

Research Article

Capacity Building and Organisational Performance in Local Government Context, Kasese District, Uganda

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Abstract

Service sector is predominantly increasing in modern economic system raising prominence of staff competences in achievement of corporate goals. This study was conducted to examine the relationship between capacity building and organizational performance in local government context, Kasese district, Uganda. Mixed methods research design was used guided by both objective and subjective assumptions to achieve the research objectives. Data was collected at one point in time from Kasese district employees working in different departments including; Finance, Human resource, engineering, health, education and sports, natural resources and community based. 80 respondents were seen to be representative in study considering the Kabale district local government Human Resource Manual (2021) where the district had a total number of 100 employees. Apparently out of 80 questionnaires distributed only 65 were returned well filled making an acceptable response rate of 81.25%. Stratified and simple random sampling approaches guided this whole process in ensuring that every staff members had equal chances of participation. Questionnaire and interview guide was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Study findings confirmed a positive and significant relationship between capacity building and Organizational Performance at Kasese district. Specifically, results reveal that conducting Induction training (Beta= .657, $P < .01$) is a significant influencer of performance; on the job training programs (Beta = .175, $P < .01$) impact on organisational performance; and off the job training (Beta= .682, $P > .01$) significantly predict organisational performance. One key recommendation drawn from this study, linked to human capital theory is that institutional managers should prioritize individual employee learning and earmark resources that sufficiently caters for knowledge and skills enhancement.

Keywords

Organizational Performance, Capacity Building, Human Development, On-job, Off-job, Local Government

1. Introduction

Capacity building concept has existed for a long time and thought about to have started in ancient time but evolved to broadly link with community development in the pre and during 1950s and 60s especially in relationship with rural

areas' technical skills at individual level [3] and later to institutional building and organizational development space [6]. The meaning and application of capacity building in African countries by then was more in informal spheres where ancient

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men and women learnt ways of making the world around them productive (enhancement of technological and self-help activities). In this era the process of training human resources for social development was in the hands of elders who had a duty to transmit knowledge to young ones in regard to different aspects of life including but not limited to: using stones for fire, woods for firewood, rocks, banana leaves, engaging in crafts, fishing, weaving, carpentry and different agricultural innovations [4, 5].

The concept indeed has been researched over years however still viewed differently depending on the context studied. Lammert, Johnson & Fiore [1] for example conceptualize capacity building as “an intervention that strengthens an organization’s ability to fulfill its mission by promoting sound management, strong governance, and persistent rededication to achieving results”. This definition a bit differs from DeCorby Watson et al [2] while attempting to prescribe measures to close the gaps between what public health staff master and what is actually needed for effective service delivery (practice). They concluded on capacity building as an area of six-interventions: 1) internet-based instruction, 2) training and workshops, 3) technical assistance, 4) education using self-directed learning, 5) communities of practice, and 6) multi-strategy interventions. Though Connolly & Lukas looked at same concept in a non-profit organization setting, they do not materially differ from DeCorby-Watson et al and Lammert, Johnson & Fiore since they emphasized on capacity building as a concept that entangles a wide range of capabilities, knowledge and resources needed for effective achievement of organizational goals [7].

By and large the concept meaning can broadly be viewed in the perspective of education, training and human resource development at individual, community, organizational and national levels. Other scholars have seen its usage rotating around institutional building, institutional development, human resource development, development management/administration and institutional strengthening. This broader holistic view on capacity building is shared by Metz et al adding that it covers not only institutional initiatives but also country specific initiatives that involve modernizing the already existing institutional and national human development interventions inculcating effective methods of management, sound policies and organizational structures [9].

It’s all apparently part of the current realm of the concept application especially with enactment of Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) in Uganda in 1997 where staff development has been the key targeted outcome. This policy has improved the general service delivery processes in the public domain in Uganda, created efficiency and effectiveness considering its influence on transparency processes and procedures, performance evaluation systems and its impact on setting organizational goals and objectives. It is perhaps a justification for Light & Hubbard to consider capacity building as a prime factor in organizational performance [8] accordingly arguing that it encompasses a number of factors; i.e

working environment, employee skills and knowledge, motivation and rewards, communication flow and organizational culture which all-together can significantly improve an organizations’ performance if prudently worked upon. Even when Morgan describes capacity building as “a risky, murky, messy business, with unpredictable and unquantifiable outcomes, uncertain methodologies, contested objectives, many unintended consequences, little credit to its champions and longtime lags” [11], this study operationalized and measured capacity building in the lens of induction, on-the-job and of-job-training” [12-15].

