

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND STAFF PERFORMANCE OF SHEEMA DISTRICT LOCAL
GOVERNMENT****Mukasa Zubail M****Metropolitan International University****Abstract**

The study established the extent to which working environment impacted on staff performance of Sheema District Local Government. Objectively, it established the relationship between the use of job aid and employees' performance, the relationship between supervisor support and employees' performance and determined the relationship between physical work environment and employees' performance in Sheema District Local Government. The researcher used a correlational design so as to establish the extent to which working environment will impact on staff performance and used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study population comprised employees, heads of departments (departments of; finance, health, community-based services, education and works), and secretaries at Sheema District Local Government. According to findings, there is significant positive correlation between Pay and Benefits and employee performance and the work environment is positively related to employee performance. There is a correlation coefficient between Training and Achievements and employee performance and managerial support is positively related to employee performance, which indicates strong, positive association. Supervisory support and performance were significantly related. Co-Worker Support was related to employee performance, as there was a significant relationship between Target/goal achievement and employee performance. Conclusively, the most important resource for an organization is the human resources who are the employees and the type of work environment in which they operate will determine whether they perform or not, it's through the performance can be realized. Fair compensation motivates employees to work harder and improve their performance and management styles can highly influence performance of employees, through training and development in order to attain the desired skills and knowledge needed to perform their duties. The researcher recommended a need to set in place better reward systems that motivate the employees to work, Sheema Local Government should come up with transformational leadership styles encompassed of ideals, influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration and ensure that the workplace environment is comfortable enough to support employee performance by improving the working conditions. Also, employee performance at Sheema Local Government should be given serious attention by the mobile telecommunications firms.

Key words: working environment and staff performance**Background of the study**

Globally, staff performance in local governments has been an emphasis in all parts of the world (Victoria et al., 2023). In the developed countries like United Kingdom, the current climate of change management

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in advanced local governments and the associated public sector reforms have resulted in many public organizations being now under seemingly relentless pressure from both internal and external sources (Frank et al., 2023). They need to demonstrate that there have been improvements in performance and that goals and objectives are being achieved (Amir, 2020). For example, the United States was found to be high on individualism, low on power distance, and low on uncertainty avoidance (thus high on risk taking) (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022), whereas Mexico was high on collectivism, high on power distance, and high on uncertainty avoidance (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022).

In Africa, Deniscombe (2018) reported that, attitude testing on local government employees began in twenties and despite fluctuations in its performances remains in use today. Job satisfaction from local government employees and motivation are very important to continuing growth of educational and other systems in Africa and around the world (Winny et al., 2023). The history of local government employees in Africa and their performance measurement starts with the history of productivity and productivity measurement, which became relevant concepts starting with the industrial revolution (Isaac et al., 2023).

In Uganda, the performance of local government and the public service has been inconsistent since the 1970's (Moses, 2020). According to Langseth & Mugaju (2020), before the introduction of civil service reforms, the public service was inefficient, insensitive, wasteful and corrupt. Ministry of Public Service

(2019), contended that because of these weaknesses, the performance of the public service greatly suffered (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Nturanabo, 2022).

At Sheema District Local Government, there have been several reforms going on to help improve staff performance and service delivery through work environment changes as well as performance improvement strategy (Racheal et al., 2023). Some of the noteworthy reforms include; results-based management which is meant to help transform the working environment into a contributor of improved staff performance, national wealth and prosperity (ACODE, 2016). As a result, the working environment at Sheema District Local Government plays a very key role in the realization of improved staff performance in terms of implementation of flagship projects to help bring about transformation of Uganda into a Middle-income economy (Sheema District Development Program, 2019 - 2020) (Ntirandekura et al., 2022).

