

**THE CHALLENGES OF PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT IN THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT UNDER THE DECENTRALIZATION SYSTEM: A CASE
STUDY OF GULU DISTRICT**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Amony Sarah, hereby declare that this work has not been submitted for an award of a degree in any other institution or university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, Mr. Oteka Albino, and my entire family for the patience, love, inspiration, prayers and support they gave me in the course of my studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACAO	Assistant Chief Administrative Officer.
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer.
CSR	Civil Service Reform Programme.
DSC	District Service Commission.
DCP	District Chairperson.
HOD	Heads of Department.
DLG	District Local Government.
LG	Local Government.
LGA	Local Governments Act.
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government.
MoPS	Ministry of Public Service.
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.
JARD	Joint Annual Review of Decentralization.
PS	Public Service.
PSC	Public Service Commission.
PSRRC	Public Service Review and Reorganization Commission.
HR	Human Resources.
HRD	Human Resource Development.
HRM	Human Resource Management.
IGG	Inspector General of Government.
NRM	National Resistance Movement.
MPs	Members of Parliament.
UN	United Nations.

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ABSTRACT

In most countries where decentralization has been tried, it is seen as a way of improving the efficiency of planning, management and service delivery in the public sector. The potential benefits of decentralization may be reduced or even disappear if effective systems of Human Resource Management (HRM) are not in place especially in the management of entry and stay of personnel in the Civil Service. This study explored the challenges of personnel recruitment in the local government Civil Service under the decentralization programme in Uganda.

The objectives of the study were to; establish whether local governments understood the objectives and principles of the decentralization policy; to determine and explain the impact of personnel decentralization on recruitment and HRM in local governments and to establish whether members of the District Service Commission (DSC) and the Executives understand and uphold the principle of merit in personnel recruitment.

The study employed a descriptive study design using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data analysis focused on answering the following questions; how can local governments create and sustain a national, multi-ethnic, Civil Service based on merit under the decentralization system in Uganda?

The study revealed that: people in the local governments now understand decentralization as a concept and its objectives contrary to what many studies have shown namely that employees in local governments do not know what the concept means. However, it was established that the principle of merit in personnel recruitment is not clearly understood and upheld. As such recruitment is based on the 'sons and daughters of the soil' as many people think that personnel decentralization is all about indigenous recruitment.

The study concluded that many challenges still stand in the process of recruiting human resources in a manner that is not biased towards tribal and sectarian tendencies. As such, the impact of personnel decentralization on recruitment and HRM in local governments remains ambiguous to many people. The government seems to have played a passive role in educating people about the concept of personnel decentralization. Therefore, sensitization needs to be promoted at all levels concerning the national purpose of personnel decentralization in particular and decentralization programme as a whole.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In contemporary times, decentralization is a topical issue the world over. Although it is a current area of concern, decentralization is of ancient vintage. Decentralization as a way of human organization has pre-occupied society from the ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, to the present times. There is hardly any part of the world that has not witnessed one form of decentralization or the other. In the cold war, decentralization had certain ideological connotations: it was assumed that centralized systems which were commonly found in developing countries, Eastern Europe, and then the Soviet Union were inefficient (Regan, 1995).

Inefficiency here is being viewed from the free market perspective. It was argued that the state control over the economy resulted in inefficiency and therefore a need to divest the government from decision-making. The governments in developing countries were involved in too many political and economic crises to perform its duties efficiently. This resulted in the deterioration of most services. Some of the factors that led to the breakdown of the state system is over concentration of power and functions, and hence the need to decentralize.

The post-independence centralizing trend in Africa can be explained in terms of a range of factors mainly connected with the role of the state in the post-colonial societies. The 1960s were marked by a vision of the developmental role of the state, (which was shared by both liberal approaches to development) which saw the state as the main agent for modernization and approaches inspired from the left (which saw it as a vehicle to socialism). Equally important, the state as the major economic actor also became the subject of elite competition and accumulation. Later, there was greater support for decentralizing the state as a response to apparent incapacity of the centralized state to fulfill earlier expectations (Regan, 1995).

In response, governments in developing countries have in the past three decades attempted to implement a variety of decentralization policies. Some have been comprehensive in scope, designed to transfer development planning and management responsibilities to local units of governments. Others have been more narrowly conceived; they simply de-concentrated or re-allocated administrative tasks among units of central government (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). Others still got renewed interest in decentralization as a response to the fiscal crisis of the

state. Many governments have lost legitimacy and with Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) forced upon them by external donors, now have much reduced state resources and limited sources of patronage. They had to find new ways of legitimizing their rule and of mobilizing public support.

According to Dillinger (1992), the motivations for decentralizing planning and management in the south have also been varied. He observes that in some, the desire of the national elite for greater political legitimacy spawned attempts of decentralization, while in others the policies were enacted in response to pressures for greater participation in decision-making by ethnic, regional, religious or tribal groups.

In most countries where it was tried, decentralization was seen as a way of improving the efficiency of planning and management within the central bureaucracy and was often embarked upon in reaction to the slowness with which central ministries responded to pressing social and economic problems (Cf. Lubanga, 1995; Dillinger, 1992). Of the 75 developing and transitional countries with populations greater than 5 million, all but 12 claim to have embarked on some form of transfer of political power to local units of government. The form and extent of decentralization varies. In parts of Africa, national governments are creating local political entities in territories that were formally solely under the administration units of central government. Local units of government have been transformed into separate political entities, with leadership chosen by local election rather than by appointment through the party structure. In Latin America, decentralization has meant a shift from centrally appointed Mayors to Mayors chosen by election (World Bank, 1994).

But the objectives of decentralization as it is observed in practice, appear only tangentially related to administrative reforms. In a few countries, decentralization may have been seen as a convenient way for national leaders to rid themselves of responsibility for regional and local development problems by transferring them to local units of government or to private organizations (ibid).

Quoting Davey's references to Africa, Hall characterized decentralization as an attempt by bankrupt central governments to create new target for the politically dissatisfied. In the former

Eastern Block and in Africa too, decentralization has been attributed to the conspicuous economic failure of the centralized state (Hall, 1993).

In the case of Uganda, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government introduced decentralization in 1986 through the ten-point programme to promote good governance and democratic accountability. Point number one provided for the establishment of popular democracy via the grassroots institutions dubbed Local Councils. From the outset, the government recognized the fact that good local governance entails creating conditions that would bring about economic vibrancy, social freedom, social justice and political capacity. The government believed that democratization and decentralization would promote local governance (Museveni 1993). Although Uganda government claims to have thought of starting on the decentralization policy without any external influence, one could not lose sight of the fact that during the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a general realization that the centralization strategy adopted by most Third World countries was failing and most countries had to accept SAPs that were being recommended by the developed countries in order to get financial assistance. Uganda was one of the countries that accepted the austerity measures.

It has to be stated that, the modern state of Uganda was a colonial creation. Before the establishment and consolidation of effective colonial administration, each nationality had its own system of local government ranging from the monarchical centralized system of kingdom like that of Buganda, which was based on hierarchical chiefs, to the highly decentralized “Republican” organizations in the non-kingdom areas of the north-east and the south-west. In 1919, the colonial administration attempted to set up local administrations when the African Authority Ordinance was passed providing for the powers and duties of African chiefs and for the enforcement of African authority (Lubanga, 1995). In Buganda, chiefs derived their power from the Kabaka and owed allegiance to him and held office at his pleasure. In non-kingdom areas, the chiefs owed their creation, appointment and allegiance to the District Commissioners who in turn, were responsible to the center. Under the colonial regimes, the local government system was as follows: Local governments collected their own revenue, employed some staff and carried out a small range of functions. They were under considerable power of tutelage of the central government, through the District Commissioners.

The District Commissioners headed a parallel central government field administration, supervised and coordinated district officers responsible for the delivery of services, (for example, works and agriculture) and was answerable to their Permanent Secretary at the center. This generated communication and budget links with the technical Department's national or provincial/regional headquarters. There was a marked absence of effective horizontal communication and harmonization at district level.

Local governments were assigned functions mainly in the area of service provision and public order, not development (Lubanga, 1995). This fact is also pointed out by Mamadou Dia, (1996:42) who notes that where local governments were set up, emphasis was more on extracting compliance and resources to meet the needs of the colonizing countries than on providing development oriented services.

Uganda gained independence under a Constitution that provided for a comparatively strong local government, the Constitution devolved significant powers to local authorities, granted them adequate control over their staff under the separate personnel system and had created a meaningful financial resource arrangement that included provisions for substantial locally generated revenues, block and equalization grants. The local authorities' loan fund was well capitalized and served satisfactorily as a source of development funds for capital development projects of local authorities (Museveni, 1993).

It was during the 1962-66 period that serious efforts at local capacity building were made (Ibid). Local governments rendered services to the relative satisfaction of their constituencies: feeder roads and community roads were well maintained, primary schools, including rural ones, were able to provide competitive education which enabled many students from the rural areas to go to secondary schools. Local governments offered scholarships and ran praiseworthy rural health services. The spirit of "local ownership" of the development process was pervasive and manifest (Mamadou Dia, 1996).

The political and social gains in local self governance were reversed by the 1967 Republican Constitution under Article 81 sub-section (d) which provided that:

Parliament may make provision for the administration of the Districts and ... empowering a minister to undertake or otherwise secure the performance of any duties, functions and to suspend, remove or replace any officer thereof.

This negative period was reinforced by the Local Administrative Act 1967, which created conditions for the local Authorities to debilitate. According to the Act, all the employees in the local government were appointed by the central government under the directive of the President (Nsibambi, 1998). This arrangement resulted in delayed appointment, degeneration of services, loss of accountability and popular participation in the development process. Local governments were thus enfeebled (Lubanga, 1996). District councils or local governments in general became mere agents of the central government and even changed name from 'Local Government' to Local Administration, which reflected scrapping of substantial powers from them.

The centralized government administration had unlimited power with little left to the local government. The Minister of Local Government had to approve the budget of the local government councils, and approve and revoke councils' by-laws. Immediate accountability for transferred resources was to the Minister of Local Government and not to the local people. The Minister had the power to terminate the mandate of the councilors and to dissolve the local government councils.

The powers to appoint persons to hold or act in any office in the Public Service of Uganda, or a District service, including the powers to confirm appointments, to exercise disciplinary control, and to remove such persons from office were vested in the President (clause (1) Article 104, Constitution of Uganda, 1967). There was a mixture of an integrated and a unified personnel system whereby local governments were empowered to recruit their staff through the District Service and Urban Services committees up to salary scale U6. Officers above this scale (U5 to U2) and those of the central government were the responsibilities of the Public Service Commission (clause (2) Article 104, Constitution of Uganda). Appointment of officers in UI was the responsibility of the President on the advice of the Public Service Commission. Those who were centrally recruited owed their allegiance to their parent ministries and were subject to discipline, by the concerned ministries (MoLG, 1994).

In practice, the pattern of staffing at the district level was confusing because of the proliferation of different authorities responsible for different aspects of district staffing. This variation in the staffing pattern militated against building an integrated team of workers at the district level thus the personnel system created dual loyalties among seconded officers who lacked commitment to the district, as one knew she/he would be re-assigned at any time.

When the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power in 1986, it found a highly centralized government system, which was inefficient in the utilization of resources and ineffective in the delivery of civil services to the local population. The Uganda Civil Service that was known as ‘the best in Africa South of the Sahara’ had been ruined by two decades of economic decline, social degeneration and political turmoil (Langseth and Mugaju, 1996).

Therefore, in its post-conflict reconstruction efforts, the NRM government evolved a comprehensive programme of constitutional and decentralization reforms to rebuild the shattered economy, social system and prepare the country for democratic governance. It launched the decentralization policy in a presidential policy statement on 2nd October 1992, and in 1995 a new constitution was promulgated which provided for the sovereignty of the people, devolution of power to the popularly elected local government and for basic freedoms and liberties. The decentralization policy was further entrenched in the Local Governments Act (LGA) 1997.

With the introduction of the decentralization policy, powers over personnel were devolved to the local governments. Legal Notice No. 1 of 1994 (Uganda 1994) and section 56 of the Local Governments Act 1997, introduced a separate personnel system where local governments became the ultimate employer, with powers to hire and fire their employees. The Constitution further decentralized the HRM function to local governments. The LGA 1997 empowered the local governments to establish their own staffing structures. The powers to appoint, discipline and promote staff are exclusively vested in the District Service Commissions (DSCs). There is one DSC in every district that has district-wide mandate to recruit, confirm, promote, discipline and fire employees of all local governments located therein.

Section 59, of the LGA 1997, for purposes of justice, fairness and detached impartiality, requires the DSC to adhere to established rules and protection of individual officers against

arbitrariness, nepotism, sectarianism and other malpractices on the part of supervisors who may question the officer's welfare or future.

It will be argued that much as decentralization is seen as a way of bringing about efficiency and effectiveness in the running of public organizations, it can at times result into inefficiency and ineffectiveness because the full import of its repercussions on the existing systems is less known and little understood. Recruitment and management of human resources in local government is a case in point. It is against this background that the research was cast.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The decentralization reform has been under implementation for over ten years now and has registered significant progress towards realization of its multiple objectives. However, the potential benefits of decentralization may be reduced or even disappear if effective systems of HRM and particularly recruitment are not in place. A human resource trend has been observed that seems to undermine the objectives of decentralization and which threatens national unity.

Although the reform was never meant to be simply a policy decision to shift responsibility for development to local authorities, but rather a policy aimed at sharing of power and improving local democracy, whilst improving effectiveness and efficiency in the use of scarce public resources, some people seem to adhere to a misconception that decentralization is about creating fully independent autonomous units, as 'states within a state' an attitude reinforced by the observed trend to employ within local governments 'sons and daughters of the soil'. If this continues, there will be a self-sustaining tendency for broad ethnic cleavage to dominate local Public Service in each region. This will erode the national character of the Civil Service and undermine the principles of decentralization and national unity.

Clearly, there are several issues and problems that decentralization presents which cannot be addressed in a single research plan. This study, however, considered the challenges of personnel recruitment under the decentralization policy in local governments. It sought to establish ways in which local governments can create and sustain a Civil Service recruitment system based on merit and with a national/multi-ethnic character.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

In general terms, the inquiry had the aim of giving an assessment of the challenges of personnel recruitment in the local government Civil Service under the decentralization policy in Uganda.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

In specific terms, the study was designed to: -

- i. Establish whether local governments understand the objectives and principles of the decentralization policy.
- ii. Determine and explain the impact of personnel decentralization on recruitment in local governments.
- iii. Establish whether members of the DSC and the Executives understand and uphold the principle of merit in personnel recruitment.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study does not claim to be exhaustive. It was limited to an inquiry into the challenges of personnel recruitment in the local government under the decentralization system, using Gulu District Local Government as a case study. Gulu district was chosen because of the claim that its representative in its recruitment of personnel in the Civil Service. The study hoped to draw lessons from the Gulu experience. The study was confined to the objectives spelt out. The period studied was from 1997-2008, bearing in mind, the period when personnel responsibilities was devolved to the local governments.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will benefit the Ministry of Local Government, which is responsible for the implementation of the policy in Uganda. They will be able to better identify the constraints in the recruitment system in local governments.

Secondly, the findings will be useful to the Ministry of Public Service, which is responsible for policy formulation regarding HRM in the public sector. They would be able to see more clearly where policy changes need to be effected in order to make the system more effective.

The findings will also benefit the various local governments who are the key players in the successful implementation of the policy. It will bring to their understanding as to why they are failing to utilize the human resources availed to them more effectively.

The findings will also be useful to all other local governments that may want to share Gulu District Local Government's experience or carry out studies in their own districts.