On the other hand organizational Performance as an outcome variable in this study refers to the “ability of the organization to achieve its economic goals by using its available resources in both an efficient and effective manner” [10]. This accordingly will depend on organizational managers’ ability to master the art of creating a cooperative working environment tapping from each employee’s emotional engagement and empathy as they together try to provide solutions. Relatedly this study measured organizational performance as task accomplishment of desired output, quality, timeliness and effectiveness

Going by this stance, the study hypothesizes therefore that if an organization has proper induction, on-job and off-job training programs, no doubt it will not only effectively achieve its set goals but also achieve them timely in desired quality standards. However, even when the Human Resource Department of Kasese District Local Government (KDLG) has put in place a number of efforts to train their staff in a number of ways including orientation, coaching, delegation and so many others, the Ministry of Local Government Annual Report [16] shows that the performance of Kasese district in the areas of planning and accountability, quality of services, Productivity, innovativeness, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery have remained wanting. Also the National Performance Assessment Report [17] shows that Kasese district is among the poor performing districts in the country. Whereas the reasons for this are unknown, a number of studies on capacity building and organisational performance have yielded conflicting results [19-21]. This study was therefore conducted to examine the relationship between capacity building and organizational performance in the context of Kasese district local government.

This study far from other similar studies conducted in different context e.g Utete in a financial organization in South Africa [22]; Mbangire [23] in private and public enterprises in Uganda; Hailey, James & Wrigley on NGO and CSOs in Britain [24]; Nwankwo, Olabisi & Onwuchekwa [19] on cooperatives in Nigeria and Danso & Ahenkan [21] on international development agencies in Ghana, this study investigated capacity building and organisational performance in local government setting.

The study contributes to organization performance literature showing the explanatory power that specific dimensions of capacity building have on local district performance. The

study validates the power of human capital theory in explaining organizational performance-capacity building relationship at a district level. This paper is organized as follows: Literature review and hypothesis development come after introduction, then methods, results, discussion, conclusion, implications, limitations and areas for future research come next.

Review of Literature and Hypothesis Development *Capacity building and Organizational Performance*

Service sector is predominantly increasing in modern economic system raising prominence of staff competences in achievement of corporate goals. Indeed organisations today across the globe achieve their targets differently through enactment of several staff capacity building strategies. As argued by Becker [18], human capital investment is one of such initiatives that not only address institutional short term goals but also long term goals. This echoes on the belief that each individual worker in any work setting possesses certain abilities and skills that can be enhanced or increased and developed over time through specific designed learning interventions. It's seen as the power, value people bring into work processes, to turn inputs into outputs. Human capital theory derive its explanatory power in all this assuming that when an organisation values and invests in its employees and equips them with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, it enhances their individual work productivity which leads to attainment of organization goals. The contenders of the theory call on human resource practitioners to embrace it arguing that education and learning are key inputs to any work process in any setting. This view has been confirmed in different research setting, despite the existence of other scholars whose results are contrary. For example Nwankwo, Olabisi & Onwuchekwa [19] in their study on Multipurpose Cooperative Societies confirmed the association between capacity building and organizational performance in Nigeria. Similar results were obtained by Ute [22] in South Africa, just like Makau in Kenya [25]. Further still Danso & Ahenkan [21] using a sample of 302 from 36 Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies in Ghana, realized positive and significant implications of all capacity development elements on organizational performance. To the contrary however Ahmad [20] in a quantitative study in a banking context observed negative results where organizational support for career development does not impact significantly on employees' performance.

Researchers observed that reviewed studies were conducted in different context, applied methodologies different from ones used in this study, besides those studies yielding conflicting results. We therefore based on these mixed views and hypothesized;

H1: There is a positive relationship between capacity building and organisational performance of local government entities in Kasese, Uganda.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Area Description

Kasese district is one of the districts in Western Uganda. It borders with Bunyangabu District in the East, Kitagwenda in the South, East by Lake George, Rubirizi District in the South, Bundibugyo District in the North and in the West by the Democratic Republic of Congo. The district stands as one of the largest in the country but most importantly known for having a number of tourism developments with a variety of tourism products ranging from mining tourism, nature-based tourism (it's a home to Rwenzori Mountains National Park) and cultural to community tourism. The district was selected for this study because of the performance challenges where by its reportedly wanting in terms of planning and accountability, quality of services, Productivity, innovativeness, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery [16, 17].