At Sheema District Local Government, it is required to provide quality roads, provide rural electrification, provide quality education where the outcomes are not improving at a commensurate rate, more specifically in primary schools; weak procurement and contract management including delay by institutions to initiate procurements (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023); poor supervision and management of contracts; the award of contracts to proven incompetent contractors unable to complete work in time; and unexplained delays in processing contractors' payments which further affects Programme implementation and makes them quote high for future jobs, health and works are still facing shortage of human resources to deliver keys services

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(Auditor Report – Sheema District Local Government, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

In Uganda, staff performance is an important aspect in service delivery among the population because the way staff perform determines how services will reach the people (Faridah et al., 2023). Effective working environments are a necessity in every organization needed in order to improve employee performance for the organization to attain goals and achieve competitive advantage, by having highly performing employees (Ministry-of-Local-Government, 2019).

Most local governments in Uganda are characterized by poor job performance of staff as they deliver services to the people. This is experienced in areas of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, absenteeism, poor time management, low revenue collection (K. Paul et al., 2023), delivery of poor-quality goods and services, failure to hold departmental monthly and quarterly meetings, general lack of interest, and lack of

commitment by staff (Ministry-of-Local-Government, 2020) (Kazaara & Christopher, 2023).

Sheema District Local Government was among the model districts in Uganda from 1990's where its overall performance in terms of service delivery and competent staffing was excellent and this was seen by the bonuses/rewards it used to get from the central government (MoLG, 2019). However, the trend has changed; performance rewards in Sheema District Local Government have now turned into penalties in most sub counties (Musaibah et al., 2023). If this trend continues and is not addressed, service delivery may continue deteriorating and local governments will be at stake. This apprehension motivated the researcher to research into how working environment affects staff performance in local governments, a case study of Sheema District Local Government (Ronet et al., 2023).

Specific Objectives of the Study

1. To establish the relationship between job aid and employees' performance of Sheema District Local Government.
2. To examine the relationship between supervisor support and employees' performance of Sheema District Local Government.
3. To determine the relationship between physical work environment and employees' performance of Sheema District Local Government.

Methodology

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Research Design

The researcher used a correlational design so as to establish the extent to which working environment will impact on staff performance in Sheema District Local Government. Correlational design involves obtaining data at a point in time with identification of the state of affairs as it exists. It was thus presumed by the researcher that in order to establish the quality of the relationship between to establish the extent to which working environment impacts on staff performance, correlational design was the most appropriate. Besides, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods. This method was preferred in accordance to Creswell (2011) who envisaged that the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed the researcher fully capture a variety of information on the same issue that could be limited by one method only.

Study Population

The study population comprised of employees, and political leaders in Sheema District Local Government. Employees included; heads of departments (departments of; 19 finance, 15 health, 20 community-based services and 15 in education), and 50 politicians. These were selected because they were assumed to know the factors that influenced their environment of work. 50 Political leaders were sampled because they have a responsibility of making the working environment either favorable of unfavorable for the employees and were aware of factors that influenced working environment and staff performance in local governments, focusing at Sheema District Local Government.

Sample Size

Table 1 sample size

Department	Target population	Sample size
Community based	20	19
Finance	19	14
Health	15	14
Education	15	14
Administration	34	28
Politicians	50	44
Total	153	133

From a total population of 153, from different departments of Sheema District Local Government, the researcher target 20 respondents from community-based department, 19 from finance, 15 from health department, 15 from education, 15 from education, 34 from administration and 50 politicians. Using the sample size table by , the researcher sampled 19 respondents from community based department, 14 from finance, 14 from health department, 14 from education, 14 from education, 28 from administration and 44 politicians.

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Sampling techniques

A sample is a group of cases, participants, events or records consisting of a portion of the target population, carefully selected to represent the population (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Using the estimation of the sample size by Creswell (2011) who asserted that 20% of the target population was enough as a representative sample size, the sample sizes were determined at 50%. The researcher used the sample size table by to get the sample size.

