

**ANALYZING THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN SERVICE DELIVERY BY LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS: THE CASE OF GULU DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN
UGANDA**

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RS20M54/205

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

May, 2024



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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Abstract

The study analyzed the role of public relations in the delivery of public services under the Gulu district local government. The Excellence theory of Grunig and Hunt (1984), together with the system theory of Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1940) and Roger's Diffusion theory of innovation (1962) informed the analytical framework of this study.

In the case of Gulu district local government, the study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches where 243 respondents were sampled using purposive and convenience sampling to select the participants.

The study found out that Gulu district local government had access to eleven Frequency Modulation Radio stations that they normally use to communicate public goods and services to the community in Gulu district. The study also found that there was an increase in hand washing practice because of involving the community through sensitization using different communication platforms.

The study concluded that most programs under study never had communication feedback strategy in build in them to support the beneficiaries in the community to give their feedback on a particular program, therefore , the study recommended that Gulu district local government should develop a feed-back communication strategy for all public goods and services as embedded under the water and road sector related activities which provides feedback to the district and community on areas which needs improvement especially through the water source committees and Community Based Labour Intensive Model of Road maintenance that keeps communication alive even after a program or project is achieved.

The implication of this study in public relations is that when PR in local governments or any entity has deliberate feedback mechanisms embedded in all programming, the input of the community, beneficiaries on the services or goods provided to them as end users could support service delivery if the service providers (local government) give an action respond on the feedback of the end users (community). The study agreed that through this approach, public relations can improve service delivery at any settings in local governments.

Declaration

I, **Ojok James Onono**, hereby declare that this is my original work, is not plagiarized and has never been submitted at any other institution for any award.

SIGNATURE 

DATE May,12th,2024.


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Approval

This is to approve that this research has been carried out by Ojok James Onono, a Master of Arts in Strategic Communication student at Uganda Christian University.

PROF. KIWANUKA-TONDO JAMES

SIGNATURE..........DATE ...15-05-24.....

SUPERVISOR

Dedication

Passionately inscribed with love for my late mother, Lamunu Catherine and Lamunu, my daughter in memory!

I also dedicate this book to my inspirational father Onono John and Lamunu Alice my second mother plus all my siblings Acan Dorothy, Omona Francis Xavier, Odong Michael Onono, Komakech Wilfred Onono, Aryemo Anna, Oyella Jane Sandra, Akot Judith, Auma Agness, Adong Magret, Akello Gloria, Adoch Lucy Esther . You are all special!

Acknowledgement

The production of this work would not be possible without the invaluable support of so many people. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of people who have been part of this incredible journey right from the start.

First and foremost, to God the almighty father; the giver of all knowledge and wisdom and the guarantor of life and to my family and siblings whose moral and material support in my journey of life has been so incredible.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of my Research Supervisor Prof. Kiwanuka-Tondo James. Your professional guidance in the process of this research was exceptional. The entire team at the School of Journalism and Communication of Uganda Christian University, both non-teaching and teaching, you are highly recognized for your support in this journey.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of Gulu University management who provided the financial support to see this study to completion. I also thank my office supervisor, Prof. Openjuru George Ladaah, the Gulu University Vice-Chancellor for the kind understanding during the entire study process. The Choice Fm Family and Mega Fm family, you are all recognized including Northern Uganda Media (NUMEC).

Allow me also thank the office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Gulu, for giving me the green light to carry out the research in Gulu District Local Government. Lastly Tony Okello, the Director of Equator Seeds Company Limited, my friend turned brother, I salute you for your support towards me always.

May God bless you all abundantly.

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List Of Abbreviations

UNRA	Uganda National Road Authority
LG	Local Government
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
PR	Public Relations
UCU	Uganda Christian University
UCUREC	Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
DHO	District Health Officer
NUMEC	Northern Uganda Media Club
NGOS	Non-Governmental Organizations
COVID-VAC	Corona Virus Vaccination.
COVID19 SOPS	Corona Virus Standard Operating Procedures
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
SACCOs	Saving and Credit Cooperative Organization or Society

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this research was to analyze the critical role played by public relations in creating better understanding between local governments and the public. Effective communication can promote social harmony and develop confidence between local governments and those receiving the services (Njuru, 2011). Unless communication is managed strategically and professionally, there will be serious disconnect between the citizens and the public servants working in public institutions like local governments and this may likely affect the delivery of public services and goods (Cornelissen, 2020). Furthermore, it is believed that public relations can play a role in improving governance and the delivery of services to the poor including; improving efficiency, accountability, and transparency, and reducing bribery (Mbogo, 2011).

A number of studies recognize the potential benefits of public relations (Kauzya 2007). For instance, Ropers and Hurst (2019) suggest that PR can function as the cross-sectoral glue between private, publics and government to tackle societal problems. However, they also point out that it has not been easy to harness this potential. This research analyzed the role of public relations in the delivery of public services and goods in Gulu District Local Government.

This chapter presented the background of the study organized into four categories; the historical background, the contextual background and the conceptual background, Statement of the problem purpose and objective of the study, the research questions and hypothesis, scope of the study, the significance of the study, the conceptual framework, and the operationalization of terminologies.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Historical Background

The origin of Public Relations (PR) is a hotly debated topic (L'Etang, 2004). Despite the lack of a unified position as regards its origin, there is a generally accepted notion that the foundations of public relations date back to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians (Moore, 1985).

However; the current practices of public relations are informed by the twentieth century phenomenon of public relations that came into play largely due to the advent of the industrial revolution in the United States of America and Europe (Heath & Coombs, 2006; Jaques, 2010). Over the years, the ever-changing nature and scope of the practice of public relations reflects the evolving roles of organizations in society (Ihlen & van Ruler, 2007).

Most importantly, the need for public relations had gained prominence over the last few decades resulting from an increase in competition among multinationals and the need for a positive public image at the global stage (Petersen, 2010). A case in point involves multinational companies like Coca-Cola, international banks and sporting franchises which are expanding their businesses across frontiers into newer territories while applying public relations to build relationships with their target publics (Taylor, 2000). Consequently, the ever-growing world economy calls for more trade between the different nations thus creating the need to sensitize, support, publicize and promote governments' development projects in the more internationalized practices of PR (Tindall, 2010).

The field of study of public relations is continuously evolving without a consensus in definition of its boundary, changing nature or theoretical underpinnings embraced by both practitioner and scholars (Curtin, 2012; Edwards, 2012; Greenwood, 2010). As a result, public relations research is informed by a different set of assumptions, values and worldviews that are continuously a subject of debate (Davidson, 2016; Russell & Lamme, 2016).

Meanwhile, the history and origins of local governments can be traced back to pre-colonial Uganda through the colonial times and currently into the post-colonial Uganda (Mamdani, 1976). Prior to colonization, each tribal group organized under a kingdom for example Buganda, Bunyoro and many other kingdoms in Africa had highly centralized hierarchical systems whereas the chiefdoms such as in the parts of Northern, North Eastern and South Western Uganda were administered by decentralized systems of governance and the power was held by clan heads (Kauzya, 2007).

When the colonialists came in, the kingdoms and chiefdoms systems of administration were subdued, galvanized and brought under one central government; the colonial government. Subsequently, at independence, the newly independent nations Uganda inclusive inherited

centralized systems of governance from the colonial masters (Lubanga, 1996). It was until the Structural Adjustment programs funded by the World Bank set in that a new wave of events unfolded in many nations not only in the west but also in the developing countries. (Mamdani, 2001).

The post-independence Uganda experienced policy change from decentralization (1962 – 1966) the back to centralization (1967 – 1985) and finally decentralization again in the latest phase (1986 – date). The 1995 constitution and the Local Government Act 1997 have given decentralization a legal mandate after a series of administrative and political considerations and debates (Kauzya, 2007).

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

The Excellence theory of Grunig and Hunt (1984), together with the systems theory of Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1940) and Roger's Diffusion theory of innovation (1962) informed the analytical framework of this study. Together these theories helped us to understand how organizations are better managed in their environments through modern PR practices.

The excellence theory stresses that good PR is associated with increasing value of organizations. If the organization establishes and maintains good relationships with their strategic publics, then, they can work towards developing and achieving organizational goals and reducing the costs of negative publicity (Grunig & Grunig, 2008).

Grunig and Hunt, (1984), under the Excellence Theory model postulate that PR practices fall in one of four categories based on two matrixes; the first either one-way or two-way communication and the second either asymmetrical or symmetrical model. Grunig and Hunt further purport that the two-way symmetrical model serves as not just the normative model but also as the most ethical way to practice PR (Grunig and Hunt, 1984).

Grunig and Hunt (1984) and Esman (2006), posit that there are linkages between the organization and the environment. Esman (2006) further identifies four types of linkages that are critical for an organization's to survival within its environment and these include; enabling linkages, functional linkages, normative linkages, and diffused linkages which describe the authority and the resources that enable the organization to exist, such as stockholders, congress,

state legislators, community leaders, functional linkages which are further divided into input linkages which are the internal publics such as employees and output linkages which include external publics members of the community, consumers and service users, normative linkages are a group of organizations that face similar problems or share similar values, such as political groups and diffused linkages are linkages that cannot clearly be identified.

However, the symmetric and asymmetric models of PR proposed in the Excellence theory have motivated more researchers to assess how PR is practiced and despite its association with ethical and effective communication (Grunin, 1992), it has been accused of being largely ideal and misrepresenting the communication process where self-interest is responsible for the nature of PR adopted in reality (L'Etang, 1996).

The systems theory as proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1940) is grounded in the interaction between an organization and its environment and among the organizational sub-systems (Roger 1990). Thus, it provides a useful framework for conceptualizing organizational effectiveness in PR between the organization and its public which is achieved through building and maintaining relationships between the sub-systems. This way the system helps expound on how the PR can contribute towards organizational effectiveness a role it cannot fulfill alone (Grunig et al. 1992).

Meanwhile the Diffusion Theory also referred to as the Diffusion of Innovations theory breaks down the process of how people perceive, process and decide in regards to new information and products. Diffusion in regards to the diffusion theory is defined as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system (Rogers, 1962).

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

The term public relations is not a neutral concept but one that implies different meanings in the various cultural perspectives; for example, in communication theory, public relations is characterized as an applied science and management discipline (Piecza & L'Etang, 2006) and Cutup, et.al, (1985), posits that public relations is the management function tasked with identifying, establishing and maintains mutually beneficial relationship between an organization

and the various publics and it's upon this relationship that the success or failure of the organization in question depends. Meanwhile, Gregory, (2008) highlighted how the confusion regarding the terminology and role definition had culminated in a disjointed body of literature characterized by the overlapping use of terms including roles, capabilities and competencies has developed.

Essentially, public relations is concerned with positively and systematically using actions and communications to influence the attitudes, opinions, belief, interest and behavior of members of the public in a given or desired direction some of which include adopting good environmental behavior as well as building lasting credibility and reputation for individuals and corporate entities like profit or non-profit organizations and even nations, states, local government or communities (Nwosu & Uffoh, 2006).

In addition, Webster (1992) argues that PR is also concerned with the promotion of rapport and goodwill between persons, firms or institutions, and other persons, special publics or the community at large through the distribution of interpretative materials, the development of neighborly interchange and assessment of public relations.

The founding father of modern public relations Bernays working with Ivy Lee defined public relations as the management function which tabulate public attitude, define the policies, procedures and interest of an organization which is then followed by the execution of a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

The International Public Relations Institute (IPRI), in their all-embracing definition of public relations define it as the management function of a continuing and planned character through which public and private organizations and institutions seek to win and retain the understanding, sympathy and support of those with whom they are or may be concerned by evaluating public opinion about themselves in order to correlate as far as possible their policies and procedure to achieves by plan and wide spread information about more productive cooperatives and more efficient fulfillment of their common interest (Ola, 2014).

Meanwhile, the OECD (2020), defines public communication as any communication activity or initiative led by public institutions for the public good. This can include the provision of information, as well as consultation and dialogue with stakeholders.

Offonri, (1985), defines PR as the business of creating and maintaining public understanding and support through effective communications. This definition builds on the point that both lack of understanding and inadequate information can bring about the down fall of governments, organizations, business and individuals while essential information and proper interpretation of plans and programs can culminate in public acceptance and goodwill between the public and the organization.

Moss, (1990), defines publics in the context of PR as a group of people bound together by a common interest that is specific to them and their situation. Meanwhile, Molte, (1974), defines publics as everyone interested in, or affected by an organization. Cutlip and Broom, (1985), on the other hand define public as a collective noun for a group of individuals tied together by some common bond of interest and sharing a sense of commonness.

Osuji, (1990), classifies the public within the LG into two broad categories; the internal public which he classifies as being made up of employees and their trade unions and the external public which includes the autonomous communities, traditional rulers and towns unions, contractors, opinion leaders in the communities, banks, school children, teachers, traders and the business communities and the LG electorate.

Johntson and Zawawi (2004), states that PR is “the ethical and strategic management of communication and relationship in order to build and develop coalitions and policy, identify and manage issues and create messages to achieve sound outcomes within a socially responsible framework” Similarly, Mersham et.al, (1995) cited in Sriramesh, (2003), defines public relations as the management, through communication, of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organization and its internal and external stakeholders.

According to Jekins (1985), cited in Arowsegbe (2005), they define public relations as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Bernays, (2013), describes public relations as a way of

persuading the public to provide support to an institution, an activity or a movement. In a similar fashion, Hallahan, (2010), refers to PR as any actions that contribute to the attainment of suitable opinions.

Regarding the concept of 'publics', the term refers to all groups whose activities affect an organization while they are also being affected by the activities of the organization. Similarly, Nwodu, (2007), broadly defines publics as various individual; internal or external and or communal or corporate entities who one way or the other, affect and are being affected by the operations or activities of an organization which could be corporate, government agency or public institution. Lattimore, (2004), stresses that publics imply groups that are almost always important to an organization.

It is implied that no organization exists as an island because to exist and function effectively, there must be a group of people impacted upon by the existence of an organization and whose actions also equally impact upon the survival of the organization. It is thus good practice to term the various clusters of populations whose activities affect an organization and who are equally affected by the activities of this organization as publics (Nwodu, 2007). Newsom and Carrell (2001) have thus concluded that a public is any group of people tied together by some common factor.

Schramm and Roberts (2009), describe the term public as a specific group of people who concern a situation in a particular time. However, many concepts may be confused with publics for example public is sometimes misused in place of similar words indicating groups of people such as crowd, mass, and or community. Moreover, public is different from community as a narrower concept and public is generally political and forms out of communities and may later develop into a community and grow beyond a single earlier unifying issue. Meanwhile, Moffit defined the public as a group of people who have a relationship with and an importance to an organization.

Grunig and Hunt, (1984), stress that a 'general public' is logically impossible and instead, publics are always specific and face some common problems. Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt share the same sentiments and describe the public as a group of people who face a common issue.

PR does not apply the term public simply as an antonym for private but instead uses it to imply the relationship between the organization and its involvement with the stakeholders in its environment. Besides, in regards to PR, the word public is sometimes used in its plural form as publics a jargon within the field to imply multiple groups of public. Meanwhile, the word public is also often substituted with other words such as audiences and or consumers depending on the situation and context at hand.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Asunta, (2016), emphasizes the role of effective public relations in enhancing sensitization of the government development projects. He further stresses that in cases of adverse publicity or case of crises facing the government, advanced public relations can be employed to mitigate the ongoing misunderstandings and develop mutual understandings between the government and the public.

The (OECD), (2017), report stressed that public communication can play a fundamental role in bridging the divide between governments and citizens. Besides political discourse, the discipline of public relations allows the public to gain access to relevant information and provides an opening and opportunity for citizens' engagements and dialogue with the administrative units around matters that affect the communities. This function can thus enable government build trust and raise awareness around key reforms and change behavior. Furthermore, is well designed, PR can promote greater transparency and participation, making it a key pillar of successful open government reforms.