2.2. Study Design, Unit of Inquiry and Sampling Techniques

To achieve the intended study objectives, the study adopted a mixed methods research design and was guided by both objective and subjective assumptions [26]. Data was collected at one point in time from Kasese district employees working in different departments including; Finance, Human resource, engineering, health, education and sports, natural resources and community based. Besides the study using purposive sampling for some respondent categories, simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used in other cases especially in attaining the sample size of 80 respondents. Our choice of these random sampling techniques was informed by the consideration that these sampling techniques have minimum sampling bias [27].

Dividing them into smaller groups or strata helped in ensuring homogeneity of responses; allegedly helping in reducing variability and increasing the precision [28].

2.3. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments' Validation

Both questionnaire and interview guide helped in collecting opinions from study respondents. Out of 80 questionnaires distributed only 65 were returned well filled making an acceptable response rate of 81.25% [29]. A Five-point likert scale was used where 1 stood for strongly disagree and 5 stood for strongly agree in line with objectives-based likert statements. As shown in table 1 below, efforts were made to measure the research instrument validity where opinions of two knowledgeable persons were computed [30]. The reliability test scores were also good which gave us hope to proceed with the final study [31].

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques and Descriptive Statistics

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used. Specifically quantitative data analysis involved use of both descriptive and inferential statistics in the Statistical Package for Social Scientists. Descriptive statistics helped in determination of measures of central tendency i.e mean, mode, median and also in determining measures of dispersion i.e range, variance, standard deviation; frequency distributions and percentages. Inferential statistics helped in correlation and regression analysis in order to answer the research question. Both thematic and content analysis techniques were used to analyze qualitative data [32]. Specifically content analysis helped in editing qualitative data, and reorganizing it into shorter meaningful sentences. Thematic analysis helped in organizing data into themes and codes. Assembling together information of the same category followed after qualitative data collection, where their similarity with the quantitative data was identified to ease the interpretation and later composing contextual explanations/descriptions on the studied phenomena [33].

The descriptive statistics in table 2 below show the extent of agreement or disagreement from respondents in regard to on-the-job training and organizational performance statements or questions asked to them. On average the majority of employees reported that they are usually trained by more experienced staff while performing their duties (mean= 4.52); learn as they earn during on-the-job training (Mean=4.39); are at times given an opportunity to accomplish tasks for the immediate supervisor in his/her absence as a means of acquainting them with various skills (mean=4.46 and 4.42 respectively). Table 3 below contains details on descriptive statistics on induction training and organizational performance. Reportedly, all new employees at Kasese district go

through the induction process (Mean=4.40); they undergo orientation to acquaint them with the organizational norms, beliefs and customs (mean=4.37).

The descriptive statistics on off-the-job training and organizational performance as presented in table 4 below reveals that the district staff trainees are given an opportunity to analyze case studies and come with all possible solutions (mean=4.36); besides, simulation of problem situation (mean=4.39); use of lectures in explaining concepts and principles (Mean=4.31); use of imaginary situation during trainings (mean=4.29); and seminars and workshops organized outside away from the district premises to enrich staff with new knowledge (mean=4.29).

Table 1. The content validity index of the questionnaire was computed using the formula below.

Respondent	1 or 2	3 or 4	Total
1	04	09	13
2	02	11	13
Total	06	20	26

Source: Primary data, 2024

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items regarded relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{20}{2}$$

$$CVI = \frac{10}{13} = 0.76$$

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of on the job training and Organizational Performance.

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees are usually trained by more experienced staff while performing their duties	65	4.52	.674
Employees learn as they earn during on-the-job training	65	4.39	.920
I am at times given an opportunity to accomplish tasks for my immediate supervisor in his absence	65	4.46	.771
From time to time, we are moved from one department to another so as to acquaint ourselves with various skills	65	4.42	.912
The trainer explains the way of doing the jobs to the trainee and in case of mistakes, corrects the trainee	65	4.44	.880
Instructions through theoretical and practical aspects are provided to the trainees	65	4.39	.952

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on Induction Training and Organizational Performance.

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
All new employees at this organization go through the induction process	65	4.40	.696
New employees go through orientation so as to be acquainted with the organizational norms, beliefs and customs	65	4.37	.917
During orientation, employees become familiar with organizational offices, different departments and their own work areas	65	4.45	.730
During induction, new employees always make a tour of the workplace	65	4.45	.744
There is introduction of various teams at the organization during induction training	65	4.49	.674

Source: primary data, 2024

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of off the job training and Organizational Performance.