Table 2: Sampling techniques

Department	study population	Sampling techniques
Community based	19	Simple Random Sampling
Finance	14	Simple Random Sampling
Health	14	Simple Random Sampling
Education	14	Simple Random Sampling
Administration	28	Simple Random Sampling
Politicians	44	Purposive sampling
Total	133	

Data Analysis

Ngai et al. (2007) describes data analysis as a way of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing or recombining the evidence to draw empirical conclusions. Data collected was entered into the social sciences (SPSS) computer program for analysis (Nelson et al., 2022). This program was used to generate descriptive and inferential statistics particularly Pearson's correlation analysis. This analysis was used to test the study hypotheses and also established the relationship between the relationship between the study variables. Qualitatively, data from interview guides were recorded by recorders during data collection, and was written down exactly as the targeted respondents disclosed during data collection.

RESULTS

Table 3 Relationship between the use of job aid and employees' performance of Sheema District Local Government

	Pay and Benefits	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard deviation
1	I feel fairly compensated for my work	30(23)	70 (53.9)	15 (11.5)	15 (11.5)		2.88	0.89

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2	I understand the pay and allowance system followed by the management		60 (46.2)	60 (46.2)	10 (7.7)		3.38	0.62
3	My pay matches my academic qualifications and performance		40 (30.8)	50 (38.4)	30 (23.1)	10 (7.7)	2.92	0.92
4	Am assured of payment even if an accident occurs to me		70 (53.9)	35 (26.9)	15 (11.5)	10 (7.7)	3.27	0.94
	Work environment							
4	The physical environment in which I work is pleasant	70 (53.9)	55 (42.6)	3 (2.3)	2(15)		3.48	0.62
5	Adequate working area, lighting and ventilation facilities are provided at the work place	50 (38.4)	60 (46.2)	8 (6.2)	12 (9.2)		3.14	0.89
6	The workload and working hours given to me are favorable	80 (61.5)	40 (30.8)	4 (3.1)	6 (4.6)		3.50	0.77
7	Necessary equipment, tools, safety norms and appliances are available at my work place	70 (53.9)	50 (38.5)	8 (6.2)	2 (1.5)		3.45	0.68
	Training & Achievements							
8	We have chances of continuous professional development and training	70 (53.9)	50 (38.4)		8 (6.2)	2 (1.5)	3.45	0.68
9	I can be given study leave with pay	50 (38.4)	70 (53.9)		10 (7.7)		3.31	0.61
10	I have made many achievements which I wish maintain	60 (46.2)	50 (38.4)		12 (9.2)	8 (6.2)	3.25	0.86

Source: Survey Primary data, (2023)

Pay and benefits

From the above results, the respondents agreed that they felt fairly compensated for their work with a (Mean = 2.88), a big percentage strongly agreed and agreed that payments and allowance systems followed by the management (in both cases that percentage was 60% with a mean = 3.38). The respondents agreed that their payment matched with their academic qualifications and performance (mean = 2.9) (Gracious, 2023). Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that they were assured of payment even if an accident occurred to them (Mean = 3.27). The analysis indicates that

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incentives, wages paid and other rewards were satisfactory hence encouraging the employees to better perform their duties. This is confirmed by the standard deviations that are all below 1 (range from 0.62 –0.94) (Moses et al., 2023).

Work environment

The results in Table 3 indicated that respondents strongly agreed that the physical environment in which they worked in was pleasant (Mean =3.48); followed by those who agreed that adequate working area, lighting and ventilation facilities were provided at the work place with a (mean = 3.14) (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). The findings showed majority of the respondents strongly agree that a better work environment with enough space and lighting would make them better perform at their job (mean =3.13) (Ramadhan et al., 2023). Others with a mean of 3.50 further agreed that the workload and working hours given to me are favorable, and Necessary equipment, tools, safety norms and appliances are available at my work place and a mean of 3.45 agreed that the necessary equipment, tools, safety norms and appliances are available at my work place. In all the cases it should be noted that the physical work environment can spur employees, performance.

Training and Achievements

From the findings, the respondents agreed strongly that their organization provided have chances of continuous professional development and training with a mean of 3.45. They also agreed that were given study leave with pay with a mean of 3.31 (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022). The respondents also agreed that they had made many achievements which they wished would be maintain with a mean of 3.24. This analysis implies that the organization encouraged training and enhances performance of the employees (Emmanuel et al., 2023).