According to Mbeke, (2011), PR is a critical component in the resolution of conflicts within organization or different groups. Besides, PR also plays a key role in directing the entity towards the achievement of its goals particularly in maintaining the reputation and or marketing of their products and services.

Bronn, (2014), contends that in Africa, investing in PR is important in assisting the government institutions to accomplish each objective smoothly and effective. In the same context, Van Heerden and Rensburg (2009), opine that PR does not only motivate public involvement but also culminates in better sensitization of government projects.

Kayode, (2014), argues that public relations is a unique management function that is important in establishing and maintaining mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organizations and their respective publics. Particularly, public relations serve a number of roles amongst which are; informing and responding to public opinion, defining and emphasizing the responsibility of management to serve the public interest and serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends.

Lattimore et al, (2004), stress that the field of PR practice is too broad extending from for-profit and non-profit organizations, institutions, governments, communities, groups and even high up individuals. Further, they argue that much of the communication efforts by PR practitioners is both persuasive and purposive.

According to Nwodu, (2007), it is proper to term a combination of different groups of people who affect and are also affected by the activities of an establishment as 'publics' since no organization exists as an island. Thus, for the existence and effective functioning of an organization, there must be certain groups who are impacted upon by the existence of the organization and who also act to impact on the survival of the organization.

There is an increase in the adoption of PR within government establishments. The ministries, corporations and parastatals widely reflect facets of PR within their ranks. This is important as the PR exercises help project their image, achieve, promote and maintain their goals, objectives, missions and visions of the government bodies (Oyekola, 1995).

Within the Local Government (LG) settings, the PR department falls under the Local Government Council and should be situated within the council's headquarters. The PR department fully participates in all activities of the LG to promote and influence these activities. The PR department is tasked with information sharing and engagement to educate the public on LG policies, projects and activities. This can be achieved through LG exhibitions, rural tours by the council members, press conferences with local press, and designing, printing and circulating of LG leaflets including brochures and flyers are part of the duties of the PR department in the local council.

The establishment of local governments in Uganda through decentralization drives was not simply driven by local political drives and agendas but instead a part of the larger global Decentralization Policy in Africa, Asia and the rest of the World under the World Bank-backed Structural Adjustments programs filled with political and fiscal devolution (Martinez-Vazquez & Vaillacourt, 2011). Having been designated as part of the New Public Management reforms, decentralization became a prerequisite for both the developed and developing countries to access aid and thus was unavoidable for the developing countries.

In Uganda, the Local Governments are established and governed under the Constitution of the republic of Uganda of 1995 and the Local Governments Act of 1997; the former in Article 176 (1) stipulates that: “The system of local government in Uganda shall be based on the district as a unit under which there shall be such lower local governments and administrative units as parliament may by law provide”. Similarly, Article 176 (2) b specifies that “decentralization shall be the principle applying to all local government and in particular, from higher to lower local government units to ensure people’s participation and democratic control in decision making” (The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995). In tandem with these constitutional provisions, the local government system in Uganda is based on the district as a unit, under which there are lower local governments and administrative units which include the; district council and sub county councils in rural districts, city council and city division councils at city level and municipal council and municipal division councils at municipality level and below these councils are parishes, zones, villages and wards (The Local Government Act, 1997).

In practice, it is notable that the ‘publics’ of any organization are diverse and include a number of individuals and or groups that are in some form of ‘homeostatic’ relationship with the organizations where exchanges are ongoing on a number of fronts. The public constitutes the audience of a newspaper, magazine or television station. Besides, it may also constitute groups of employees, communities or consumers who in other words maybe referred to as stakeholders. As such, publics and stakeholders are used interchangeably.

Ndubueze et al. (2019) stresses that strong communication between the LGs and their publics creates trust among its citizens. This way, citizens can be rallied to support their communities through active involvement and participation in community programs. In addition,

such community engagements keep citizens informed on the projects that affect their livelihoods and wellbeing either as individuals and or as communities in general.

The local government is a structure that provides for the goods and services needed by the people and also brings development and good governance to the local levels (Odiboh, 2019). Moreover, Lee (1961) argues that there cannot be good PR in the absence of public awareness of their activities. PR at the grass root level is an important communication tool for good administrative performance and promotes public appreciation and acknowledgment. However, such communication requires that government first does a good job for the people before engaging in PR works to call such work to attention. Further, in order to the public's confidence, respect and support, it is necessary for local governments to be sound and honest.

Gelders & Ihlen, (2010), stress that PR within government settings is dependent upon citizen dialogue for the survival of government institution. They further argue that government cannot have a standing on an issue unless they ensure that there is widespread awareness within the public domain. Through such awareness, the government has an ideal environment within which they can start a communicative process on issues affecting the public. Besides the primary function of informing the public, governments also ought to influence public opinion.

The local government is tasked with the delivery of a number of public services or goods ranging from health promotion services, education, road works and public infrastructure development, water and sanitation among others. This, the government ought to deliver while working with the population to understand their needs and also have the input of the public. This is achievable through the proper PR and community involvement. For the effective delivery of the public goods, the government ought to work hand in hand with their public to agree. To the best of my knowledge, no study has been conducted to establish the effectiveness of PR in the delivery of public services or goods by Gulu District Local government and this will be the first of its kind and will focus on establishing the models of PR adopted for the various programs under the Gulu District Local government, the expertise of the personnel, the challenges and impacts of PR in the delivery of public services and goods.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The role of PR in organizations has been undervalued in many entities and government fares worst as regards this vice despite the massive scope of benefits associated with good PR practices (Kiambi, 2010). Instead, the top administration does not fully recognize the massive potential of PR as a great tool in enhancing service delivery but only looks at PR as an image cleaning venture and they would only need them when there is crisis or for publicity effect (Miller 1999; Russell & Bishop, 2009). PR scholars are also advancing the notion that indeed PR can work beyond defending and managing corporate reputations (Carroll and Olegario, 2020; Fehrer, et.al,2022).

Subsequently, PR within the local governments is underfunded and given less attention and scrutiny than its true value to the organization dictates. Besides, the attitude of management towards PR is Luke-warm and the capacity building programs of the PR function through continuing education, workshops and conferences are widely lacking from the menu of government programs within Gulu district work plan (Webster, 1992).

This way, the local government has failed to fully harness the true potential and benefits of PR because of the vague implementation and as a result the LG cannot further organizational objectives and goals to their best as the relationships with their public are not well managed whilst the communication function also remains largely dysfunctional within the environments they operate (Kayode, 2014).

This study purpose was to establish the current model and practices of PR by the Gulu District Local Government and examined how effectively PR has been used to deliver public service and goods such as health, finance and human development, water and sanitation services, works and other infrastructural development programs to their public.

1.3 Purpose and Objective of the study

The purpose of the study was to analyze the role of public relations in the delivery of public services under the Gulu district local government.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

1. To establish the PR models employed by the Gulu District Local Government.
2. To investigate the expertise and qualification of the staff involved in PR under the Gulu District Local Government.
3. To assess the impact of the PR done by the Gulu District Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services.
4. To investigate the challenges faced by the public relations office/department in Gulu District Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services.

1.4 Research questions/ Hypotheses

The study attempted to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the PR models employed by the Gulu District Local Government?
2. What is the expertise and qualification of the staff involved in PR under the Gulu District Local Government?
3. What is the impact of the PR done by the Gulu District Local Government on the delivery of public goods and services?
4. What are the challenges faced by public relations office/department in Gulu District Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services?

1.4.1 Hypotheses of the study

The study tested the hypotheses stated below;

1. The two-way symmetrical model of PR is associated with the highest effectiveness in the delivery of public goods
2. Communication via radio is associated with the highest effectiveness in the delivery of public goods and services.
3. Having a PR expert running the PR department is associated with the highest effectiveness in delivery of public goods

1.5 Scope of the study

1.5.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in traditional Gulu district under the jurisdiction and governance of Gulu district local government. The areas covered ranged from the two divisions within Gulu Municipality; Layibi and Pece and stretch-out to Bungatira sub-county.

1.5.2 Context Scope

The study was conducted to cover for major thematic areas of PR within the Gulu District LG; the models of PR employed and their PR works, the expertise and qualifications of the PR personnel employed, the impact of the PR work on the delivery of public goods and the challenges faced by the PR department within Gulu District Local Government.

The assessment of thematic areas under study was applied as the analytic frame under five LG programs conducted in the period between January 2017 and December 2021. The programs identified for the study include the;

- Corona Virus prevention through the enforcement of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in 2020 which was decentralized to district level and managed under the local government taskforces at the district level.
- The Corona Virus mass vaccination program that started in late 2021 and continues to date.
- The Water projects.
- Road works, maintenance, repair, and redevelopment projects under the Gulu district LG.
- The Emyooga fund under the Gulu District Local Government and supported by the Microfinance support center.

1.5.3 Time Scope

The study was conducted and covered an assessment of programs implemented by the Gulu district LG over a five-year period ranging from January 2017 to December 2021.

1.6 Justification of the study

The increasing demand for public relation in both private and government institutions, particularly in Gulu district has prompted the researcher to examine the influence of communication in enhancing service delivery and adding knowledge in communication research.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study will be beneficial to a number of individuals and stakeholders; institutions, local governments, the citizen, the PR practitioners.

The local government will be informed about the shortcomings of their PR practice if found and helped make better informed decisions as regards PR.

The public will stand to benefit from improved PR if the management adopts best practices to improve efficiency in the delivery of public services and goods.

The academia and student communities also stand to harness benefits from this work in form of literature sources and reference points to either inform further research or better understanding of concepts of PR.

To the researcher, the study is a pre-requisite for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Strategic Communication of Uganda Christian University, Mukono.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

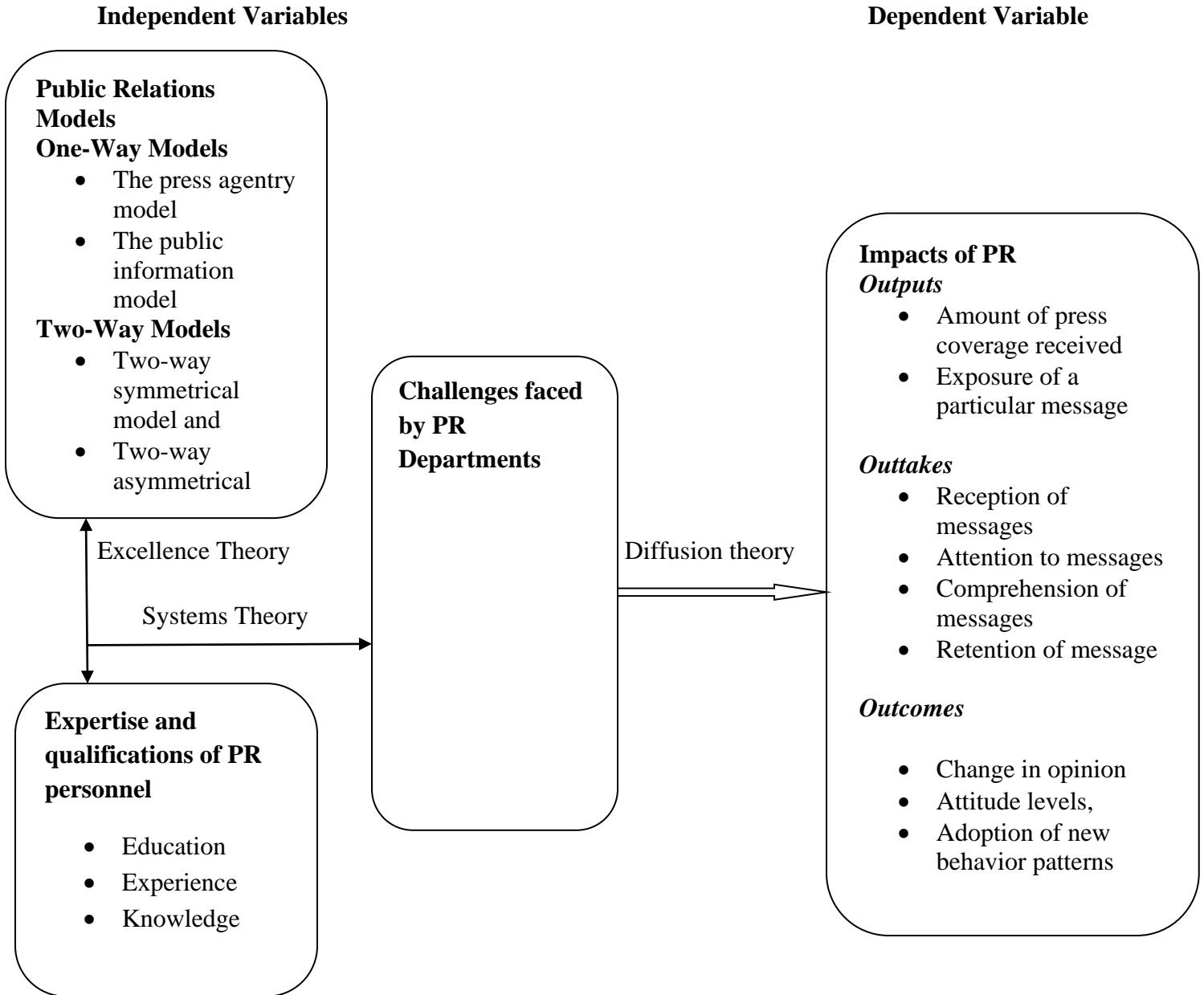


Figure 1: A conceptual Framework showing the relationship between independent variables (models of PR and expertise and qualifications of PR personnel) and dependent variables (impacts of PR)

The conceptual framework of this study explained the interaction between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The independent variables were the model of

PR employed by Gulu District Local Government; the press agency model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model and the two-way symmetrical model and the expertise and qualifications of the PR personnel; knowledge, education and experience. Meanwhile, the dependent variables of the study included the impacts of PR; the outputs, outtakes and outcomes.

From the conceptual framework, the PR model employed by the Local government interacts with the experience and expertise of the PR personnel under the Excellence model. Through the systems approach, the two variable groups under the excellence theory at the center of the local government – public relationship are synthesized as interacting to counter challenges that the relationship between the public and the local government. Finally, the interaction between these culminates in the delivery of information and communication between the local government and the public and for this to be accomplished; a series of stages that are best observed through the lens of the diffusion of innovation theory ought to be fulfilled for the observed impact.

1.9 Operational definitions

Outcomes: A long-term measure of the effectiveness of a particular communications program or activity, by focusing on whether targeted audience groups changed their opinions, attitudes and or behavior patterns as a result of having been exposed to and become aware of messages directed at them.

Outputs: These are short-term or immediate results of a particular communications program or activity, with a prime focus on how well an organization presents itself to others and the amount of exposure it receives. Also, the final stage in the communications production process, resulting in the production and distribution of items such as brochures, media releases, websites and speeches.

Outtakes: the initial reaction of audience to the receipt of communications materials, including whether the audience heeded or responded to a call for information or action within the messages.

Public Relations

This is any communication activity or initiative led by public institutions for the public good including the provision of information, as well as consultation and dialogue with stakeholders.

Public

Refers to a specific group of people who concern a situation at a particular time in this case the local communities of Gulu district who ought to be served by the local governance of the district

Local Government

Local government is a system of governance of a town or an area by elected representatives of the people who live there. A Local government can also mean the organization that is responsible for the government of a local area and for provision of services. In this case a district management will represent the local government unit.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the review of literature for the study; the set of theories adopted as the analytical framework of the study was well expounded in this chapter. The literature is organized thematically in line with the specific objectives of the study. The literature reviewed is accessed from a number of sources including peer reviewed journal articles, year planners, text books, publication from authorities and student theses.

2.2 Theoretical Review

There is no one unifying theory of PR as the practice of PR is multifaceted and should be interpreted through a number of relevant theoretical perspectives. The theoretical underpinnings that inform the relationship between PR practice and its effectiveness in the delivery of public goods are wide ranging and include a number of theories starting with the simple ones through to the highly complex ones. Thus, this study will be underpinned by the Excellence theory of Grunig and Hunt, (1984) and supported by the systems theory of Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1940) and Roger's diffusion of innovations theory of (1962).