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The trainee is given an opportunity to analyze the case and come with all possible solutions	65	4.36	1.010
In this case also a problem situation is simulated asking the employee to assume the role of a particular person in the situation.	65	4.39	1.000
Lectures can be very much helpful in explaining the concepts and principles very clearly and face to face interaction is very much possible	65	4.31	1.051
During training, an imaginary situation is created and trainees are asked to act on it	65	4.29	1.131
Various seminars and workshops are organized outside the organization where employees attend to enrich themselves with new knowledge	65	4.29	1.094

Source: primary data, 2024

3. Results

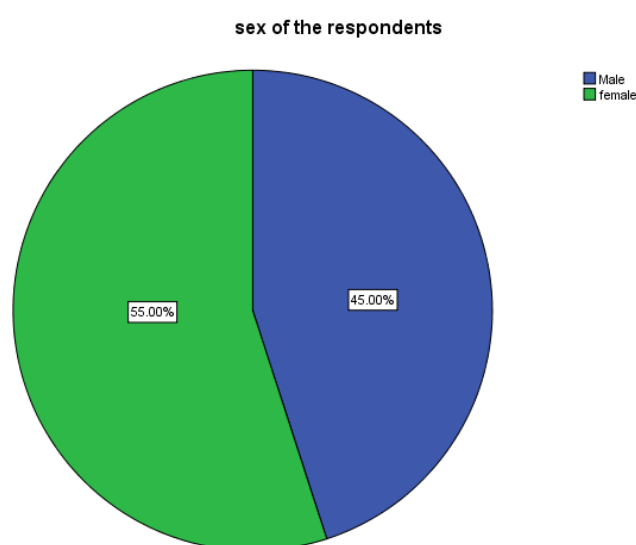
3.1. Respondent Demographic Profiles

Overview

The demographic distribution of respondents provides context for understanding the characteristics of the sample population. For example, the majority of respondents were female, aged between 20-34, with bachelor's degrees, and with 2-5 years of service. These demographics suggest a relatively young workforce with a considerable level of education and experience, which can influence their perceptions and responses to training and organizational performance.

Demographic details

The study aimed at establishing the gender of the respondents. Accordingly, as seen in the Figure 1 below majority of the respondents sampled were females (55.00%) whereas 45.00% of the respondents that were sampled were males. This is an indication that both males and females opinions were fairly captured.

**Figure 1.** Sex Distribution of the Respondents.

The study also sought to establish the age bracket of the

respondents. As can be seen in the figure 2 below 53.00% of the respondents were in 31-34 age bracket and 47.00% were between 20-30 age bracket. This implies that the respondents on average had the cognitive maturity to understand and interpret the questionnaire appropriately.

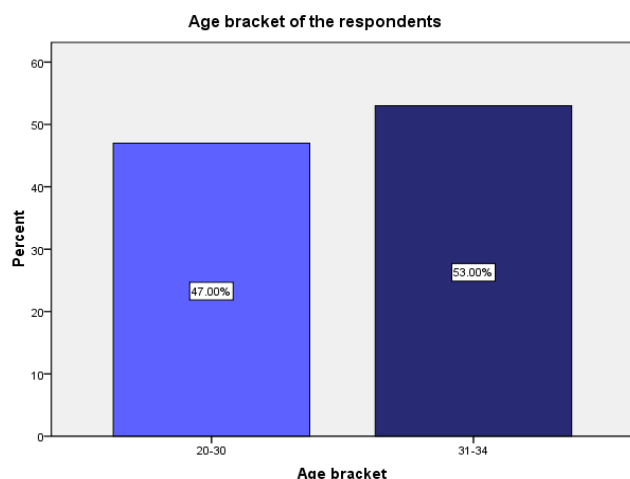


Figure 2. Age distribution of the respondents.

In attempting to establish the Level of Education attained by the respondents, the study as shown in figure 3 below observed that 86.00% of the respondents' attained education up to Bachelors level, 13.00% attained their education up to masters level and only 1.00% have had education up to a Diploma level of the total number of the respondents. This implies that most of the respondents were able to understand what was asked during the study given that it was conducted in english and thus they were able to read and write.

The study also tried to establish the management responsibility of the respondents and as shown in figure 4 below, it was found out that 69.00% of the majority respondents had worked with Kasese district for a period between 2-5 years, 25.00% had worked for a period between 5-10 years and 6.00% had worked between 1-2 years. We observed that since majority of employees (respondents) had worked with the district for over two years, it showed that the respondents had enough information and experience in the issues relating to capacity building and organizational performance at Kasese District Local Government.