Table 4 Relationship between supervisor support and employees' performance in Sheema District Local Government

Managerial support	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard Deviation
My manager always gives me bonuses for my extra contribution to the organization's wellbeing	60 (46.2)	65 (50)	2 (1.5)	3 (2.3)		3.4	0.64
My manager accords me with training and career growth opportunities		1(7.7)	20 (15.4)	60 (46.2)	40 (30.8)	2	0.88
My manager will always promote me in regard to my Performance		10 (7.7)	5(3.8)	100 (76.9)	15 (11.5)	2.08	0.67
Supervisory support							

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My supervisor will always recommend me whenever there are promotion opportunities given my contribution	70(53.9)	55(42.6)	3 (2.3)	2(15)		3.48	0.62
My supervisor is always willing to give me adequate time to improve my performance	50(38.4)	60 (46.2)	8 (6.2)	12 (9.2)		3.14	0.89
My supervisor provides me with all information I need to execute my tasks		80 (61.5)	40 (30.8)	4 (3.1)	6(4.6)	3.50	0.77
My supervisor always makes sure that all materials necessary to accomplish my work are available		70 (53.9)	50 (38.5)	8(6.2)	2(1.5)	3.45	0.68
Co-Worker Support							
My co-workers always share with me information regarding my tasks	40 (30.8)	70 (53.9)	8 (6.2)	12 (9.2)		3.06	0.86
My co-workers will always provide me with counseling and guidance whenever I have personal challenges	20 (15.4)	20(15 .4)	50(38. 4)	40(30. 8)		2.15	1.03
My co-workers are always ready to stand in for me whenever I have a genuine reason to be away		70 (53.9)	40 (30.8)	10 (7.7)	10 (7.7)	3.31	0.91

Source: Survey Primary data, (2023)

Managerial support

From the above findings, the respondents agreed that managers always gave them bonuses for their extra contribution to the organization's wellbeing (60% and a mean =3.4). However, they disagreed that their managers didn't accord them with training and career growth opportunities (Mean = 2). This can highly affect the motivation of the employees hence affecting their performance. Majority of the respondents also strongly disagreed that managers will always promote them in regard to their Performance (Mean = 2.08) (Annet et al., 2023).

The analysis implies that management did not give a clear picture of the future of the organization which can highly impact performance but also the management style is flexible enough to allow good communication between the

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superiors and other employees hence encouraging performance (Brighton et al., 2023).

The results in Table 4 indicate that the respondents strongly agreed that their supervisors always recommended them whenever there were promotion opportunities given their contribution (Mean =3.48); supervisors were always willing to give adequate time to improve their performance (mean = 3.14). The findings show majority of the respondents strongly agreed that supervisors provided employees with all information needed to execute their tasks (mean =3.50). More agreed that supervisors always made sure that all materials necessary to accomplish their work was available with a mean of 3.45. In all the cases it should be noted that supervisory support helped to improve and spur employees, performance (Godfrey et al., 2023).

Co-Worker Support

The findings show that the respondents agreed that their co-workers always shared with them information regarding their tasks as indicated by a mean = 3.06; they however disagree that co-workers always provided them with counseling and guidance whenever they had personal challenges (Mean =2.15). They strongly agreed that co-workers were always ready to stand in for them whenever they had a genuine reason to be away (Mean = 3.31) (Musaibah et al., 2023).

The analysis can therefore be interpreted that co-worker support was of great importance to performance of employees because when they are able to balance work and personal life, employees can focus and perform better (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022).

