational and job characteristics such as organization sector and size, and job position. The framework therefore shows determinants of Effective Communication on employee Performance of MHLUD.

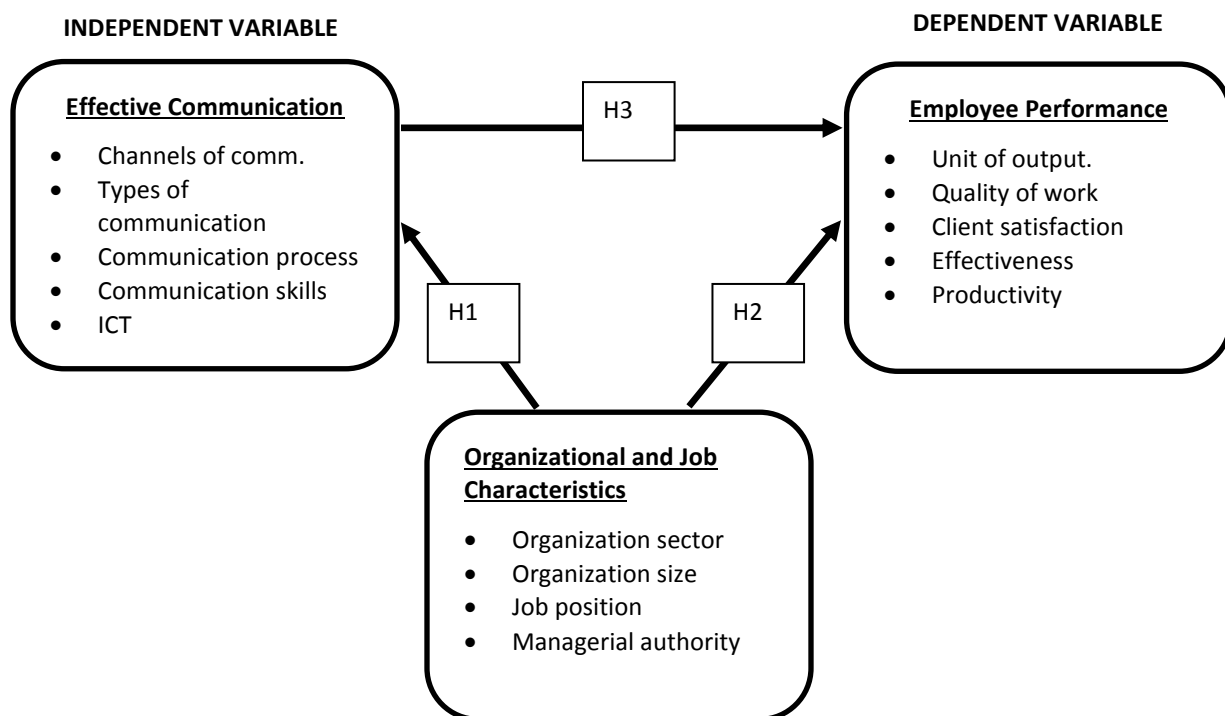


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the study on communication and performance

Source: Adopted and adapted by the Researchers

Literature Review

Communication is one of the concepts defined in many ways in the literature. For example, Hoben et al. (2007) consider communication as a whole concept comprising of speech and verbal symbols thereby constituting an exchange process, while according to Kekelis and Andersen (1984), communication denotes the process when the parties understand each other. Barnlund (2008) explains that communication is the exchange process in which the parties send and receive messages simultaneously. According to Ince and Gül (2001) communication is the exchange of ideas, emotions and opinions through words, letters and symbols among two or more people.

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dimension of looking at communication from the business or organization perspective. Therefore, this is why writers like Gupta and Kumar (2010) defined communication as the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organization to its members and among members of the organization, and Ayatse (2005) observed that communication is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. Multidimensional aspect of the notion of communication along with its analyses from different viewpoints affects its definition, communication is needed to review, conceptualize and direct interaction in an organization.

Communication covers all activities that an individual does when he wants to make a transformation in someone else mind. This is a meaning bridge between an individual or individuals and organization. Similarly, emphasizing social aspect of communication, communication that takes part on the base of social life and forms the content of organizational structure is a process which aims at conducting good relationships between groups and organizations (Dogan, 2005). This is because the competencies and skills they possess will enable them to exhibit work behaviours appropriate and relevant to the performance of the job. It is further theorized that employees are likely to be more productive if their performance is rewarded assuming that the reward received has value to them, as argued by the expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Despite these different definitions, the main point in communication lies within sharing. It is, therefore, the process of sharing emotions, thoughts and information between two or more parties and thus, uncovering common meanings (Karakütük, 2011).