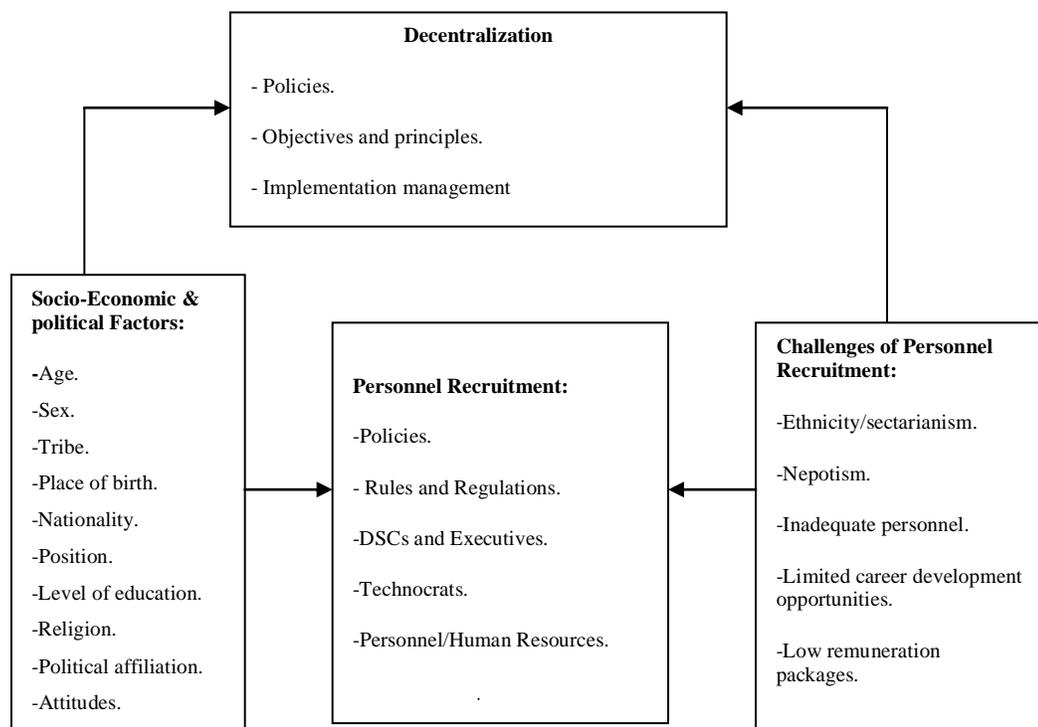
Finally, the findings will contribute to the scholarly discussions of the topic in the specific context of Uganda.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The policy of decentralization has had salutary impacts in its implementation in Uganda, among them includes, the successful devolution of human resources responsibilities (recruit, retain, promote, discipline and dismiss) to local governments in what is known as personnel decentralization. These responsibilities are vested in the DSCs mandated by the Constitution of Uganda 1995 and the LGA 1997. Decentralization of personnel is aimed at improving service delivery; improve democratic accountability and enhancing good governance from a management accountability point of view. However, this has undergone a lot of challenges including, among others, the low remuneration packages, inadequate qualified personnel, limited career advancement opportunities, limited funding base, and perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing personnel decentralization today is the creation and sustenance of a national/multi-ethnic local government Civil Service system. This challenge indicates that; local governments have failed to adhere to rules and regulations regarding HRM, members of the DSCs and Executives have lost their integrity and credibility, local governments do not understand and uphold the principle of merit so vital in public administration, and perhaps that, local governments have not fully understood and internalized the objectives and principles of decentralization. Recruitment of personnel along ethnic lines impacts negatively on service delivery, good governance, nationalism and integration. What becomes clear from this analysis is the need for a systematic approach to decentralization. The right adjustments in existing HRM

systems needs to be made, so that, a successful programme of decentralization in local governments can be achieved. Figure 1 below shows the relationship between the different variables that affect personnel recruitment in local governments under the decentralization system in Uganda.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher

1.7 Definition of Key Concepts

1.7.1 Decentralization

Decentralization means different things to different people. But broadly, decentralization has been defined as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and raising of and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of central government ministries or agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous

public authorities or corporations; area-wide, regional or functional authorities or non-governmental private or voluntary organization (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). Decentralization takes many forms; De-concentration, devolution, delegation. For purposes of this study, the devolution form shall be used. Under this arrangement, the central government transfers to the local governments decision-making authority, select public sector development activities and the power/right to secure resources or make expenditure decisions.

In Uganda there are two major focal points at the local level in the decentralization program, namely; the district councils and the sub-county councils (LC III). In urban areas the main players are municipal councils, which are equivalent of district and sub-county councils. They have been declared as body corporate. This means they can sue and be sued.

1.7.2 Separate Personnel System

According to Mawhood (1983), a separate personnel system is a system in which every local authority acts as a completely autonomous employer. This system is the commonest throughout the world. It is a natural response to a legal decentralization of powers. Under this system, the employees' loyalty is single to the authority of the employer but a full career is open to the employee to decide whether to stay in one place or move elsewhere on transfer. Problems arise where local authorities are too poor to pay the staff they need or too small to offer them adequate experience in the profession or where nepotism prevails in making appointments and promotions. The separate personnel system demands considerable maturity in local units.

In the Ugandan context, a separate personnel system is defined as a system where local authorities employ their own staff directly (MoLG, Uganda, 1993).

1.7.3 Personnel Decentralization

This refers to the devolution of the responsibilities of human resources by central government to local governments. This includes the power to hire and fire their employees. Here the process and initiative with regard to recruitment, promotion and discipline becomes the exclusive domain of the local government (Lubanga, 1998: 69).

1.7.4 Human Resource Management

The term HRM has come to be used with increasing regularity as a description of the management of employees (Beardwell and Holden 1998; Randell et.al 1992). It is the same definition that MoLG has adopted.

1.7.5 Local Government

A local government is a political sub-division of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the power to impose taxes or exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected (Alderfer, 1964:178).

1.7.6 Civil Service

This refers to all persons employed by a public authority, institution or body with legal personality of its own (Ozgediz, 1983:2).

1.7.7 Tribalism

This refers to the behaviour and attitude that stems from strong loyalty to one's own tribe or social group (Pearsall, 1998).

1.7.8 National

This refers to something affecting or involving a nation as a whole especially as distinguished from subordinate areas (Pearsall, 1998).

1.7.9 Multi-Ethnic

This refers to something composed of or involving several ethnic groups (Kindersley, 1998).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews thematically some of the relevant literature related to the study including both published and unpublished materials. This serves three purposes. First, it clarifies the topic under inquiry and the methodologies used. Second, it provides conceptual framework within which the study was carried out. Third, it reviews the different decentralization experiences indicating the difficulties and failures in implementing the policies. The literature reviewed helps in assessing the link between decentralization and good HRM systems especially recruitment/selection of personnel in local governments.

The review is done under the following main sections:-

- i) Civil Service System in Uganda.
- ii) Decentralization.
- iii) Personnel Decentralization.
- iv) Public Sector Staffing and Management.
- v) Management of Human Resources in the Civil Service.

2.2 Uganda's Civil Service System

An understanding of the Civil Service system in Uganda will help us to know its character, its mandate and contributions toward good governance, democratic accountability and national unity. The centrality of the Civil Service in the management of modern societies cannot be over-emphasized. In modern states, including Uganda, the primary function of the Civil Service is to analyze, recommend, implement and evaluate public policy. The success of any government depends on the professionalism, dedication, effectiveness and capacity of its Civil Services to deliver services to the public promptly and efficiently, and to ensure good governance that, in turn, creates an enabling environment for development and modernization (Langseth and Mugaju, 1996).

In 1962, independent Uganda inherited the Westminster model of government not only in the realm of politics but also in the Civil Service. In this model, the Civil Service was supposed to be

politically neutral in competitive party politics. The task of the Civil Service was to provide continuity and to serve any democratically elected government.

The Westminster model was based on the principle of meritocracy or the career of the open talent. Civil servants were recruited by open competition regardless of class, ethnicity, race, sex or religion. Promotion was based on merit and performance, which was determined through confidential annual reports on all civil servants. Honesty, integrity, patriotism, incorruptibility and dedication to duty were the underlying pillars of the Westminster Civil Service model (Langseth And Mugaju, 1996).

However, soon after independence both in the Civil Service as in politics, the principles and practices of the Westminster model were rapidly eroded. The principles of neutrality, integrity and meritocracy were gradually sacrificed at the 'alter' of political convenience and ethnicity. Between 1962 and 1966 the Obote 1 regime pursued the policy of Africanization (the occupation of public offices by Africans in replacement of foreigners who were mainly British and Asian expatriates) without regard for performance, integrity, effectiveness and good governance. The rationale for Africanization was that it was essential to reduce Uganda's dependence on British expatriates whose loyalty was in doubt and whose condescension and arrogance were sources of national humiliation. Besides, national pride dictated that Africans should be in-charge of their destiny in all institutions of government including the Civil Service. This policy, however, led to inefficiency and ineffectiveness, as there was shortage of skilled and experienced personnel in the Civil Service (Langseth and Mugaju: 1996).

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the reconstruction and reform of the Civil Service in Uganda. The NRM regime introduced the decentralization process, which decentralized personnel matters to local governments, with the DSCs being mandated to hire and fire their staff by the 1995 Constitution Article 200(1) and LGA (1997) section 56. The Public Service Commission (PSC) was mandated under Article 165 (1) of the Constitution to guide, co-ordinate and develop the DSCs in carrying out their functions (MoPS, 2001).

Whereas the Civil Service experienced tremendous changes in the local government setting in terms of the delivery of services, the reform also created a situation in which the Civil Service was 'ethnicized' by the individual local governments, a situation similar to Africanisation, but

this time what I may call ‘Districtization’ where districts only recruit persons originating from the recruiting districts. This practice has dominated the recruitment process in the local government Civil Service thereby undermining the intentions of decentralization and putting nationalism at stake. Tukahebwa (1998:20) noted that the problem of ‘tribalising’ staff through district selective recruitment cuts across all districts. Therefore, there is need to pay particular attention to the recruitment process and procedure in local governments, to ensure that, the principle of merit is adhered to, and that local governments have a national/multi-ethnic character. By so doing, the country will rid itself of the problems experienced between 1962-1966 when the Obote 1 regime embarked on the Africanisation of the Civil Service.

2.3 Decentralization: Nature and Definition

Decentralization is a term that means different things to different people depending on their interests and area of focus (Nsibambi, 1998). Although the term decentralization is as ambiguous and confusing as it is elusive and difficult, it has rich conceptual and empirical meaning because it can signify static and dynamic process as well as refer to pure ideal type and to moderate incremental change in governmental system. Decentralization can be defined both in territorial and functional terms (Olum, 2004:1).

Rondimelli (1981:137) defines territorial decentralization as, the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and the raising of and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of central government ministries or agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities or non-governmental private or voluntary organization”. Hence, based on this definition, decentralization is about the transfer of authority on a geographical basis whether by deconcentration of administrative authority to field units of the same department or level of government or by the political devolution of authority to the local government units or special statutory bodies.

Functionally, decentralization is the transfer of authority from central to peripheral organizations of the same level, for example, from a government department to a parastatal agency or quango” (Conyers, 1986:88).

Decentralized functions include not only permissive functions (functions which the local units may do but are not obliged to do and may carry out in a manner to be determined by themselves), but also those obligatory functions in the execution of which the representative organs may exercise a significant degree of discretion.

Decentralization is an inclusive term, which may be interpreted narrowly or broadly. In its narrow, traditional sense it usually comprises deconcentration and devolution, or field administration and local government. In its wider, emerging sense it is extended to include parastatal agencies, privatization and community management, including the role of subordinate structures of local government, Non Government Organizations (NGOs) and traditional authorities (Pastuer, 1996).

Besides the above-mentioned categories of decentralization, a further analytical refinement can be made between the political, fiscal and institutional dimensions of decentralization by not giving sufficient attention to other elements of decentralization. For example, if political power is devolved and fiscal resources to local institutions are not, failure is inevitable.

Political decentralization is mainly concerned with increasing public participation through citizens' active engagement in public institutions. If the overriding political environment is not conducive to reform, decentralization is unlikely to be on a government's agenda. In Uganda and Ghana, political decentralization was associated with the devolution of specified power and responsibilities from central government to lower level political entities.

Much of the present concern with local government reform worldwide has to do with its potential to increase the effectiveness of resource allocation, where spending decisions are based on clear understanding of local needs and performance is ultimately reflected in the local electoral process. This is distinct from those spending decisions that originate from within the administration, where there is often a good deal less public accountability in relation to expenditure. Where a large proportion of expenditure is financed from local taxes and charges, there is likely to be a stronger concern for economy and efficiency to reduce the overall burden on the taxpayer as a voter. However, this is rarely the case in developing countries where most local governments are heavily dependent on grants. In order to realize the potential benefits arising from efficient local government, it is important that research goes beyond the

conventional analysis of political structures and administrative functions to include the analysis of operating system and procedures upon which the whole system depends.

Collins (1997), summarizes all this by saying that as numerous countries around the world are beginning to experiment with new ways of improving democratic decision-making at the grassroots, local government is increasingly being seen as means to institutionalize a number of the new participatory approaches to the planning and management of local development. It is becoming clear, however, that structural reforms designed to enhance the role of local government will not, in itself, result in improved democratic decision-making but will most often, have to be accompanied by improvements in operational systems and management procedures if local government is going to provide an effective Public Service. To understand this process requires moving beyond a general discussion of the virtues of decentralization and forms of devolution to a more specific analysis of the strengths of different operating systems. Only in this way will it be possible to identify those improvements that might be capable of transforming local governments from a state of near-permanent inefficiency, ineffectiveness and mismanagement. Unless some of these fundamental weaknesses can be overcome it is unlikely that decentralization will succeed (Collins, 1997).

This understanding is all the more urgent as countries as diverse as India and Nigeria begin to experiment with decentralization. In both countries as indeed elsewhere, significant advances towards democratic decentralization have often in the past been thwarted by subsequent political change.

Where devolution is not accompanied by sufficient checks and balances designed to safeguard public interest, even if resources are plentiful and functions intensive, overall performance is likely to be severely compromised as shown in the case of local government reform in Bangladesh. Elsewhere, where decentralized functions are limited and authority restricted as in Cote d'Ivoire, for example, or where the lack of functional autonomy is combined with limited resources, as in Ghana, decentralization will obviously have limited impact on the development process (Manor and Crook, 1994).

Improved economic and managerial efficiency or effectiveness is most often advanced as the primary justification for decentralization. Within the decentralization literature, decentralization

issues are often viewed in instrumental rather than technical terms. From that perspective the objective of decentralization is increased efficiency and effectiveness of economic and social development programs.

Silverman, (1992) noted that there is considerable empirical evidence that decentralization leads to a smaller public sector that is at the same time more responsive to local variations in preference and costs. Decentralization also leads to innovations in service delivery and revenue generation as many local governments struggle with solving the problems that they face. These processes lead simultaneously to a citizenry that is happier with its government and to a release of public resources to the private sector, which can then help put the country on a more rapid development trajectory.

While there has been a certain amount of research on the broad structure and functions of decentralization in different countries, much less research has been conducted on the internal systems and procedures that can contribute to strengthening local governments in an operational sense.

It has been argued that decentralization, much as it is seen as a way of bringing efficiency and effectiveness in the running of public organizations, can sometimes result into inefficiency and ineffectiveness if accompanying internal systems are not thought through carefully. The decentralization now occurring in Uganda just as elsewhere, whatever the underlying cause, is clearly not a carefully designed sequence of reforms aimed at improving the efficiency of public service delivery (Dillinger, 1992). It appears to be a reluctant and disorderly series of concessions by central government attempting to maintain political stability without fully knowing its effects on the various existing systems, such as the HRM systems and nationalism at large.

2.3.1 Decentralization in Uganda

After Uganda attained independence in October 1962, the post independence governments experienced serious difficulties in delivering social services to the citizenry. These difficulties arose because the functions of central government had become increasingly inefficient, ineffective and inflexible. This crisis stemmed from the 1967 Republican Constitution, which was introduced after the abrogation of the 1962 independence Constitution that had devolved

considerable powers to local authorities and granted them sufficient revenues to deliver social service (Olum 2004:1).

In 1986, when the NRM captured state power, it found a highly centralized administrative structure that stifled local initiatives, misappropriated revenues raised from the local population, promoted inefficiency in utilization of resources and ineffectiveness in the delivery of social services (Olum 2004:2). To stem out these vices the NRM government initiated a process of decentralization in local governance, which was launched in a Presidential Policy Statement on 2 October 1992. Decentralization was aimed at promoting and sustaining popular democratic participation in government through a system of elected local councils (LCs). These LCs also aimed at revamping the socio-economic conditions of the people and the country at large.

The 1995 Constitution of Uganda, together with the LGA (1997), consolidated, streamlined and gave effect to the decentralization policy through the devolution of functions, power and services. It also provided for decentralization at all levels of local government, in order to ensure good governance and democratic participation (MoPS, 2003).

