COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AND STAFF PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM MUNI UNIVERSITY, UGANDA

Pacuto Ngos Solomon[1i],
Dan Ayebale[2]

[1]Department of Computer and Information Science
Muni University, P.O. Box 725 Arua, Uganda
[2]PhD, Faculty of Business and Administration
Uganda Christian University,
P. O. Box 33659 Kampala, Uganda

Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between communication competences and staff performance in the unique context of Muni University. In the study, a descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used with a sample size of 109. Purposive, stratified and systematic sampling techniques were used to select respondents. Data was analyzed through frequencies and percentages, Spearman rank order correlation, coefficient of determination, and regression. There was a relationship between the dependent and independent variable.

Keywords: communication, competences, performance

1. Introduction

The study examined the relationship between communication competences and staff performance in Muni University. In this study, communication competences were conceived as the independent variable and performance was the dependent variable.

1.1 Historical background

Over the past two to three decades, universities world over have faced major challenges in terms of their management and staff performance. These challenges have resulted in

---

[i] Correspondence: email s.pacuto@muni.ac.ug, ayebale.dan@gmail.com

significant transformations in the scope of their mission, governance, knowledge production and circulation, and relations with wider national, regional and global economies and societies (Barnett, 2009). These transformations are part of a wider 'paradigmatic transition' facing all societies and universities, around the world (Santos, 2010: 1). Whilst at present what might be the enduring features of this transition are unknown, some of its constituent elements, and management politics, are visible, and are cause for major concern.

In Africa, in essence these management politics are changing what it means to talk about the university, critical knowledge production and performance in general. An underlying thread in all of these challenges is the dominance of management theories and performance of university staff.

Today, academics and University staff, their Universities, cities, regions and nations, are measured, compared, rated, ranked, rejected, targeted for treatment, re-measured in an intense process of staff performance, scrutiny and identity making. In other words, the competitive comparative advantage has been to think in imaginative ways as to how to become a world class education hub by buying in world class brands, world class academics and competent staff.

1.2 Theoretical background

Communication competences and staff performance is better understood in the context of this study with the use of Competence-based Strategic Management theory. Competence-based Strategic Management theory is a way of thinking about how organizations gain high performance for a significant period of time (Katz, 2013).

The theory further explains how organizations can develop sustainable competitive advantage in a systematic and structural way (Baggozi & Edwards, 1998). It is an integrative strategy theory that incorporates economic, organizational and behavioural concerns in a framework that is dynamic, systemic, cognitive and holistic (Sanchez and Heene, 2004). Competence-based Strategic Management theory defines competence as: the ability to sustain the coordinated deployment of resources in ways that helps an organization achieve its goals while creating and distributing value to customers and stakeholders (Draft & Lengel, 2008).

Another theory that was adopted to underpin this study is the institutional theory. This theory takes a sociological perspective to explain organizational structures and behavior (Dunn, 2010:4). Staff performance at university is a function that is heavily structure-managed and the behavior of individuals who manage the process through various structures has a significant role in improving the staff performance of organizations through applying the principles to make appropriate decisions. The

institutional theory draws attention to how organization decision making is influenced by the social and cultural factors as identified by Scott, (2001:32), and in particular how rationalized activities are adopted by organizations. The theory emphasizes the use of rules, laws and sanctions as enforcement mechanism, with expedience as basis for compliance (Scott 2004:23). And by its nature, university management and performance is a rules-bound game. When applied, the theory helps to explain the staff's effect of institutional decision making and the influence of the regulatory and oversight department in influencing performance (Scott, 2001).

1.3 Conceptual background

Conceptually, this study was guided by the concepts of communication competencies and staff performance as the independent and depend variables respectively. According to Leis (2011:12) management is the organization and coordination of the activities of a business in order to achieve defined objectives. Management consists of interlocking functions of creating corporate policy and organizing, planning, controlling and directing an organization's resources in order to achieve the organizational goals and objectives. In this study, management was measured in terms of planning, budgeting and communicating.

Staff Performance is accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. In management, staff performance is deemed to be the fulfillment of an obligation, in a manner that releases the performer from all liabilities under the contract. Staff Performance has been described as "*the degree of achievement of certain effort or undertaking*". It relates to the prescribed goals or objectives which form the parameters (Chitkara, 2005).