The Excellence Theory of Grunig and Hunt (1984) for the first time offered a set of generic principles for effective public relations practice, applicable across different cultural perspectives and orientations which included; involvement of PR in strategic management, empowerment of PR in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management, integrated PR function, PR as a management function separate from other functions, the role of the PR practitioner, two-way symmetrical model of PR, a symmetrical system of internal communication, knowledge potential for managerial role and symmetrical PR, and diversity embodied in all roles.

In relation to the work of relationship building, the excellence theory basically explains the relationship that exists between grassroots governments and the people and how well PR can be used to strengthen these relationships. The excellence theory when applied helps long-term relationships between the government and the people become foreseeable and possible through practical two-way symmetrical communication which in turn fosters a mutual understanding between the government and their publics. For optimum benefits to be achieved from PR, organizations ought to identify strategic publics with which they build long-term relationships with through symmetrical communication program (Morsing, 2006).

According to Yue, (2016), excellently planned PR contributes to net effectiveness of organizations by building long-term relationships of high quality between the organization and its key stakeholders. Similarly, the Excellence theory held that practicing Excellent PR would enable organizations meet their goals through supporting effective communication with stakeholders. In addition, the costs of litigation, regulation and public pressure during crises could be avoided through proactive PR practices and tactics (Smudde, 2005).

Grunig and Hunt (1984) stress that for the excellence study, the Excellence theory was proposed to explain the characteristics and components of excellent PR practice. In this theory, it is emphasized that the two-way symmetrical model of PR should be the normative model of PR as it allows for both the organizations and their publics seek relationships that balance the interests of both (Grunig, 2002).

The Diffusion Theory of Rogers also referred to as the Diffusion of Innovations theory, breaks down the process of how people perceive, think about (process) and decide in regards to new information and products. Diffusion in regards to the diffusion theory is defined as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system according to Valente et al., (1995).

The theory has been applied in a number of fields including communication, public health, criminal justice, agriculture, marketing and agriculture where it has produced consistently successful results (Porter & Kramer,1999). In the context of public relations, the diffusion of innovation is unique in the fact that this communication is concerning new ideas and the diffusion of this innovation throughout society brings about social change (Rogers, 2010).

The diffusion theory (1962) postulates that there are five stages that individuals go through in the process of adopting innovation and that individuals adopt a new idea by going through the five distinct steps that include: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption. This way, the diffusion theory provides a functional framework for the assessment of the cognitive processes and is beneficial to the way the PR practitioners understand the decision-making processes of their respective publics. Under the first stage classified as awareness, the PR practitioner must first ensure enough media coverage through adequate media coverage, promotional materials and press releases to spread awareness to a vast geographical location and reach wider publics. Secondly, under the persuasion stage, the PR personnel ought to ensure that the public is convinced about the idea or product under promotion which may be achieved by employing a number of methodologies and tools such as factsheets and statistics. The third and fourth stages of evaluation and trial respectively tell the practitioner how the public will put under consideration the new idea prior to fully deciding on whether to adopt the new idea or not and can be established through surveys in the post implementation period. Finally, the adoption stage is the end goal for the PR practitioner at which the members of their target public decide upon implementing the idea promoted by the PR campaign or totally avoiding it. The theory has also shown importance in helping the PR teams decide who constitute their publics as they can identify early adopters to act in the capacity of role models, influencers and promoters for the PR campaigns.

Adequate knowledge and application of the diffusion of innovation theory is very important in improving the practice of PR to achieve the goal of maintaining and sustaining a positive relationship between organizations and their publics. Maintaining relationships with different demographic groups over a long course of time and changing technology involves propagation and execution of new ideas. Such ideas and information ought to be properly managed to ensure that the desired goals are met (Green et al.,2009)

Meanwhile, the systems theory is built on the notion that a system is made of parts referred to as subsystems separated from one another by boundaries thus requiring communication structures amongst them and that any part of the system that generates change pressures belongs to a higher order that is; a supra-system (Cutpil et.al, 1994). The system is

further comprised of four components; objects, attributes, internal relationships, and environments.

In respect to the systems theory, the PR function; a subsystem of the organization is part of the organization's purposive and managed behavior to achieve its set goals and objectives (Cutlip et al., 1994). Besides, the social systems perspectives observe that PR is an organization-public system concerned with the relationships built and maintained by the organization and their respective publics. Similarly, Lattimore, (2012), observes that PR teams are 'boundary spanners straddling the edge of the organization and on the lookout for both internal (within the organization) and external (in the midst of the public) concerns for regulation and response.

The PR function is task-bound to act as an open system and help organizations adjust and adopt to change in their environments and respond to the needs of their publics (Broom et al. 2000). Thus, they are tasked with monitoring and interpreting changes and concerns within their environments and work together with top management in developing strategic plans and to work upon changes and respond to the demands within their external publics (Cutlip et al., 1994). It is also upon the PR teams to identify problems and invest in research and interpreting environmental stimulus including, public opinions, cultural shifts, social change and technology as well as identifying the changes from within the organization.

According to Cutlip et al., (1994), the organization-publics system is interdependent and consists of the organization and its stakeholders and as such, the public is a subsystem that must be redefined to answer particular PR problems. The systems theory suggests that we can map out a flow chart of communication and use it to inform PR and other information processes of an organization. This flow chart will be designed to indicate the routes of inputs, throughputs and feedback loops for messages and opinions which are in control and affect understandings and relationships back and forth in the organization-public relationship (Mackey, 2004). Further, such mapping techniques help identify the ways and positions in which the organization sub-component of the system talks either internally to itself or externally to the public and this way, we can establish how best to maintain communication within the system.

Ferguson (1984) is widely credited for the initial work in establishing the centrality of relationship in the practice of PR. Later, Broom et al. (2000), working around the systems theory

and a number of other relationship theories including the interpersonal communication, psychotherapy and interpersonal relationships came up with a tentative framework understanding the organizational-public relationships.

One key aspect of the systems theory is that it offers a perspective through which the PR activity is viewed as being at the center of the relationship between an organization and its public. Such a relationship is maintained and progressively improved by the PR function of management and requires that PR strategies and tactics are assessed in terms of their effect on the relationship between an organization and its publics (Khamis & Elizabeth, 2009).

2.3 Review according to objectives

2.3.1 The PR models employed by the Gulu District Local Government

Grunig and Hunt, (1984), identified four models of PR through which they described the strategies with which organizations approach their PR efforts. Among these models are; the press agency model, the public information model, the two-way symmetrical model and the two-way asymmetrical model with each of these giving different degrees of effectiveness amongst the PR practicing organizations. Amongst these four models however, the two-way symmetrical model has been thought of as the most effective for achieving the organizational goals.

One-way communication differs from two-way communication in that the former does not apply research to glean internal and external information while the latter gives and gathers information when dealing with the public (Grunug, et. al, 1984). Given this stark contrast between the two major classifications of the communication models, Verčič et al, (1996), assert that PR should not be restricted to one-way information-giving and that for effective communication to happen, it must be two-way. The sad reality however is that researchers found that it is rather rampant that PR practitioners only practice one-way communication which means no research is done to collect stakeholders' input, an important factor being a lack of monetary support from the public (Verčič et al., 1996).

It should be noted that both the press agency model and public information model are grouped under the one-way communication models; characterized by the unidirectional flow of information from the organization to its public. The core purpose for the adoption of such PR

models that promote one-way communication in their nature is to publicize or inform publics of organizational actions. The salient feature of these models is that they do not incorporate public feedback upon receiving organizational messages (Yue, 2016).

Morsing and Schultz, (2006), have identified that both the two-way asymmetrical model and the two-way symmetrical model involve some research work albeit for distinct reasons. The two-way asymmetrical model is aimed at persuading the public to do what organizations would like them to do in terms of thinking or behavior termed as effective persuasion to convince the stakeholders of the attractiveness of the organization rather than understanding and compromising and ultimately control stakeholders without any form of power sharing. Conversely, the two-way symmetrical model puts into consideration the voices and opinions of all stakeholders during decision making. Under this model, organizations advocate for dialogue between organizations and stakeholders in search of mutually agreeable solutions that benefit both sides thus enabling the building of quality and long-term relationships between organizations and publics.

The communicative intentions of an organization determine the model of communication they adopt for their PR activities; while two-way asymmetrical communication aims to persuade publics to do what organizations want them to think, or to do, just like propaganda (Verčič et al., 1996), two-way symmetrical communication on the other hand is meant to foster mutual and sincere motives for the purposes of resolving conflict and cultivating good relationships.

Another way of looking at communication between organizations and their publics was identified by Wakefield (2000) who used the terms “inside-out” communication and “outside-in” communication to describe the two different philosophies organizations take towards communicating with publics. He stressed that, organizations with an “outside-in” mindset practice two-way communication where as those with an “inside-out” approach focused only on media relations, product publicity, and image building which constitutes one-way philosophy in communicating with publics which is more reactive and less strategic unlike the former which is taken as a proactive activity that not only involves sending messages to publics, but also bringing feedback from publics to organizations, thusly contributing to organizational behavior in a strategic manner.

Grunig et al. (1995), surveyed the empirical evidence regarding the use of the public relations models and concluded that corporations most frequently practice the press agency model, and government agencies, the public information model. However, some exceptions did exist for example; Valentini (2013), found that under the Italian governmental administrations, none of the four models was more prevalent than the others, indicating that the public communication officers practiced a mixed-motive model instead depending on the prevailing circumstances.

2.3.2 The expertise and qualification of the staff involved in PR departments and work

Dwi Cahaya, (2009), stresses that the increasing role of PR for all kinds of organizations has imposed demands for more highly qualified individuals to fill these positions. It is evident than now, unlike before, more organizations whether for profit or non-profit employ PR staff or representatives. The PR staff have further taken up a number of titles pointing towards their specializations and these include; Public Relations, Guest Relations Officer, Marketing Communications Executive, Special Event Coordinator, Public Affairs, Community Relations, Government Relations and Investor Relations (Zikusooka, 2002,). This, Dolphin, (2002) explained that many practitioners have looked at the role and tried to give it a name more appropriate to that which the job entails and the weight that organizations attach to it.

According to Dwi Cahaya, (2009), PR practitioners widely do not possess any PR-related degree and in addition, rarely attend any PR-related courses. Instead, these hail from more generalist backgrounds such as marketing, journalist, psychology, foreign language and many others. To put this in context, a research on the profile of PR officers in big organizations throughout Britain showed that approximately a quarter of the respondents in the study were from a generalist background; 35% had a journalist background and 25% had a degree in language and the rest from either Pharmacy or Physiology and or Chemistry and more specifically none of the respondents had graduated from a PR course. Winner, (1993) cited in Dolphin (2002), argues that the reason behind this was that the generalists who have subsequently specialized may well have a better grasp of the corporate nature of his or her organization than a specialist PR educated person and the former brings wider perspective and broader skills into the communication era.

According to Dolphin, (2002), most of the PR practitioners come into practice by chance; are not PR educated and neither do they intend to be in PR but are promoted to be in PR because they are considered to have the requirements thrive in the PR department. This has been helped by the acceptance for a wider scope of professionals and fields of study to practice PR apart from the PR-educated persons. Specifically, Dwi Cahaya (2006), while researching Bali-based PR practitioners found that only one PR staff had a PR-related degree while others are generalists which mostly from Economics and tourism-related field of study such as Food and Beverage, Hotel Management, Business Administration.

PR practitioners perform a specific set of roles; and these are what they actually have to perform daily and can be defined as the behavior of practitioners or organizations in practicing PR. Cutlip et al. (1994), suggest that public relations practitioners 'adopt roles in organizations by taking on patterns of behaviors to deal with recurring types of situations and to accommodate others' expectations. First introduced by Broom and Smith (1979), PR roles were further developed by Cutlip (1994), who developed these into four major roles such as Expert Prescriber, Communication Facilitator, Problem Solving Facilitator and Communication technician (Pritchard et al, 2006).

Each of the PR roles has unique attributes which associated with it; Expert Prescribers, are regarded as experts on public relations and consequently they are seen as best qualified to handle public relations problems and identify solutions to them, Communication facilitators, are cast as sensitive listeners and information brokers who act in a 'go between' role, facilitating communications, Problem solving facilitators collaborate with other managers to help define and solve organizational communication problems and Communication technicians are merely providers of technical communications services such as writing releases and features for the media, preparing and editing newsletters and handling contacts with the media (Moss and Warnaby, 1997). Meanwhile, all decisions regarding strategy and actions are taken by the dominant management coalition in which the PR practitioners have no role and are simply given the task of communicating about the decisions taken by this dominant coalition (Dwi Cahaya, 2009).

The PR industry and practice is open to all highly competent individuals from the various academic backgrounds (Dwi Cahaya, 2009). These must however be willing to learn new things because it requires skill, knowledge and expertise from all disciplines (Dolphin, 2002). Despite its open nature, there are generally some subjects that boost a career into the PR industry such as Public Relations, Journalism, Business Management, Marketing, Psychology, Politic and English (www.prospects.ac.uk).

Weinstein (1990), opines that in terms of personality, not all people can work well in the field of PR as a certain type of personality are more suitable than others for this role. The success of PR in developing and maintaining relationships with the different publics is greatly influenced by one's personality and overall performance in doing communication related tasks (Aprilia et al, 2005). In this regard, White and Mazur (1995) argue that the position requires a mix of functional, managerial, organizational and negotiating abilities. Besides, analytical and well developed communication skills added to business management and political diplomatic skills are equally important to serve in this capacity (Dolphin, 2002).

Successful PR practice requires a thorough understanding of people and human psychology (Calmis, 2003). Dolphin (2002), in a survey on the profile of PR directors in British companies concluded that a PR practitioner ought to be a very sociable person as one of the many talents he or she should possess. The other critical qualities were communication skills, sound judgment and the ability to listen and think critically.

Fawkes and Tench (2004) found that writing skill and knowledge of the media are desirable skills that employers want the PR applicant to possess. A research conducted on what employers' requirements of the PR graduates and or job seekers showed that literacy is the primary skill required. They also ranked that the second most important skill as teamwork followed by problem solving, analytical thinking, research skills, ability to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills and numeracy (Tench & Yeomans, 2006).

The open nature of the PR practice that provides labor market opportunities to persons from the various academic and professional backgrounds has culminated in less satisfactory performance as such workers are limited to only certain tasks and roles (Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Theaker, 2001). Particularly, PR staff are limited to only performing technical tasks such as

writing, editing and producing newsletters only (Cornelissen, 2004) which is as well expected since most of the PR practitioners come into the profession largely by performing technician roles (Cornelissen, 2004).

According to Figuee, et.al, (2017) and Flynn, (2014), scholars in the field of PR continue to struggle to articulate the competencies, capabilities and or skills required in PR practice. Instead, most of the work done has focused on the definition of the public relations role and practice while excluding a general body of knowledge of the field Vieira and Grantaham, (2014).

2.3.3 The impact of the PR strategies in the delivery of public goods and services

Public relations is a vital tool that governments can deploy in their attempt to foster good governance and ensure democracy (Mbogo, 2011). Once adopted by governments, public relations can help news media in covering the important milestones and activities launched, conducted and or implemented by the government (Coombs, 2015).

Afanyo, (1999), stresses that PR is a goodwill task that helps in building harmony between an organization and its public through mutual understanding based on the truthful and complete information and this way, it evolves to implements programs of action which will serve both the public interest and that of the organization. Besides, the PR function is directed towards developing and encouraging behaviors which will nurture seeds of mutual understanding for strong and healthy growth while advocating for the elimination of practices which though legitimate, may offend public opinion or jeopardize mutual understanding (Haywood, 1984).