Organizational Communication

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011), organizational communication broadly studies corporate life as constituted through discursive processes such as conflict, teamwork and leadership'. Internal organizational communication facilitates the flow of information among members of the organization. The effective flow of information among employees within an organization is facilitated by a vibrant internal communication system. These systems of communication could be upward, downward, vertical or horizontal which is based on the structure of command within an organization. Apparently, organizational communication tends to exhibit what an organization stands for, the purpose of its existence, who the various clients are, the manner in which their workloads are accomplished and the chain of reporting among members.

Effective communication is a transaction of ideas, directory command or guide into oral or written words, or actions on the path of the communicator in such a way that the receiver gets the same message and reacts in manner envisaged by the communicator (Akam, 2011).

There is an effective communication when a satisfactory effect is resulted from intentional or unintentional information sharing. This information when encoded by a manager is interpreted between various entities and emulated on it in a desired manner. However, the effect also ensures the message is not blocked during the communication process. In quest of this, it is believed that effective communication serves the purpose for which it was intended. Whenever the desired effect is not succeeded, factors such as communication barriers are explored with the aim to discover how the communication has been ineffective. Conferring to some studies, communication is effective when the following considerations are arrived at; understanding, compatibility, display of positive behaviours, smoothness of communication, positive outcomes, positive non-verbal communication and adapting of messages communicated (Robbins et al., 2010). According to Ainobushorozi (2013), communication technique employs managerial proficiency in encoding as well as decoding information in a productive manner.

Several theories have been argued to explain why organization adopts effective communication strategies as a management tool because there are always statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, especially one that has been repeatedly tested or is widely accepted and can be used to make predictions about natural phenomena like communication and performance for this very case. The theory reviewed in this study is the Systems Theory.

The system theory sees the organization as a system with interrelated parts, which are connected to each other. According to Booth (1986) the systems theory has more valid and applicable stance in internal communication. This is because the systems approach recognizes the role that communication plays in facilitating efficient functioning between the various components of the organizations. The theory describes organizational behaviour, its communication and more specifically the organizations effectiveness on communication. Essentially in this context, the theory gives the approaches from which the researcher can use the effectual communication to measure employee performance within an organization. In view of this, Systems Approach gives a holistic view of an organization.

In organizational communication research, some main components of the systems theory have been identified which informs how effective communication leads to employee performance namely; wholeness, hierarchical and feedback. In systems theory, the whole determines the character and functions of parts (Weckowicz, 2002). Wholeness refers to the interdependence of the various elements that constitute the system. This means that individual parts of a system contribute to the existence of the organization. Conferring to Miller (2009) the concept of an organizational structure indicates that, the relations within an organism are systematized by order of hierarchy rules. In this regard, components in the main systems are designed into subsystems; making up the whole system, which itself operates within a larger environment.

There are several communication channels available to a modern organization with differing levels of effectiveness and use. For internal communications, the diagram below depicts the various channels available and the effectiveness of each channel.



Figure 2: Channels for communication and their effectiveness

Source: Harris & Nelson (2008)

In order to survive and succeed, organizations need to grasp the vital role of communication in all of this. If communication in an organization is bad, the organization is likely to under-perform. If it is good, however, the performance and overall effectiveness will also be good.

Wallace (2004) points out that the type of medium chosen by the manager may depend on the richness or effectiveness of the medium, the cost and efficiency, the symbolism and also whether there is some equivocality in the message being sent. Some of the channels are discussed below: Memorandums (memos) a form of business communication channel used specially among departments; interview or meetings which is communication dialogue between two or more employees deliberating on issues with the aim of providing

a positive outcome; telephone of two or more employees engaging in a virtual conversation via cable; and report, a medium forgiving an account on an executed event within the organization. Others according to Wallace (2004) are notice board, face to face discussion, questionnaire and survey, intranet (a computer-based communication system that is used internally by staff within organizations), complaint and suggestion boxes, and posters.