From communication perspective, it is all about meeting or exceeding stakeholders' needs and expectations from a task. It invariably involves placing consideration on three major elements, i.e. time, cost and quality (Project management institute, 2004). For purposes of this study, staff performance will be measured in terms of time, cost and quality.

Competence models may be applicable to all employees in an organization or they may be position specific. Identifying employee competencies can contribute to improved staff performance. They are most effective if they meet several critical standards, including linkage to, and leverage within an organization's human resource system (Walumbwa, et. al. 2008). Core competencies differentiate an organization from its competition and create a company's competitive advantage in the marketplace.

An organizational core competency is its strategic strength (Ammons & Weare, 2009). To be competent a person would need to be able to interpret the situation in the

context and to have a repertoire of possible actions to take and have trained in the possible actions in the repertoire, if this is relevant. Regardless of training, competency would grow through experience and the extent of an individual to learn and adapt.

1.4 Contextual background

Contextually, meaningful higher education systems require successful education institutions. Such institutions cannot succeed without competent management. Although this is true the world over, concept of competent university staff and how to achieve it differ (Walumbwa, et. al. 2008). These differences might arise from variations in culture and traditions, historic experiences or from levels of development, to name just a few reasons. Regardless of these differences, there is wide spread agreement that better staff performance can help higher education institutions achieve their goals, reduce costs and frictions and increase effectiveness (Ammons & Weare, 2009).

It is impossible to run a university like a private company; however, it is not only possible, but also necessary to transform the management tools developed in the private sector and apply them appropriately to management in higher education (Asree & Zain, 2010). Once the importance of management competences is recognized and accepted, there is a need to identify how the concept applies to the specific duties of those who manage universities, faculties, departments or schools. This can elucidate issues and skills pertinent to such management duties. And, it is important to clarify which persons in which positions at a university need to have which competencies (Assadifard, Roya et al 2011). And, if said competences and persons are identified, it still remains to establish the right means of providing those competences for better staff performance.

Communication competences can distinguish and differentiate an organization from its competitors. While two organizations may be alike in financial results, the way in which the results were achieve could be different based on the competences that fit their particular strategy and organizational culture (Beheshtifar, 2011). By aligning competences to business strategies, organizations can better recruit and select employees for their organizations (Blair, 1999).

Competences have become a precise way for employers to distinguish superior from average or below average performance. The reason for this is because competencies extend beyond measuring baseline characteristics and or skills used to define and assess job performance (Brinckmann, 2008). In addition to recruitment and selection, a well sound Competency Model will help with performance management, succession planning and career development.

Competences are also what people need to be successful in their jobs. Job competencies are not the same as job task (Burnett & Dutsch, 2006). Competences include all the related knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that form a person's job. This set of context-specific qualities is correlated with superior job performance and can be used as a standard against which to measure job performance as well as to develop, recruit, and hire employees.

Lastly, competences can provide a structured model that can be used to integrate management practices throughout the organization. Competencies that align their recruiting, performance management, training and development and reward practices to reinforce key behaviors that the organization values. Competency models can help organizations align their initiatives to their overall business strategy (Bennis, 1984).

2. Statement of the problem

In a bid to improve equitable access to university education, the government of Uganda has spent many resources in Universities including Muni University with the aim that the resources will be managed competently to bring about better performance (Khan, 2015). Despite the heavy investment in terms of resources, the staff at these Universities has not performed to the expected standards and this is evidenced in the many strikes by staff and students. The performance of the universities is less than expected as shown by 64% of the set target still off track (Uganda Government Annual Performance Report, 2015).

Consequently, the declining staff performance has been a source of rising concerns over lack of achievement of planned targets in time. In the circumstances, one would wonder whether the staff has had the required competences to perform the tasks. Therefore, this study investigated the relationship between communication competences and staff performance in Muni University.

2.1 Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the study was to establish the extent to which communication competence affects staff performance in Muni University.

2.2 Research question
To what extent does communication competence affect staff performance in Muni University?

2.3 Hypothesis of the Study

Communication competences at management level has a positive and significant effect on staff performance in Muni University.

3. Methodology and Design

3.1 Research design

Orodho (2000) defines a research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to the research problems. A research design can be regarded as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevancy with the research purpose. It is the conceptual structure within which the research was conducted. It constituted the blueprint for collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2003).