Humes (1969), views LG as a means of coordinating and managing functions at the local level; it is a means of involving the local resources thus, providing the members of the public with a sense of identification and participation which are both essential to effective, economical, and enthusiastic governance at this level. Similarly, Osuji, (1990), stresses that LG provides the opportunity for the local members of the community to partake in activities of governance and policies that serve her own inhabitants. This creates a sense of belonging and recognition among the local dwellers, in the sense that it gives them consideration by the government as worthy and capable of handling things themselves (Offonri, 1985).

Particularly, in government installations, PR plays a great role in creating mutual understanding between the government and the public it serves thus ensuring active cooperation of the public in government programs and fostering citizen support for established policies and programs (Johnston & Zawawi, 2004).

Furthermore, PR also informs the public about the government's business; improve the effectiveness of the organization operations through appropriate public information techniques; provide feedback to government administrators so that programs and policies can be modified, amended or continued (Tesfaye, 2018).

2.3.4 The challenges faced by the public relations office/department

Njuru, (2011), stresses the absence of the public relations departments and the use of non-technical personnel in a number of government projects and installations undermines the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects which he attributes to limited participation of the wider team in decision making. Besides Mbeke, (2011) and Mbogo, (2011), also stress that there is a no remarkable change the implementation of different government projects despite the presidential directive in Kenya thus, continuing the era of low sensitization level among the public on government projects.

On the negative side however, Ogolla, (2011) argues against the misuse of media and the low levels of awareness of public relations tools as some of the challenges that face governments adopting public relations for their work. The low levels of utilization of public relations have thus culminated in low sensitization, mistrust and negative perception amongst the public in relation to government institutions thus complicating the promotion of government projects because of the unprofessional manner in which the public relations functions of government have been handled (Omondi, 2012).

In the government institutions, there is little appreciation of the role played by Public Relations tools in sensitizing the public on government projects (Kiambi, 2010). This is evidenced by the fact that public relations officers are not part of the top management teams that make decisions including policies and regulations that would need to be communicated to the

public. This underscores the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects, since there is limited participation in decision making process (Njuru, 2011).

Njuru, (2011), stresses that the absence of the public relations departments and the use of non-technical personnel in a number of government projects and installations reflects on the low appreciation of the public relations function. Thus, this underscores the role of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects and despite the increasing scholarship on the topic, there seems no remarkable change in the implementation of the various government projects (Mbogo, 2011).

Despite all these efforts, there is little appreciation of the importance of public relations in sensitizing the public on government projects. This is evidenced by the fact that public relations officers are not part of the top management teams that make decisions including policies and regulations that would need to be communicated to the public (Omondi, 2012).

A number of LGs do not appreciate the need for PR and its programs and thus do not have in place a department dedicated to this. In addition, they do not make use of PR while conducting their business. Whereas, some sources attribute it to ignorance of what PR and its importance to LG is, others attribute it to insufficient funding for such programs and the rest due to lack of interest in some local governments which may result from the afore mentioned ignorance of such programs and their importance.

A number of emerging trends affect government and present challenges for communicators within local government. Amongst these are an increase in pressure for responsible flexibility (Pratt, 2013), soft governance; coproduction with and adaptation to citizens and stakeholders (Evans and Reid, 2013) and decentralization (Kamnuansilpa, 2012).

The communities served by LGs are diverse with a range of competing and vocal interests and as such, activities like engaging, enabling participation, and making appropriate representation, are difficult and constant communication challenges. In ideal situations, PR personnel manage transparent processes that facilitate voice, and enable ownership, but avoid being captured by self-serving elites or minorities (Evans & Reid, 2013). To negotiate paths to decisions that are acceptably balanced for the benefit of the community requires deliberate

processes and a special balance of skills and qualities in those who manage the processes (Simmons, 2013).

Wang and Wan Wart, (2007) observe that there has been a decline in trust of government institutions in recent decades. A number of factors have been cited as contributing factors towards this decline including the exposure of scandalous behavior by politicians, expansion of government, and disappointment with the performance of governments and their service provision.

Within LG, there is a gross lack of guidance on the roles, tasks and positioning and tilting for communicators which is reflected in the vast number of job titles that indicate differences in focus on media, publications, and relations, and different levels of seniority (Glenny, 2007). Given that approaches to communication at the LG level are mostly determined at the local organization level (Simmons & Small, 2012) and decisions to manage communication largely determined by the senior decision makers or management (Grunig, et. al 1995), there is a wide gap in guidance on principles for managing executing communication as well as autonomy for LG to address perceived local needs.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter described the methods and techniques the researcher used to conduct the study. It covered the study design, study population, sample size and selection, data collection methods and data collection tools, quality control through validity and reliability of the data collection instruments, data processing and analysis, and ethical consideration.

3.1 Research design

The study used a mixed design of qualitative and quantitative approach, where in-depth interviews were conducted to capture facts, opinions and relevant information that was left out when collecting data by the questionnaires during the survey. This enabled the researcher to undertake an in-depth analysis of the role of PR in the delivery of public service meanwhile the quantitative method explored to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent study variables. Where the independent variables in the study are the model of PR employed by Gulu District Local Government; the press a gentry model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model and the two-way symmetrical model and the expertise and qualifications of the PR personnel; knowledge, education and experience. Meanwhile, the dependent variables of the study included the impacts of PR; the outputs, outtakes and outcomes.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Gulu District. The district is located in Northern Uganda approximately 333 km north of Kampala; the capital city of Uganda. The district sits on coordinates 02⁰49'50.0"N, 32⁰19'13.0"E. The approximate population of the district is 396,500 people (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2014). The district is mainly divided into Gulu municipality, Gulu East constituency and Gulu West constituency. Majority of the residents in the rural areas are peasant farmers while a handful practice commercial farming and petty trade for livelihood besides others being formally employed by the government at both local and

central level governments while others serve in the private sector and non-governmental sector and some are unemployed.

The administration of the district is localized and the management function is under the Gulu District Local Government headed by the Local Council Five (LCV) chairperson under the political wing who works hand in hand with the technocrats such as the Chief Administrative officer and presidential appointees; Resident district commissioners (RDC) TO oversee the delivery of public goods.

The district is also served by a number of media houses including those at national level, regional level and district level. These included radio, television and newspapers and tabloids that are key agents of communication, information sharing and public relation campaigns in general terms.

3.3 Sources of information

Both primary and secondary data was used in this study as sources of information. Primary data on roles of public relation in service delivery was obtained through direct contact with the respondents. Relevant documents such as communication reports, Strategic plan were considered as secondary data in this study and was needful in giving relevant information.

3.3.1 Primary data

Primary data was generated from the field by direct contact with the local government that constitutes the Managers, employees of Medias, employees of agencies and public of Gulu district local government. It was obtained through the use of questionnaires and interview guide, documentary check list, and observation to respondents following systematic and established academic procedures, as suggested by Nunnally & Bernstein (1994).

3.3.2 Secondary data:

Secondary data was obtained through the already existing literature on the role of public relations in the delivery of public goods under local government (data) and any other literature from records, journals and financial reports. These data was used since they were published by reputable institutions, from journals, the internet and other publications. Some of the data was attained from the records that the Gulu district local government have in their data base.

3.4 Population and Sampling techniques

The study considered the following category of respondents under the study and this included Local government technocrats, Political leaders, PR department staff, Agency staff and project leads, radio and TV news reporters, General public in Gulu District with an estimate of 1000 study population for both survey and qualitative. The ‘publics’ considered under the study because they are the ones who were affected or benefited by the communication on programs by Gulu LG, the members of the media fraternity working with the various media houses amplifying information to the public and others are Radio Managers who determines who speaks on their Radios, the staff of the several agencies involved in the projects considered in this study because they had implemented some government projects from Ministry of Health, Uganda Microfinance Centre, Uganda National Road Authority in partnership with Gulu LG in around the thematic areas under study.

The staff of Gulu District Local Government who include the district engineer plus the staff under the Engineering and Water department, the Emyooga focal point person, the staff under the District Health Office, the staff under the Public Relations department which include the Chief Administrative officer (CAO) and the Communication Officer since Public Relations is under Administration of the district council headed by CAO. These staffs have their work falls directly or indirectly under the thematic areas of programs by Gulu District Local Government that were accessed in this study.

3.4.1 Sample Size Determination.

3.4.1.1 Sample size for quantitative

The sample size for the study was determined by using statistical tables of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The estimated population for the study was 1000. Morgan table suggested sample size is 278 at 95% confidence level and 5% sampling error.

3.4.1.2 Sample for qualitative

The researcher used in-depth interview to collect data from the category of population which included the Radio station personnel, Public Relation’s department staff, Agency staff from Uganda National Road Authority (UNRA), Uganda Micro-finance Center, Ministry of

Health staff at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital and project leads or focal point person, technical officers who manages projects like Emooyga and other technical officers like the Gulu District Engineer, the Gulu district Water Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) political leaders (LCV Chairperson, District Speaker, councilor fives) among others. This strategic population had relevant information on the topic of the study that is why through purposive sampling I got certain facts, personal thoughts which the questionnaire could not answer and are clearly highlighted in the findings and discussions of the research report in chapter five.

3.4.2 Sampling techniques and procedures

3.4.2.1 Sampling techniques for quantitative.

For quantitative, the researcher used convenience sampling which is part of non-probability sampling technique where not everybody has a chance of participating in the study.

3.4.3 Sampling techniques

The researchers used non probability sampling where not everyone has a chance of taking part in the study.

3.4.4 Sampling for Qualitative

The study considered the following sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select key informant participants for example public relation staffs, political leaders and managers of radio stations who shared their experiences and opinions as regards the use and effectiveness of PR in the delivery of public goods.

3.5 Variables and Indicators

This study explained the interaction between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The independent variables were the model of PR employed by Gulu District Local Government; the press agency model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model and the two-way symmetrical model and the expertise and qualifications of the PR personnel; knowledge, education and experience. Meanwhile, the dependent variables of the study included the impacts of PR; the outputs, outtakes and outcomes. Whereas the indicators

was used to measure the performance of public relation outputs this include Amount of press coverage received, exposure of a particular message, reception of messages, attention to messages, comprehension of messages, and retention of message.

3.6 Procedure/Protocols for data collection

Prior to my clearance to conduct the study, I defended my proposal at Uganda Christian University in November 2022 and it was successful and I was presented with a letter of approval by Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCUREC) in March 2024 which I presented to the Chief Administrative Officer of Gulu District to allow me interview the technocrats with responsibilities under the thematic areas of study. Upon receiving such clearance at the respective offices, I proceeded to sample, sought consent of members of the target ‘publics’ to part take in my study and administered the tool to consenting study participants. The data collected was cleaned and was analyzed.

3.7 Data collection instruments and equipment

The researcher employed a number of methods and techniques to collect data from the various sets of participants depending on the suitability of the tools that employed in data collection for the specific set of participants.

3.7.1 In-depth Interviews

The study employed in-depth interviewing method that involved face to face interactive interviews with the study participants between the months of April 2023 to June 2023. In this study, the key informant respondents who included; the technocrats as the Gulu District Engineer ,Gulu District Water Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer, Emyooga focal point officer, The District Communications Officer , the Political Leaders, were interviewed in their offices within the Gulu District Administration block, government agency staff and project leads like UNRA Northern Regional Engineer, Director Gulu Regional Referral Hospital were also interviewed in their regional offices within Gulu district while majority of the media personalities interacted with the researcher from Northern Uganda Media Club (NUMEC) a resource Centre that brings together most media practitioners from Northern Uganda together and some few were interviewed from their various Radio Stations in Gulu .

In-depth interviews were used to gather qualitative data for the study using the interviews schedules designed with open ended questions centered directly on the research questions that included what PR models is being employed by Gulu district local government, how is the expertise and qualification of the staff involved in PR seen in press dealing and networking ,and what are visible or seen impact of service delivery that can be credited as a result of PR at Gulu LG and what are the challenges PR is getting in the delivery of public service and goods at Gulu LG. These questioned gathered the views and opinions of the study participants as regards to the roles of public relations in service delivery in Gulu district local government.

The interview sessions were recorded on an earlier pre-tested audio recording device that was turned on right at the start of session while creating a rapport with the study participants and sought final consent to partake in the study. This recording was played through to confirm that the session was well recorded. Alongside the recording, the researcher took notes from the interview for the entirety of the process to offer a backup of the audio recordings.

The interviewing method of data collection was considered as it offered the researcher better insights into the phenomena under investigation and also allowed the researcher to elicit required responses from the respondents while also having a controlled environment where the respondents' body language, gestures and tones were well observed.

3.7.2 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was deployed in the field to collect quantitative data. The semi-structured questionnaire was developed to on the basis of a 5-key Likert-scale representing the options (Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1)). The questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher and the help of a research assistant.

The questionnaire method was preferred as it enabled the collection of big volumes of data from a large population of respondents within a short timeframe. The administering of the questionnaire provided a conducive environment for the respondents to report their opinions without fear for backlash.

3.7.3 Documentary Review

The researcher conducted a documentary review to collect secondary data about the quality and content of the print media material and social media communications from the PR agents for the local government. This process involved a review of several working papers and documents including Uganda Public Service Specific job specification for Communications Officers in Local Government, and not limited to brochures, media and press releases and social media posts and the reactions to these. The data derived from the documentary review process was used to complement the data collected from the study participants.

3.7.4 Quality/Error Control

In the study, the quality of the instruments was established by testing for validity and reliability of these tools.

3.7.5 Validity

Validity of instruments means the ability of a research tool to measure that which it is intended to measure. In this case, qualitative instruments were used to collect qualitative data and quantitative instruments used to collect quantitative data.

Validity of instruments was judged, first on face value (face validity) and secondly through pre-testing to ensure content validity thus reducing measurement error. This was done to ensure that the instruments measure that which they are intended to measure. It was crowned by seeking approval of the supervisor before the instruments was finally deployed in the field. They will then be requested to state the relevance (R) of non-relevance (NR) of each item. The content validity index (CVI) was thus computed using standardized measures and appropriate adjustments made. The CVI was generated from the formula below;

$$CVI = \frac{\textit{Items rated relevant}}{\textit{Total number of items on the questionnaire}}$$

For the instruments to be valid, the CVI ought to fall within the acceptable statistical range of 0.5 to 1.

3.7.6 Reliability

Reliability means the ability of the instrument to deliver similar results when used in a study in future using the same methodology (Sarantakos, 2003). In respect to reliability, the researcher conducted a mixed method study with Gulu District Local Government as the case.

The reliability of the instrument was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient with the help of SPSS computer program. When the reliability coefficient, alpha is greater than 0.5 ($\alpha > 0.5$), it implies high level of reliability of instruments (Amin, 2005).

3.8 Data processing and analysis

The researcher collected two sets of data; quantitative and qualitative and the two were processed separately though triangulated at analysis, interpretation and presentation. During the data collection stage, notes and audio recordings was taken and backed regularly throughout the period of the study.

The researcher also employed data triangulation for the findings of the study at interpretation stage so as to achieve complementarity or convergence and or dissonance within both sets of qualitative and quantitative data. This helped to harmonize both qualitative and quantitative findings.

3.8.1 Qualitative data

Data from interviews was recorded using an audio device and notes for the interview also taken. The audio interview was transcribed into 'clean verbatim' and notes of my transcription compared with those notes taken during the interview.

I coded the data transcripts using line by line analysis and identified emerging themes and subthemes from the data. The data were finally analyzed using thematic analysis and thematic analysis was used for reorganizing the findings under their respective themes and sub-themes for presentation. The data was interpreted by composing meanings, descriptions and inferences from the text presented in quotes under the section of findings.

3.8.2 Quantitative data

The questionnaires used to collect quantitative data was processed and subjected to verification checks to ensure their completeness. The questionnaires were sorted, coded and the emerging data threads entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program for analysis of our data. The data entered into the system was used to compute the emerging descriptive statistics including, frequency distributions, percentages.

3.9 Ethical Considerations.

Clearance and permission was confirmed by an offer of approval letter from Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCUREC) and I presented this to the relevant office bearers at the various firms seeking to conduct my study at their premises.