The main objectives of the decentralization program in Uganda are to build a more democratic government that is responsive and accountable to the public, to promote capacity building at the local level, and to introduce local choice into the delivery of Civil Service, fostering a sense of local ownership. The administrative changes resulting from decentralization aim to bring decision-making closer to the population and permit better communication between local leaders and the population to which they are responsible. This was thought as capable of creating situations conducive to local decision-making founded on local options and circumstances.

As noted by Lubanga and Villadsen (1996:15), in their research on decentralization in Uganda, despite the progress of decentralization so far, the transition from central government to district management has not been easy. New structures and operating practices are being introduced in an environment where physical facilities are inadequate and the existing skills base is weak.

In summary, the policy of decentralization in Uganda sought to devolve political and administrative power to democratically elected local councils in order to achieve the following objectives:-

- (i) Political development.
 - Democratize government at local levels,
 - Empower people and promote local participation in decision-making,
 - Create civil society,
 - Make governmental operations more responsive,
 - Promote political accountability.
- (ii) Administrative/management efficiency.
 - Create capacity or capacity building,
 - Rationalize and re-organize the local Civil Services,
 - Enhance administrative and technical accountability.

2.3.2 Implementation Problems

With the Local Government Bill 1993, a new species of problems set in. On the HRM platform, the civil servants generally disliked the separate personnel system. They were worried that the local political leaders would harass them and that their decisions might be based on political whims and other irrational considerations.

Lubanga and Villadsen (1996) further noted that managing the transition from an integrated personnel system to separate personnel systems became a daunting task. Among other things, it called for a campaign that would bring about a change of attitudes. A number of activities had to be undertaken which included sensitization training for attitudinal change, the establishment of DSCs, the creation of District based systems and the due process that would facilitate orderly management of the staff function and training of local government personnel to improve their management and technical competence to bridge performance or knowledge gaps.

Another cluster of problems was institutional and organizational re-designing. Institutional and organizational reviews were undertaken for functional, structural, systematic and rationalization of local governments. Under this cluster of problems one had to contend with central/national politicians and senior civil servants who accepted decentralized institutions but wished to retain corporatist control. They wanted to limit the latitude of freedom and authority of councils by maintaining a mentor-pupil relationship.

Within the different local government settings, some people seem to adhere to the misconception that decentralization is aimed at creating fully independent autonomous unit as states within a state. An attitude that has seen many local governments misuse powers devolved to them, especially that of the DSCs, there is a tendency for most LGs to employ within their LGs only persons hailing from that district. This undermines the credibility of the DSCs indicating that they have failed to uphold the principle of merit, so vital in public administration and puts nationalism at stake.

The research sought to show that decentralization per se is not a panacea, and unless some demanding requirements in the management of areas like human resources are met performance gains will not materialize.

2.4 Personnel Decentralization

One of the major achievements of decentralization so far is the devolution of Civil Service matters (personnel responsibility) to the district councils in what is known as *Personnel Decentralization*. Personnel decentralization is essentially the creation of a separate personnel system for each district. This simply means that each district recruits, promotes, remunerates, disciplines and fires its own staff. Its aim is to strengthen the capacity of local governments to provide functions to enable local governments become better implementers of local development policies and plans (MoLG, 1994). These functions are vested in the DSCs, which are responsible to the district councils.

Personnel decentralization has its origin from the liberal school of political thought; it is a consequence of the principle of sovereignty of the people. Tocqueville, a liberal philosopher, proposed that a township, just like an individual, is independent in all that concerns itself alone and is subordinate to the state in those matters that are shared in common with other township (Lubanga, 1998:70). Hence, in Uganda, personnel responsibilities were devolved to local governments by the 1995 Constitution and LGA 1997, the local governments currently account for more than 75% of the employees in the public sector.

2.4.1 Types of Personnel Decentralization

Personnel decentralization is divided into three classic typologies, namely; the separate, hybrid and unified personnel system (Lubanga, 1998).

In the separate personnel system, local governments become the ultimate employer. They have power to hire and fire their employees. The process and initiative with regard to recruitment, promotion and discipline becomes the exclusive domain of each local government. They therefore, bear the responsibility to establish or abolish offices in their local public services (Lubanga, 1998).

Alderfer (1964) adds that under such an arrangement conditions of employment might be uniform between local units but the opportunity for transfer would be unlikely and the attraction for competent trained personnel would be slight.

In a unified personnel system, the local government service runs parallel to that of the central government. Local government officers are appointed, promoted and disciplined by a national Public Service Commission or District Service Commission. Local governments remain the employers but staff is organized on a national basis under one local government Service Commission or Board (Lubanga, 1998).

The hybrid system contrasts with the two systems (separate and unified system). It is an integrated personnel system under which officers belong to the central government cadres but serve local governments on secondment or are posted more or less like field administration officials. Because many developing countries do not operate pure systems, they adopt a hybrid system (Lubanga, 1998).

2.4.2 Rationale for Personnel Decentralization

Personnel decentralization is based on the argument that since the staffs are only servants of a local government created to meet the local requirement of development and governance they should be fully answerable and responsible to their constituents through the elected local leadership.

Personnel decentralization is said to enhance good government from a management accountability point of view as it overcomes some of the omissions and commissions engendered by centralized system. It has been observed that a leading cause of widespread development failure in Africa is the absence of democratic accountability. This deficiency has allowed service providers to put their needs and those of their superiors consistently before those of consumers and made it impossible for consumers to voice their dissatisfactions (Lubanga, 1998).

The World Bank (1994) has also observed that difficulties in service delivery in developing countries can be traced in part to system-wide problems rather than problems within the organizations alone. One of the problems is the centralization of the public sector. It argues that centralized structures are inherently incapable of being responsive to local needs because rarely do incentives exist for central government ministries to perceive citizens as their clientele.

Personnel decentralization enhances the responsiveness of service providers and to that extent empowers the client population. It is argued that in centralized systems such as those that existed in Uganda between 1966 and 1986, emphasis on accountability has been based on the principle-agent relationship where the effort is to control the agent. This has resulted in the government asking for increased productivity without really looking after the basic requirements of those from whom work is expected. It also engendered a culture in central ministries whereby emphasis was on measurement of and accountability for input rather than output.

Under personnel decentralization, because of proximity of the employer and the employee, and given their mutual interest effective attachment is likely to develop and along with it reciprocal accountability i.e. improving performance and eliminating organizational failure by making employers accountable to workers, workers accountable to employers and agencies accountable to client/consumers and in the long-term shifting emphasis from inputs to outcomes and value-for-money.

Personnel decentralization supports good governance in so far as it leads to local capacity building to the growth of personal and institutional capacities and competencies and to local accountability. This is because it is often accompanied by a reduction in numbers of officers employed by the central government and an increase in local government employees.

The decentralization of the personnel function may also be explained as a reform measure based on the “benefit jurisdiction”. If under decentralization decision-making over services is assigned to the sub-national government that constitutes “benefit jurisdiction” it would follow that personnel delivering those services should be fully accountable to the leadership of that benefit jurisdiction. This approach would provide for efficiency and that in return would ensure effectiveness in service delivery.

Some scholars have also argued that if decentralization is conceived as a continuum, with deconcentration being minimal and devolution being maximal and assuming that it is most desirable for purposes of employment and good governance to let local governments have control over and responsibility for their decisions, then the separate personnel system would be the most appropriate form to promote good governance and provide an organic interface with civil society. That it also offers more opportunities to councils and civil society to monitor, evaluate, reward, censure and sanction local government officials.

It is against such argument that Uganda adopted a separate personnel system. Hitherto, personnel matters were handled by the center, the Legal Notice No of 1994 introduced a separate personnel system and the 1995 Constitution further decentralized the HRM function to local governments. The LGA (1997) also empowered local governments to establish their own staffing structures.

Whereas personnel decentralization was envisaged to enhance good governance from a management accountability point of view, in that, it would overcome some of the omissions and commissions engendered by the centralized system, separate personnel system adopted after decentralization tends to promote tribalism. There is a tendency to employ within local governments only persons from the recruiting districts. This is a serious problem that undermines the credibility of the DSCs. It indicates that they have failed to uphold the merit principle that is vital in public administration. With such a trend, nationalism and integration may be at stake.

2.4.3 Challenges of Personnel Decentralization in Uganda

Whilst recognizing that by-and-large personnel decentralization has had salutary effects on Uganda's democratization and good governance a number of problems remain challenging and require immediate attention. These include, among others, the district council remuneration packages that are not competitive. Secondly, and perhaps the most important issue, is the recruitment process that is marred by tribalism discouraging qualified personnel from applying for jobs in the recruiting local governments.

It has been observed that recruitment of staff by some DSCs is not always on merit (merit presupposes or implies that the choice of recruit is the outcome of an unbiased assessment of an individual's value as measured against stated requirements and not dependent on ethnicity, religion or relationships) and is greatly influenced by the ethnic origin (district) and political affiliation/patronage of the candidates (MoLG, 2004:8).

The report in the media in the case of the CAO in Kapchorwa district local government and appointment of the NAADs Coordinator in Luwero district local government serve as cases to illustrate the point (MoLG, 2004). Tukahebwa (1998:20) also noted that the problem of tribalising staff through district selective recruitment cuts across all districts. It has been among others reported in Kabale and Iganga districts (Kaka 1996:3, Musumba, 1996:9).

The MoLG (2004) also reported that some councilors are willing to condone misappropriation of resources by appointed staff originating from their local government on the (flawed) reasoning that those resources would still be invested in the district. This could be manifested in the fact that it is always the Inspector General of Government (IGG) that intervenes in cases of alleged corruption in local governments. It is rare that local government councils demand loudly for interdiction over corruption cases unless the targeted officer is of a different origin or allegedly in-subordinate.

Over the years job seekers have also learnt not to respond to advertisements that will (even though this is not explicitly stated anywhere) require their proper ethnic roots. The danger inherent in this practice is that it eventually leads to the creation of (small) tribal units (MoLG, 2004:8) or balkanization of the nation (Nsibambi, 1998:20), which goes against the intended

principles, and objectives of decentralization that sought to achieve a measure of stability and promotion of national unity through policy implementation.

Perhaps another major challenge is with regard to the policy that provides for the decentralization process, which is lacking in some aspects. For instance, within the LGA, the role of the MoLG is summarily described as ‘co-ordination’ and an advocate for local governments. Whilst the LGA describes the monitoring and inspection role for the line ministries, it does not define the relationship between MoLG and the line ministries. Neither does it indicate the role of the MoLG with regard to spearheading the process of decentralization. With regard to its regulatory role vis-à-vis local governments that do not adhere to rules and regulations, at present, the MoLG has such a regulatory role but only of last resort in case of takeover of the administration of a local government by the President under Article 202 of the Constitution (MoLG, 2004). Such loopholes leave the local governments at liberty to act according to their individual interests regardless of national implications.

Ideally, the MoLG needs to position itself as a crosscutting Ministry like MoFPED and the MoPS. Its main tasks and role would then be,

- Policy development and policy harmonization, spearheading decentralization, as a coherent programme across Ministries, whilst ensuring consistency in the approaches by the various sector ministries.
- Co-ordination of local government supervision, mentoring and inspection on the basis of set policies for service delivery and quality standards.
- Co-ordination of capacity building for local governments and set, in consultation with MoPS and sector ministries, policies for HRM and Human Resource Development (HRD) in local governments.
- Play regulatory role vis-à-vis local governments that do not adhere to rules and regulations.

Hence, for personnel decentralization to be efficacious there must be safeguards in appointments of staff, i.e. initial and promotional, to do away with subjective judgments in HRM such as discrimination, victimization and favoritism, to ensure a fair disciplinary process and action.

However, the extent to which this can be done is dependent upon the internal management (executive) structures of local governments, the integrity of members, the adherence to rules and regulations governing recruitment agency. All these conditions affect the level of impartiality of recruitment and the disciplinary process.

Therefore, the creation and sustenance of a merit-based recruitment system that encourages the emergence of local government bureaucracies with national (multi-ethnic) character still remains one of the greatest challenges in personnel decentralization in Uganda. It is against this background that the study was undertaken to investigate ways in which this problem can be overcome.

2.5 Public Sector Staffing and Management.

The public service in developing countries has been growing about four times as fast as in developed countries in recent years. This is partly in response to demands for improved services and partly because of the desire of some governments to improve tribal, ethnic or regional representation or to use public employment as means to combat unemployment. However, on a per capita basis developed countries still have more than twice the number of public servants than the developing countries (Ozgedi 1983).

It is generally acknowledged that public sector staffing is a fundamental issue at the macro-institutional level. Scholarly literature identifies the following as some of the main issues that affect staffing at the macro-level as well as local governments' impact on public expenditure, incentives and motivation. Addressing such issues in such a manner is even more complex under decentralization; significant changes in the public sector employment policies might result. Opportunities might be created for rationalization of such policies. However, without a conscious effort, the likelihood is that local governments will repeat the employment sins of central government by copying both staffing patterns and qualifications criteria. Among these are: formalistic and rigid employment policies, inefficient employment procedures; misallocation of staff by function and sector; inadequate financing; lack of autonomy on the one hand, yet lack of integration and coordination, on the other hand; and scarcity of skilled staff (Rondinelli et.al. 1984).

As early as 1962, these staffing problems were recognized. A UN Report of that year pointed out that a government may organize effectively for decentralization, mark out optimum areas for administration, allocate functions rationally between units at different levels and arrange for popular participation and representation in the programme; but the success of the programme will in the end depend largely on the availability of qualified staff for sustained work in small towns and rural areas, the ability of staff members to work effectively together and the administrative as well as technical support and supervision they receive. While discussing decentralization and development they pointed out the following as the major problems confronted by the developing countries: First, critical shortages in personnel who are technically competent; Secondly, difficulty in finding qualified personnel to work in the remoter areas because of the natural attractions of the work in the urban areas, higher salaries; and finally, differences in pay and allowances amongst employees.

They further note that low salaries may cause field as well as headquarter staff to look to additional employment or to bribes or other corrupt practices to solve their financial problems. Adequate salary, promptly paid, will reduce the propensity to accept gifts or fees. Similarly, other nationwide measures for improvement of the quality of personnel such as the creation of a career service, with recruitment and promotion on the basis of merit, a common classification and common pay scale for all Departments at central and local levels, in-service training, a pension scheme, legal protection against political interference, with increased tenure of office of civil servants and the prohibition of their participation in political activity – will have beneficial effects throughout a country.

Recent scholarly studies have acknowledged these problems too. For example, Prud'homme (1995) notes that decentralization transfers power not only from central to local governments, but also from central to local bureaucracies. Central bureaucracies are likely to attract more qualified people, not so much because they offer higher salaries but because they offer better careers, with a greater diversity of tasks, more possibilities of promotion, less political intervention and a longer view of issues.

The act of devolving the employment function to local jurisdictions does not ensure more rational employment policies nor improve the capacity to implement such policies significantly. Increased reliance on local governments to undertake an expanding array of governmental

functions is likely to strain local government capacities; not least the capacity to establish rational employment policies (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1984).

It has been established that personnel is typically the largest single item of local government expenditure, and the ability of local government to recruit, retain and motivate staff is critical to its ability to provide municipal services efficiently. In many developing countries, control over local personnel management decisions rests with central government. Central governments often control the number of positions local governments are allowed to maintain at each grade, the starting salaries and pay differentials between grades. In Turkey, for example, the staff list of each municipality is fixed by the government along with the corresponding salary scale. Any amendments to the staff list have to be approved by central government. In some countries, central governments are directly involved in individual recruitment and promotion decisions. In Ghana, for example, local government staffs are directly recruited, promoted, and paid by sectoral ministries of central government. In Indonesia, all full time staffing positions are subject to central government recruitment and promotions and are paid directly by central government (Dillinger, 1994:18).

Again and again, different authors have expressed fears of local governments falling into the traps of central governments. For example, setting up rigid structures, employment policies, and staffing patterns similar to those that failed central government. In Uganda, as already pointed out, the staffing function at the District level was devolved to the DSCs by the 1995 Constitution and the LGA of 1997. Through the District Structure Reviews of 1994, districts were left to determine their own staffing levels.

Many decentralization policies fail to improve either economic or administrative efficiencies. This failure is frequently attributed to the absence of managerial and technical capacity at the local government level. There is a danger, recognized by bureaucrats and the local population alike, that decentralization might transfer responsibilities to those without the capacity to carry them out and so result in the deterioration of government services. The perception of inadequate capacity at sub-national levels is often used to justify retaining managerial, administrative, and technical controls at central levels.