This study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design. In a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design, the study variables, that is, independent and dependent variables were measured at the same point in time and this enabled description as well as comparison of various factors associated with the study (Bhattacherjee, 2012). This further helped the researcher to ensure that people's views and opinions were sought and described accordingly to establish how management competencies affect performance within the study scope.

The study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design because the study intended to pick only representative sample elements of the cross section of the study population. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.2 Study population

The study was done at Muni University. The actual population is the 15 University Council members, 63 Academic staff, 81 Administrative staff, 15 support staff and 23 guild officials. The study targeted key players in the running of Muni University who are conversant with the management affairs of the University.

3.3 Determination of sample size

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. It was the process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from the population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). A sample size of 112 respondents was determined using statistical tables of Krejcie & Morgan as cited by Amin (2005). The sample included various categories as specified in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Research respondents by category and sample

No.	Category of respondents	(N)	(S)	Sampling technique
1	Academic staff	63	14	Simple random sampling
2	Administrative staff	81	62= 34 (permanent basis 28 (contract basis)	Stratified sampling
3	Support staff	25	14	Simple random sampling
4	University Council	15	6	Purposive sampling
5	University guild	15	10	Simple random sampling
6	**Total**	**214**	**112**	

Key: *N* – Population Size, *S* – Recommended Sample Population *(Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).*

The sample sizes in the Table 1 above are derived from Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table.

3.4 Sampling techniques and procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select University Council members who were interviewed. The researcher chose this technique to select this category of respondents in order to focus on those that are the most knowledgeable and with vast experience about what was to be investigated.

Simple random sampling was used to select Academic staff and the student guild expected to participate in the research. The researcher chose this sampling technique for this particular group because this group of respondents is homogenous with almost equal understanding of the topic under investigation. In addition, they constitute a reasonable number to support selection by this procedure. Stratified sampling was used to select Administrative staff because it will enable the researcher to determine desired levels of sampling of representation for each group, and provide administrative efficiency.

3.5 Data collection methods

There are several methods to collect required data for research purpose and these include face-to-face interview, key informants interview, focus group discussion (FGD), survey, observation, and documentary review. However, for the purpose of this study focus was on survey and documentary review and face to face interviews.

3.6 Survey

The selection of the survey method was guided by the nature of data to be collected, the time available and the objectives of the study (Touliatos and Compton, 1988). This method was used on all respondents who were selected to participate in this study. One of the reasons why this method was preferred is because the study involved variables that cannot be observed and can only be derived from respondents' views, opinions and feelings (Touliatos & Compton, 1988).

3.7 Documentary review

Document analysis was used in studying the already existing literature and documents in order to either find gaps that could be filled by the study or evidence that could support or contradict the quantitative and quantitative findings (Kothari, 2004). To exhaustively investigate the study, the researcher used triangulation to capture a variety of information, and reveal discrepancies that a single technique might not reveal (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

3.8 Data collection instruments

The researcher was guided by the nature of the problem under investigation in as far as data collection instruments are concerned. Accordingly, the study used interview guide, questionnaire, focused group discussion topics and documentary checklists.

3.9 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument used to gather data over a large sample or number of respondents (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Structured questionnaires were developed following recommended guidelines by various scholars that include Kothari (2005); Sekaran & Bougie (2010) and Saunders, et al (2009).

3.10 Interview guide

An interview guide is a set of questions that the researcher asks during the interview (McNamara, 2009). The researcher designed an interview guide which was used during the interview of strategic managers of the University. The interview was face-to-face.

3.11 Documentary checklist

A documentary checklist was drawn in order to guide the researcher on the information required for the study. The researcher made use of the documentary checklist to request for the documents from Muni University. Documentary checklist was used in order to supplement the primary sources of data (Kothari, 2004). The documents reviewed

included Budget performance report, Human resource manual, Staff establishment and status list, internal memos, job adverts, minutes of appointments among others.

3.12 Validity and reliability of instruments

As observed by Vogt (2007), a number of studies have used these instruments and found both their reliability and validity values to be acceptable to the population being studied and in a different context thus recommends for testing the validity and reliability of the instruments. The instruments were pre-tested to determine their validity and reliability.