Informed voluntary consent was sought from the prospective study participants before involving them in the study. To maintain the integrity of the study and data collected, there was no remuneration and neither gift for participation in the study.

Utmost confidentiality was observed with the information provided and the participants were expected to provide any identification information such as names while information provided by the participants was kept out of reach for parties not involved in the study.

3.10 Anticipated methodological constraints

The study was limited by financial constraints. The researcher endeavored to maximize use of available resources by reaching for the respondents at their work places, especially where several could be found together.

Another limitation was availability of respondents and the possibility of deliberately distorting information. This was overcome by sensitizing the respondents on the importance of the study and the need for honest responses.

This was the case of Gulu District Local government in analysis of service delivery hence might not necessarily represent the position of all districts in Uganda as far as the role of public relations in enhancing service delivery is concern.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the presentation and analysis of the data that was collected from various respondents to determine the roles of public relations in the delivery of public services by Gulu district local government. The study was guided by these objectives; the model of public relations adopted in Gulu local government, the experience and expertise of PR staff and personnel, the impacts of PR on the delivery of public service and goods including the challenges faced by PR in the delivery of public services and goods. The assessment of thematic areas under study was applied as the analytic frame under five Gulu District Local Government programs conducted in the period between January 2017 and December 2021.

The service delivery was assessed basing on the following areas; Corona Virus prevention through the enforcement of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in 2020, The Corona Virus mass vaccination program that started in late 2021, the Water projects. Road works, maintenance, repair, and redevelopment projects under the Gulu district LG and the Emyooga fund under the Gulu District Local Government supported by the Microfinance Support Centre.

Response Rate

Out of 278 participants who accessed the surveys, 243 responded to the survey giving a respond rate of 87%. The overall response rate of 87% is an internationally acceptable rate response rate since it is above the 50% rate that is recommendable according to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003).

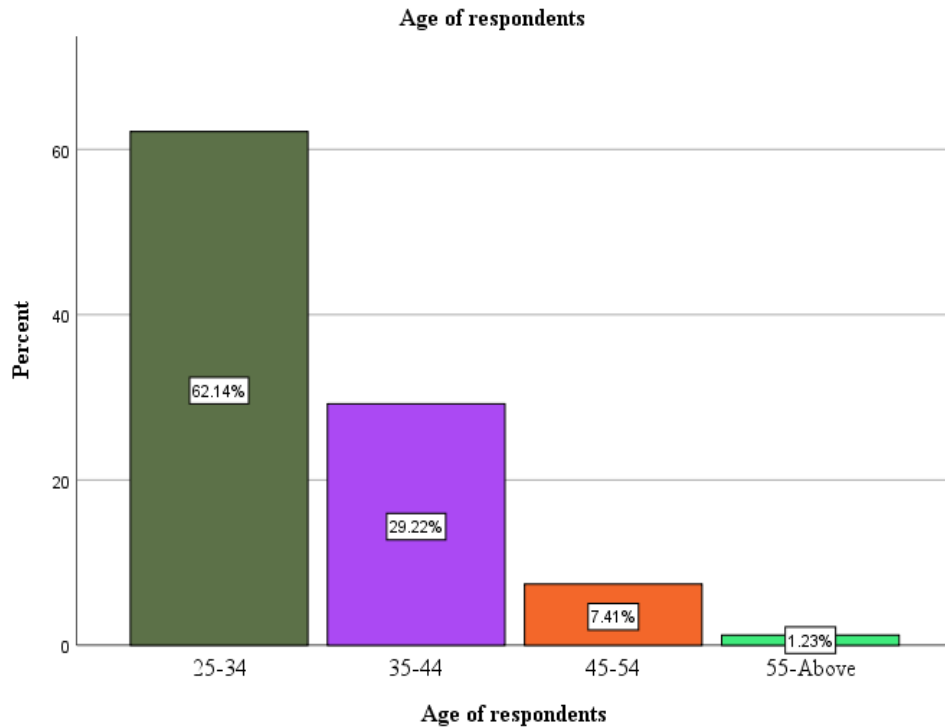
4.1 Demographic data of respondents

4.1.1 Age of respondents

The researcher investigated the age of respondents in Gulu district as presented in the figure below.

Figure 4.1

Showing Age of respondents



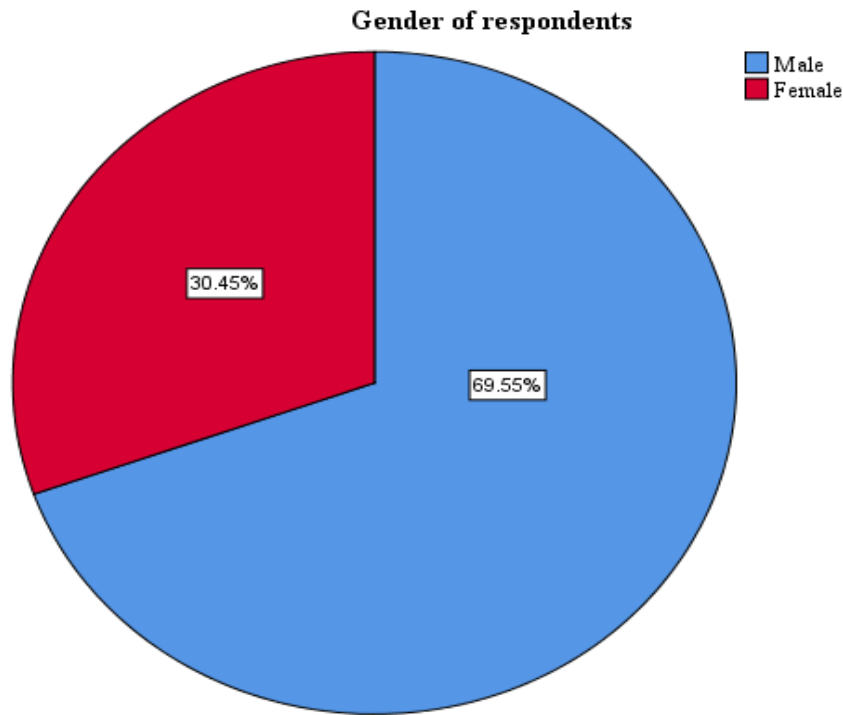
The findings of the participant were grouped in four categories 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years and 55-above years. The results show majority of respondents were aged by 25-34 years with 62.1%, followed by 29.2% who were aged 35-44 years, 7.4% of them were aged 45-54 years and 1.2% of them were above 55 years. This implies that most respondents were mature enough to make good judgement about government programs in Gulu district and how service delivery affects their livelihood and service delivery.

4.1.2: Gender of respondents

The researcher investigated the gender of participants in Gulu district and is presented in the figure below

Figure 2.2

Showing gender of respondents



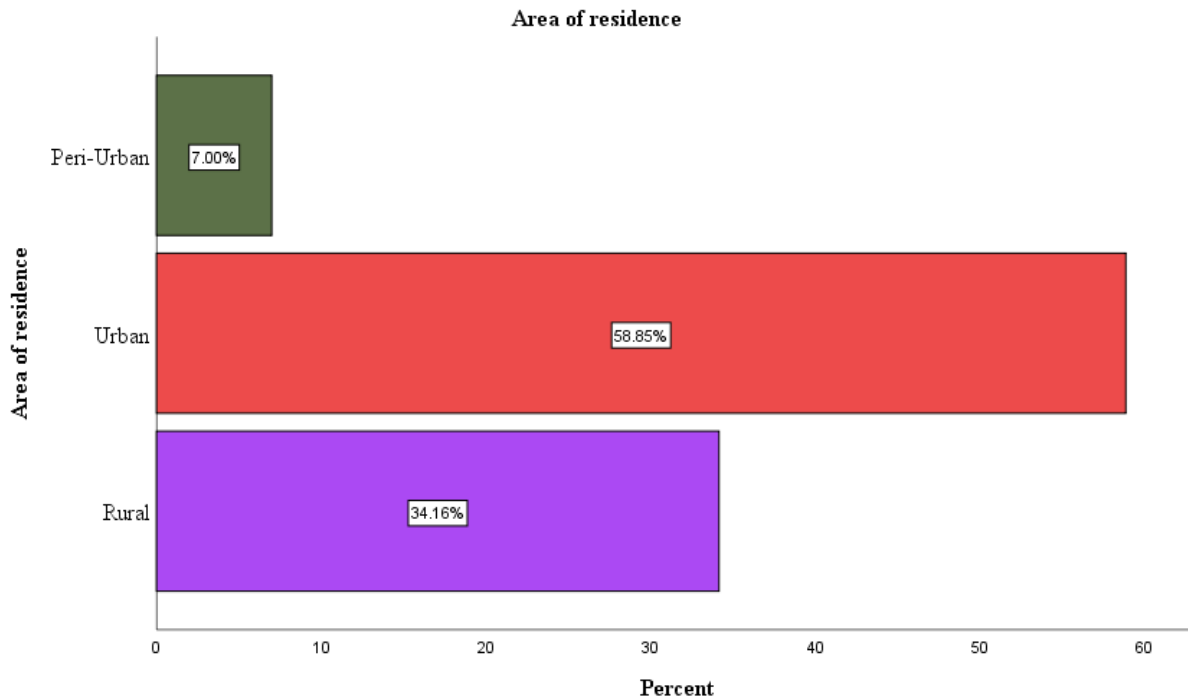
The study revealed that the gender of participants who participated in this study was dominated by males who formed 69.5 % of the total number of respondents compared to 30.5% Females; this is attributed to the fact that greater number of men compared to women were seeking information on government programs due to the recent issues of misuse of Emyooga fund. This also indicated that the patriarchy society of male dominance as to culture and other factors deeper in villages can't be ruled out.

4.1.3 Areas of residence

The researcher investigated the areas of residence for participants in Gulu district as analyzed below

Figure 4.3

Showing Areas of residence of respondents



The results 34.2% of participant live in rural area, 58.8% resides in urban area and 7.0% stay in peri-urban. This implies that majority of respondent stays in urban areas in search for employment opportunities as well most of the youth have attained certain level of education with necessary skills that make them to survive in the town.

4.1.4 Level of education

The researcher investigated the level of education for participant in Gulu district and the results are presented in the table below.

Table 1*Showing the Level of education of respondents*

		Level of education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No formal education	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	Primary	46	18.9	18.9	21.0
	Secondary	87	35.8	35.8	56.8
	Tertiary	38	15.6	15.6	72.4
	University	67	27.6	27.6	100.0
	Total	243	100.0	100.0	

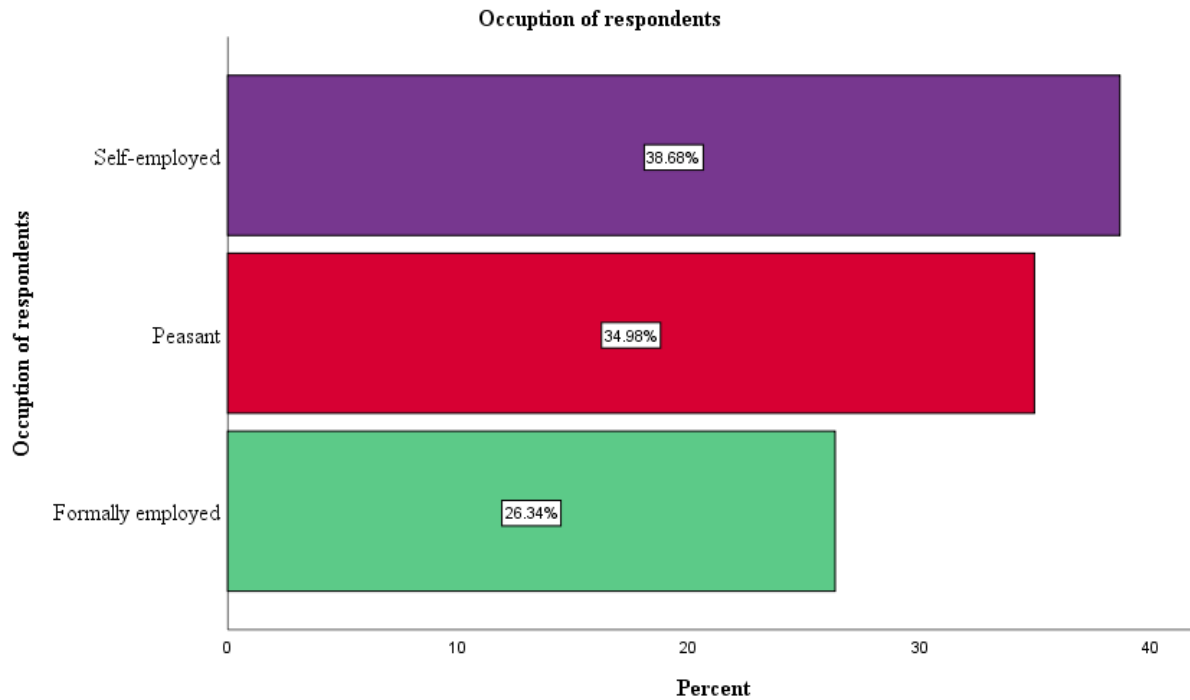
The biggest number of respondents in this study had secondary as their highest level of education and they formed 35.8% of the total respondents, these were followed by those with a degree by 27.6% and 18.9% had primary level, 2.1% had no formal education while 15.6% had tertiary which means that generally all respondents were able to read and write which contributed to high response to the questionnaires. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study involved people of all levels of education and they knew what they were responding to. In relation to this study having such an educated population which is informed makes it to be reactive to any slight change in the service delivery.

4.1.5 Occupation of respondents

The researcher investigated the occupation of respondents in Gulu district local government and findings are presented in the figure below.

Figure 4.4

Showing Occupation of respondents



The findings show the occupation of participant who participated in the study, 38.7% of participant were self-employed, 35% were peasant and 26.3% were formally employed. This implies that majority of respondents were doing their personal jobs like boda-boda, shops, vending wholesale where those who were formally employed could be the Radio Station workers, Ministry works workers or Uganda National Roads Authority, Uganda Microfinance Centre, Ministry of Health who formed part of the agencies doing similar work for the areas under study and the local Government staff.

4.2 The PR models employed by the Gulu District Local Government

The researcher investigated the PR models employed by Gulu district local government as presented in the table below

Table 2

The PR models employed by the Gulu District Local Government

	Strongly Agree	SA+A	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %
The communications regarding the program were simply informative on COVID-SOPS	64.2%	91.4%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
COVID VAC	72.8%	91.4%	18.5%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT WORKS	0.0%	53.1%	53.1%	8.6%	18.5%	19.8%
EMYOOGA FUND	8.6%	63.0%	54.3%	17.3%	19.8%	0.0%
The communication as regards the program provided an opportunity for feedback on COVID-SOPS	35.8%	53.1%	17.3%	8.6%	19.8%	18.5%
COVID VAC	55.6%	90.1%	34.6%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
WATER PROJECT WORKS	64.2%	100.0%	35.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
EMYOOGA FUND	9.9%	65.4%	55.6%	25.9%	8.6%	0.0%
The feedback in the communications towards the program was put into consideration on COVID-SOPS	45.7%	55.6%	9.9%	17.3%	0.0%	27.2%
	28.4%	45.7%	17.3%	17.3%	8.6%	28.4%
	81.5%	91.4%	9.9%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%

COVID VAC	72.8%	90.1%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
WATER PROJECT	39.5%	82.7%	43.2%	8.6%	0.0%	8.6%
WORKS	19.8%	63.0%	43.2%	18.5%	0.0%	18.5%
EMYOOGA FUND	64.2%	72.8%	8.6%	8.6%	18.5%	0.0%
The information in the program was presented in a way similar to news and press releases on COVID- SOPS	65.4%	74.1%	8.6%	8.6%	17.3%	0.0%
COVID VAC	65.4%	91.4%	25.9%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
WATER PROJECT	55.6%	91.4%	35.8%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
WORKS	45.7%	81.5%	35.8%	0.0%	0.0%	18.5%
EMYOOGA FUND	46.9%	55.6%	8.6%	0.0%	17.3%	27.2%
The model of local government information is simply targeted towards effecting the implementation of programs through continuous persuasion on COVID-SOPS	81.5%	100.0%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	71.6%	100.0%	28.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT	18.5%	37.0%	18.5%	34.6%	19.8%	8.6%
WORKS	25.9%	53.1%	27.2%	8.6%	9.9%	28.4%
EMYOOGA FUND	18.5%	35.8%	17.3%	8.6%	18.5%	37.0%
The program would have been more successful if it would allow to have feedback of the community and include their views and opinions on COVID-SOPS	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	82.7%	91.4%	8.6%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT	46.9%	74.1%	27.2%	0.0%	25.9%	0.0%
WORKS	55.6%	100 %	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
EMYOOGA	65.4%	74.1%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	25.9%

The research investigates model of communication / public relation applied or adopted in Gulu district local government, the findings shows 91.4 of participant strongly agreed that the communications regarding the program were simply informative on COVID-SOPS,

91.4 on COVID VAC, 53.1 on Water Project, 63% WORKS and 53.1% Emyooga fund. This implies that communication was not informative on certain program like Water Projects and Emyooga Fund which had the lowest response.