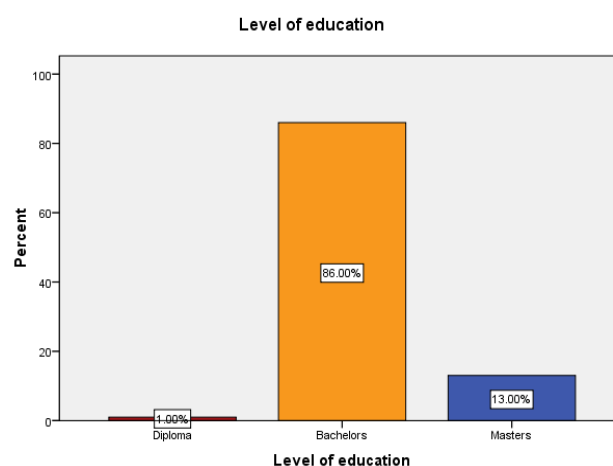


Figure 3. Level of Education of respondents.

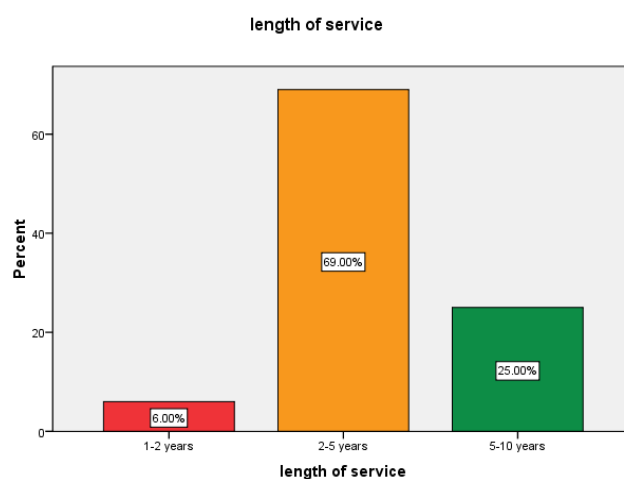


Figure 4. Length of Service of respondents.

3.2. Inferential Statistics on the Job Training and Organizational Performance

As shown on the correlation table 5 below the bivariate analysis outcomes reveal a positive relationship between on-the-job training and organisational performance (coefficient of 0.175 with probability value ($p=0.000$) that is less than $\alpha=0.01$ level of significance). Therefore as more on-the-job trainings are done, performance increases positively.

Table 5. Correlation results of on the job training and organizational performance.

		On-the-job training	Employee performance
On-the-job training	Pearson Correlation	1	.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.161
	N	65	65
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	.175	1

	On-the-job training	Employee performance
Sig. (2-tailed)	.161	
N	65	65

3.3. Inferential Statistics on Off-the-Job Training and Organizational Performance

As shown in the correlation analysis [table 6](#) below, the results of a bivariate analysis reveals that the relationship be-

tween off-the-job training and organizational performance was 0.682 with probability value ($p=0.000$) that is less than $\alpha=0.01$ level of significance. This implies that there was a positive relationship between off-the-job training and organizational performance.

Table 6. Correlation results of off the job training and organizational performance.

		Off-the-job training	Employee performance
Off-the-job training	Pearson Correlation	1	.682**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	65	65
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	.682	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	65	65

3.4. Inferential Statistics on Induction Training and Organizational Performance

A bivariate analysis on induction training and organizational performance also revealed that the relationship between induction training and organizational performance was 0.657, with probability value ($p = 0.000$) that is less than $\alpha = 0.01$

level of significance. This implies that there was a significant positive relationship between induction training and organizational performance. A qualitative extract from one of the respondents confirmed the same "*As a new employee, I found the induction process to be extremely beneficial. The orientation sessions helped me understand the organization's culture and policies, while the workplace tour and team introductions made me feel more comfortable and integrated into the team.*"

Table 7. Correlation results on induction and organizational performance.

Correlations		Induction training	Organizational Performance
Induction training	Pearson Correlation	1	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	65	100
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	65	100

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

3.5. Multivariate Analysis on Capacity Building and Organisational Performance

As shown in the regression results in [Table 8](#) below capacity building has a positive and significant relationship with Organizational Performance at Kasese district. Specifically, results reveal that conducting induction training (Beta= .657,

$P < .01$) is a significant influencer of performance; on-the-job training programs (Beta = .175, $P < .01$) impact on organisational performance; and off-the-job training (Beta= .682, $P > .01$) significantly predict organisational performance.