3.13 Validity of instruments

Vogt (2007) defines validity as — the truth or accuracy of the research (pp. 117). Saunders et al (2009) adds that it is the extent to which the data collection instrument measures as well as the appropriateness of the measures coming to accurate conclusions. Validity tests was conducted for content, criterion and construct. Validity test how well the instrument is representative, captures relationships between the variables as well as measures the concepts (Saunders et al, 2009); Vogt, 2007; and Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

This study utilized triangulation to ensure validity of research findings prior to the administration of the research instruments. The instruments were checked by experts including the supervisors of the researcher. Content validity ratio was used to calculate the Content Validity Index, using formula below;

$$CVI = \frac{\textit{Total Number of items rated by all respondents}}{\textit{Total Number of items in the Instrument}}$$

A content validity index of 0.7 and above according to Amin, (2005) qualified the instrument for the study.

3.14 Reliability of instruments

Reliability is defined by Vogt (2007) as the consistency of either measurement or design to give the same conclusions if used as different times or by different scholars. The first step in ensuring reliability is by providing clear operational definitions of the variables under study. Thereafter, internal consistency was measured through internal consistency reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010) using split-half reliability method.

3.15 Data Analysis

The findings of the study were analyzed using quantitative method. This involved uncovering structures, extracting important variables, detecting any irregularity and testing any assumptions (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The researcher further used triangulation method of analysis so as to come up with appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

3.16 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data analysis consisted of numerical values from which descriptions such as mean and standard deviations was made (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The quantitative data gathered were organized, numbered and coded then entered using SPSS 12.0 for windows. The researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze data provide a mention of the descriptive and inferential statistics utilized.

3.17 Measurement of variables

By measurement, we refer to the formulae or scale that will be used in the study in relation to the variables (Kothari, 2004). The study variables were measured using nominal and ordinal types of measurements. The questionnaires specifically for respondents were measured on a five interval Likert Scale, the level of agreement were ranked as strongly agree, which reflected more agreement than just agreement or strongly disagree compared to just disagree. Ordinal Scale as measurement of variables did not only categorize the elements being measured but also ranked them into some order.

4. Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

4.1 Response rate

A total of 109 questionnaires were administered, 107 were returned and 4 could not be used and were therefore excluded, leaving a total of 103 questionnaires for considerations. For the case of interviews, out of 11 targeted respondents six were interviewed. These included the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs), University Secretary, University Librarian and two members of the Governing Council. Managers were interviewed to solicit detailed information about different management competences and their effect on staff performance at Muni University.

The table below gives the detailed information of the study response rate.

Table 2: Response rate

Instrument	Target population	Actual response	Response rate
Questionnaire	109	103	94.5%
Interview guide	11	06	55.5%

Source: Primary data, 2017

As indicated in Table 4.2.1, 109 questionnaires were administered and 103 were returned, giving a response rate of 94.5%. Similarly, Table 4.2.1 shows that 11 interviewees were targeted and 06 were reached, giving a response rate of 55.5%, this is in line with the expected threshold of 50% for quality data according to Amin (2005).

4.2 Characteristics of the respondents

This section contains a detailed description of the results about gender, age, level of education and experience of respondent obtained after data analysis. In this section, frequency tables were used to represent findings against interpretation of demographic characteristics of respondents. The information was sought because the nature of the study necessitated the gathering of opinions and findings from across section of different people for a wider perspective and analysis of the findings.

Table 3: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Gender	Male	81	79	79	79
	Female	22	21	21	100
Age	20-29	52	50	50	50
	30-39	39	38	38	88
	40-49	12	12	12	12
Level of education	O Level	4	4	4	4
	A Level	10	10	10	14
	Diploma	34	33	33	47
	Degree	52	50	50	97
	Masters	3	3	3	100
	PhD				
Experience	Above 6 years	12	12	12	12
	4 to 5 years	35	34	34	46
	2 to 3 years	24	23	23	69
	1 year and below	32	31	31	100

Source: Primary data, 2017

On gender, as is given in the Table 3 majority of the respondents in this study were male and were 81 constituting 79% of the sample. The female respondents were 22

(21%). In relation to the age distributions of respondents included in the study, the majority of the respondents, that is, 52 comprising 50% of the sample were between 20 to 29 years followed by those between 30 and 39 years (38%).