Dillinger (1994), however, argues that failures in urban service delivery are not merely the result of a lot of technical knowledge on the part of the local government staff, but also constraints and perverse incentives confronting local personnel and their political leadership, and that these, in turn, are often inadvertent result of problems in the relationship between central and local government.

2.5.1 Management of Human Resource in the Civil Service

HRM has become one of the most discussed approaches to the practice and analysis of the employment relationship in the contemporary times. It has become a pervasive and influential approach to the management of employment in a wide range of market economies yet it has generated a lot of debate.

The type of questions raised by the HRM debate indicates the extent to which it has disturbed many formally accepted concepts in the employment relationship. For some, it has become a model for action and application, for others it is no more than a map which indicates how the management of employees might be worked out in more and specific ways than HRM can adequately deal with (Beardwell, 1992).

Whatever the perspective taken on HRM, there is a cognate body of prescription policy and analysis, which is directed at the notion of HRM as a perspective that is central to the employment relationship. Whether HRM is driven by ideological, strategic, operational, market or other goals, its language, practice and adoption suggest that it is perhaps the most significant perspective on the employment relationship to emerge in the last forty years (Armstrong, 1996).

The quality of a company's personnel is frequently the single factor that determines whether the organization is going to be successful, whether it will realize a satisfactory return on its investment, and whether it will reach its basic objectives (Stanton, 1977; Armstrong, 1996).

Managing human resources is one of the key elements in the co-ordination and management of work organizations. The personnel function contributes to the creativity of added value by ensuring that people with the required competences and levels of motivation are available and help to create a culture and environment that stimulates quality performance. Whatever means are used to ensure the creation and delivery of services and goods in modern economies, the role

of individuals and groups as employees and the ability of management to effectively deploy such a resource is vital to the interests of both the employees and organization alike.

To a large extent this fundamental issue has been at the heart of a great deal of the analysis of how organizations are run and it is as important an issue facing organizations as those of markets, finance and strategy. For these reasons the question of how to manage employees has remained as a constant element in organization and managerial thought and prescription throughout this century.

In addition, decentralization and devolvement of responsibility are also seen as very much part of the HRM strategy as it facilitates communication, involvement and commitment of middle management and other employees deeper within the organization. The effectiveness of the organization thus rests on how the strategy and the structure of the organization are interrelated (Randell et. al. 1992). This is particularly so in the decentralized systems. A point well articulated by the Audit Commission for England and Wales (1988:4)

Local government is people business. Many of the worst problems faced by authorities today result from the absence of good people or on poor training or motivation of those people who remain. In part, at least, this is a self-inflicted wound. Some authorities have neglected personnel management and their responsibility to train and retain skilled workforce.

The management of human resource can be categorized into three major tasks, namely: the management of entry of personnel, the management of the stay of personnel and the management of the exit of the personnel.

2.5.2 Management of Entry into the District Service

The DSCs have been given the powers to appoint persons to hold or act in any office in the service of a District or Urban Council, including the power to confirm appointments, to exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices and to remove those persons from offices. This responsibility is derived from Article 55 and 56 of the Local Governments Act 1997.

Uganda's employment policy also gives Ugandans priority to take up any job that may occur in the labour market. All citizens are given equal opportunity to compete openly for any job where they possess the necessary qualifications. All recruitment in the public service is guided by merit whereas discipline and removal of officers is affected by application of fair play and justice (MoPS, 2001). The merit principle presupposes that the choice of a recruit is the outcome of an unbiased assessment of an individual's value as measured against stated requirements and not dependant on ethnicity, religion, relationship or political affiliation or patronage of the candidate (MoLG, 2004).

Whereas this seems to be the ideal situation, in practice a lot is left to be desired as local governments embark on an 'autonomous' drive and biased decision-making process with disregard to principles in personnel recruitment and management.

Crispin (1990) notes, that the importance of personnel selection as an integral aspect of human resources development and employment is not sufficiently appreciated in Africa. He argues that personnel selection is a critical factor in human resources development and employment especially when it involves bringing fresh entrants into service regardless of the level at which they are being recruited. If at this stage the mistake is made of bringing in the wrong person in spite of any provisions for a probationary period, the possibility of resorting to measures like dismissal or even suspension after recruitment is very difficult indeed. He, therefore, stresses the importance of having proper personnel selection methods and procedures regardless of their levels and ethnicity. What is important is whether they can deliver to the expectation of the organization.

He also adds that, while the merit principle should as far as possible be adhered to, there are cases where consideration of social justice and national unity necessitate the deliberate disregard of the principle such cases include the need to ensure balance - regional, gender or any other in appointment. This can be done without indulging in nepotism, abuse of office or other such malpractices, which tend to reduce efficiency in human resources development and utilization.

2.5.3 Managing the Stay of Human Resources

Kiiza Amooti (1997) in a seminar paper observed that, it would be a waste of time and resources if after recruiting staff a District or Urban Council couldn't retain such staff. It is, therefore, the

responsibility of a local government to ensure that staffs recruited are retained for as long tenure as possible. This can be achieved by ensuring that the key elements that go into the building of a highly motivated workforce are in place. These would include, among others:

- timely payment of salaries and wages;
- having in place schemes of services that guide the employee progression in the service; and
- Provision of training, not only in the particular ways that benefit the organization, but also for the individuals' career development.

2.5.4 Managing the Exit of Human Resources

Kiiza Amooti (1997) further notes that in many organizations, Districts and Urban Councils inclusive, one of the neglected tasks of HRM is that of handling the exit. Article 60, sub-section (2) of the Local Governments Act (1997) provides for a person aggrieved by a decision of the DSC, to appeal to the PSC. This Article 60 safeguards the stay of the employee in the service of the local government by protecting them against arbitrary dismissals/termination. The cost of arbitrary dismissals to an organization is the loss of experienced staff that is replaced by inexperienced ones in an effort to ensure the continuity of the organization. Furthermore, as the organization gains the reputation of arbitrary dismissal, it gets difficulties in attracting new staff and retaining them.

In some local governments, for example, there have been many cases of witch-hunting employees especially by some politicians who believe they should not be working in their districts for various reasons including ethnic background, political patronage and mainly personal conflicts. This has been backed up by many unfounded claims of mismanagement of public funds, and corruption that has led to interdiction of officers, unfair and unjust dismissals without a fair hearing.

Such wrangles have made some local governments unpopular and hence unable to attract qualified and experienced personnel. This negatively impacts on the level of service delivery and national development.

2.6 Conclusion

The literature reviewed indicates that before independence, Uganda's Civil Service that was based on the Westminster model was considered 'the best in Africa south of the Sahara' (Langseth and Mugaju, 1996). It was based on the principle of meritocracy, integrity, neutrality, patriotism, and incorruptibility among others. However, after independence, all the above principles were eroded and issues of class, ethnicity, race, sex, political patronage and religion, among others, took a centre stage. This changed the national character of the Civil Service to an ethnic character. Employment into the Civil Service was no longer based on merit but on other factors as earlier mentioned.

When the NRM government assumed power in 1986, it introduced many reforms and notably among them was the decentralization programme. Under this programme, powers were devolved to the local governments including the power to hire, remunerate and fire staff (personnel decentralization).

The literature also revealed that there is still some misunderstanding from both the citizens and DSCs about the concept of personnel decentralization and it is this misconception that has eroded the intentions/objectives of personnel decentralization, and has instead given the local government Civil Service a biased out-look of exclusionism. The literature laid a foundation for the study as most of the findings were in agreement with what earlier scholars had already established. For instance, as Tukahebwa (1998) posited, the problem of 'tribalising' personnel through district selective recruitment cuts across all districts. The findings agree with this assertion, but also revealed that, the practice is relative in some districts. In the case of Gulu, it is believed that the principle of merit is upheld by the DSC being members of proven integrity; and that there is little/no political interference in the activities of the Commission. However, this does not disqualify the diverse opinions held by other respondents who still believe merit is not always considered in personnel recruitment in local governments, but that, the process is marred by tribalism and nepotism.

Indeed, personnel decentralization faces many challenges including the unattractive remuneration packages, tribalism, nepotism and corruption, among others, that affect the recruitment process. The concern, therefore, is how to create and sustain a multi-ethnic local

government Civil Service based on merit. The study tried to address this concern as stated in the recommendations in chapter five.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology. It includes a number of sub-sections namely; the research design, the study area, study population, sample size and sampling techniques/procedure, data collection methods, study procedure, data analysis and the limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. Descriptive studies are basically interested in detailed description of a phenomenon, group or community. A descriptive study is undertaken in order to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of variables of interest in a situation (Uma Sekaran, 2003: 119). Also descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation.

The design was therefore employed to examine the recruitment process in Gulu district and also to understand the challenges of creating a multi-ethnic local government Civil Service under decentralization in Uganda. As such, the concept of merit recruitment was well conceptualized and the findings are presented in chapter four.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Gulu District Local Government, a local authority that forms part of Northern Uganda. It lies 332 km north of the capital of Kampala and consists of two counties: Achwa and Omoro. Gulu district has historically been seen as the most important and influential of the northern districts. It shares borders with seven other districts as well as Sudan. The 2002 census put the population at 479,496 (UBOS, 2002).

Gulu District Local Government was chosen because it is a cosmopolitan local authority, with ability to attract persons from all over the country, due to available infrastructure and social amenities. It is easily accessible. In addition, Gulu Local Government is known to have a highly

credible DSC with proven integrity. Therefore, allowing for equal opportunities for all job seekers who may want to work in the district.

3.4 Study Population

The population consisted of both men and women in the service of Gulu District Local Government on the established scheme. They had different levels of employment, conditions of service and education, but had joined the service during or after the decentralization policy was launched. It is assumed that employees in this category have acquired a certain education level and have some skills and therefore have career plans to pursue. They have also been the main ‘Casualties’ of the decentralization policy. The DSC Chairperson, Secretary DSC, Personnel officers, LC V Vice Chairperson, CAO and Heads of Department were interviewed as key informants. These people were presumed to have the relevant information about the HRM system and the decentralization policy.

3.5 Sample Size

The study comprised of sixty (60) respondents who were purposively and randomly selected from a sampling frame of 250. The researcher emphasized the issue of representativeness and as such people from different socio- economic background were selected. Since the study was largely qualitative, the researcher targeted a total of 60 respondents and when this number was reached, a point of saturation was reached and data collection was stopped. Departmental staff lists were used as the sampling frames after the researcher and the Personnel Officer had updated them. This made the sample more representative by having employees of various Departments forming separate strata. For each Department, the names of the employees were arranged in alphabetical order to form one list for each stratum. This made the list more accurate for use and reduced bias in the selection of respondents. The number of respondents selected from each strata was proportionate to the total number in that sampling strata.

3.6 Sampling Technique/Procedure

The study employed both simple random sampling (particularly the lottery method) and purposive sampling technique to select the study respondents. Purposive sampling was used on various categories of respondents from whom the researcher wished to get specific information

(Key Informants). These included the DSC chairperson, CAO, Heads of Departments, Personnel Officers, LV Chairperson, among others, simply because it was the researcher's conviction that this category of people had sufficient knowledge on the topic under consideration. In all, 20 key informants were selected for the study.

The remaining 40 respondents were randomly selected using the lottery method. Respondents from different departments had their names alphabetically arranged after which these names were substituted with numbers and placed in an urn (container). The researcher selected the names one at a time until the required number of respondents was reached. The method was good because it gave each and every respondent an equal chance of being selected.

Table 1: Distribution of the Study Population According to Departments and the Proportion Selected into the Sample.

Department	Total Population	Proportion Selected
Health	50	7
Education	51	7
Natural Resources	37	7
Work and Technical service	28	4
Finance and Administration	27	5
Production & Marketing	22	4
Community Services	30	5
Planning	5	1
Key Informants		20
Total	250	60

Source: Field data

Table 2: Disaggregated Data on the Composition of the Key Informants

Key Informants	No
CAO	1
Sec. DSC	1
Personnel officer DSC	1
PPO	1
HoDs	4
Local Councilor V	2
Chairperson DSC	1
	1
Other stakeholders	7
	20

Source: Field data

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data. The study basically employed three methods of data collection namely; the questionnaire method, interviewing and documentary review.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire (administered by the researcher) was used to collect data. This helped in collecting primary data. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were delivered at the respondents' place of work and were collected at appointed time by the researcher. Before the actual handing in of the questionnaires, the researcher got into contact with her respondents and informed them about the day she was to bring the questionnaires and when she would collect them.

The questionnaire covered issues related to the concept of decentralization, personnel recruitment and HRM. Questionnaires were administered basically on the respondents from the different departments because of their busy schedules and therefore could fill the questionnaires in their free time.

3.7.2 Interview Method

Interviewing was done with the help of an interview guide. This was used to capture data from the key informants. This was because much detailed information was needed from this category of respondents. Indeed, the key informants provided information on the decentralization policy and aspects of HRM like recruitment, merit and promotion. While interviewing, probing was used in cases where respondents gave inadequate answers or where confused meanings were given to the question.

3.7.3 Documentary Review

The study also made use of some documents at the district including annual district reports, minutes of the departmental meetings and books from the libraries. The documents were thoroughly reviewed by the researcher for secondary data. These provided supplementary data to that earlier obtained from key informants and questionnaires. The secondary literature reviewed was used for cross- referencing the findings of the study.

3.8 Study Procedure

The researcher was availed with an introductory letter from Makerere University, Department of Political Science and Public Administration for presentation to the CAO, Gulu District Local Government, who, in turn, introduced her to the Principal Personnel Officer who assisted her to get access to the staff list from which the sampling frame was drawn. For smooth access to the respondents, Heads of Department were contacted for further authority to interact with the respondents.

Questionnaires were distributed to the respective respondents in the different Departments and a period of one week was given to answer the questions. Thereafter, the researcher made a programme to meet the key informants; each was interviewed for at least one hour in his/her office. This exercise lasted approximately four weeks.

3.9 Data Analysis

There were two ways of analyzing the information and data. Qualitative data was analyzed by content after transcribing and developing themes, while quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.9.1 Qualitative Data

At the end of each day, field notes were transcribed. Qualitative data was analyzed by content after transcribing and developing themes. The respondent's views were quoted verbatim to give their actual feeling about the issues that were raised.

3.9.2 Quantitative Data

On receipt of each questionnaire, editing was done to ensure that the information given in the pre-coded questions was complete and correctly filled in. In the case of open-ended questions, all responses to questions were noted and arranged into meaningful trends. All questionnaires were numbered to make coding easier. After editing, coding was done for easy analysis. In the analysis, the researcher employed the SPSS programme that helped in the generation of frequency tables, percentages, graphs and charts, which were used in the analysis and interpretation of findings.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

The study had the limitations inherent in any research design. For example, time and resources did not allow for an exhaustive inquiry. However, the researcher dedicated much time for this study and also raised some financial resources to finish the research.

Also, some respondents were uncooperative fearing that the results of the research could negatively affect them. However, the researcher endeavoured to explain in detail the purpose of the research emphasizing that it was purely for academic purposes and stressed that the respondents' views were to be treated with high level of confidentiality.

In addition, for various reasons some respondents failed to return questionnaires. An unduly completed questionnaire was yet another problem. Some respondents left some questions unfilled. This resulted into some inaccuracies in the processing, analysis and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF
FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the presentation, interpretation and discussion of the findings. It develops themes based on the study's objectives. It is important to stress that the study was guided by basically three objectives, namely; to establish whether local governments understand the objectives and principles of the decentralization policy; to determine and explain the impact of personnel decentralization on recruitment and HRM in local governments and to establish whether members of the DSC and the LC members understand and uphold the principle of merit in personnel recruitment.

The first part of the chapter presents the social characteristics of the respondents followed by sub-themes developed according to the study's set objectives. Tables and graphs were also used to interpret and explain the findings of the study.

4.2 The Social Characteristics of the Respondents

The social characteristics of the respondents included their level of education, ethnic background, and nationality, among others.

4.2.1 Sex of the Respondents

The study considered the sex of the respondents since people of different sexes normally hold different views on many issues including decentralization. It was also important to consider the sex of the respondents so as to establish whether Gulu District Local Government is balanced in terms of staffing as regards sex composition. Table 3 summarizes the responses.

Table 3: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	36	60
Female	24	40
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 3, 60% of the respondents were males while 40% of the respondents were females. This shows that in terms of sex composition, both males and females are fairly represented and women are not entirely left behind in terms of employment as used to be the case before the NRM's assumption of power in 1986. It is important to note that the NRM government has endeavoured much to uplift the status of women in political, social and economic spheres through the Affirmative Action Programme.

