The contribution of legislation to ethical performance of local government administrators: a case of Wakiso District in Uganda

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The current study sought to thoroughly analyse the contribution of legislation on the ethical performance of Local Government Administrators in the District of Wakiso, Uganda. This study was premised on the fact that there were intense complaints about unethical behaviours among Local Government Administrators in the District. The unethical behaviour abound in spite of the numerous laws that were enacted to guide and control the official conduct of Local Government Administrators in the country. The study design was a cross-sectional survey since the data were collected from a cross section of selected Local Government Administrators at one point in time. A total of 226 Local Government Administrators who participated in the study were selected through a stratified sampling. Several methods were used to collect data: the self-administered questionnaires; interviews; review of primary document and secondary literature. Findings revealed that: awareness of legislation accounts for 21.9% variation in methods of implementing legislation; it was found out that awareness of legislation had a moderate positive significant relationship with methods of implementation. The methods for implementation contribute 8% to the promotion of moral virtues among Local Government Administrators; there was a low positive significant relationship between methods of implementing legislation and moral virtues of Local Government Administrators. The moral virtues of Local Government Administrators account for 27.4% variation in ethical performance. It was found that moral virtues had a moderate positive significant relationship with ethical performance. Legislation accounts for 39.5% variation in ethical performance.

The test indicates a moderate positive relationship between legislation and ethical performance. In a hypothesised model the overall total effect of legislation on ethical performance is 70% which is high, leaving effect of other factors to be 30%. The major contribution of this study is that it has established that legislation contributes greatly (70%) to ethical performance of Local Government Administrators in the District. In conclusion, legislation is relevant to the performance of Local Government Administrators. However, the ethical performance of the Local Government Administrators is based on fear of the law which means that the Local Government Administrators do not perform ethically as required by the laws. The study went ahead to make the following recommendations based on objectives: that there should be continuous emphasise on awareness of legislation by supervisors from the time the civil servant joins the organisation up to the time of leaving, with emphasise on improved methods of implementation of legislation especially by Chief Administrative Officer. Secondly, there is need to revisit the methods of implementing legislation by respective heads of department especially by clear follow up on the circulars and press releases. Besides, prosecution should be improved by making it more objective and embedded as part of mission statement in every work place at the district by Inspector General of Government. Thirdly there is need to sensitise and empower Local Government Administrators through training by consultancy firms, to enable them make a formal commitment to demonstrate ethics, integrity and responsibility in all that they do. This study recommends training in moral virtues which can help the Local Government Administrators to acquire and retain some of the moral virtues like full accountability, transparency and integrity. Specific methods are recommended for the training: lectures, case studies, role play, simulation and group discussion.