Cumulatively, the majority of the study respondents, 91 (88%) were within the age of 20 to 29 years. The study sample is not different in the characteristic presented from what one would find in the entire staff population of the selected case study.

With regard to the level of education among the people included in the study, half of the respondents were degree holders constituting 52 (50%) followed by diploma holders 34 (33%). A level respondents were 10 (10%), O level respondents were 10% and Master degree holders were 3 representing 3%. Collectively, respondents in the study that had attained O level education, A level education and Masters Degrees were 17 (17%). The result of the table shows that majority of the study respondents were educated to Bachelor degree level as this was expected given that the study context is a University, where most positions require one to have a degree level of education. As indicated in the Table 3 above, the majority of the respondents 35 (34%) had worked for a period of between four and five years, followed by those who had worked for one year and below who were 32 (31%). 23% of the respondents of the study had served Muni University for a period of two to three years. Further as indicated in Table 3 above 12% of the respondents had experience working with the University for over six years. Those who had worked for 6 years and above were 12 (12%). This is majorly the case given that the University is relatively new.

4.3 Communication Competences and Staff Performance

The second objective of the study was to establish the extent to which communication competence affects staff performance in Muni University. The staff at Muni University was requested to respond to the study questionnaire by indicating their position using a five point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree as shown in the table below.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of responses regarding the different dimensions of planning competences of staff in Muni University

Communication competences	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There is clarity in communication	38 (37%)	49 (48%)	2 (2%)	13 (12%)	1 (1%)
There is correctness in communication	23 (23%)	31 (30%)	16 (15%)	25 (24%)	9 (8%)
There is completeness in	33 (32%)	51 (49%)	6 (6%)	11 (11%)	2 (2%)

communication					
There is conciseness in communication	30 (29%)	58 (56%)	12 (12%)	3 (3%)	0 (0%)
There is consideration in communication	31 (30%)	44 (42%)	14 (14%)	14 (14%)	0 (0%)
There is courtesy in communication	30 (29%)	53 (51%)	5 (5%)	12 (12%)	3 (3%)

Source: Primary data, 2017

A linear regression model was also run to determine the significance of communication on staff performance and also to prove the second hypothesis. Table 4 indicates that 38 (37%) strongly agreed that communication was complete whereas 9 (48%) agreed, 2 (2%) were undecided and 13 (12%) disagreed while 1 (1%) strongly disagreed. With the biggest percent 85% (87) in agreement, it implies that the staff at Muni University communicate in a complete manner. Most of the respondents in the interviews are in agreement with these findings as they revealed that communication conveys facts requires by the audience. The respondents agreed that complete communication develops and enhances staff performance and are cost saving as no crucial information goes missing and no additional cost is incurred in conveying extra message if the communication is complete.

The response also indicated that 23 (23%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there is clarity in the communication they receive, 31 (30%) agreed, 16 (15%) were neutral while 25 (24%) disagreed and 9 (8%). Cumulatively a slight majority of 53% are in agreement which shows that not everyone is involved in designing training materials. It is possible that only competent people are involved in deigning communication at Muni University.

Table 4 indicates that 30 (29%) strongly agreed that there is correct communication, 58 (56%) agreed, 12 (12%) were undecided and 3 (3%) disagreed while nobody strongly disagreed. Thus, only 5% of the respondents that disagreed with the statement indicate that at Muni University correctness of information is a great tool considered while designing communication.

As far as communication conciseness was concerned, 31 (30%) strongly agreed, 44 (42%) agreed, 28 (28%) were undecided and 3 (3%) disagreed while nobody strongly disagreed. With the majority of the respondents 73(72%) not opposing the statement, it indicates that the staff of Muni University values communication conciseness. The majority of the respondents 53 (51%) agreed that consideration was given in most communication, 30 (29) strongly agreed, 5(5%) were undecided and 12 (12%) disagreed while 3 (3%) strongly disagreed.

4.4 Correlation results of the relationship between communication competences and staff performance in Muni University

Having presented findings about planning competences and staff performance, the next stage was to establish how communication competences affected staff performance. This was achieved by computing the Spearman correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination. The details are presented in the table below, accompanied with and analysis and interpretation.