4.2.2 Tribes/Ethnic Backgrounds of the Respondents

The study also looked at the tribal/ethnic identities of the respondents and the researcher was interested in establishing whether Gulu DSC was dominated by people of one ethnic identity or was multi-ethnic. Table 4 summarizes the responses.

Table 4: Ethnic Backgrounds of the Respondents

Tribe	No of Respondents	Percentage
Acholi	29	48.3
Langi	17	28.3
Baganda	6	10
Banyankole	2	3.3
Others	6	10
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 4, the majority 48.3% of the respondents were Acholis followed by the Langis who comprised of 28.3%. Tribes outside Acholi land had the smallest percentage, for example, the

Banyankole were 3.3% while the ‘other’ tribes had 10% with Baganda forming 10%. This implies that although the DSC is trying to balance employees in terms of regions, those coming from Gulu (home district) are still dominant in many positions in the district. Ideally, people from the recruiting districts would be given priority due to factors such as, their retention capacity, language knowledge, proximity and social adaptability. This, however, should be done fairly and impartially without indulging in malpractices like nepotism, sectarianism and corruption.

4.2.5 Nationality of Respondents

In terms of nationality all the respondents interviewed were Ugandans with no foreigners. This shows that Gulu DSC does not have any foreign employees. Probably, because, the employment policy of Uganda gives priority to Ugandan citizens to take up jobs that may exist in the Public Service. Foreigners can only work in local governments as investors/expatriates.

4.2.3 Education Level of the Respondents

The study further looked at the education levels of the respondents to establish whether Gulu DSC is staffed by qualified and competent staff. Table 5 summarizes the responses

Table 5: The Education Levels of the Respondents

Level of Education	No of respondents	Percentage
Primary	3	3
Secondary	5	4.9
HSC	8	7.9
Certificate	4	6.7
Diploma	15	25
University or equivalent	18	30
Others	7	11.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field Data

From table 5, the majority 30% of the respondents had university or equivalent level of education, followed by diploma holders with 25% while the minority had primary level of education 3%. People with secondary level of education comprised 4.9%, those with High School level of education comprised 7.9%. 6.7% of the respondents were certificate holders and those who had ‘other’ qualifications not cited in the table comprised 11.7% and they basically included Grade II and III teachers, and other qualifications from technical schools.

This shows that Gulu DSC is staffed by highly qualified and competent staff since even the lowest cadre workers have some formal education level.

4.2.8 Department where Respondents Worked

The study also considered the various Departments where the respondents worked and table 6 below summarizes the responses.

Table 6: Departments where Respondents Worked

Department	No of respondents	Percentage
Education	12	20
Health	12	20
Works	7	11.7
Natural resources	9	15
Production	5	8.3
Community development	7	11.7
Finance and administration	7	11.7
Planning	1	1.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 6, the majority of the respondents belonged to the departments of Health 20% and Education 20%. These two are the largest Departments and therefore getting many respondents from them was inevitable. The Planning Department had the least number of respondents being represented by only 1.7%. This is because the Planning Department was poorly staffed with only

an Acting District Planner and a Secretary. However, it is important to note that all the Departments were fairly represented as far as this study is concerned.

4.2.9 Job Experience

The study also looked at the job experiences of the respondents to see whether Gulu DSC was staffed by experienced employees or not. As the saying goes “experience is a good teacher” and it is hoped that once there are experienced people in the District, service delivery can become easy. Table 7 summarizes the responses.

Table 7: Job Experiences of the Respondents

Period worked	No of respondents	Percentage
0-5	31	51.7
6-10	16	26.7
11-15	10	16.7
16-20	2	3.3
20+	1	1.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 7, all the respondents had some working experience. However, the majority (51.7%) of the employees had worked for less than 5 years. Respondents who had worked for more than 20 years were also minimal comprising 1.7% only. This shows that although everybody has a working experience, people with a very long experience are lacking in Gulu DSC. This implies that, Gulu district is disadvantaged when it comes to filling senior positions that require high levels of experience. It will, therefore, face the hassles of attracting qualified and experienced personnel from other parts of the country.

4.2.10 Mode of Entering the Civil Service

The study also considered the mode through which the respondents entered the Civil Service. The aim was to establish whether merit recruitment principle was adhered to in Gulu District

Local Government or people get jobs through patronage politics. Table 8 summarizes the responses.

Table 8: The Mode of Entry into the Civil Service

Mode of Entry	No of Respondents	Percentage
Application	54	90
Appointment	1	1.7
Transferred	5	7.9
Others	0	0
Total	60	100

Source: Field Data

From table 8, 90% of the respondents entered the district Civil Service through applications, 1.7% through appointments and this was, for instance, the CAO, while 7.9% were transferred. This may mean that the merit principle in recruitment of employees in Gulu DSC is still upheld as the majority join the service through applications where the best candidate will always be taken. However, filling in/applying for a particular job in the district does not necessarily mean that the procedure used to select the suitable candidate is based on merit or fair. The concern therefore is how one ascertains that the principle of merit is adhered to during the selection of personnel in local governments.

4.2.11 Current Employment Status of the Respondents

The study also looked at the current employment status of the respondents to establish whether Gulu DSC had permanent employees.

Table 9: The Current Employment Status of the Respondents

Employment Status	No of Respondents	Percentage
Temporary	2	3.3
Probation	8	13.3
Confirmed	47	78.3
Acting	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 9, the majority 78.3% of the respondents were confirmed employees in the Civil Service, 13.3% were on probation, 5% were acting employees while 3.3% were temporary employees. This shows that the district has chances of moving forward since the majority of the respondents are confirmed and therefore permanent. Employees are committed to the service of the district since their job security is guaranteed.

4.3 Establishing Whether Local Governments Understand the Meaning, Objectives and Principles of the Decentralization Policy

The study endeavored to establish whether Gulu district local government personnel understood the concept of decentralization currently under implementation in all the local governments of Uganda. It was established that many local government officials and indeed members of the DSC in Gulu understand the decentralization policy differently. According to some respondents, decentralization refers to devolution of legislative and management power from the centre; it's the system of bringing government or governance to the grass root level. According to some key informants decentralization refers to bringing services nearer to the people. It is the transfer of power, resources, management and decision to grassroots/lower governments.

Other respondents argued that under decentralization, power is devolved to individual districts by central government to be autonomous. It is where local governments are empowered to plan and manage their affairs. This corroborates what many scholars on decentralization have agreed upon as the definition of decentralization. For example, according to Nsibambi (1998:6) decentralization as a term presupposes centralized and unitary states and prescribes a process by

which powers are transferred from the centre to the local governments giving them autonomy and liberty to manage their own affairs within the framework of a unitary state.

The study further established that local government employees were knowledgeable about the objectives of the decentralization policy. The responses are summarized in table 10.

Table 10: Knowledge about the Objectives of Decentralization Programme

Objectives	No. of Respondents	Percentage
To bring services closer to people	31	51.7
To empower lower level service providers	12	20
For better and closer monitoring of services being delivered to the people of the area.	8	13.3
To empower local population to manage themselves	5	8.3
For effective and efficient planning	4	6.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 10, the objectives of decentralization are; to bring services closer to the people as aired out by 51.7%, to empower lower level service providers (20%), for better and closer monitoring of services being delivered to the people of the area (13.3%), to empower local population to manage themselves (8.3%) and for effective and efficient planning (6.7%). This shows that local government employees are aware of the real objectives of the decentralization programme.

The study also tried to establish whether decentralization policy really makes districts autonomous, that is, if they are truly being empowered to become local democratic states. According to the respondents, most of them disagreed and argued that there is no way decentralization policy has made districts autonomous. Respondents stressed that local

governments still rely on the central government for funds in form of grants (conditional, unconditional and equalization grants) and therefore they can't be autonomous. Indeed, as long as districts continue relying on the centre for funding, there is no way they can be independent since they have to make accountability to the centre.

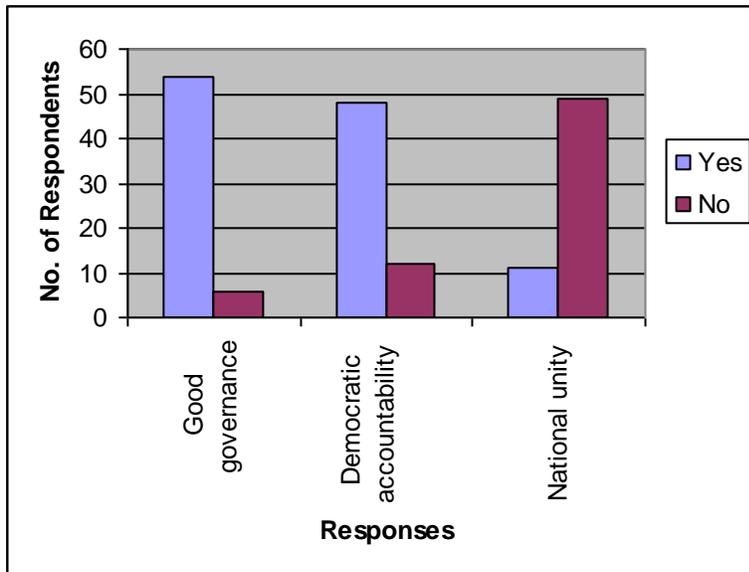
According to one Key Informant; "Decentralization has not created any autonomy in the district".

He stressed that autonomy would mean leaving districts to plan for themselves but the central government still has influence in the affairs of the local government basically because of the funds they send to them. To the informant, what local governments have in terms of financial resources can't sustain them and therefore must rely on the centre for extra funding. He, therefore, concludes that he does not see any autonomy in districts for as long as they still depend on the centre.

However, it is imperative that the central government gets involved (not interferes) in some matters concerning local governments as a regulatory measure to ensure rules and regulations are adhered to, especially when they are bent on jeopardizing nationalism. Matters of HRM for instance need not to be left to individual local governments to decide, but should be supervised and coordinated by the centre.

The study further tried to establish whether decentralization has promoted good governance, democratic accountability and national unity and the responses are summarized in the bar graph 1 below.

Bar Graph 1: Relationship between Decentralization, Good Governance, Democratic accountability, and National Unity



Source: Field data

From bar graph 1 above, it can be easily deduced that decentralization indeed promotes good governance as stated by 54 respondents out of the 60 interviewed. It also fosters democratic accountability as 48 respondents stressed. However, the respondents strongly disagreed that decentralization has fostered national unity arguing that sectarianism and corruption have characterized the decentralization policy. This was a view held by 49 respondents out of the 60 respondents interviewed. The danger inherent in this practice is that it eventually leads to the creation of (small) tribal units (MoLG, 2004), or balkanization of the nation (Nsibambi, 1998), which goes against the intended principles, and objectives of decentralization that sought to achieve a measure of stability and promotion of national unity through policy implementation. With such a trend nationalism and integration is at stake.

4.4 The Impact of Personnel Decentralization on Recruitment and Human Resource Management in Local Governments

The study endeavored to determine and explain the impact of personnel decentralization on recruitment and HRM in local governments and the findings are presented and discussed as hereunder.

On whether local government employees understood the concept of personnel decentralization, the study established that people in the local governments hold different views regarding the concept of personnel decentralization. According to some respondents, personnel decentralization refers to having qualified personnel down at service delivery points. It also refers to staff recruited from within the district, sub-counties and parishes. Other respondents stressed that it refers to employing people within the same locality for work in the area.

This understanding of personnel decentralization is more of a misconception than a fact. Lubanga (1998) posited that personnel decentralization is the devolution of the responsibilities of human resources by central government to local governments. This includes the power to hire and fire their employees. Here the process and initiative with regard to recruitment, promotion and discipline becomes the exclusive domain of the local government.

According to the prior perception of personnel decentralization, it would mean that people from outside the districts would not have a chance to get employment in districts outside their mother district. Personnel decentralization has been perceived to mean indigenous recruitment. That is why respondents were arguing that they rarely respond to adverts from outside their districts because chances of getting jobs there are minimal. However, this shouldn't be the case because Public Service is supposed to have a national character.

According to one Key Informant;

Under personnel decentralization, all persons are employed by local governments through DSCs, promoted, demoted and disciplined by them.

This seems a more convincing definition. It is the recruitment of personnel by respective local government DSCs and their management. It indeed corroborates the works of Lubanga (1998) as seen above.

The study also endeavoured to establish whether respondents knew the objectives of personnel decentralization. Table 11 shows the responses.

Table 11: Objectives of Personnel Decentralization

Objectives	No. of Respondents	Percentage
To promote quality service delivery to the local people.	29	48.3
To promote accountability both personal and fiscal.	8	13.3
For good governance.	15	25
To create employment to the local population.	8	13.3
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 11, 48.3% of the respondents stressed that personnel decentralization has the objective of promoting quality service delivery to the local people. Indeed, many respondents supported the view that with the decentralization of personnel, there has been quality in the delivery of services such as health services, education, among others. Respondents further brought to the attention of the researcher that services have now been brought closer to the people compared to before the decentralized programme when they had to wait for everything from the central government.

Other respondents 25% argued that personnel decentralization was intended to foster good governance by letting people to govern themselves through their elected representatives. People have been given chance to participate in political activities such as voting and being voted in political offices. This has promoted good governance and accountability to the citizens. This corroborates what Johnson and Minis (2009) noted namely, that various sectors of society, particularly marginalized groups, can most easily participate in decision making at the local level because local decisions directly affect them. Also, they can readily have access to local decision makers, in contrast to national decision makers who may be located in a distant city. Information about the workings of government can be more easily communicated to citizens at the local level, establishing a clearer link between participation and outcome. Indeed, many governments have embarked on decentralization programmes to foster democratic processes. Even where formal mechanisms for informing citizens are weak, the effects of local government actions remain highly visible.

Some respondents 13.3% also argued that personnel decentralization was intended to create employment opportunities to the local people. Although some respondents aired out this as one of the objectives of personnel decentralization, the researcher thinks it was not the overriding objective. Personnel decentralization was never intended to create employment to people in their district as many people perceive it but for easy service delivery and if jobs are created, they are supposed to be distributed nationally and not to be taken up by people from the mother district only. Although ideally, people from the recruiting districts would be given priority due to factors such as their retention capacity, language knowledge and social adaptability, this should be done fairly and impartially without indulging in malpractices like nepotism, sectarianism and corruption.

A number of respondents stressed that, personnel decentralization was aimed at minimizing the bureaucracy in the Civil Service. Indeed, in order to transform state bureaucracy into an instrument for democracy building, governments need to pursue decentralization, strengthen coordination, and place tighter monitoring on state bureaucratic activities. The three should come as a package. Decentralization requires greater policy coordination if it is not to undermine bureaucratic effectiveness, and a routine monitoring of the abuses of public authority and power if it is not to degenerate into a corrupt system of rule by 'oligarchs'. Lastly, the respondents stressed that personnel decentralization aimed at ensuring easy supervision of staff so that they could perform better.

Although some respondents seem to know the real objectives of personnel decentralization, others seem not to be aware. However, according to some Key Informants, the objectives can be summarized as follows; to take full control of the personnel by respective local governments; to minimize the bureaucracy in the Civil Service; ensure effective planning; and to make it easy to supervise staff.

The study further tried to find out whether personnel decentralization has promoted good governance, improved performance, effective service delivery, local capacity building, and national unity. The results are as presented in table 12.

Table 12: Relationship between Personnel Decentralization, Good Governance, Performance, Service Delivery, Local Capacity Building, and National Unity

Options	Yes	%	No	%
Good governance	54	90	6	10
Performance	47	78.3	13	21.7
Service delivery	45	75	15	25
Local capacity building	39	65	21	25
National unity	11	18.3	49	81.7

Source: Field data

According to table 12, 90% of the respondents argued that personnel decentralization has indeed promoted good governance because it has led to local accountability. Since the district is responsible for hiring, retaining, promoting and disciplining its personnel, it has made them more accountable to the district. It has also offered more opportunities to the council and civil society to monitor, evaluate, reward, censure and sanction local government officials. 78.3% said it has led to good performance and 75% to service delivery, because it has enhanced the responsiveness of service providers to local needs and empowered the client population to ask for accountability, thereby improving performance and eliminating organizational failure by making employers accountable to workers, workers accountable to employers and agencies accountable to clients/consumers and it has also shifted emphasis from inputs to outputs and value-for-money. 65% of the respondents said it has promoted local capacity building because it has led to the growth of personal and institutional capacities and competencies. The district can now train its own personnel to improve their performance. Indeed, this finding corroborates Lubanga (1998) that personnel decentralization is said to enhance good governance from a management accountability point of view as it overcomes some of the omissions and commissions engendered by centralized systems. However, personnel decentralization has not promoted national unity according to the majority 81.7% of the respondents.