Table 5 The relationship between physical work environment and employees' performance in Sheema District Local Government

Target/goal achievement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard deviation
Both Sheema District Local Government and individual performance are monitored basing agreed timelines and targets	70 (53.9)	55 (42.6)	3 (2.3)	2 (15)		3.48	0.62
Our target completion rate has been increasing over the last three years	50 (38.4)	60(46.2)	8 (6.2)	12 (9.2)		3.14	0.89
We have regular meetings to review performance against targets		80 (61.5)	40 (30.8)	4 (3.1)	6 (4.6)	3.50	0.77
Budgets are well developed and strictly followed		70 (53.9)	50 (38.5)	8(6.2)	2 (1.5)	3.45	0.68

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Team work							
My workplace emphasizes achievement of group performance	40(30.8)	70 (53.9)	8 (6.2)	12(9.2)		3.06	0.86
Even if I am absent, a workmate can stand in to do my duties for that day	20(15.4)	20 (15.4)	50 (38.4)	40(30.8)		2.15	1.03
My work place emphasizes achievement of individual performance		70 (53.9)	40(30.8)	10 (7.7)	10 (7.7)	3.31	0.91
Attendance and punctuality							
I come to my office regularly and sign the daily attendance register.	70 (53.9)	50 (38.4)		8 (6.2)	2 (1.5)	3.45	0.68
When I am present in office, I attend my clients on time.	50 (38.4)	70 (53.9)		10 (7.7)		3.31	0.61
I don't absent myself for no genuine cause	60 (46.2)	50 (38.4)		12(9.2)	8 (6.2)	3.25	0.86

Source: Survey Primary data, (2023)

Target or goal achievement

The results in Table 5 indicate that the respondents strongly agreed that both Sheema District Local Government and individual performance were monitored basing on the agreed timelines and targets (mean =3.48); their targeted completion rate has been increasing over the last three years (mean = 3.13). The findings show majority of the respondents strongly agree that they had regular meetings to review performance against targets with a mean of 3.50. A mean of 3.45 agreed that budgets were well developed and strictly followed (Wegulo et al., 2023).

Team work

The findings show that the respondents agreed that their workplace emphasized achievement of group performance as indicated by a mean of 3.06; they however disagree that even if they were absent, workmates could stand in to do their duties for that day (Mean of 2.15). They strongly agreed that their work place emphasized achievement of individual performance (Mean of 3.31). The analysis can therefore be interpreted that work life balance is of great importance to performance of employees because when they are able to balance work and personal life, employees can focus and perform better (Ronet et al., 2023).

From the Community based department, one respondent disclosed that;

Attendance and punctuality

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From the findings, the respondents agreed strongly that they came to their office regularly and signed the daily attendance register with a (Mean =3.45). They also agreed that when they were present in office, they attended their clients on time with a (Mean =3.31). The respondents also agreed that they didn't absent themselves for no genuine cause with a (Mean = 3.24) (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Nturanabo, 2022).

This analysis implied that Sheema District Local Government encouraged attendance and punctuality which enhanced performance of the employees. The extent to which working environment impacted on staff performance in Sheema District Local Government (Musaibah et al., 2023)

Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

The computed summary of descriptive statistics for dependent (employee performance) and independent (working environment) variable that were included in the questionnaires were indicated in this part. The mean and standard deviation of all variables collected from the respondents at Sheema District Local Government were discussed.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
Employee performance	1.00	5.00	3.97	1.150
Working environment	1.00	5.00	3.47	.977
Training & Achievements	1.00	5.00	2.63	1.100
Management	1.00	5.00	3.55	0.907
Pay and Benefits	1.00	5.00	3.33	1.095

Source: Survey (2023) SPSS output.

Effects of working Environment on Employee performance

Table 7 Effects of working Environment on Employee performance

Effects of working Environment on Employee performance				2023
Managerial support	1.00	5.00	3.49	1.083

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Supervisory support	1.00	5.00	2.39	1.100
Co-Worker Support	1.00	5.00	3.02	1.149
Valid N (list wise)				

Source: Survey (2023) SPSS output.