Table 5: Correlation between communication competences and staff performance

		Communication competences	Staff performance
Communication competences	Pearson Correlation	1	.343
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.118
	N	74	74
Staff performance	Pearson Correlation	.118	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	74	74
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.03 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Primary data

According to results presented in Table 5 the Pearson correlation coefficients indicate that the relationship between communication competence and staff performance is weak and statistically insignificant at 20% significance level (rho = .343, P<0.003). Since the correlation does not indicate the percentage variation in the dependent variable caused by the independent variable, a coefficient of determination, which is the square of the correlation coefficient was computed. The coefficient of determination was expressed into percentage to determine the effect of planning competences on staff performance. Based on this statistic, it is revealed that communication competences accounted for 11.8% of variation in staff performance.

4.5 Regression results indicating the effect of communication competences on staff performance

This section gives details of the analysis that was conducted using regression to determine the effect of the dimension of communication competences (Completeness, Clarity, Correctness, conciseness, consideration, correctness) on staff performance. The findings are presented in the tables below, accompanied with an analysis and interpretation.

Table 6: Relationship between communication competence and staff performance

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 (Constant) Communication competences	1.195	.346		3.455	.001
	.768	.088	.655	8.722	.000
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of estimate	
1	.655ª	.430	.424	.48524	

a. *Predictor: (Constant), Communication competences*   a. *Dependent variable: Performance*

Source: Primary data, 2017

As indicated in Table 6 above, linear regression was conducted to test the second hypothesis which states that Communication competences has a positive significant effect on staff performance. The result show Communication competences was computed to comprise (correctness, Completeness, Clarity, Correctness, conciseness) and these were seen to have a significant effect on the performance of staff with significance level (β = .0.655 P< 0.001). Communication competences further explains a 42.4% variation on the performance of staff (Adjusted R Square = 0.424). The second hypothesis, H2 which states that communication competences which comprised of clarity, correctness, completeness, conciseness and consideration have a significant effect on performance of staff in Muni University was supported.

5. Summary of findings

Finding established that communication is complete with an overwhelming 94 (11%) respondents in agreement, there is clarity in the communication with 72 (70%) in agreement, communication is correct with 79 (76%) in agreement, communication is concise with 88 (86%) in agreement and an overwhelming majority of 97 (95%) in agreement there is concreteness in communication. There was a strong relationship between communication competence and staff performance. Linear regression results of communication competence against staff performance indicates that there is a positive significant effect on staff performance (β = .0.655 P< 0.05) and further explains a 51.3 variation on staff performance is attributed to communication competence.

6. Discussions of the findings

Finding from hypothesis testing showed that communication competence has a positive significant effect on staff performance ($\beta < 0.05$) and further explains a 42.4% variation on staff performance (Adjusted R Square = 0.424). In line with these findings, Partlow (1996) recognized that those organizations which developed good communication according to the needs of the staff get good results. These findings are also in agreement with Tsaur and Lin (2004), who established that communication plays a vital role on staff performance and a bad communication design is nothing but a loss of time and money. Khan (2011) confirmed these findings that communication has a significant effect on organizational performance. Therefore, good communication plays a key role in staff performance enhancement and this is in agreement with the findings of this study. The good communication in Muni University can be attributed to the fact that Muni is a University with a small population of staff who can be reached in the shortest time possible with any form of communication.

The finding of the study also indicated that the majority 49 (48%) of the respondents agreed that there was completeness of communication, 38 (37%) of the respondents strongly agreed. communication begins with the decision made in the need analysis process and end with a model for the communication if the information is to be up to date and relevant. The findings are supported by Brandon Hall (2014) study which revealed that 49% of organization consider communication imperative and so is the content to be regularly up dated. These findings also show that developing communication requires skilled people who can be from within the organization or hired as revealed by findings from interviews.

The finding of the study further indicated that 31 (30%) of the respondents agreed that there was clarity in communication, 23 (23%) of the respondents strongly agreed. In line with the interviews, clarity in communication reduces the cost of sending the information which is vital in performance enhancement. However, slight majority indicated that at considerable number of respondent do not receive clear communication, this contradicted the University Human Resource Manual and all job advertisement reviewed that required every staff to have the ability to communicate effectively. The finding of the study also indicated that 51 (49%) of the respondents agree that communication is always correct, 33 (32%) of the respondents strongly agreed. Mo (2012) supports these findings by noting that as with the correctness of communication, the confidence of staff is boosted thus great performance in the organization.