Harris & Nelson (2008), describes types of communications as both downward and upward communication this way. Downward communication reinforces the hierarchical nature of organizations, whereas upward communication provides suggestions, message of what subordinates are doing, unsolved work problems and how employees feel about each other and their jobs. Trahan (2008) talked of internal communication where the flow of communication is done between or among employees regarding their work shows a form of internal communication has taken place. According to him is operationally stated as the exchange of communication both informal and formal between top hierarchy members and employees within an organization. In other words, it exists between leaders, managers and employees – or peer-to-peer, from leader-to-leader or employee-to-employee, for instance.

Also, formally, organizational communication has two dimensions; vertically and horizontally. Vertical communication is a downward and upward form of direction. In other words, vertical communication transmits information among different levels in the organizational structure. However, horizontal communication also transmits information among people, divisions, departments and units within the operational structure. Accordingly, downward communication is when messages flow from a higher-level employee to a lower-level employee within an organization. This arises if information runs down through an organization's official succession of the hierarchical structure like the case of MLHUD. In other words, communications start at the upper levels of the organization and moves through to the bottom levels (Tubbs & Moss, 2008).

On the other hand, informal channel of communication is often referred to as “grapevine” and it is based predominantly on cordial interactions among members in the network (Bratton et al., 2007). A weak and ineffective formal organizational communication may be the consequence of this outcome. However, the informal communication network without official verification is not necessarily bad. The existence of a parallel and strong information communication may be a challenge to the formal structure. This is especially so when there are rampant and uncorroborated rumours in the network. Information on that network can be used to formulate effective communication policies for the organization (Sostek, 2006). According to Sostek (2006), informal communication networks can be the source of rumours, and can be good or bad depending on the content. Rumours about individuals are bad since the objective is mostly to hurt them.

Now that you understand the purposes of effective communication, let's take a closer look at the elements in the communication process. By analysing the parts of the process, we are better able to understand the whole. The communication process is a simple model that demonstrates all the factors that can affect communication. Communication is effective if the message that is received is the same one that is sent. A *sender* transmits a message through a *channel* to the *receiver*. The sender first develops an idea, which is composed into a message and then transmitted to the other party, who interprets the message and receives meaning. Information theorists have added somewhat more complicated language. Developing a message is known as *encoding*. Interpreting the message is referred to as *decoding*. The other important feature is the feedback cycle (Barrelas, 2010). The communication process consists of seven steps (Shannon & Weaver, 1949), message, encoding, transmitting, receiving, decoding, understanding and feedback.

The goal of communication is to convey information and the understanding of that information from one person or group to another person or group. This communication process is divided into three basic components: A *sender* transmits a message through a *channel* to the *receiver*. (Figure 3 shows a more elaborate model.) The sender first develops an idea, which is composed into a message and then transmitted to the other party, who interprets the message and receives meaning. Information theorists have added somewhat more complicated language. Developing a message is known as *encoding*. Interpreting the

message is referred to as *decoding*. The other important feature is the feedback cycle. When two people interact, communication is rarely one-way only. When a person receives a message, she responds to it by giving a reply. The feedback cycle is the same as the sender-receiver feedback noted in Figure 3. Otherwise, the sender can't know whether the other parties properly interpreted the message or how they reacted to it. Feedback is especially significant in management because a supervisor has to know how subordinates respond to directives and plans. The manager also needs to know how work is progressing and how employees feel about the general work situation.

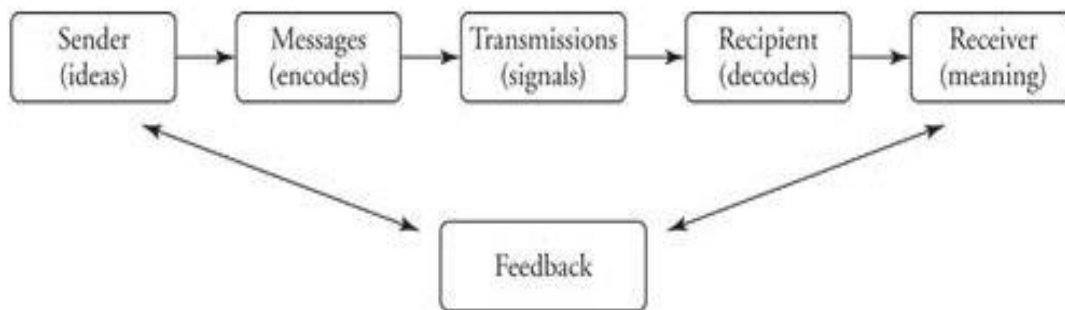


Figure 3: Communication process

Source: Bovee and Thill (1992)