According to one Key Informant in the Health Department, personnel decentralization has not promoted any of the above. He stressed that, it has instead led to recruitment of relatives, low performance, low service delivery and lack of national unity.

The study also looked at how personnel decentralization has impacted on recruitment of staff in Gulu district local government. The respondents argued that it has negatively impacted on the recruitment of personnel because it has accelerated corruption in the district recruitment process.

Another Key Informant from the Agriculture Department stressed that it has impacted negatively since chances of promotion and career advancement are limited. He stressed that sourcing from outside the district has been widened but still people from within the district dominate the new recruits. This is reinforced by the fact that three quarters of the DSC is composed of people from the same/mother district.

From the study findings, it can be concluded that whereas personnel decentralization has had salutary achievements in as far as bringing services closer to the people is concerned; it has also had negative effects on the recruitment exercise in local governments since it is marred by corruption, nepotism and sectarianism. Districts recruit mainly ‘sons and daughters of their soil’ regardless of merit. This has led to the recruitment of unqualified personnel in the district Departments, hence, affecting the quality of service delivery. Indeed, according to one Key Informant;

Recruitment is at times biased towards one’s relatives and applicant’s background/(technical know who) and as such it loses meaning.

The study further looked at the process of recruiting staff in Gulu district local government and tried to establish how the staff is recruited and the role played by various stakeholders and/or institutions at different stages. It was established that the staff is recruited following the normal procedures as laid down by the PSC. In particular, vacant jobs are advertised, interviews are done, selection follows, and people are oriented after their deployment, all this, it was reported, is done through the DSC. This was a view held by almost every person interviewed. .

On who takes part in the recruitment process, respondents stressed that it is basically members of DSC only; while others argued it is the technical staff and members of the DSC. However, Article 56 (2) of the LGA 1997 provides that, when considering recruitment of staff in a specialized discipline, other than Education or Health Services the Commission shall under the guidelines provided by the PSC co-opt at least two persons specialized in that discipline on the Commission.

On the role played by various people in the recruitment process the District Veterinary Officer said his role is to assist the DSC in interviewing the new recruits while the District Inspector of Schools said he short-lists the applicants. On the other hand, the Senior Assistant Accountant said he assists in identifying the vacant posts and the Agricultural Officer said he assists in providing technical guidance. This therefore shows that different people at different levels play various roles in the recruitment exercise.

On the role played by Local Council executives, respondents said there is no big role played by this group. However, some respondents argued that these people are important in identifying vacant positions in their council meetings and forward them to the DSC while others said they help in monitoring the recruitment exercise/process.

On the role played by Members of Parliament in the recruitment exercise, many people again said there is no much role they play. Others were quick to stress that they help in giving advice where necessary.

On the role played by Opinion Leaders in the recruitment exercise, respondents stressed that they help in making sure that corruption and tribalism are minimized/not practiced. According to one Key Informant in the Education Department there is no role played by opinion leaders because the DSC is an independent body.

The researcher also examined the role played by the DSC, and according to the respondents, this body is important in designing adverts, interviewing, selection of qualified candidates and assessing the best candidate and recommending them to CAO for appointment.

The researcher took up this assessment to determine whether the DSC was independent in carrying out its duties, or was interfered with by other stakeholders because cases of influence peddling by politicians and other executives have been reported. From the responses above, it is clear that the DSC is an independent body, but it also works hand-in-hand with other stakeholders who provide guidance to the Commission in matters of personnel recruitment, for instance, on the vacancies available in each Department and the job specifications. However, the researcher recognizes the fact that it is not easy to determine who influences the recruitment process in the district because it is a sensitive subject that cannot be easily disclosed even with

assured confidentiality. All responses are general assertions, people seem secure of what is taking place but are reluctant to make mention of the details.

The study further endeavored to establish whether the Gulu DSC was credible enough in its recruitment mandate and the results obtained were mixed. The table 13 summarizes the responses.

Table 13: Credibility of the Gulu District Service Commission

Credibility of DSC	No of Respondents	Percentage
Credible	39	65
Not Credible	18	30
Not Sure	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 13, 65% of the respondents agreed that the Gulu DSC is credible enough in its recruitment mandate stressing that the body is composed of competent retired civil servants of proven integrity, who cannot be easily compromised. According to some Key Informants, it is hard to bribe such persons because they have worked, retired and have the money. “How much would you give to such people for sure?” asked one Key Informant. Other respondents also argued that if there were cases of discontent, they would have been known in the media because the law provides for avenues through which aggrieved persons can address their grievances, and such cases have not been heard of in the district. Therefore, in ascertaining the credibility of the DSC 30% of the respondents stressed that the DSC is not credible in its recruitment mandate arguing that tribalism, corruption and sectarianism have characterized the Commission. However, 5% of the respondents were not sure whether the Commission was credible or not.

From the responses above one can deduce that the Service Commission is to a large extent credible. Indeed, according to the responses given Gulu district has been on record for its credibility in its recruitment mandate compared to other districts in the country. According to one Key Informant,

“Gulu district cannot be compared to these other districts. We recruit on merit and Corruption is minimal in the district if at all its there”.

The study went on to establish the level of credibility of the Gulu DSC and the responses are presented in table 14.

Table 14: The Level of Credibility of the Gulu District Service Commission

Response	No of respondents	Percentage
Highly credible	33	55
Fairly credible	22	36.7
Poorly credible	5	8.3
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

Table 14 shows that 55% of the respondents stressed that the DSC is highly credible, 36.7% said it was fairly credible while 8.3% said it was poorly credible. Those who stressed that it was highly credible argued that,

Merit recruitment is followed and the district ends up recruiting the best candidates out of the many. Members of the DSC are people of high integrity who cannot be easily compromised.

Another Key Informant stressed the same view,

Credibility is there because we recruit basing on Public Service Commission guidelines and the merit principle is always upheld. Therefore there is no way merit can be disregarded during the recruitment process.

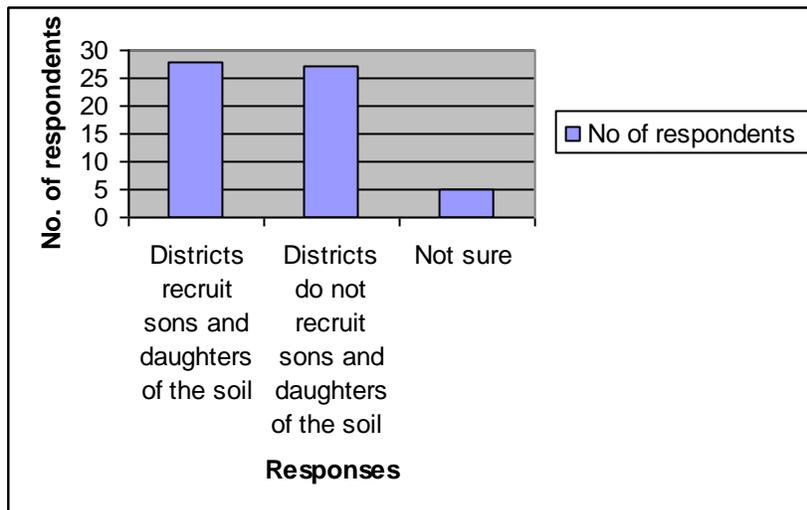
Some Key Informants stressed that the DSC is credible because outsourcing from outside the district is done for technical positions. So even if the DSC were to select their sons and daughters, technical ones will always come from outside the district in case they are lacking in the mother district.

According to the District Inspector of Schools, in Gulu, even other tribes apart from Acholis are working in the district.

Most Key Informants were in agreement that “in Gulu District Local Government all tribes are fairly represented such as the Atesots, Lugbara, Banyoro, Basoga, Acholis, Langis, among others. However, a closer look also gives a different impression. In particular reference to table 5 considered earlier, the majority of the respondents were Acholis (48.3%) followed by the Langis who composed 28.3%. Tribes outside Acholi had the smallest percentage, for example, the Banyankole composed 3.3% while the ‘other’ tribes composed 10% with Baganda forming 10%. This puts the credibility of the DSC in question. With such imbalances in job allocations, one can easily say that the credibility is to some extent limited and is being hampered by tribal sentiments.

Following numerous allegations from both print and electronic media that districts are fond of recruiting daughters and sons of the soil, this study endeavoured to venture into this and establish whether the allegations were true. Bar graph 2 below summarizes the findings.

Bar graph 2: Whether Decentralization Encourages Sons and Daughters of the Soil to be Recruited in the Local Government



Source: Field data

From bar graph 2, 28 respondents (46.7%) said the district recruits daughters and sons of the soil while 27 respondents (45%) said it is not true that the district recruits daughters and sons of the soil. 5 respondents (8.3%) were undecided on the issue. Therefore, one can concretely assert that to some extent the recruitment process in Gulu is not very transparent but recruits the daughters and sons of the soil.

Those who said decentralization encourages recruitment of sons and daughters of the soil argued that three quarters (3/4) of the personnel is composed of people from Gulu district. This finding corroborates what the MoLG (2004:8) observed that recruitment of staff by some DSCs is not always on merit (merit presupposes or implies that the choice of recruit is the outcome of an unbiased assessment of an individual's value as measured against stated requirements and not dependent on ethnicity, religion or relationships) and is greatly influenced by the ethnic origin (district) and political affiliation/patronage of the candidates. Therefore, one wonders if the merit principle is upheld in Gulu DSC as seen earlier, how come people in the District Service are basically from one region!

According to one Key Informant, this could be explained by two factors, namely; the low remuneration in Public Service that is unattractive to job seekers to work in distant districts like Gulu district other than their own. He cited the example of teachers and medical personnel arguing that this group cannot afford to go to rural areas such as those in Gulu given the little money they are paid. Currently a primary school teacher/enrolled nurse is paid a minimum of 200,000 Ushs inclusive of accommodation, travel allowances and food. This money is too little for someone to survive on especially in a distant place given that the cost of living in Uganda is ever increasing. This serves to explain the number of vacancies that exist in the Education and Medical Departments in most districts like Gulu district.

The CAO also said that in particular reference to Gulu, because of the insecurity that has raged on for years, people fear to go for work in such a district. That's why most of the positions are occupied by the indigenous Acholi.

However, those respondents who disagreed that the district does not recruit only daughters and sons of the soil argue that all district officers are national officers (meaning they can be deployed in any part of the country), and in Gulu District Local Government there are many different

tribes represented. For example, there are many Atesots, Lugbara, Banyoro, Basoga, Acholis, and Langis, among others. They further emphasized that recruitment in the district has been done on merit.

The study further endeavoured to establish the staffing levels in the different Departments in the district in order to identify if there were vacant positions and find out the reasons for the existence of such vacant positions. Table 15 below summarizes the responses.

Table 15: Staffing Levels in the District

Staffing levels	Works	Production	Education	Health	Community development	Natural resources	Finance and administration	Planning
Fully staffed	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	0
Averagely staffed	2	2	3	2	4	5	3	0
Under-staffed	5	3	6	8	3	3	4	1
Total	7	5	12	12	7	9	7	1

Source: Field data

From table 15, it can be vividly seen that all the Departments are either averagely staffed or understaffed, with only the Education and Health Department fully staffed probably due to their large absorption capacity of personnel. But on average they are understaffed for reasons earlier discussed. In the Works Department, respondents stressed that the Department is understaffed because the recruitment procedures to fill vacant positions normally take long. In the Production Department, it is understaffed because there was a ban on recruitment for a long time and there is also failure to attract new recruits. The ban, however, could explain why other Departments too are understaffed since it could have affected all the other Departments. According to one Key Informant, the Agriculture Department is understaffed because attracting and maintaining the staff is difficult due to the low remuneration rate in the Public Service for Agricultural Officers.

According to the CAO, the reasons as to why some positions are not filled and in particular the Heads of Department are the high qualifications and experience required for such senior positions. Attracting such senior personnel has been difficult for the district for various reasons

including those already mentioned. The position of the District Engineer was one case in point that required a lot of expertise and experience, and yet still the district structure did not provide for the position of the Principal Engineer a level from which the District Engineer would arise. Further, another challenge cited was the unattractive salary. Indeed, the Public Service salary structures are still below the expected standards compared to that of the private sector, and as such do not draw people to the Civil Service.

The study further tried to establish whether the Gulu DSC has a national character (recruiting from outside the district and incorporating in people of diverse backgrounds). The responses are as presented in table 16 below.

Table 16: The Extent to which Gulu District Service Commission has a National Character

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Gulu District Service Commission has a national character	51	85
Gulu District Service Commission does not have a national character	8	13.3
Not sure	1	1.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 16, 85% of the respondents agreed that Gulu DSC has got a national character while 13.3% disagreed. However, 1.7% of the respondents were not sure of whether the DSC has a national character or not. Respondents who stressed that the Gulu DSC has a national character argued that the local government was all embracing; in other words, it included persons from various ethnic backgrounds thereby fostering national unity. The respondents also argued that rules and regulations regarding personnel recruitment were adhered to and that the principle of merit was of paramount importance in the recruitment process allowing for diversity in personnel selection.

Besides, according to another Key Informant, in the event that persons are dissatisfied with the DSC they can address their grievances through set mechanisms. Article 166 (e) of the

Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides that the PSC shall hear and determine grievances of persons appointed by the DSCs. However, such scenarios have not yet happened in Gulu district local government.

Those respondents who disagreed that Gulu district does not have a national character in as far recruitment of personnel is concerned cited cases of local political influence arguing that since the DSC members are politically recommended, there is bound to be influence peddling because some politicians ‘think’ they (members) owe them ‘something’ for placing them in office. For that matter, priority would be given to candidates of their choice regardless of merit. Eventually, the process ceases to be fair and therefore not multi-ethnic.

The study also investigated the extent to which personnel decentralization has promoted tribalism in local governments with particular emphasis on Gulu local government. The responses are summarized in table 17.

Table 17: The Extent to Which Personnel Decentralization Promotes Tribalism

Extent to Which Personnel Decentralization promote Tribalism	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Promotes tribalism	29	48.3
Does not promote tribalism	27	45
Not Sure	4	6.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 17, 48.3% of the respondents stressed that personnel decentralization has promoted tribalism while 45% disagreed. However, 6.7% of the respondents were not sure.

Those who stressed that personnel decentralization has promoted tribalism argued that it’s basically a misconception that people have about the objective of decentralization. Some people seem to believe that personnel decentralization is about recruiting locals, in that case, relatives, friends and in-laws wouldn’t be exceptional. To them, personnel decentralization means recruiting people from home districts to occupy the different posts.

Those who argued that it has not promoted tribalism stressed that Gulu district is unique compared to other districts in that the merit principle is still upheld. Tukahebwa (1998:20) also noted that the problem of tribalising staff through district selective recruitment cuts across all districts. It has been among others reported in Kabale and Iganga districts (Kaka 1996:3, Musumba, 1996:9). They cited the various compositions of other tribes in the district Civil Service. Another Key Informant said, ‘it is not true that decentralization has promoted tribalism in Gulu because many personnel from other tribes have been recruited in the District Service’.

The study also investigated the benefits of personnel decentralization and the responses are as indicated in table 18.

Table 18: Benefits of Personnel Decentralization

Benefits of Personnel Decentralization	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Has provided employment opportunity to marginalized tribes and regions.	7	11.7
Has promoted unity in the district as people from one region come to work together.	5	8.3
The procedures are not complicated as they used to be under the central government recruitment.	9	15
Promotes efficiency and results oriented output.	7	11.7
Better coordination because the staff understands each other better.	6	10
Staff is easy to discipline since both the technical staff and the politicians are supervising them. Supervision is also made easy.	8	13.3
Promote good service delivery and coordination in the district.	10	16.7
Promoted good governance.	5	8.3
Has improved on capacity building.	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 18, the benefits of personnel decentralization according to the respondents include but are not limited to the following, 11.7% of the respondents asserted that it has provided employment opportunity to marginalized tribes and regions. 8.3% say it has promoted unity in the district as people from one region come to work together, 15% argue that the procedures of recruitment are not complicated as they used to be under the central government, 11.7% believe personnel decentralization has promoted efficiency and result oriented output, 10% cited that it leads to better coordination because the staff understand each other better, 13.3% stated that staff is easy to discipline since both the technical staff and the politicians are supervising them. Supervision is also made easy. 16.7% agree that it also promotes good service delivery and coordination in the district. 8.3% say personnel decentralization also promotes good governance, and 5% argue it has improved on capacity building issues. All this shows that personnel decentralization has been beneficial to Gulu district.