The finding of the study further indicates that 58 (56%) of the respondents agree that there is concise communication, 30 (29%) of the respondents strongly agreed. Concise communication plays a vital role in providing direction for management. The finding of the study also established that communication gave consideration for the different categories of staff with the majority 44 (42%) of the respondents agreeing and 31 (30%) of the respondents strongly agreeing. However, this is in total disagreement with results from interviews where most respondents revealed that when it comes to communication some staff were not considered, it was limited which compromised on the way the message was delivered. In line with these findings, Mo (2012) noted that while communicating, consideration should be given to all categories of staff.

The study found out that the majority of the respondents 53 (51%) agreed that the communication they have was concrete, 30 (29) strongly agreed. As stated by Mo (2012), concrete communication does not give room for misinterpretation and this does enhance staff performance. Myna (2009) supplements these findings by noting that concrete communication helps to build reputation.

7. Conclusion

From the finding of the study, it can be concluded that making staff have complete communication that is clarity, correctness, conciseness, concreteness and with consideration of the different categories of staff ensures that the communication is relevant and this significantly contributes to staff performance as explained by communication competence positively contributing to a variation of 42.4% on performance of staff.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that communication be made in a manner that takes care of the completeness, clarity, correctness, conciseness and concreteness of the communication for better performance. This should be done through involving staff of all categories at the right time. There is also need to consider having feedback for every communication.

References

1. Allen, M. W. (1992). Communication and organizational commitment: Perceived organizational support as a mediating factor. *Communication Quarterly*, 29 (*40*): 357–367.

2. Allen, M. W. (1995). Communication concepts related to perceived organizational management. *Western Journal of Management*, 17 (*59*): 326–346.

3. Atwater, L. E., & Waldman, D. (2008). *Leadership, feedback, and the open communication gap*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

4. Asree, S.; Zain, M. (2010), "Influence of leadership competency and organizational culture on responsiveness and performance of firms", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 22* (4), 1-40).

5. Bagozzi Assadifard, Roya et al (2011), R. P., & Edwards, J. R. (1998). A general approach for representing constructs in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 33 (*71*): 45–87.

6. Beheshtifar, M. (2011), "Role of career competencies in organizations", *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences, 18 (42):* 6-12.

7. Bennis, W. (1984). The Four Competencies of Leadership.

8. Blair, E. H. (1999). Features-Which Competencies Are Most Important For Safety Managers? What skills should the safety professional possess to ensure both personal and organizational success? The author presents them. *Professional Safety*, *44* (1), 28-32.

9. Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.

10. Brinckmann, J. (2008). *Competence of top management teams and success of new technology-based firms*. Springer Fachmedien.

11. Burnett, M., & Dutsch, J. V. (2006). Competency-based training and assessment center: Strategies, technology, process, and issues. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *8* (2): 141-143.

12. Chen, Z., Eisenberger, R., Johnson, K. M., Sucharski, I. L., & Aselage, J. (2009). Perceived organizational support and extra-role performance: Which leads to which? *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 88 (*149*): 119–124.

13. Daft, R .L., & Lengel, R. H. (1984). Information richness: a new approach to managerial behavior and organizational design. In L. L. Cummings & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior 4* (6): 191–233. Homewood, IL: JAI Press.

14. Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media Richness and structural design. *Management Science*, 19 (*32):* 554–571).

15. Daft, R. L., Lengel, R. H., & Trevino, L. K. (1987, September). Message equivocality, media selection, and manager performance: Implications for information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 22 (72): 355–366.

16. Downs, C. W., & Adrian, A. D. (2004). *Assessing organizational communication: Strategic communication audits*. London: Guilford.

17. Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support and management. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 32 (*71*): 500–507.

18. Eisenberger, R., & Stinglhamber, F. (2011). *Perceived organizational support: Fostering enthusiastic and productive employees*. Washington, DC: APA.

19. Finkel, S. E. (1995). *Causal analysis with panel data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

20. Glauser, M. J. (1984). Upward information flow in organizations: Review and conceptual analysis. *Human Relations*, (Vol. *37*, 613–643).

21. Goggin, M. L, Bowman, A. O'M., Lester, J. P., & O'Toole, L. J. (1990). *Management theory and practice: Toward a third generation*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown Higher Education.