Communication is deemed ineffective when there is poor listener ship, no clarity in speech, bad timing of sharing information, use of jargons, making sarcastic statement or using careless words, attaching emotions to speeches, adopting poor non-verbal communication and portraying deceitful thoughts in communication. Ineffective interaction becomes a blockade to organizational success (Miller, 2009). In an organization and MLHUD for that matter, ineffective communication results when supervisors at the departmental level fail to interact frequently with their subordinates. Lack or absence of the 7 indicators aforementioned (Clarity, consideration, courtesy, correctness, completion, concreteness and conciseness) also leads to breakdowns in communication systems.

The contribution of employees on job is the most important factor for development and excellence in the organization (Korkaew & Suthinee, 2012). Rich, LePine, & Crawford, (2010) identified two types of employee performance for organizational effectiveness: task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to behaviours that are directly involved in activities that provide indirect support for the organization's core technical processes (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). These behaviours directly relate to the formal organization reward system. On the other hand, contextual performance is defined as individual efforts that are not directly related to their main task functions Werner (2000). However, these behaviours are important because they shape the organizational, social, and psychological contexts serving as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes.

Empirical Studies on Effective Communication and Employee Performance

With a focus on employee communication, Tumbare (2009) did a research on an internal communication assessment of the Lilongwe City Assembly. Her study assessed the organizational communication of the Assembly. Explicitly, the effect of internal communication at the Lilongwe City was measured. The methodological approach measured their current and ideal amounts of information within the organization. These are receiving information from others, sending information to others, action on information sent, channels of communication, communication relationships, communication and work satisfaction, timeliness of information received from key sources and sources of information. Findings from a sample of 186 respondents of the Assembly indicated a great need to receive information and to interact with

Assembly management more frequently than what is happening currently. The communication between subordinates and co-workers seems to be satisfactory. Could this be the same case with MLHUD?

Ainobushoborozi (2013) similarly did a study which examined the impact of effective communication on labour productivity in civil engineering projects with a case study of Kampala Central division. Multinomial Logit (MNL) estimation technique was employed to measure the existing relationship between effective communication and labour productivity, and other explanatory variables include work duration spent in a company, educational qualifications, timely information on changes at work, cooperation at work and adequate training provided to employees. The findings showed that asking for clarity in communication, cooperation at work to get tasks completed and timely information about changes affecting work are statistically meaningful to labour productivity in civil engineering projects. He stressed that in order to attain the targeted productivity level, managers should ensure clarity of any instruction at work, provide adequate training to employees, ensure cooperation at work by providing incentives and finally develop a good communication plan to ensure timely information delivery especially on changes affecting work.

Meanwhile, Kibe (2014) investigated the effects of communication strategies on organizational performance. A descriptive research design was used in this study. 132 questionnaires were distributed to employees. The findings of this research showed the importance of both the theoretical level and practical level. It concluded that for any organizational performance to be effective, an open communication environment should be encouraged. Once members of the organization feel free to share feedback, ideas and even criticism at every level it increases performance.

Finally, Neves & Eisenberger (2012) reviewed that management communication was positively associated with a temporal change in POS, mediates the relationship between management communications and implications of practice. Specifically, it revealed that management communication affects performance mainly because it signals that the organization cares about the well-being and values the contributions of its employees. This study also adopted the use of the perceived organization support in terms of communication as indicators on the effect of communication on organization performance. Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) assessed the impacts of organizational communication on the perception of red tape by comparing internal communication with external, especially client-oriented, communication in both public and non-profit organizations.

Communication plays an important role in organizational functioning and effective communication should be highly recommended to every organization in all the sectors of the economy. Any management both public establishment and private that is desirous of ensuring the success and efficiency of its workforce, should be conscious of implementing effective communication programmes. Indeed, many previous studies have attested that communication affects performance either at individual or organizational level but most of them have not attempted to investigate on the factors that may mediate with communication to influence performance. Also, most of the studies never put an emphasis on how organizational and job characteristics may too influence communication. Therefore, the current study is hoped to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between effective communication and employee performance, and how the different factors like organization and job characteristics may have an influence on communication and then performance.