The study also looked at the disadvantages associated with personnel decentralization and the responses are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19: Disadvantages of Personnel Decentralization

Disadvantages of Personnel Decentralization	No of Respondents	Percentage
Has promoted corruption and tribalism due to the recruitment of only sons and daughters of the soil in the local governments.	19	31.7
Poor quality service delivery as even unqualified persons are employed.	9	15
Sometimes there are delays in the delivery of services.	10	16.7
There is bureaucracy in recruiting fresh applicants.	5	8.3
Most staff is not exposed to outside life.	2	3.3
Limited career advancement opportunities.	6	10
There is tendency to favour locals at the expense of other people.	9	15
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 19, the majority 31.7% of the respondents were of the view that personnel decentralization has promoted corruption and tribalism due to the recruitment of only sons and daughters of the soil in the local governments. 15% cited poor quality service delivery as even unqualified persons are employed in the districts. 16.7% pointed out that there were delays in the delivery of services. 8.3% said there is bureaucracy in recruiting fresh applicants. According to 3.3% of the respondents, most staff is not exposed to outside life. 10% of the respondents stressed that there is limited career advancement opportunities. Another 15% argue that there is a tendency to favour locals at the expense of other people. This therefore implies that whereas personnel decentralization has advantages associated with it as indicated earlier, some disadvantages also accrue to it. The study also looked at the challenges facing personnel decentralization in the district. According to the respondents the challenges are shown in table 20

Table 20: Challenges Facing Personnel Decentralization

Challenges Facing Personnel Decentralization	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Inadequate salaries/ low remuneration packages.	11	18.3
Sectarianism, thus poor service delivery.	13	21.7
Inadequate funding especially from the central government, which has hampered the activities of the local governments.	16	26.7
Problem of attracting and maintaining good officers in the District Service Commission.	3	5
Insecurity in Gulu district hindering the attraction of staff to fill certain positions.	5	8.3
Attitudinal problems among job seekers and communities.	5	8.3
Lack of incentives to local government personnel like housing, transport and medical allowances.	4	6.7
Lack of commitment to the Civil Service by some employees has seriously affected the delivery of services in the district.	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 20, 18.3% of the respondents argued that inadequate salaries/low remuneration packages was a serious challenge to personnel decentralization, 21.7% of the respondents cited sectarianism which has led to poor service delivery, 26.7% mentioned inadequate funding especially from the central government which has hampered the activities of the local governments, 5% mentioned the problem of attracting and maintaining good officers in the DSC, 8.3% cited insecurity in Gulu district has also hindered the attraction of staff to fill certain positions, while another 8.3% argued that attitudinal problems among job seekers and communities still remain a big challenge because even when it is not explicitly stated anywhere, job seekers would not respond to adverts that they presume will require their ethnic identities. Communities have also adhered to a misguided view that personnel decentralization is meant to benefit only locals of a particular district, an attitude evident in the fact that normally, even when persons from other districts are recruited they do not serve for long tenures due to cases of witch-hunting by locals especially politicians. 6.7% of the respondents argued that lack of incentives to local government personnel like housing, transport and medical allowances, among others, was yet another challenge to personnel decentralization. Ideally, such incentives would help not only to attract personnel but also retain them in the local governments. 5% of the respondents argued that lack of commitment to the Civil Service by some employees has also seriously affected the delivery of services in the district. This, therefore, indicates that Gulu district local government faces several challenges as a result of personnel decentralization. There is a need therefore to address these concerns for successful decentralization to take effect.

4.5 Establishing Whether Members of the DSC and the Executives Understand and Uphold the Principle of Merit in Personnel Recruitment

The study tried to establish whether members of the DSC and the executives understand and uphold the principle of merit in personnel recruitment. According to the respondents, the merit principle refers to taking candidates on merit; others argued that it refers to recognizing good and excellent performance. It also refers to judgment based on facts on the ground and credibility. To the researcher this seems not to be the actual meaning of merit recruitment. Accordingly, under merit-based recruitment, one is recruited/considered for a position because of their ability and qualification. This presupposes that there is no favoritism basing on other social, economic or political considerations. Therefore, people will always get jobs because they deserve such jobs.

The study also looked at the importance of merit principle in personnel recruitment. The responses are summarized in table 21 below.

Table 21: The Importance of Merit Principle in Personnel Recruitment

Importance of Merit Based Recruitment	No of Respondents	Percentage
Candidate suitable for the job will always be selected.	22	36.7
Qualified staff is placed in the respective jobs and services are well rendered to the community.	13	21.7
Avoids tribalism in personnel recruitment.	20	33.3
Promotes integrity and good work and reduces corruption.	5	8.3
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 21, it can be clearly seen that consideration of the principle of merit in personnel recruitment has several importance including, among others, candidates suitable for the job will always be selected as stated by 36.7% of the respondents, 21.7 argued that qualified staff is placed in the respective jobs and services are well rendered to the community, 33.3% believe it avoids tribalism/sectarianism in personnel recruitment, and 8.3% observe that it also promotes integrity and good work thus reducing corruption.

On the importance of merit principle in personnel recruitment, the findings revealed that the candidate suitable for the job would always be selected once merit recruitment is followed. Further, it was established that qualified staff will be placed in the respective jobs and services are well rendered to the community. It further avoids issues of tribalism and enhances integrity and good work thus reducing corruption.

The study also tried to establish whether the Gulu DSC upholds the principle of merit in the recruitment process and the responses are shown in table 22.

Table 22: The Extent to which the Merit Principle is upheld in the Local Government

Response	No. of respondents	Percentage
Gulu district local government upholds the principle of merit	44	73.3
Gulu local government does not uphold the principle of merit	13	21.7
Not sure	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 22 above, 73.3% of the respondents answered in the affirmative that the district upholds the principle of merit in its recruitment procedures. This is because people from different regions are given equal opportunity to compete for the available jobs. This finding corroborates what the MoPS (2001) put across that under personnel decentralization all citizens are given equal opportunity to compete openly for any job where they possess the necessary qualifications. All recruitment in the public service is guided by merit whereas discipline and removal of officers is affected by application of fair play and justice.

However, 21.7% disagreed on the issue. This group argued that the district is not balanced in terms of the personnel working in the district whereby the majority of the respondents hail from the same district-Gulu. In fact, this reinforces the assertion that districts are known for recruiting daughters and sons of the soil. Only 5% of the respondents said they were not sure whether the merit principle is upheld or not.

The study went further to establish how often the principle of merit is upheld with the sole motive of finding out whether it can be at times disregarded. Table 23 summaries the responses.

Table 23: How Often the Principle of Merit is Upheld in the Recruitment Process

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Always	21	35
Sometimes	23	38.3
Rarely	16	26.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 23, 35% of the respondents stressed that the principle of merit in recruitment is always upheld, 38.3% stressed that it is sometimes upheld, while 26.7% of the respondents said it is rarely upheld. Those who said the merit principle is upheld in Gulu DSC argued that it is basically done in order to avoid getting wrong people for the right job. It is also done to ensure efficiency at work and also for the provision of quality services.

Those who said merit principle is not always upheld argued that corruption and tribalism have characterized the work of the Commission.

The study also endeavoured to establish whether respondents were familiar with the PSC Form 3 that is normally filled by every new applicant when seeking for employment in the Public Service. Table 24 below gives the responses.

Table 24: Familiarity with PSC Form 3

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Familiar with the PSC Form 3	38	63.3
Not Familiar with the PSC Form 3	19	31.7
Not very well	3	5
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 24 above, 63.3% of the respondents agreed that they were familiar with the PSC Form 3 and went ahead to describe it as follows; it's a Form filled in when applying in any local government service. 31.7% of the respondents said they were not familiar with it, while 5% said they partly knew of it.

According to the researcher, the 31.7% and 5% not familiar and not sure responses respectively would either imply that the respondents had never seen or used this Form, and then the question would be how did they join the Civil Service?

On whether the PSC Form 3 was relevant, some respondents argued that it was not relevant because it is confined to the DSC and rarely used. Others argued that it was outdated. Others argued that a new form should instead be designed that does not discriminate serving officers from new entrants. Also others pointed out that some of the issues were irrelevant to the applicant's candidature especially question 17 & 18 regarding Armed Forces and criminal records. Those who said the Form was relevant said it is important for easy identification of the employees in case of emergencies. It also provides the relevant information needed on the applicant for present and future purposes. They also stressed that it gives nationals chance to secure jobs since foreigners will always be eliminated. However, reasons for the elimination of foreigners were not given.

The study was also interested in finding out what exactly question number 3 in the PSC Form regarding the place of birth required somebody to fill in and its relevance in the recruitment exercise. Table 25 below gives the summary of the responses.

Table 25: Required Items to fill in PSC Form 3 Regarding Question 3

Alternatives	No of Respondents	Percentage
Hospital	18	30
District of origin	23	38.3
Both hospital and district of origin	12	20
Others (e.g where mother was living at time of birth)	5	8.3
Not sure	2	3.3
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 25, the majority 38.3% of the respondents stressed that question 3 on the PSC Form requires one to fill in the district of origin, 30% said the hospital, 20% mentioned both hospital and district of origin while 8.3% mentioned, for example, where one's mother was staying at the time of birth, and the rest 3.3% said they were not sure. This shows how people fill different thing on this particular question and its relevance was not well captured by the respondents.

According to the responses, it is relevant in that it helps in identification of nationals from non-nationals. One respondent emphatically stressed that it can help to deploy some one very well especially where the language is fitting. From the researcher's observation, this inquiry for a person's place of birth/tribe has some advantages as the respondents have tried to point out. However, it is also disadvantageous on the applicant's side especially if it leads the penal into subjective judgment when making a choice of a suitable recruit.

The study further tried to establish the impact of identifying one's place of birth/tribe at recruitment stage on the recruitment process. The responses are given in table 26 below.

Table 26: The Impact of Identifying One’s Place of Birth/Tribe to the Recruitment Exercise.

Impact of Identifying Place of Birth/Tribe	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Impacts on Recruitment	31	51.7
Has no impact on Recruitment	27	45
Not sure	2	3.3
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 26, 51.7% of the respondents agreed that asking somebody for their place of birth/tribe when applying for a Public Service job impacts on the candidate because it leads to bias along ethnic lines, while 45% said it doesn’t citing the advantages already mentioned above. 3.3% of the respondents were not sure whether it impacts or it doesn’t.

The study also looked into the appropriateness of the DSC in combating unemployment in Uganda and the responses are as shown in table 27.

Table 27: Appropriateness of the District Service Commission in Combating Unemployment in Uganda

Response	No of respondents	Percentage
Appropriate	9	15
Not appropriate	50	83.3
Not sure	1	1.7
Total	60	100

Source: Field data

From table 27, it can be easily seen that the DSC is not the appropriate way of combating unemployment in Uganda as stressed by 83.3% of the respondents. It’s only 15% of the respondents who argued that the DSC could be an appropriate institution/body for combating unemployment in Uganda. However, only 1.7% of the respondents said they were not sure.

Respondents who said it's not an appropriate mechanism of combating unemployment argued that the body is very small and it should be the MFPED to do this not the DSC. This corroborates what Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, (1984) had established that the act of devolving the employment function to local jurisdictions does not ensure more rational employment policies nor improve the capacity to implement such policies significantly. Increased reliance on local governments to undertake an expanding array of governmental functions is likely to strain local government capacities; not least the capacity to establish rational employment policies.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The conclusions and recommendations emanate from the study's set objectives.

5.2 Conclusions

It is clear that the concept of decentralization and its objectives are well understood in the local governments. The problems in implementation therefore can be attributed to other factors and not poor understanding of the concept per se. For example, almost every respondent knew that decentralization is supposed to bring services closer to the people and to devolve powers. Therefore failure of the policy to achieve the objectives for which it was designed should be blamed on other factors such as corruption and/or sectarianism and not on the misunderstanding of the policy by those implementing it or the beneficiaries.

Further, although decentralization was well understood amongst the respondents, the concept of personnel decentralization in particular is not yet clear not only to the local community but also to the district Civil Service personnel. As such the impact that personnel decentralization has had on recruitment and HRM in local governments remains ambiguous to many people. The government seems to have played a passive role in educating people about the concept of personnel decentralization. It is surprising that the civil servants who are the implementers of the policy do not understand all its components.

Also, much as the principle of merit is upheld in Gulu district local government, at times those who are responsible for recruitment ignore it. This is seen when people start recruiting their sons and daughters as indicated by some respondents. Although the law provides that the merit principle should be upheld all the time and that Public Service jobs are competed for by people of all backgrounds, districts have tended to favour relatives, sons and daughters of the soil disregarding what the law provides.

It is, important to stress that according to what many respondents from this study believe, Gulu district is unique compared to other districts of Uganda. It is unique in a sense that although to a

small extent corruption and tribal tendencies surface, to a large extent merit-based recruitment and the ‘son and daughter’ of the soil syndrome have been minimized. However, such an assertion is difficult to qualify considering the nature of corruption in our society today, which is normally not open and exposed so easily due to several factors.

5.3 Recommendations

From the presentations, discussions and conclusions of this study, the researcher makes several recommendations, which she thinks once effected can help create a multi-ethnic Civil Service free of corruption and tribal sentiments.

Importantly, training for competence should always be carried out. This should focus on both technical as well as moral competence. The DSC should be trained in recruitment exercises so that they are able to hire well-trained human resources at all levels. The argument that there is generally a shortage of trained personnel does not hold given the fact that there are many unemployed graduates. The recruitment exercise should be just, free from nepotism and tribalism and qualification oriented (Munyonyo, 1999).

Also, sensitization needs to be promoted at all levels concerning the national purpose of personnel decentralization in particular and decentralization programme as a whole. From the study, it came out clearly that civil servants’ understanding of personnel decentralization is still questionable and therefore routine sensitization about its meaning and intended objectives can be helpful to them. There is need for attitudinal change amongst all nationals; the mentality that one will not be recruited for a job in another district even when it’s not explicitly stated anywhere should be discouraged. Job seekers should be encouraged to apply for jobs in any district, and DSCs must be in position to short-list, interview and recruit all qualified persons on merit without any prejudice.

There is a need to improve on the representation of the members of DSCs. As found out from the study, the DSCs are regionally unbalanced. People from within the district dominate three quarters of the DSC. This is partly due to the misconception of personnel decentralization (i.e. giving districts full independence and autonomy), and partly due to policy failure that provides

for the decentralization of personnel, as it does not streamline some of these issues. The criteria of selecting members of the DSCs need to be revisited. Currently, members are appointed by LCs and approved by PSC. This has led to cases of influence peddling and conflicting loyalties as members 'fight' to keep their jobs in the next terms at the expense of service delivery and nationalism. Appointment of DSCs should be centralized (should have a national pool), to ensure regional balance and eliminate issues of tribalism in the Public Service. Members of the DSCs should also be transferable; this will promote impartiality, incorruptibility, and integrity, hence, creating public trust in the system; and give members exposure of the different situations that they may face.

In addition, districts should be able to co-opt other members from other districts to carry out recruitment especially where conflicting interests may arise.

There is need to emphasize recruitment based on merit and not political/religious patronage/ethnic identity. The PSC and DSCs should endeavour to put aside/revisit things and issues that create bias in the recruitment exercise, a case in point is the PSC Form 3 that could unknowingly lead to prejudice. Questions like an applicant's place of birth, tribe should be avoided especially at the recruitment stage. They can only be sought out after the applicant has been employed. It's more relevant to find out the nationality of applicants than their ethnic backgrounds for purposes of national planning.

There is need for the DSCs to report to the PSC. It emerged from the study that failure to report to the PSC has been responsible for the rampant corruption and tribalism in the districts. The co-ordination, mentoring, monitoring and supervisory role of the PSC should be reinforced to ensure that DSCs act within the set guidelines and policies. Alternatively, an independent body should be established to audit the performance of the DSCs and the PSC to avoid cases of corruption.