Regression analysis results on capacity building and Organisational Performance

Table 8. Regression results.

Variables Model	Un standardized β Coefficients	t	Standardized β Coefficients	t	Sig.
Induction training	.242	0.108	0.657	2.026	.003
On the job training	.301	0.109	0.175	4.130	.000
Off the job training	.246	0.105	0.682	3.908	.0323

R = 0.482 R-square = 4.121 F = 15.134 Sig = 0.000
Dependent variable: Organizational Performance

4. Discussion

The study examined the relationship between capacity building and organizational performance in local government context, Kasese district, Uganda. Findings as portrayed in [table 8](#) above confirmed a positive and significant effect of capacity building on organizational performance ($R = 0.482$, $t = 4.121$, $p = 0.000$). Extract from one of the qualitative responses also confirmed the same *"As a new employee, I found the induction process to be extremely beneficial. The orientation sessions helped me understand the organization's culture and policies, while the workplace tour and team introductions made me feel more comfortable and integrated into the team"*. These results practically imply that a mix of capacity building methods (induction, on-job and off-job training) can positively change institutional performance outcomes in terms of not only task accomplishment, or timely attainment of targets but also achievement of desired quality output. This finding concurs with Nimusima et al [15] who argue that since well conducted induction communicates to the employee about the cherished values and beliefs it increases compliance to rules and regulations, bring work harmony, increase motivation and retention. Proper induction even decreases the number of mistakes and accidents at work and improves the quality of work as well as customer satisfaction. This happens naturally as new employees get to learn more about the organizational culture, the various departments as well the chain of command which helps them to be able to identify where to seek clarification on particular matters [34].

Literature also portrays the functional administrative secrecy of on-job and off-job training on organisational performance.

For example, Zhenjing and colleagues [35] who link them with the institutional ability to make employees productive as they acquire new ideas, knowledge and expertise learn from the exposure, as well as improve on their innovativeness. Such human resource development endeavours at organizational level indeed reflects its ability to fulfill its mission by promoting sound management, strong governance, and persistent rededication to achieving results [1]. Since it carries with itself the ability to improve the general service delivery processes and its impact on setting organizational goals and objectives, it's a prime factor in organizational performance especially its influence on working environment, employee skills and knowledge, motivation and rewards, communication flow and organizational culture [8]. With prudence application of capacity building the institution in question is enabled to achieve its economic goals efficiently and effectively [10].

This all reflect the Human capital theory gains in this study. It reflects on the belief that each individual worker in any work setting possesses certain abilities and skills that can be enhanced or increased and developed over time through specific designed learning interventions. This all echo on the value and power people bring into work processes, to turn inputs into outputs [18].

4.1. Conclusion and Implication

The study observes that 48% of variations in Kasese district performance were accounted by capacity building. This partly explains empirically that implementation of a sound capacity building plan has multiple ripple effects. This also echoes the contribution of this study to organizational performance literature providing a proof on the positive relationship existing

between capacity building and organizational performance in local government context.

This finding calls for managerial attention from organizational managers to prioritize knowledge and skills enhancement interventions. Even when the correlation for on-the-job training and organizational performance was low, respondents generally agreed that acquainting them with various skills constitute an opportunity for successful task accomplishment (mean=4.46). This aligns better with human capital theory which explains institutional development that originate from individual worker's involvement in institutionally designed learning interventions. It theoretically implies that integration of capacity building constructs with Human capital theory explains better organizational performance concept.

4.2. Limitations and Areas for Future Research

As researchers we observe that even when the study makes a significant contribution to organizational performance literature, it has certain limitations which future researchers in the same area can address. In the first place for example, the study is premised on the assumption that capacity building is the only predictor of organizational performance, yet it accounted to variations in organizational performance to a tune of 48%. It indicates partly that other significant predictors were excluded from the model. Besides this limitation, the study collected data at one point in time which future researchers can extend collecting data over time to observe changes in organizational performance at different levels of capacity building intervention in a different research setting.

Abbreviations

KDLG Kasese District Local Government
PSRP Public Service Reform Programme

Author Contributions

Rosemary Kaheeru: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Validation

Pereez Nimusima: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Kadhiri Mohamedi Rwambale: Funding acquisition, Resources, Writing – review & editing

Faith Ahabyoona: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Resources, Writing – review & editing

Agnes Amanyire: Funding acquisition, Methodology, Resources, Visualization, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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