Methodology

Creswell, (2014) describes a research design as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. The current research adopted a descriptive survey design and to Cooper and Schindler (2008) and Kothari (2004) specifically a descriptive survey research design is concerned with providing information on characteristics of a population or phenomenon (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The design was appropriate because the main interest was to explore the viable relationship and describe how the factors support matters under study. Descriptive research design thus was applied in obtaining information from MLHUD staffs in relation effective communication and employee performance.

The target population of this study was the employees of MLHUD working at the headquarters and Uganda Land Commission, totalling to 435. Target population traits covered all employees of different Directories, departments, sections and from every level because this gave a true representation of the study population.

After the establishment of the total population, the study used Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973) for calculating sample size. According to him, for a 95% confidence level and $p = 0.5$, size of the sample was;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where, N is the population size and e is the level of precision. Let this formula be used for our population, in which $N=435$ with $\pm 5\%$ precision.

Assuming 95% confidence level and $p = 0.5$, we get the sample size as

$$n = \frac{435}{1+435(0.05^2)} = 208$$

The sample size for this study was 208. Samples from the different sections were computed using stratified sampling further supplemented with simple random sampling technique, which provide every member of population same and known chances of being nominated in each stratum hence stratified random sampling. For collecting data from 208 respondents were nominated to represent the study population of 435 employees as shown below;

Table 3.1: Sample size by departments

| No. | Unit/Section | Sample size, n |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. | Land Management | 64 |
| 2. | Physical Planning & Urban Dev't | 52 |
| 3. | Housing | 48 |
| 4. | Uganda Land Commission | 44 |
| | Total | 208 |

Source: Researchers

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from the MLHUD employees with the use of structured questionnaires collecting data on the effects of effective communication on employee performance. On the other hand, secondary data was collected from both internal and external sources. From internal organizational sources, unpublished literature in form of annual, monthly and weekly MLHUD reports were accessed, and externally, government (Public Service) reports and manuals, journals, textbooks, and these as well as the Internet and web were instrumental for the study.

The self-administered questionnaire was the main technique of collecting data administered to staff. In questionnaire, general questions were about gender, age, department, position, years of service, and education level. The questionnaire was structured into five sections, Section (A) deals with the bio data of respondents. It is aimed at obtaining information about respondents' department, years of service, employment status, and education level Section (B) dealt with communication and employee performance using a Likert scale of fifth continuum from 1 to 5. (1= strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= uncertain, 4=disagree and 5=strongly disagree) in this questionnaire.

Data quality control for this study was done through validity and reliability checks on the data collection instruments. Validity is described as the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This study therefore, used both construct validity and content validity. For construct validity, the questionnaires were divided into five sections to ensure that each section assessed information for a specific objective, and also ensured that the same closely ties to the conceptual framework for the study. Similarly, to ensure content validity, the questionnaires were subjected to thorough examination by three randomly selected MLHUD staffs. The three staffs were asked to evaluate the statements in the questionnaire for relevance and whether they are meaningful, clear and whether they are free of errors. This facilitated the necessary revision and modification of the research instrument thereby enhancing content validity.

On the other hand, reliability of data collection instrument is the process which shows if measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results (Zikmund, 2003). Reliability can be computed through different methods but for this study, questionnaire reliability was checked by using internal consistency method to measure the correlation between each item in the questionnaire and others. According to Cooper and Schindler (2008) reliability coefficient refers to the scores obtained on a test. A reliability coefficient of zero indicates that the test scores are unreliable. For basic research purposes, tests with a reliability score of 0.7 and above is accepted as reliable but for applied research settings, a reliability of 0.8 may not be high enough., whilst for clinical decision making, test scores of between 0.8 and 0.9 are acceptable for basic research but for applied it must be 0.95 and above (Cooper & Schindler, 2008).

The data for this study was sorted, coded and summarized on the master sheet in the excel programme. First, some of the quantitative data was analysed with the use of frequency counts. Frequency distributions was calculated and presented in percentages, which makes it easier to compare and analyse groups. A statistical examination of summary frequencies and percentages will assist in data interpretation, and the data was presented in frequency distribution tables. Secondly, this research used regression analysis under the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to express the relationship between two variables, and estimates the value of the dependent variable (y) based on a selected value of the independent variable (x) (Fornell & Cha, 1994). But for the purpose of this research work, it was used to determine the relationship between a particular variable and another. The statistical method was used to analyse the impact of effective communication which is the independent variable, on employee performance, the dependent variable. Regression equation is an equation that defines the relationship between two variables. It is given by: $y = a + b(x) + \mu$

Where y= Dependent Variable

x = Independent Variable

$$b = \frac{\Delta \text{in } (y)}{\Delta \text{in } (x)}$$

μ = stochastic variable, other factors that are responsible for change but are held constant.