In-depth Interview revealed that communication towards water projects are majorly targeted to community of need and works projects also are directed to where the work projects are ongoing. The in-depth interview also revealed that Gulu District Local Government have access to eleven Frequency Modulation Radio stations that they normally use to communicate public goods and services to the community in Gulu District. The eleven Radio Stations include Mega FM, Radio Rupiny, Speak FM, Choice FM, Radio Pacis Gulu, Acholi Broadcasting Services (ABS), Radio Maria, Radio King, and Radio Calvary, Radio Favour, Mega 100 and Gulu Fm.

The respondents however in ranking said Mega FM, Rupiny Radio, Speak FM and Radio Pacis are the most used because of reach and listenership of the local community. One of the Radio Managers justified why all the Radio stations are at the disposal of Gulu District Leaders during in-depth interview on 19/April/2023.

They have access to all these Radios because Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) directed us in 2014 that as management of media houses we have to at least give one hour to promote government programs to the people and its them to arrange with us and brief people on public goods and services and at times UCC also sends special secular like during COVID19 Pandemic, we were given special secular for free broadcast.

In-depth Interview with media practitioners also revealed that Gulu district local government officials have access to a media centre called Northern Uganda Media Club (NUMEC). According to the journalists the centre is being housed in buildings given by Gulu DLG that offers press conference facilities to the public and act as a resource centre for journalists in Gulu and northern Uganda.

One of the participants cited Police, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as the biggest beneficiaries of the media Centre and not Gulu LG officials.

Actually police spokesperson for Aswa region holds weekly press conference with the press at the center but unless we call them, is very rare to have local government officials utilizing this facility as their deliberate initiative. To be honest for the last two

years, I have not seen any initiative from them or shared press-release here in relations to government programs or service delivery.

The results also show the communication as regards the program provided an opportunity for feedback on COVID-SOPS with 90.1% of respondent agreed, 100% agreed on COVID VAC, 65.4% on water project, 55.6% on works and 45.7 % on EMYOOGA FUND. This means Gulu district failed to provide feedback or avenues for communication with the community.

In-depth interview on 16/April/2023 with the Radio Mangers also revealed the category of people they give free airtime to communicate information on public goods and services in Gulu District Local Government.

In Our Radio, we have free airtime schedules for LCV chairpersons, Resident District Commissioners neighboring other districts like Omoro, Amuru, Pader among others, its upon them to bring their technical officers to explain government programmes, however we have never recorded any Chief Administrative Officer in our Radio.

The results in the table above show 91.4% of respondent strongly agreed and said the feedback in the communications towards the program was put into consideration on COVID-SOPS, 90.1% on COVID VAC, 82. % on water project, 63% on works and 72.8% on Emyooga Fund. From the finding, this implies that majority of respondents agreed that communication feedback was not put into consideration on all government programs.

Use of Notice Boards and Informal Meetings: The study also found out that Gulu District Local Government have notice boards in most of the traditional sub counties like Bungatira, Awach, Patiko, Palaro, as a strong medium for informing the public on public goods and services.

Informal meetings like funeral rites, Church services are some of the avenues this study found that Gulu District Local Leaders have been using to communicate public goods and services and this is inscribed in one of the politician's in-depth interviews on 17/April/2023

Actually ,we take any opportunity to sensitize the community on government programmes and mobilize them to benefit, during burials and in churches when given opportunity to speak, we just talk about government programmes"

The statistical finding revealed that 74.1% of respondent said the information in the program was presented in a way similar to news and press releases on COVID- SOPS, while 91.4% on COVID VAC, 91.4 on water project, 81.5% on works whereas 55.6% on Emyooga Fund. This implies majority of respondent strongly agreed that information on programs was done as news and press releases in the district.

The study found out that Gulu District local government have over three strategic WhatsApp groups the district uses to communicate with its development partners to keep track of activities and updates as per the various signed memorandum of understandings with them.

The results in show 100% of respondents strongly agreed that the model of local government information was simply targeted towards effecting the implementation of programs through continuous persuasion on COVID-SOPS, 100% on COVID VAC, 37.0% on WATER PROJECT, 53.1% on works and 35.8% on Emyooga Fund. This implies that there was no continuous persuasion on the implementation of programs like water project, works and Emyooga fund where as other like COVID SOPS and COVID VAC had much persuasion information since it was too dangerous.

The statistical findings revealed 100% majority of respondents strongly agreed the program would have been more successful if it would allow to have feedback of the community and include their views and opinions on COVID-SOPS, 91.4% on COVID VAC, 74.1% water project, 100% on works and 74.1% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of respondents agreed that communication feedback on views and opinions to community makes the program successful.

4.3 The expertise and qualification of the staff involved in PR under the Gulu District Local Government

The researcher investigated the expertise and qualification of the staff involved in PR under the Gulu district local government and the results are presented in the table below

Table 3

The expertise and qualification of the staff involved in PR under the Gulu District Local Government

	Strongly Agree	SA+A	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %
The persons handling the communication of the program did it to my satisfaction on COVID-SOPS	82.7%	100.0%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	72.8%	91.4%	18.5%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT	27.2%	81.5%	54.3%	8.6%	9.9%	0.0%
WORK	37.0%	72.8%	35.8%	8.6%	8.6%	9.9%
EMYOOGA	35.8%	44.4%	8.6%	0.0%	18.5%	37.0%
The persons communicating the programs showed adequate levels of knowledge on COVID-SOPS	81.5%	90.1%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
COVID VAC	71.6%	90.1%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
WATER PROJECT	35.8%	80.2%	44.4%	0.0%	9.9%	9.9%
WORK	27.2%	71.6%	44.4%	8.6%	0.0%	19.8%
EMYOOGA	27.2%	61.7%	34.6%	8.6%	9.9%	19.8%
The personnel tasked with communicating as regards these programs were responsive tour questions on COVID-SOPS	72.8%	91.4%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
COVID VAC	72.8%	100.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Water project	72.8%	81.5%	8.6%	0.0%	18.5%	0.0%

Work	53.1%	71.6%	18.5%	9.9%	8.6%	9.9%
Emyooga	44.4%	44.4%	0.0%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%
The personnel conducting the communication regarding the program communicated all the important details on COVID-SOPS	64.2%	100.0%	35.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	82.7%	100.0%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Water project	37.0%	91.4%	54.3%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Work	28.4%	82.7%	54.3%	8.6%	0.0%	8.6%
Emyooga	35.8%	53.1%	17.3%	8.6%	28.4%	9.9%
The persons tasked with the communication managed to dispel all misconceptions and misinformation on COVID SOPS	72.8%	100.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	82.7%	100.0%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT	45.7%	91.4%	45.7%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
WORK	25.9%	81.5%	55.6%	8.6%	9.9%	0.0%
EMYOOGA	54.3%	90.1%	35.8%	0.0%	9.9%	0.0%
From the communication, i got a comprehensive understanding of the programs at hand on COVID SOPS	91.4%	91.4%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%
COVID VAC	82.7%	100.0%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Water project	46.9%	90.1%	43.2%	0.0%	9.9%	0.0%
Work	37.0%	91.4%	54.3%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Emyooga	45.7%	72.8%	27.2%	8.6%	0.0%	18.5%
The information shared by the communication experts was complementary with that from the other sources on COVID SOPS	81.5%	100.0%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	64.2%	91.4%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
Water project	37.0%	91.4%	54.3%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%
Work	19.8%	65.4%	45.7%	17.3%	8.6%	8.6%
Emyooga	38.3%	55.6%	17.3%	18.5%	8.6%	17.3%
The communicator showed expertise in the way they passed on information and engaged the public during information sharing	61.7%	81.5%	19.8%	9.9%	8.6%	0.0%

sessions on COVID SOPS						
COVID VAC	63.0%	100.0%	37.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Water project	8.6%	91.4%	82.7%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Work	17.3%	82.7%	65.4%	0.0%	17.3%	0.0%
Emyooga	44.4%	54.3%	9.9%	9.9%	8.6%	27.2%
The persons handling this communication programs are known to have conducted communication works on public matters before on COVID SOPS	53.1%	91.4%	38.3%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
COVID VAC	61.7%	100.0%	38.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT	17.3%	91.4%	74.1%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%
WORK	17.3%	91.4%	74.1%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
EMYOOGA	17.3%	63.0%	45.7%	19.8%	8.6%	8.6%

The researcher investigated the experience and expertise of public relation staff and personnel in Gulu district local government, the results in the table above shows 100.0% of participants strongly agreed that the persons handling the communication of the program did it to their satisfaction on COVID-SOPS, 91.4% on COVID VAC, 81.5% on water project, 72.8% on works and 44.4% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participant were convinced that public relation officer and other sectoral heads like the District Health Officer had enough qualification and provided enough information of government programs however, on Emyooga fund things were not okay.

The results in the table above, 90.1% of participant showed that the persons communicating the programs disclosed adequate levels of knowledge on COVID-SOPS, 90.1% on COVID VAC, 80.2% on water project, 71.6% on works and 61.7% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participant during COVID period asked all relevant information on programs.

The results in the table shows 91.4% of respondents strongly agreed that the personnel tasked with communicating as regards these programs were responsive toward questions on COVID-SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 81.5% on water project, 71.6% on works and 44.4% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participants asked responsive questions too ward programs

The findings revealed 100.0% of participant strongly agreed the personnel conducting the communication regarding the program communicated all the important details on COVID-SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 82.7% on works and 53.1% on Emy-ooga funds.

The findings also show 100.0% of respondents strongly agreed and said the persons tasked with the communication managed to dispel all misconceptions and misinformation on COVID SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 81.5% on works and 90.1% on Emgooya. This implies that majority of participant listened to the communicators to avoid misconception and misinformation on the COVID-19 vaccines since majority of community had started treating themselves with herbals.

As of the Ministry of Public Service Job Description and Specification for Local Governments 2017, Public Relations Officers or staff are referred to as ‘Communication Officers’ and yet formally they were known as ‘District Information Officers’. The study found that Gulu District Local Government recruited a Communication Officer in May, 2019 following Ministry of Public Service job description and specifications for Local Governments 2017.

In-depth interview on 27th /04/2023 with officers in Administration revealed the expertise and qualification of the staff involved in the Gulu District Local Government Public Relations Office were degree holders with 3 years’ experience in mass communication.

According to the specification, the person should hold a bachelor’s degree in mass communication, journalism or information science and we followed that when recruiting, so know that our Public Relations officer called Communication Officer is qualified and competent.

From the findings, 91.4% of the participant strongly agreed that from the communication, they got a comprehensive understanding of the programs at hand on COVID SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 90.1% on water project, 91.4% on works and 72.8% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of respondents got a comprehensive knowledge on the program.

The statistical findings revealed 100.0% of participants strongly agreed the information shared by the communication experts was complementary with that from the other sources on COVID SOPS, on 91.4% on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 65.4% on works and 55.6% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participants agreed that communication expert gave complementary information from other sources on programs.

The results in the table above revealed 81.5% of respondents strongly agreed that the communicator showed expertise in the way they passed on information and engaged the public during information sharing sessions on COVID SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 82.7% on works and 54.3% on Emyooga fund. This implies that most of respondents believed the communication officers were expertise in passing information and sharing during public meeting in the community, radios.

The findings show that 91.4% of respondents strongly agreed that the persons handling this communication programs were known t have conducted communication works on public matters before on COVID SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 91.4% on works and 63.0% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participant strongly agreed that most communication officer had worked on different programs before joining these programs.

To this, in-depth interview with some of the technocrats also revealed that Communication on COVID SOPS AND COVID19 VAC was just decentralized but there were national addresses on Radios that was being managed by the President of the Republic of Uganda, his Excellency Yoweri Museveni Kaguta and the National Taskforce that was headed by Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). With the decentralization at the district level under the RDCs and the DHOs which created more impact in Gulu district local government too.

4.4 The impact of the PR done by the Gulu District Local Government on the delivery of public goods and services

The researcher investigated the impact of the PR done by the Gulu District Local Government on the delivery of public goods and services as analyzed below in the table

Table 4

The impact of the PR done by the Gulu District Local Government on the delivery of public goods and services

	Strongly Agree	SA+A	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %
The information shared during the communication program greatly improved my knowledge of the program on COVID SOPS	91.4%	100.0%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
water project	28.4%	91.4%	63.0%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Work	18.5%	71.6%	53.1%	8.6%	19.8%	0.0%
Emyooga fund	44.4%	61.7%	17.3%	0.0%	18.5%	19.8%
The information shared as regards the program motivated a uptake of the program on COVID SOPS	82.7%	100.0%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	72.8%	100.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Water project	35.8%	90.1%	54.3%	9.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Work	27.2%	82.7%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%	17.3%
Emyooga	53.1%	63.0%	9.9%	0.0%	18.5%	18.5%
I can still recall the information shared from the communicators because it has been very important on COVID SOPS	81.5%	91.4%	9.9%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%
COVID VAC	81.5%	100.0%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Water project	54.3%	91.4%	37.0%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Work	45.7%	90.1%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
Emyooga	37.0%	54.3%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	45.7%
The information was generally received in my community and upon sharing with my fellow community members i was able to decide on COVID SOPS	91.4%	91.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
COVID VAC	81.5%	91.4%	9.9%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
Water project	44.4%	91.4%	46.9%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%
Work	27.2%	81.5%	54.3%	0.0%	8.6%	9.9%
Emyooga	54.3%	81.5%	27.2%	8.6%	0.0%	9.9%
I performed the recommended tasks briefly but later stopped after realising the information shared did not reflect in the results on COVID SOPS	82.7%	82.7%	0.0%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	82.7%	100.0%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
water project	28.4%	55.6%	27.2%	35.8%	0.0%	8.6%
Work	37.0%	72.8%	35.8%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%
on Emyooga	55.6%	65.4%	9.9%	17.3%	0.0%	17.3%
The communication as regards these programs brought about community practices to support the activities on COVID SOPS	72.8%	100.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COVID VAC	72.8%	100.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Water project	35.8%	90.1%	54.3%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
Works	44.4%	81.5%	37.0%	8.6%	0.0%	9.9%
Emyooga	45.7%	71.6%	25.9%	0.0%	9.9%	18.5%
The communications of programs has brought about a backlash from the community on COVID SOPS	56.8%	91.4%	34.6%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
COVID VAC	56.8%	100.0%	43.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
water project	19.8%	82.7%	63.0%	0.0%	17.3%	0.0%
Work	35.8%	71.6%	35.8%	18.5%	0.0%	9.9%

Emyooga	38.3%	72.8%	34.6%	8.6%	18.5%	0.0%
The communications as regards the programs was a main factor in ensuring its success on COVID SOPS	82.7%	91.4%	8.6%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%
COVID VAC	91.4%	100.0%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
water project	54.3%	100.0%	45.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Work	17.3%	72.8%	55.6%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Emyooga	37.0%	63.0%	25.9%	0.0%	18.5%	18.5%

The researcher investigated the impacts of public relation on the delivery of public goods or services in Gulu district local government and the results in the table revealed 100% of participants strongly agreed the information shared during the communication program greatly improved their knowledge of the program on COVID SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 71.6% on work and 61.7% Emyooga fund. This implies majority of participants believed that information shared during communication program improved their knowledge on handle COVID SOPS, COVID VAC and among other.