Remuneration of personnel in the Civil Service needs to be improved; incentives and fringe benefits (housing, medical care, e.t.c) should be introduced/encouraged to make Public Service jobs attractive and to motivate personnel. It is partly due to poor salaries and lack of incentives that people cannot work in districts different from theirs. Once salaries are improved and benefits introduced, especially for the people who work in distant districts, people will settle even in

outside districts and the concept of personnel decentralization will carry more meaning. Local governments should step-up their lobbying capacities to involve other development partners to fund some of these activities like housing, medical care to reduce stress on their meager resources. Such projects and facilities will help to market local governments, hence attracting and retaining qualified personnel in the Civil Service.

In particular reference to Gulu district and the northern districts as a whole, there is need to improve on the security situation so that people can be attracted to work in the districts. As it emerged from the study, the political instability that destabilized the region for over twenty years scared off the would-be potential workers in the district and the impression even today is that the region is still politically unstable. As such people cannot go there for work. Improving the security situation therefore will be a move towards the right direction as far as attracting competent and qualified personnel in the district is concerned. Finding a lasting solution to the insecurity will rule out its impact on personnel recruitment.

Local governments should come up with an exchange programme where personnel from one district move to another district to work for a particular period of time. This will enhance capacity building, widen exposures and foster national unity.

The role of the MoLG with regard to spearheading the decentralization process should be strengthened, to ensure consistency in the approaches by the various sector ministries and local governments. The MoLG should strengthen its regulatory role vis-à-vis local governments that do not adhere to rules and regulations. Regular supervisory visits to local governments should be encouraged to assess adherence to set policies for service delivery and quality standards. The MoLG should coordinate capacity building for local governments and set, in consultation with MoPS and sector ministries, policies for HRM and Human Resource Development in local governments.

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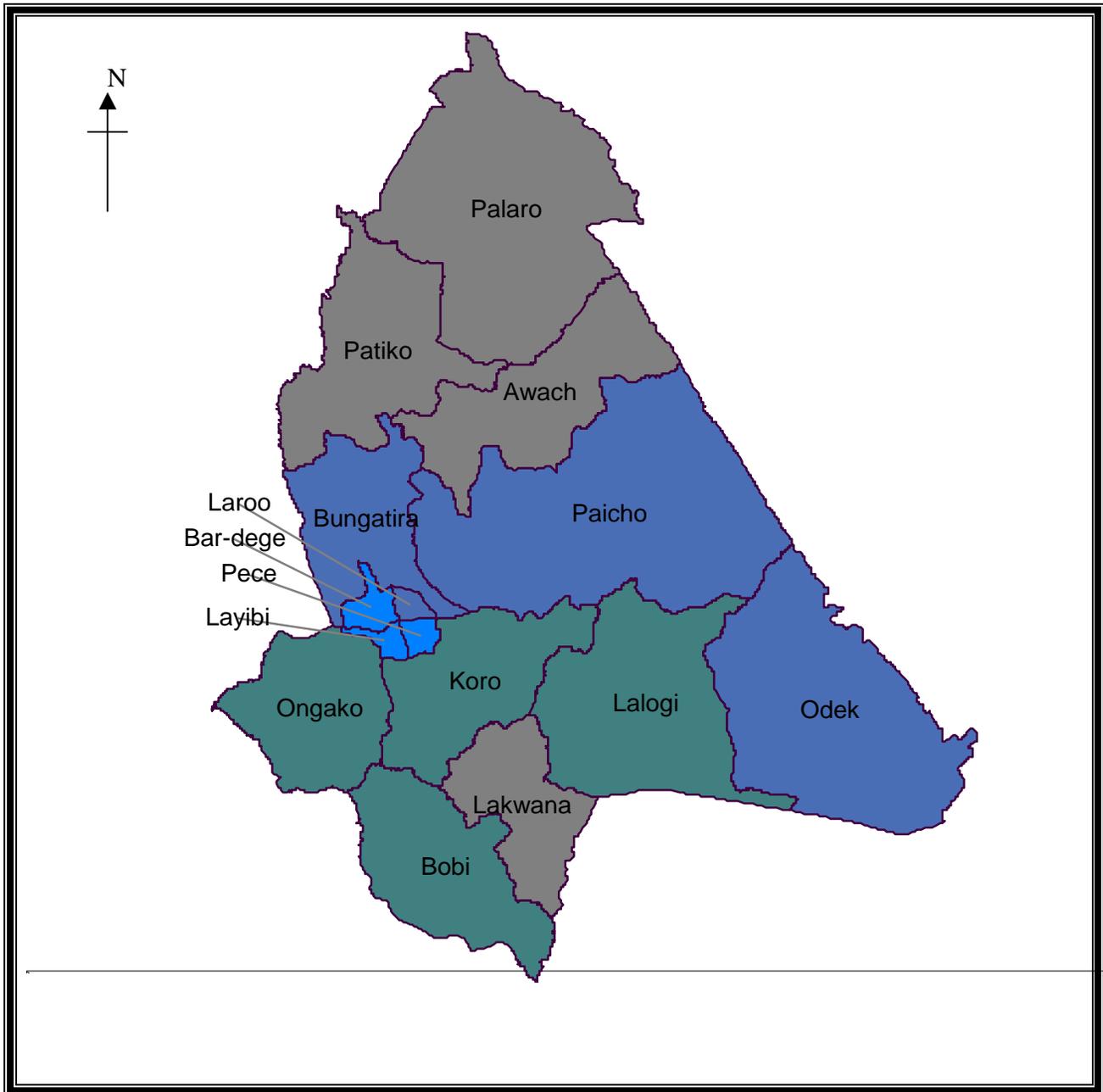
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Appendix B

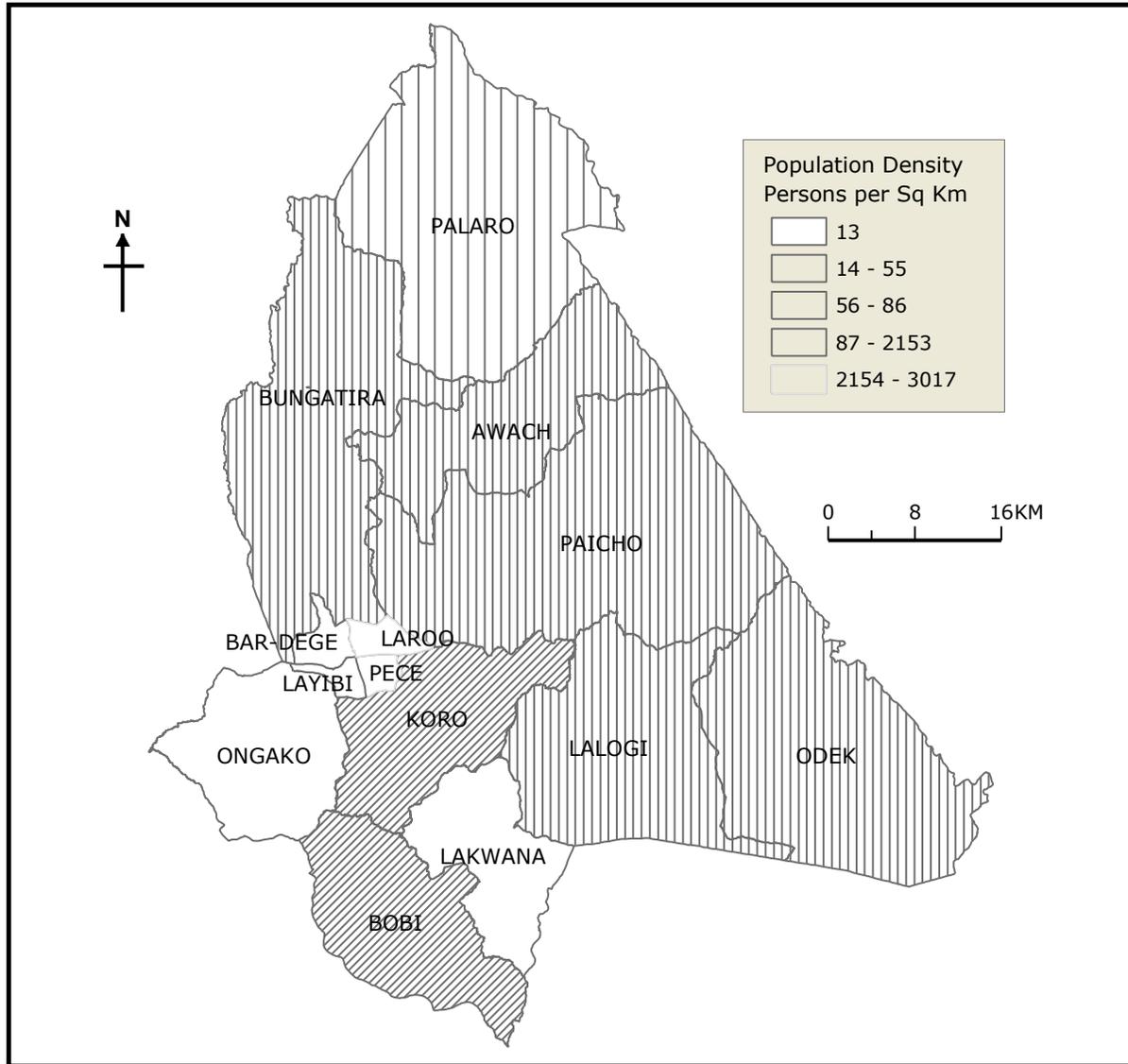
MAP OF GULU DISTRICT SHOWING MAJOR ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS



Source: Gulu District Planning Unit

Appendix C

MAP OF GULU DISTRICT SHOWING POPULATION DENSITY



Source: Gulu District Planning Unit.

Appendix D

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS UNDER DECENTRALIZATION

The purpose of this questionnaire / interview guide is to collect data for scientific analysis on the challenges of personnel recruitment in the local government Civil Service under the decentralization system in Uganda. You have been selected at random to give information about the topic. The information you give will be purely for the purpose of the study and will not in anyway be associated with you. Your right to anonymity and confidentiality will be protected.

Instructions:

This questionnaire is divided into two sections A&B; please attempt to answer all questions.

Please indicate your answers by ticking or filling in where applicable.

Section A

Background information

1. a) What is your sex

Male Female

2. What is your tribe / ethnic background?

3. What is your place of birth?

4. What is your district of origin?

5. What is your nationality?

6. What is your educational background?

Primary Secondary HSC

Certificate Diploma University or equivalent

Others (specify)

7. In which department do you work?

Education Health Works

Others (specify).....

8 .What is your job title?

9. For how long have you been working at this job? 0-5 6-10 11-15 16-20
20+

10. When did you join Gulu District Local Government?

11. How did you came to join district local government

Application Transferred Appointed decentralized

Others (specify).....

12. What is your current employment status?

Temporary Probation confirmed Acting

Section B

Decentralization

13. What do you understand by the form decentralization?

14. What are the objectives of decentralization?

15. Do you think decentralization promotes any of the following: -

Good governance Yes No

Democratic accountability Yes No

National unity Yes No

16. What do you understand by personnel decentralization?

17. What are the objectives of personnel decentralization?

18. Do you think personnel decentralization enhances any of the following?

Good governance Yes No

Performance Yes No

Service delivery Yes No

Local capacity building Yes No

National unity Yes No

Personnel recruitment

19. What impact has the decentralization of personnel had on the recruitment of staff in your district?

20. How are staffs recruited in the district service?

21. Who takes part in the recruitment process in your district? (List them)

22. What role do you play in the recruitment process in your district?

23. What role do the Local Council executives play in the district recruitment process?

24. What role to the area Members of Parliament play in the district recruitment process?

25. What role do the Opinion Leaders play in the district recruitment process?

26. What is the role of the District Service Commission in the recruitment process?

27. Do you consider the District Service Commission credible in its recruitment mandate?

Yes No (go to b)

a) If yes, how credible?

Highly Fairly poorly

ii) Give reasons for your answer above.....

b) If No, why not?.....

28. What is the staffing level in your department?

Fully staffed Averagely staffed Under staffed

b) Give reasons for your answer above.....

29.a) Do you consider the local government public service to have a national character?

Yes No

b) Give reasons for your answer above.....

30.a) It has been alleged that personnel decentralization promotes tribalism, do you agree?

Yes No

b) Give reasons for your answer above.....

31. What are the benefits of personnel decentralization? (List them)

32. What are the disadvantages of personnel decentralization? (List them)

33. What are the challenges facing personnel decentralization in your district?.....

34. Can you suggest ways of how the above problems can be overcome?.....

Principle of Merit

35. What is the principle of merit in personnel recruitment?.....

36. What is the importance of the merit principle in personnel recruitment?.....

37. Does your district uphold the merit principles in its recruitment process?

Yes No (go to c)

b) If yes, how often?

Always Sometimes Rarely

c) If no, why?.....

38. How can the principle of merit be upheld in the local governments?

39. Are you familiar with PSC form 3?

Yes No

a) If yes, what is it?.....

b) If no, why?.....

40. Of what relevance is the PSC form 3 in the recruitment of personnel in local governments?

41. What does questions (3) of the PSC form 3 regarding “place of birth” require a candidate to fill?

Hospital District of origin

Others (specify).....

42. What is the relevance of “place of birth” to the recruitment process?.....

a) Does it impact on the candidate’s application in any way?

Yes No

b) If yes, how?.....

b) If no, why?.....

43. How appropriate is the DSC in combating unemployment in Uganda?

44. Suggest ways in which local governments can create and sustain a multi-ethnic Civil Service system based on merit?

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DSC, LCV REPRESENTATIVE, HEADS OF DEPARTMENT,
PERSONNEL OFFICERS AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Position held by officer/ department.....
2. For how long you worked in this position.....
3. What is your employment status?
Temporary Probation confirmed Acting
Others (specify).....
4. What is the staffing level in your district?
Fully staffed.....Averagely staffed.....Under staffed.....
5. What is your level of education?
6. How many employees do you have under your supervision?
7. How many of those employees are: -
Qualified Unqualified Confirmed Temporary
Probation Acting.....
8. How many vacancies do you have in your department/ district?
9. Why are the positions not filled?
10. What challenges do you face in attracting qualified personnel under decentralization in your district?
11. How can this be overcome?
12. Who are responsible for the recruitment of staff in the district?
13. What role do you play in the recruitment process in the district?

14. What role do the Local Council executives play in the district recruitment process?
15. What role do the area Members of Parliament play in the district recruitment process?
16. What role do the Opinion Leaders play in the district recruitment process?
17. What is the role of the District Service Commission in the recruitment process?
18. What procedure is followed in the recruitment of staff?
19. What guidelines / policies do you follow when recruiting personnel?
20. What kind of training or mentoring have you received or undertaken regarding personnel recruitment?
21. What is the principle of merit in personnel recruitment?
22. Of what significance is the principle in personnel recruitment?
23. How often is the principle considered when recruiting personnel in your district?
24. When should the merit principle be regarded in personnel recruitment?
25. When should it be disregarded?
26. How can the principle of merit be upheld in personnel recruitment under decentralization in local governments?
27. What do you understand by decentralization?
28. What are the objectives of decentralization?
29. It is alleged that decentralization is aimed at making districts fully independent autonomous units as states within a state, what is your take on this?
30. Do you think decentralization promotes any of the following and how?

Good governance, Democratic accountability, National unity
31. What is personnel decentralization?

32. What are the objectives of personnel decentralization?

33. Do you think personnel decentralization enhances any of the following and how?

Good governance, Performance, Service delivery, Local capacity building, National unity

34. What impact has the decentralization of personnel had on the recruitment of staff in your district?

35. How credible is the District Service Commission in its recruitment mandate?

36. It has been observed that districts only recruit “sons and daughters of the soil” what has been your district experience?

37. It is alleged that personnel decentralization promotes tribalism / ethnicity, what is your take on this?

38. It has been observed that job seekers do not respond to advertisements that will require their ethnic identity, what has been your district experience?

39. In your opinion, what is the character of the local government Civil Service in Uganda why?

40. How appropriate is the PSC form 3 in the recruitment of staff in local governments?

41. What does question (3) regarding ‘place of birth/tribe’ require an applicant to fill?

42. Of what relevance is it “place of birth/tribe” to the exercise?

43. What influence does it have in the recruitment process?

44. How appropriate is the DSC in combating unemployment in Uganda?

45. Suggest ways in which local governments can create and sustain a multi-ethnic Civil Service system based on merit?