For the purpose of this study, a regression equation was derived. Thus, since Y was the dependent variable then employee performance was treated as the dependent variable. Also, for the independent variable, effective communication was treated as the independent variable since employee performance always depends on how communication is exercised in the Ministry.

Results

A response rate measured the level of success or quality achieved in collecting survey data (Westat, 2007). In other words, response rate was a ratio of the number of people who respond to a study to the estimated sample size for the study. The response rate in this study was computed using the formula below:

$$RR = \frac{NR}{SZ} \times 100$$

Where;

RR = Response Rate; NR = Number of responses; and SZ = Sample size

A total of targeted two hundred eight (208) questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondents (staffs) but one hundred ninety-four (194) questionnaires were returned, and arrived as;

$$RR = \frac{120}{135} \times 100 = 93.2\%$$

RR = 93.2%

Therefore, the response rate for this study is 93.2%. Accordingly, Babbie (2004) posits that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyse and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on the above, the response rate for this study was found to be very good, which is of great significance in making generalization and conclusions for this study.

Respondents' profile data include staff time with Ministry gender and below presents respondents' profile.

Table 1: Respondents by Gender at MLHUD

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Male | 98 | 50.5 | 50.5 | 50.5 |
| Female | 96 | 49.5 | 49.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 194 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Primary data, 2018

From the sample size of 194 as shown in Table 1 above, it was found out that 98 (50.5%) of the respondents were male and 96 (49.5%) of respondents were female. This is an indication that there are slightly more males than females in MLHUD and could be the reflection of the National Population and Housing Census of 2015 that placed the population of male higher than that of their female counterparts in formal employment in Uganda.

Hypothesis one: The organizational and Job characteristics have a direct impact on effective communication

It is assumed that organizational and Job characteristics have a direct impact on effective communication and Table 2 below presents the analysis.

Table 2: Correlations for Organizational & Job Characteristics and Effective Communication

| | | OGJOB | EFCOM |
|-------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| OGJOB | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .667** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 194 | 194 |
| EFCOM | Pearson Correlation | .667** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 194 | 194 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data, 2018

The Table 2 shows that organizational and job characteristics have a direct impact on effective communication. The correlation coefficient was 0.667 with p-value of 0.000, which implies that, a change in organizational and job characteristics will cause a change to communication on a tune of 66.7% if other variables are kept constant. This shows that, there is enough statistical evidence that a change in organizational and job characteristics will cause a change to communication and vice versa, thus the

research hypothesis H₁ was accepted and this is reason why one respondent stated that, “*indeed the job descriptions are clear and precise; they indicate the line of duty, who reports to who, why and when which enhances performances. The promotion guidelines are clear and well documented*”.

Hypothesis two: The organizational and Job characteristics have a direct impact on employee performance

It is assumed that organizational and Job characteristics have a direct impact on employee performance and Table 3 below presents the analysis.

Table 3: *Correlations for Organizational & Job Characteristics and Employee Performance*

| | | OGJOBC | PERFORMANCE |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|-------------|
| OGJOBC | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .596** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 194 | 194 |
| PERFORMANCE | Pearson Correlation | .596** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 194 | 194 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to the data in Table 3, organizational and job characteristics have a direct impact on employee performance as showed by the correlation coefficient of 0.596 with p-value of 0.000, which implies that, a change in organizational and job characteristics will cause a change to employee performance on a level of 59.6% if other variables are kept constant. This shows that, there is enough statistical evidence that a change in organizational and job characteristics will cause a change to employee performance and vice versa, thus the research hypothesis H₂ that “the organizational and Job characteristics have a direct impact on employee performance” was accepted as supported by one respondent when he said that “*Job descriptions are highly embraced, the rules and guidelines must be followed and adhered to which guides all employees and employees are guided by policies which improves performance*”.

The Relationship between Effective Communication and Employee Performance at MLHUD.

On the research objective to determine the relationship between effective communication and employee performance at MLHUD, a research hypothesis 3 “Effective communication has a positive impact on employee performance” was formulated and tested in table IV, therefore, the Pearson correlation between employee performance and effective communication was done through correlation of coefficient and regression analysis.