The study through in-depth interview found there was an increase in handwashing practice coverage in the whole district and every point of a business center, shops, bars, daily market, bus park, taxi park because of involving the community through sensitization using different communication platforms, Gulu District Water and Sanitation Office reported increased in handwashing practice after visiting the latrine to 78%.9 in 2021-2022 from 16.07% between 2016 -2017. The Gulu District Water Office also registered minor success in safe water coverage from 51.2% between 2016-2017 to 59.9% from 2021 to 2022.

The statistical finding indicates that 100% of participants strongly agreed that the information shared as regards the program motivated them in uptake of the program on COVID SOPS, 100% on COVID VAC, 90.1% on water projects, 82.7% on works and 63% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participants believed the information shared on program encouraged them to uptake the COVID SOPS, COVID VAC.

The results show 91.4% of participants could still recall the information shared from the communicators because it has been very important on COVID SOPS, 100% on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 90.1% on works and 54.3% on Emyooga fund. This shows majority of participants could remember information shared by communicator of government programs.

In-depth interview on 20th /04/2023 with a key informant revealed that successful implementation of the Corona Virus prevention through the Standard Operating Procedures contributed to this rise in handwashing practice coverage that could help also prevent many diseases.

I want to be factual, this has been growing over the years but is great to note that COVID19 pandemic sensitization contributed to this increase and we worked hard on this, we combed everywhere sensitizing the people in the district that they should have handwashing facilities and could help them prevent many diseases.

In-depth interview with office of the District Health Office also revealed that 86.4% got their first doze of COVID19 Vaccination at that time and 64% got their second doze which was above the 60% national target. The participant said the reduction on the second doze was not due to communication interruption but rather merger mix of the various vaccine.

The results show 91.4% of participants strongly agreed that the information was generally received in their community and upon sharing with their fellow community members they were able to decide on COVID SOPS, 91.4% decided on COVID VAC, 91.4% on water project, 81.5% decided on works and 81.5% decided on 81.5% on Emyooga. This implies that majority of respondents received information and shared it with community which made them to decide well on the programs.

In-depth interview revealed that Over 230 Kilometer road opened between 2017-2021 without any conflicts. Gulu District Engineering Department recorded opening over 230Km Roads with ease within the district without conflicting with the local community since they understood the need for road-networks as a post war conflict district.

One of the key informants during in-depth interview joked that charcoal dealers and log dealers can access everywhere in Gulu because of these road network instead of the community using in selling other produces.

This was with proper sensitization and all road projects involved the community however the only sin here is that we ended up providing access everywhere to tree loggers and charcoal dealers in the long run. They are the ones utilizing it everywhere in Gulu.

The results in the table shows 82.7% of respondents performed the recommended tasks briefly but later stopped after realizing the information shared did not reflect in the results on COVID SOPS, 100.0% on covid sops, 56% on water projects, 72.8% on works and 65.4% on Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participant would only take relevant information on government programs.

The results in the table above shows 100.0% of participant strongly agreed that the communication as regards these programs brought about community practices to support the activities on COVID SOPS, 100% on COVID VAC, 90.1% on water project, 81.5% on works and 71.6% on Emyooga fund. This shows majority of participant in the community support the activities of government program.

The results also show 91.4% of participant strongly agreed that the communications of programs has brought about a backlash from the community on COVID SOPS, 100.0% on COVID VAC, 82.7% on water project, 71.6% on works and 72.8% on Emyooga fund. This represents certain views which were not allowed in the community like politics.

The results in the table above shows 91.4% of participant said the communications as regards the programs was a main factor in ensuring its success on COVID SOPS, while 100.0% said on COVID VAC, 100.0% on water project, 72.8% on works and 63.0% on Emyooga fund.

This implies that majority of respondents considered communication as one of the factors that contributed to the success.

The study found out at least 376 groups benefited from Emyooga Funds. Gulu District Local Government was able to register 471 groups to benefit from Emyooga Funds and validated 376 out of the 471 associations or groups who all received the UGX 30 million. Key informants say was possible because of handy provision of information and proper sanitization of the community using all the communication platforms like whatsapp.

4.5 The challenges faced by the public relations office/department in Gulu District Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services.

The researcher investigated the challenges faced by the public relations office/department in Gulu District Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services.

Table 5

The challenges faced by the public relations office/department in Gulu District Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services.

	Strongly disagree	SD+D	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %
The communication about the program was continuous throughout the life of the project hence it kept reinforcing it on COVID SOPS	81.5%	91.4%	9.9%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
COVID VAC	81.5%	100.0%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT WORK	28.4%	81.5%	54.3%	17.3%	0.0%	0.0%
EMYOOGA	44.4%	81.5%	37.0%	8.6%	0.0%	9.9%
The positive public trust in the government is important for digesting the communication shared and has improved community uptake on COVID SOPS	45.7%	63.0%	17.3%	8.6%	0.0%	28.4%
COVID VAC	72.8%	100.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT WORKS	71.6%	100.0%	28.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
EMYOOGA	17.3%	82.7%	65.4%	8.6%	0.0%	8.6%
	0.0%	90.1%	90.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
	37.0%	74.1%	37.0%	0.0%	8.6%	17.3%

There is harmonized communication among the several stakeholders involved in the programs on COVID SOPS	82.7%	91.4%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
COVID VAC	63.0%	100.0%	37.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT	18.5%	91.4%	72.8%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%
WORK	18.5%	81.5%	63.0%	8.6%	0.0%	9.9%
EMYOOGA	55.6%	72.8%	17.3%	8.6%	9.9%	8.6%
	64.2%	100.0%	35.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The content of the communication is shared on numerous platforms such as radio, print media and social media on COVID SOPS						
COVID VAC	53.1%	81.5%	28.4%	0.0%	9.9%	8.6%
WATER PROJECT	53.1%	81.5%	28.4%	8.6%	9.9%	0.0%
WORKS	44.4%	71.6%	27.2%	18.5%	0.0%	9.9%
EMYOOGA	72.8%	100.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The communications as regards programs is done in several languages on COVID SOPS	71.6%	90.1%	18.5%	0.0%	9.9%	0.0%
COVID VAC	63.0%	90.1%	27.2%	0.0%	9.9%	0.0%
WATER PROJECT	27.2%	80.2%	53.1%	9.9%	9.9%	0.0%
WORK	35.8%	80.2%	44.4%	0.0%	19.8%	0.0%
EMYOOGA	51.9%	51.9%	0.0%	0.0%	29.6%	18.5%

The researcher investigated the challenges faced by public relation in the delivery of public services which included COVID SOPS, COVID VAC, Water Project, Work and Emyooga fund in Gulu district local government. The findings in the table above show 91% of respondents strongly disagreed that the communication about the program was not continuous throughout the life of the project hence it kept reinforcing it on COVID SOPS, 100% of respondents strongly disagreed on COVID VAC, 82.7% on Water Project, 81.5% on works and 63.0% on Emyooga fund. This implies that there was no good communication throughout the program while reinforcing it majority of respondents failed to get information on Emyooga fund citing cases of NRM money for its support.

The results also revealed 100% of participants strongly disagreed they had no positive public trust in the government which was important for digesting the communication shared and has improved community uptake on COVID SOPS, 100% COVID VAC, 82.7% water project, 90.1% works and 74.1% Emyooga fund. This implies that people did not trust the information which the government was giving and this did not improve communication feedback on government programs.

The study through in-depth interview found that there was Fear of conflicting with the political wing. There was fear by the technical officers on communicating because the politicians want to be the one communicating on behalf of the district. This fear has at times resulted to giving half-baked information to the public on government programs by the politicians because other information requires input of a technical person not the politician.

One of the key respondents in the study shared the opinion on this contentious matter.

Section 13 of the local Government Act (B) empowers the district chairperson to monitor the general administration of the district and they say it includes communication hence at times as a technical officer even if cleared by the Chief Administrative Officer to speak, you might just not speak to keep relationship with the political wing.

The results in the above 91.4% of respondents strongly disagreed that there was no harmonized communication among the several stakeholders involved in the programs on COVID SOPS, 100.0% strongly disagreed on COVID VAC, 91.4% Water Project, 81.5% Works and 72.8% Emyooga fund. This could be attributed to several stakeholders did not participated in all government activities which means they experienced a lot of challenges in implementing the program.

The study found that funding was one of the biggest challenges affecting the Public Relations Office of Gulu District Local Government under administration headed by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) that there is no specific budget allocation to the office as a direct vote. The communication funds are normally available for activities under Road works and Technical services, Water and Sanitation office, Health department where the communication officer has no control on how is spent or utilized for specific activities under those Public Service dockets.

The respondents were asked whether the content of the communication was shared on numerous platforms such as radio, print media and social media on COVID SOPS with 100% strongly disagreed, 81.5% strongly disagreed on COVID VAC, 81.5% strongly disagreed 91.4% strongly disagreed on water project, 81.5% works 71.6% and 100% strongly agreed on Emyooga fund. This means people in Gulu district had a lot challenges as portrayed by the result.

During an in depth interview with one participant, the key informant revealed how funding challenges has hampered direct involvement of the office in designing and fulfilling many public relations framework strategies independently.

like at times there is need to document and publicize groups doing very well under the Emyooga programs and other government services like Parish Development Model not under your study but you find I have nothing completely to support this initiative.

The respondents were asked whether the communications as regards programs was done in several languages on COVID SOPS with 90.1% disagreed, the results show 90.1% disagreed on COVID VAC, 80.2% Water Project, 80.2% works and 51.9% Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of respondents disagreed that communication regarding government program was done in several languages except English and Acoli yet Gulu has become a metropolitan districts that needed kiswahili, Luganda among others.

The study found out through in-depth interview that online presence was a challenge. Online presence is key in informing the public and civil society on the development in service delivery including reports from the various public service dockets within the district, however this study found out that Gulu District doesn't have an active Website, twitter page, Facebook page and where the communication officer should put documentation for public consumption and get details on various project. Strategic to this, there were some partners who are supporting service delivery in the district and needed partners online boost.

One of the respondents had this to say about this media platforms challenge.

You do monitoring and you don't see anything for our records and our website is down, this is embarrassing, well aware for our strategic need as a postwar conflict district, many people would also want to know about us.

The study also found out that ,there was no hierarchical growth in Communication office: the structure were not in place and doesn't accommodate promotion in from senior to principal level compared to other offices in Gulu district local government like in Information Technology Office have senior level, this is in production department as well and at times communication Officer who want to grow in service must enroll for another academic programme and change direction where there is promotion or prepare just to exit local government.

This study also found out that there is little cooperation and support from heads of department to the communication office which is a big challenge. The Communication Office is a powerful functionary of administration and heavily rely on what happens in all departments for proper profiling and where necessary, briefing the media. Some respondents during in-depth interview said some heads of department still treat communication officer as rumor monger in this generation of robust communication with impact on service delivery.

The moment heads of department want to hide public information; it definitely will create information darkness in the community and ends up not provoking demand for accountability in service delivery.

In-depth interview with the Radio Managers also revealed that some of the officials who have access to the Radio free airtime for government programs also sometime abuse it by taking money from a development partner and want to force the Radio managers to give their associates that free airtime and they might never talk about government programs or service delivery in the districts.

You see, you realize when those sent in the Radio after talking on the free airtime of a given district start asking you to give them receipts because the RDC or LCV chairpersons had picked 'fuel' from them, hence some district officials also abuse this allocation and makes us relocate it away from them by inviting many districts to benefit on a weekly basis other than a monopoly of one district.

In-depth interview also revealed that under the roads sector, there has been no deliberate efforts to sensitize people to differentiate between national roads and district roads. The community in Gulu still don't know who is responsible for maintenance of which road and they

end up pushing for accountability of maintenance and rehabilitation on the wrong authority at times, which has been a good scapegoat for UNRA and Gulu district local government on state of bad roads within Gulu district. Interviews from UNRA and office of the district engineer reveals that some leaders like RDCs and councilors also have this challenge.

Chapter Five

Discussion of the Results.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the discussions and interpretation of the findings in line with relevant reviewed literature of the study and the study theoretical framework.

5.1 Summary of the findings

The results show majority of respondents were aged by 25-34 years with 62.1%, followed by 29.2% who were aged 35-44 years, 7.4% of them were aged 45-54 years and 1.2% of them were above 55 years. This implies that most respondents were mature enough to make good judgment about government programs in Gulu district and how service delivery affects their livelihood and service delivery.

The study revealed that the gender of participants who participated in this study was dominated by males who formed 69.5 % of the total number of respondents compared to 30.5% Females, this is attributed to the fact that more male are seeking information on government programs due to the recent issues of misuse of Emyooga fund, youth livelihood fund.

The results 34.2% of participant live in rural area, 58.8% resides in urban area and 7.0% stay in peri-urban. This implies that majority of respondent stays in urban areas in search for employment opportunities as well most of the youth have attained certain level of education with necessary skills that make them to survive in the town.

The biggest number of respondents in this study had secondary as their highest level of education and they formed 35.8% of the total respondents, these were followed by those with a degree by 27.6% and 18.9% had primary level, 2.1% had no formal education while 15.6% had tertiary which means that generally all respondents were able to read and write which contributed to high response to the questionnaires. Therefore, it can be concluded that the study involved people of all levels of education and they knew what they were responding to. In relation to this

study having such an educated population which is informed makes it to be reactive to any slight change in the service delivery.

The findings show the occupation of participant who participated in the study, 38.7% of participant were self-employed, 35% were peasant and 26.3% were formally employed. This implies that majority of respondents were doing their personal jobs like boda-boda, shops, vending wholesale where those who were formally employed could be the radio station worker, ministry works workers, national water, and local government

5.2 Discussion of the Results

5.2.1 The research investigated models of communication / public relation applied or adopted in Gulu district local government.

The study found out that Gulu District Local Government has access to eleven Frequency Modulation Radio stations that they normally use to communicate public goods and services to the community in Gulu District. The eleven Radio Station include Mega FM, Radio Rupiny, Speak FM, Choice FM, Radio Pacis Gulu, Acholi Broadcasting Services (ABS), Radio Maria, Radio King, Radio Calvary, Mega 100 and Gulu Fm. This finding agrees with (Verčič et al., 1996) who said that the sad reality however is that researchers found that it is rather rampant that PR practitioners only practice one-way communication which means no research is done to collect stakeholders' input, an important factor in building trust and confidence of the community members on a given program or service by local government.

Radio Communication is good as a public information or press agency model for creating awareness and is the best medium, however it is more beneficial at the stage of mobilization of the community members or the citizens towards a public service implementation program but when reviewing the performance of a program or services, it would require a strategic approach where Rogers (1962) suggestion becomes relevant in assessing how the community would have processed and decided on the services being offered. Secondly, the researcher found out that Gulu district local government has no communication strategy or plan in place that means, publicity and visibility is the only goal in this case where majority of the

feed-back from the community are also through the press or the Radios as elaborately discussed by Yue (2016), that public information model have a salient feature of not incorporating public feedback upon receiving organizational messages. It is also important to note that encouraging feedback through the press-normally calls for reactionary public relations approach than proper planning through proactive approach which could cure and inform intervention in time before crisis. Although Gulu district local government didn't have a clear communication plan or strategy in place to show the researcher about the exact models they are using in PR or communication, the study exposed Gulu Local Government for majorly practicing the press agency and public information model, a clear indication that the district authorities are missing out on deliberate feedback mechanism from the community members about the services they are providing.