Table 6 depicts the overall arithmetic mean and standard deviation of dependent and independent variables as responded by the respondents. The finding of this study indicates that most of employees were sufficiently agreed with democratic leadership style with a mean value of 3.55 and 0.907 standard deviation, training with a cumulative mean value of 3.49 and 1.083 standard deviation, physical environment scored a mean value of 3.47 and 0.977 standard deviation. This indicates that, Sheema District Local Government should maintain its strength on physical environment, democratic leadership style and training in order to have competent employee and improved performance. However, employees on other variables such as work life balance agreed with a cumulative mean value of 3.33 and 1.095 standard deviation and Discrimination with a mean value of 3.02 and 1.149 standard deviation. This implies that, Sheema District Local Government has to work in balancing work personal life of the employees and avoid the prevalence of work place discrimination (W. Paul & Kazaara, 2023).

On the other hand, workload scored a mean value of 2.39 and 1.100 standard deviation; reward scored a mean value of 2.63 and 1.100 standard deviation. This implies that, Sheema District Local Government have to give due attention to give reasonable workload, sufficient breaks for its employee. Additionally, it should give due attention in terms of providing fair reward for its workers. Finally, employee performance scored a mean value of 3.97 and 1.15 standard deviation.

Table 8: The relationship between physical work environment and employees' performance in Sheema District Local Government

	Pay and Benefits	Work environment	Training & Achievements	Managerial support	Supervisory support	Co-Worker Support	Target/goal achievement	Team work
Pay and Benefits	.689**	1						
Work environment	.557**	0.562	1					
Training & Achievements	.552**	0.619	0.446	1				

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Managerial support	.527**	0.600	0.534	0.594	1			
Supervisory support	.583**	0.625	0.433	0.618	0.578	1		
Co-Worker Support	-.526**	(0.454)	(0.353)	(0.339)	(0.401)	(0.377)	1	
Target/goal achievement	-.442**	(0.318)	(0.311)	(0.270)	(0.292)	(0.276)	(0.511)	1

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey (2023) SPSS output.

The result in table 8 indicates that, there is significant positive correlation between Pay and Benefits and employee performance with a correlation coefficient $r=.689$ and sig. (2-tailed) is .000, which is $<.05$. Therefore, there is strong and statistically significant relationship at 5% significance level. Work environment is positively related to employee performance with a Pearson correlation coefficient $r=.557$ and sig. (2-tailed) is .000, which is $<.05$. Therefore, there is strong and statistically significant relationship at 5% significance level. The correlation coefficient between Training and Achievements and employee performance is $r=.552$ and sign. (2-tailed) 000, this implies strong, positive and statistically significant relationship at 5%significance level. Managerial support is positively related to employee performance with a Pearson correlation coefficient $r=.527$ and sig. (2-tailed) .000, which indicates strong, positive association and statistically significant at 5% significance level. The correlation coefficient between Supervisory support and performance $r=.583$ and sig. (2-tailed).000, which indicates strong, positive association and statistically significant at 5% significance level (Nelson et al., 2023).

On the other hand, the correlation coefficient between Co-Worker Support and employee performance is; 526 and sig. (2-tailed).000, this indicates strong, negative association and statistically significant at 5% significance level. Target/goal achievement is negatively related to employee performance with correlation coefficient $r=-.442$ and sig. (2-tailed) .000, which is $<.05$. Therefore, there is moderate and statistically significant relationship between Target/goal achievement and employee performance.

Conclusions

The most important resource for an organization is the human resources who are the employees. They make sufficient contribution to an organization; attention should therefore be paid to them. Employees will strive to perform when they feel that their immediate environment state corresponds with their obligations. The type of work environment in

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which they operate will determine whether they perform or not, it's through the performance can be realized. The workplace conditions to work and boost their performance.

The employees want to be recognized for their work through fair compensation. Fair compensation will motivate employees to work harder and improve their performance at Sheema District Local Government. The reward systems at Sheema District Local Government is financial and extrinsic. The employees have few opportunities for mobility of the organization.

Recommendations

The study findings support the Two Factor Theory which points out that the environment in which the job is performed motivates the employees to perform better. The study recommends that mobile telecommunications firms need to set in place better reward systems that motivate the employees to work.

Following dissatisfaction in that management and leadership style by respondents at Sheema Local Government, the it should come up with transformational leadership styles encompassed of ideals, influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. This leadership style would motivate employees to work.

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