Table 4: Correlations for Effective Communication and Employee Performance at MLHUD

| | | PERFORMANCE | EFCOM |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------|--------|
| PERFORMANCE | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .297** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 194 | 194 |
| EFCOM | Pearson Correlation | .297** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 194 | 194 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data, 2018

The correlation table in Table 4 shows that, effective communication has a direct impact on employee performance from the correlation coefficient of 0.297 with p-value of 0.000. This implied that, a percentage increase in effective communication will lead to 29.7% increase in employee performance if other variables are kept constant. There is an indication of enough statistical evidence that a change in effective communication will cause a change in employee performance and vice versa, thus the research hypothesis H_3 was accepted in this current study echoing what Bass (1985) stated that, the setting and clearly communicating performance standards and expectations enable one to achieve the best results through managing employee performance that too was mentioned by a respondent that,

Indeed, the effective communication in the Ministry given that the government digitalized it has enhanced performance. If communication in an organization is bad, the organization is likely to under-perform. If it is good, however, the performance and overall effectiveness will also be good, and this is dependent on effective communication.

Table 5: Summary of Coefficient of Effective Communication and Employee Performance.

Coefficients^a

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized | t | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|----------------------|--------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Coefficients Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | -4.821 | .848 | | -5.686 | .000 |
| 1 | EFCOM | .493 | .043 | .538 | 11.495 | .000 |
| | OGJOBC | .448 | .048 | .436 | 9.325 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: PERFORMANCE

Source: Primary data, 2018

The regression table shows that organizational and job characteristics depend on effective communication and employee performance. This is seen from the table since the t-test for the effective communication and employee performance had a p-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05. So, the regression model can be expressed as $EP=0.538+0.436+ \epsilon \dots$. From equation, the regression coefficient for effective communication = 0.538 shows that, one percent increase in effective communication increases employee performance by 54% if other variables are kept constant and its T value of 11.495 which is greater than the critical T at the 5% level of significance indicates that, there is enough statistical evidence that an increase in effective communication will lead to an increase in employee performance and vice versa, thus the research hypothesis (H_3) is accepted.

This is why one respondent said,

The MLHUD purchased landlines from all service providers, they utilized all the notices, they connected to internet, increased on the number of staff meetings, call for timely reports, they introduced morning staff briefing and utilization of suggestion boxes, they embraced an open-door policy and feedback became paramount which enhanced performance.

This is an indication that communication has unfortunately not impacted employee performance at MLHUD as majority of respondents agreed that, *“indeed if communication reduces the performance of the MLHUD will reduce. Therefore, the Management of the Ministry must be conscious in ensuring that measures are put in place to enhance communication in order to up hold performance”*.

Interviews from different respondents included one of the top supervisors in the Ministry who alleged that,

“Majority of Ministry’s employees understand effective communication even the office attendants and drivers are senior six (UACE) drop outs so they can communicate.” He further confirmed that, *“with the Universal Primary and Secondary Education, the number of educated Ugandans has increased and the MLHUD cannot appoint any staff who doesn’t know what effective communication is. Further they are trained on the job especially customer care and communication skills”*.

In support of this, one of the lower-level employees said that,

Ideally face to face and memos are the most appropriate forms of communication in Public Services since the job descriptions are written down and telephones are not on all employee desks worse off when the telephone (landline) is shared among the staff working on the same work station.

Additionally, another staff claimed that,

Some bosses call us using our mobile handsets as if they belong to the Ministry. The Ministry has never given us free mobile handsets yet majority of our bosses enjoy using mobile telephones because they are the fastest and most effective if the information needed is very urgent and even take dictation using a mobile telephone while taking dictation.

In accordance with Harris and Nelson (2008), one of the staff that, *“face to face is commonly used since it gives chance to the manager to look in the face of the employees while giving him/her feedback.”* He further added that,

Face to face is effective since in MLHUD subordinates are required to be submissive to their bosses and it is hard for managers to fire an employee without following the long procedures which include addressing in competencies directly to the employee.