22. Goldhaber, G.M (1983). *Organizational communication* (3rd ed.). Dubuque, IA: Brown.

23. Gopinath, C., & Becker, T. E. (2000). Communication, procedural justice and employee attitudes: Relationships under conditions of divestiture. *Journal of Management*, 18 (*26):63–83.

24. Gouldner, A. W. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 11 (*25*): 161–178.

25. Gray, J., & Laidlaw, H. (2004). Improving management of organizations. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15 (*17*): 425–448.

26. Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: Wiley.

27. Levinson, H. (1965). Reciprocation: The relationship between man and organization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 3 (*9*): 370–390.

28. Lynch, P. D., Eisenberger, R., & Armeli, S. (1999). Perceived organizational support: Inferior-versus-superior performance by wary employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 26 (*84): 467–483.

29. MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., Hoffman, J. M., West, S. G., & Sheets, V. (2002). A comparison of methods to test mediation and other intervening variable effects. *Psychological Methods*, 2 (17): 83–104.

30. Muchinsky, P. (1977). Managing Organizations through communication. *Academy of Management Journal*, 15 (*20*): 592–607.

31. O'Reilly, C. A. (1977). Planning and decision making performance *Journal of Applied Management*, 39 (*62*): 632–635.

32. O'Reilly, C. A., & Roberts, K. H. (1977). Task group structure, Budgetion, and effectiveness in three organizations *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 9 (*62*): 674–681.

33. O'Sullivan, P. B. (2000). What you don't know won't hurt me: Impression management functions of communication channels in relationships. *Human Communication Research*, 21 (*26*): 403–431.

34. Oswald, M. E., & Grosjean, S. (2004). Confirmation bias. In R. F. Pohl (Ed.), *Cognitive illusions: A handbook on fallacies and biases in thinking, judgment and memory* (pp. 79–96). Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

35. Picho. E. O (2013) Human resource management practices and employee job satisfaction in Uganda Management Institute, Kampala - Uganda

36. Rhoades, L., Eisenberger, R., & Armeli, S. (2001) Affective commitment to the organization: The contribution of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 55 (*86*): 825–836.

37. Roberts, K. H., & O'Reilly, C. A. (1974). Measuring organizational communication. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 22 (*59*): 321–326.

38. Roberts, K. H., & O'Reilly, C. A. (1979). Some correlates of communication roles in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 19 (*22*): 42–57.

39. Rockmann, K. W., & Northcraft, G. B. (2008). To be or not to be trusted: The influence of media richness on defection and deception. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 29 (*107*): 106–122.

40. Schweiger, D. M., & DeNisi, A. S. (1991). Communication with employees following a merger: A longitudinal field experiment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 13 (*34*): 110–135.

41. Smidts, A., Pruyn, A. T. H., & van Riel, C. B. M. (2001). The impact of employee communication and perceived external prestige on organizational identification. *Academy of Management Journal*, 28 (*49*): 1051–1062.

42. Snyder, R. A., & Morris, J. H. (1984). Organizational communication and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 18 (*69*): 461–465.

43. Stephens, C., & Long, N. (2000). Communication with police supervisors and peers as a buffer of work-related traumatic stress. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17 (*21*): 407–424.

44. Tepper, B. J., Moss, S. E., Lockhart, D. E., & Carr, J. C. (2007). Abusive supervision, upward maintenance communication, and subordinates' psychological distress. *Academy of Management Journal*, 12 (*50*): 1169–1180.

45. Tourish, D. (2005). Critical upward communication: Ten Commandments for improving strategy and decision making. *Long Range Planning*, 11 (*38*): 485–503.

46. Tourish, D., Craig, R., & Amernic, J. (2010). Transformational leadership education and agency perspectives in business school pedagogy: A marriage of inconvenience? *British Journal of Management*, 17 (*21*): S40–S59.

47. Tsai, M., Chuang, S., & Hsieh,W. (2009). An integrated process model of communication satisfaction and organizational outcomes. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 14 (*37): 825–834.

48. Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gradner, W. L., Wernsing T. S. et. al. (2008). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of Management*, 12 (34): 86-126.

49. Wason, P. (1968). Reasoning about a rule. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 13 (20)*: 273–281.

50. Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 11 (*17*): 601–617.