Therefore, this shows that, MLHUD staffs normally follow the communication process which enhances its effectiveness that in turn improves performance as one of the respondents (staff) who refused to close his name commented that, *“employees in MLHUD are all knowledgeable of the communication process and reporting lines but some of them are just big headed and stubborn so they use lack of knowledge of the process as a blessing in disguise.”*

Accordingly, majority agreed and strongly agreed respectively that, senders always get feedback from receivers which makes communication effective in the MLHUD. This is why three employees spoke at the same time in reference to this subject matter claiming that, *“some colleagues just have a bad attitude so they just ignore any communication that is sent to them yet they know that ignoring any form of communication affects the communication process.”* They further alleged that, *“in MLHUD effective communication is a culture since they deal with clients on sensitive matters of land. So, it is a requirement to give feedback or feed forward.”*

MLHUD commonly uses the top-bottom type of communication where directives are clear and consistent but doesn't encourage open feedback as echoed by one of the lower employees that,

In MLHUD there is no bottom top communication. All directives are from the top with clear instructions to follow and failure to abide with them can lead to disciplinary action ... Top management thinks they lower cadres are useless who cannot give a positive contribution to be incorporated in the information to be passed on."

MLHUD supervisors endeavour to give clear and detailed work instructions, directions, procedures and targets of what is expected of subordinates' performance. This is so because according to Wang (2005), better performance can be achieved only when there is a reasonable level of expectation-fit and when the social exchange between managers and employees is fair and equal as an employee put it *"in all public service organisations like ministries, orders are orders from superiors and they must be followed since that is the design of the nature of activities that they do on a daily basis"*.

Top managers agreed that,

Communication flow is easy once followed. Although they didn't deny that, there is some level of bureaucracy given the nature of work they deal with. ...As managers, we try to communicate on a daily basis and so far, we have not got serious issues concerning poor communication in MLHUD.

This is clear that through communication at MLHUD, performance standards are set and given to staffs which aids their performance and this is in line with what Bass (1985) stated that, the setting and clearly communicating performance standards and expectations enable one to achieve the best results through managing employee performance as one supervisor alleged that, *"there is good communication between their peers, lower level counter parts, causal staff and top managers and this improves performance."*

This echoes what Bass (1985) said that, observing and providing feedback, and conducting appraisals enable one to achieve the best results through managing employee performance. This is why one respondent who refused to mention her name and department stated that,

While some officers in MLHUD allow feedback certainly not all and it is not considered or used. I have never heard that the ideas of the lower cadres have been put into consideration. Keep watching and least we can't lose hope now or in future.

Conclusion

The research study was to examine the effect of teamwork on employee performance and it was found that, the variable of effective communication has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. The multiple regression model showed a significantly strong relationship between independent variable (effective communication) and the dependent variable which is employee performance. The regression coefficient R shows the value 0.538 which shows that, one percent increase in effective communication increases employee performance by 54% if other variables are kept constant hence accepting the research hypothesis three *"Effective communication has a positive impact on employee performance"*. This therefore suggests that when the effectiveness of communication processes and mechanisms improves, employee performance also improves accordingly. The recommendations given for this study therefore, are to help MLHUD improve its communication processes for better organizational performance.

Recommendations

This study's recommendations will support MLHUD, her employees and others to enhance their performance through effective communication by adopting the following;

There are three channels of communication (face-to-face, telephone and memos) used at MLHUD more equally but much emphasis should be placed on face-to-face because it's the one which ensure employees

feel valued and also elicit commitment to the implementation of decisions taking in order to achieve set goals and objectives.

The current trend is that internet and email is gaining prominence as a mode of communicating instructions but unfortunately at MLHUD is the least utilized channel. Therefore, the study recommends the Ministry to improve on the use of email/internet communication

MLHUD must encourage open and candid communication because it is recommended that such communications come with courtesy and consideration, and without malice or prejudice.

Barriers and breakdowns bottlenecks in the communication systems and so MLHUD must either remove or at least minimize these communication bottlenecks to increase clarity in communication.

The study showed the top-bottom approach and information flow should not only be downward but must be upwards too. Therefore, MLHUD must adopt a two-way communication system that results in understanding, compatibility, display of positive behaviours, smoothness of communication, production of positive outcomes, elicit positive non-verbal communication, and ensure employees adapt to messages communicated.

As much as downward communication helps management to get things done in the right way since the employees are able to ascertain what is expected of them from the management that help them to be effective in execution of specific duties, must also consider lateral communication where the employees are able to create teamwork spirit and hence enhance their performance through the teamwork kind of operation.

MLHUD must ensure supervisors communicate with subordinates (employees) regularly to get feedback and convey suggestions in order to clarify future job assignments; this will help improve workers' performance and organizational performance.

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