In-depth interviews found out that communication as regards the program provided an opportunity for feedback on COVID-SOPS, COVID VAC, water project, works and Roads. The COVID-SOPs and COVID VAC, Roads and Water sector feedback was possible because during initial stage of COVID19 pandemic, there were community dialogues which were championed by the district task force led by the Gulu Resident District Commissioner and Roads activities have community based intensive model that contracts the community to maintain the road and any road opening have road management committee involving the local people. This keeps communication about the road even after opening and in the water sector through the water source committee, of community opened water points. The committee keeps in touch with the District Water Office in case of maintenance and damages, it strategically keeps the communication on these services alive.

Despite these natural strengths under the water and road or work sectors, the study found out that the district communication office doesn't utilize this as a strong feedback mechanism since this study could not establish direct involvement of the communication office with the community in these sectors. Without a communication plan or strategy by Gulu district local government over the years, this natural inbuilt flow of communication on services under the road and water sectors accidentally places Gulu district local government to have been practicing a mix model of communication as vividly explained by Valentini, (2013) that in Italy,

communication officers were found to be practicing communication models depending on prevailing circumstances and in this case the circumstances is that, communication is inbuilt in these services despite the fact that authorities are not taking advantage.

The study found out that Gulu District local government have over three strategic WhatsApp groups the district uses to communicate with its development partners to keep track of activities COVID- SOPS, COVID VAC and updates as per the various signed memorandum of understanding with them. This is strategic in keeping harmony and sharing information with the development partners, the irony is that development partners also provide services hence the people who need to be in direct contact with the district officials as per this study is the local community hence the study finds that the two way communication model is being prioritized with the development partners and not the real intended group who are the beneficiaries of the services provided by Gulu District Local Government.

The study discovered majority of participant agreed that the model of local government information was simply targeted towards effecting the implementation of programs through continuous persuasion on COVID-SOPS, COVID VAC, WATER PROJECT, works and Emyooga Fund. This implies that there was no continuous persuasion on the implementation of programs like water project, works and Emyooga fund where as other like COVID SOPS and COVID VAC had much persuasion information.

5.3 The researcher investigated the experience and expertise of public relation staff and personnel in Gulu district local government

The study found that Gulu District Local Government recruited a Communication Officer in May, 2019 following Ministry of Public Service job description and specifications for Local Governments 2017. As of the Ministry of Public Service Job Description and Specification for Local Governments 2017, Public Relations Officers are referred to as ‘Communication Officers’ and yet formally they were known as ‘District Information Officers’.

This finding is inconsistent with Dolphin, (2002) who said most of the PR practitioners come into practice by chance; are not PR educated and neither do they intend to be in PR but are promoted to be in PR because they are considered to have the requirements to thrive in the PR

department whose focus was radio station and televisions. This finding roots that contrary to Dolphin, (2002) government or authority can specify through policy or national laws who should be appointed as a public relations officer by way of a specific qualification and in the context of Uganda, the Ministry of public Service that governs recruitment of all public officers in Uganda have job specifications for all public service jobs in Uganda including PR or communications officers in public service hence for one to qualify to serve at public relations office in public service which Gulu district local government is part of, should have the qualification in mass communication, journalism or information science. Anything apart from that, even if one can thrive in PR in local government with Mathematic bachelors or psychology bachelors in this context one shall not qualify to serve in PR in Uganda's local government.

But the finding very much contents with Zikusooka, (2002) in the changes and using of names for PR practitioner as it fits an entity because the public relations officer for local governments were referred to as 'district information officers' until under the public service job specification of 2017 which now says PR in local governments are 'Communications Officers'. Government of Uganda have now adopted 'Communications Officer' for PR staff in Public Universities too, the current harmonization of grading and nomenclature of positions in structure for public universities communicated on the 29th of September ,2022 by the Permanent Secretary public service directed all public universities among other varying titles to name their PR staff as 'Communications Officer' at that level of Assistant, Senior, Principal and Chief Communication Officers with different salary scales depending on the qualifications. This is more to public entity that have centralized command system; however, Dolphins (2002) assertion could still be relevant in private or non-governmental entities.

The study discovered that majority of participants agreed that the persons communicating the programs disclosed adequate levels of knowledge on COVID-SOPS, COVID VAC, water project, works and Emyooga fund. This implies that majority of participants during COVID period asked all relevant information on programs. This was directed to District health office on health matters. This finding agreed with (Dolphin, 2002) who said the PR industry and practice is open to all highly competent individuals from the various academic backgrounds. It demonstrates that all the technical officers in the thematic areas like Emyooga focal point person, district engineers, district health officers, district water officer are first line communicators of

activities in their department hence should be able to learn basic communication skills to support communications department.

It also very much agrees with Fawkes and Tench (2004) who found out that writing skill and knowledge of the media are desirable skills that employers want the PR applicant to possess. The decentralized Gulu district COVID19 taskforce headed by the RDC had technical officers who had exposure to high level of education and all knew the basic literacy.

5.4 The research investigated the impacts of public relation on the delivery of public goods or services in Gulu district local government

The study found there was an increase in hand washing practice coverage in the whole district and every point of a business center, shops, bars, daily market, bus park, taxi park because of involving the community through sensitization using different communication platforms, Gulu District Water and Sanitation Office reported increased in hand washing practice after visiting the latrine to 78%.9 in 2021-2022 from 16.07% between 2016 -2017. This finding concurs with Roper and Hurst, (2019) who suggest that PR can functions as cross sectoral glue between publics and government to tackle societal problems. This was majorly due to multi-approaches of the COVID19 team to engage the local community using dialogues and the media to sensitize them on the danger of COVID19.

The study found that Over 230 Kilometer Road was opened in the year 2017-2021 without any conflict. Gulu District Engineering Department recorded opening over 230 Km Roads with ease within the district without conflicting with the local community since the beneficiaries (Gulu District Community members) understood the need for road-networks as a post war conflict district. This was possible due to the dialogues and direct engagements with the community by the district team on the importance of having these roads in their area as a post conflict community, hence it clearly defends the notion and the uprising of PR scholars that indeed PR can do more beyond the traditional corporate brand or reputation management creating more debate and interest of how relevant PR is when the entire team cooperates (Carroll and Olegario, 2020; Fehrer, et.al,2022). This creates a sense of belonging and recognition among

the local dwellers, under this arrangement, PR becomes the collective responsibility of all officers in an organization for achieving a unified goal beyond just the communication officer.

The study found out at least 376 groups benefited from Emyooga Funds. Gulu District Local Government was able to register 471 groups to benefit from Emyooga Funds and validated 376 out of the 471 associations or groups who all received the UGX 30 million. Key informants say was possible because of handy provision of information and proper sanitization of the community using all the communication platforms like Radios and some few community meetings were held. However, the study can also authoritatively report that majority of community members in Gulu DLG still don't know anything on Emyooga because it was majorly popularized using the press agency model and from inception has been tapped as a political program. This has greatly affected its revolving nature. Many people believe that the National Resistance Movement Party headed by the President of Uganda. His Excellency, Yoweri Museveni Kaguta gave them as a campaign influencer to vote him back in office during the 2021 elections.

5.5 The study investigated the challenges faced by public relation in the delivery of public services and goods

The study revealed majority of participants strongly disagreed they had no positive public trust in the government which was important for digesting the communication shared and did not improve community uptake on COVID SOPS, COVID VAC, Water project, Works and Emyooga fund. This implies that some people did not trust the information which the government was giving and this never improved communication feedback on government programs where many people on Emyooga fund and COVID VAC had varying opinions. Emyooga was seen as money for politics ignoring its revolving nature and on COVID VAC there was fear that it was a western world agenda to kill Africans. This became worst when medics also were not frontliners in up taking COVID VAC.

This finding concurs with Wang and Wan Wart, (2007) who observed that there has been a decline in trust of government institutions in recent decades. A number of factors have been cited as contributing factors towards this decline including the exposure of scandalous behavior

by politicians, expansion of government, and disappointment with the performance of governments and their service provision. Indeed, Emyooga could have performed better however it has been tagged to politics and most of the groups that got the revolving funds are not returning the money to sustain the SACCOs. Out of the 13 SACCOs that received money, the focal point office reports 50% recovery although the local leaders SACCOs or group, comprising of politicians only are the worst performing with no trace of recovery citing political money by the president as cited by the Focal point office during interview. This demonstrate that from the inception it was too much mixed with politics. The implementers couldn't communicate to erase the political perception beneficiaries had pick. This reports directly about message processing, perception and decision. Indeed, the community processed that Emyooga is money for politics and not revolving, accounting for its poor revolving nature agreeing with the importance being highlighted by the diffusion theory (1962), that beyond the press agency model relevant to create awareness about new public services or goods in the Radio, there is also need to do research and audit the existing ones, how is being perceived by the beneficiaries to inform intervention. This also concurs with Verčič et al, (1996), that PR should not be restricted to one-way information-giving since for effective communication to happen, it must be two-way.

The study also found that there was Fear of conflicting with the political wing. There was fear by the technical officers on communicating because the politicians want to be the one communicating on behalf of the district. This fear has at times resulted to giving half-baked information to the public on government programs by the politicians because other information requires input of a technical person not the politician. This study found that the politicians guide communication at Gulu DLG and existentially argues that it directly accounts for unpopular official press comments by district communications or public relations officers about their districts in Uganda's media as most of the space and official comments about districts are occupied by politicians and the technocrat's head in the district ,like Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) also are found to be under this spell, allowing all Radio programs and community dialogues to be handled by the politicians even specific to Gulu DLG case.

The study discovered majority of participants strongly disagreed that there was no harmonized communication among the several stakeholders involved in the programs on COVID SOPS, COVID VAC, Water Project, Works and Emyooga fund. This could be attributed no

harmonized communication structure and this prevented several stakeholders from participating in all government activities which means they experienced a lot challenge in implementing the program.

The study found that Funding was one of the biggest challenges affecting the Public Relations Office of Gulu DLG under administration headed by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). There is no specific budget allocation to the office as a direct vote. The communication funds are normally available for activities under Works and Technical services, Water and Sanitation office, Health department where the communication officer has no control on how is spent or utilized for specific activities under those Public Service dockets.

The study also found out that online communication presence was a challenge in Gulu district. Online presence is key in informing the public and civil societies on the development in service delivery including reports from the various public service dockets within the district, however this study found out that Gulu DLG doesn't have an active website, twitter page, Facebook page where the communication officer should put documentation for public consumption. This finding faults Gulu district local government for failing to update their partners and public on the services they are providing to the community as this study found out that under Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) which formed part of the parameter frame under this study ,Gulu is being supported by many development partners ,supporting borehole rehabilitation, spring well protection in the community .They need online presence through the district publicity for donor boost but over one year , Gulu district social media pages are down not active. Communications plays a big role in donor politics and these partners heavily support these services to the local community through the district.

This finding also presented the person handling communications as 'incompetent' as people who do activities with the public relations office don't see it anywhere online except the supervisor (CAO) who might be reading the hardcopy report, the study on this note also argues that, the best platform of reporting for a communications officer or a PR Specialist is to have his or her work in a public domain like the website or social media pages of their organization. This creates public perception of incompetence of the officer yet the challenges at times are beyond the officer, although being creative would not be an excuse.

The study found out there was no hierarchical growth in Communication office: the structure was not in place and doesn't accommodate promotion in to senior or mid-level compared to other offices in Gulu District Local Government like the Information Technology Office have senior level including Production, Natural Resources departments among others. At times communication Officer who want to grow in service must enroll for another academic programme.

This finding also shows that a district might need two or more communication officers for effectiveness since having only one person in office might be tricky in case of health challenges or emergencies. The setting also makes it hard for one to upgrade or take longer study leave with obvious reason, there would be no one to support the role in absentia.

This study also found that there is little support and cooperation from the heads of department directly to the communication office which is a big challenge. The Communication Office is a powerful functionary of administration and heavily rely on what happen in all departments for proper profiling and where necessary briefing the press.

The abuse of free Radio airtime by some district officials who instead of communicating government programs invite their associate and get money from them is also a challenge affecting the PR of Gulu district local government as most of the Radios have now added in many districts to benefit from the free airtime outside Gulu as a control measure limiting contact hour of the officials and the community in Gulu. This created mistrust on the free airtime, media owners now want it cancelled by UCC.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Recommendation

6.0 Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions of findings of the study, recommendations and makes suggestions on areas for further research.

6.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that Gulu district local government officials communicate their messages on government programs through radio stations which they have access to eleven Frequency Modulation Radio stations. The eleven Radio Stations includes Mega FM, Radio Rupiny, Speak FM, Choice FM, Radio Pacis Gulu, Acholi Broadcasting Services (ABS), Radio Maria, Radio King, and Radio Calvary.

They also have notice boards in most of the traditional sub counties like Awach, Patiko, Palaro, as a strong medium for informing the public on public goods and services. Informal meetings like funeral rites, Church services are some of the avenues this study found that Gulu District Local Leaders have been using to communicate public goods and service where they take any opportunity to sensitize the community on government programs and mobilize them to benefit, during burial and in church when given opportunity to speak. Under this, the study noted that some of the officials are abusing the government free airtime for relying government programs by instead picking money from their associates and pushing them to the Radio managers as form of accountability.

The study also concluded that most of the programs under study do not have communication feedback strategy in build in them to support the beneficiaries in the community to give their feedback on particular programs. Water sector and road works were found to have committees that would give feedback on rehabilitation work that would require repair and maintenance, an example of that committee is the water source committee.

The study found out that public relation or communication department in Gulu district local government had no promotion from Junior upward. This is a structural human resource shortfall or problem from the Ministry of Public Service and Local Government which could lead to demotivation of the officer, work overload, low performance of the worker.

The study also found that Over 230 Kilometer roads were opened between 2017-2021 in Gulu district without any conflicts due to the communication involved with local communities, some of road's opening involved the community members under community labour intensive model of work.

The study concluded that there is under funding in communication or public relation department of Gulu district local government, the study found out that Gulu district doesn't have an active website, twitter page, Facebook page and where the communication officer should put documentation for public consumption and get details on various projects, the officer only relied on writing reports to the supervisor (CAO) making assertion that the officer is just incompetent.

This also brought in the notion that many development partners who support public service in Gulu district are disappointed for no online partnership boost especially on the website about support under the WASH programs as accountability and donor confidence on the partnership.

Therefore, the implication of this study in public relations is that when PR in local government or any entity has deliberate feedback mechanisms embedded in all programming, the input of the community, beneficiaries on the services or goods provided to them as end users could support service delivery if the service provider (local government) give an action respond on the feedback of the end users (community). The study agreed that through this approach, public relations can improve service delivery at any setting in local government. This continues to build on the strength of two-way communication as opposed to only using one way communication, elaborately explained under the Excellency theory of Grunig and Hunt, (1984) in Chapter two of this study. However, this study further adds that even though there is interaction or feedback on the services by the public but provided the service providers do not act on the feedback of the public then the two-way communication shall remain a design without supporting service delivery.

The study also concluded that as argued by Roger's Diffusion theory of innovation (1962) about different level of processing and deciding in regards to new information about a product, it is indeed wise to be careful to do background check or have community input before introducing a new program, product or services since persuading the community might never work after they have made a decision on introduction of that service or product. This was vivid in the study, especially on Emyooga revolving fund as majority of the population processed and decided that Emyooga is attached to politics and as long as they support the National Resistance Movement (NRM), the current ruling party in Uganda, there is no need to return the money with the small interest and this has evidently resulted to the poor performance of the revolving nature of Emyooga as many of the SACCOs are just dying out. This study roots that if the government had made a wider consultation before implementation and had made public contribution core of Emyooga's pre-planning, the performance of Emyooga would have been better than now. This study then argues that Public Relation might not have much achievement in service delivery once a new program, services is introduced without the input of beneficiaries. However, the public relations feed-back embedded in the two-way communication model should help support redesigning strategy of the program but again if feedback like on Emyooga is left without action respond (redesigning the program to the community feed-back) from the Central Government, there would be no much success in service provision of Emyooga to the community by the local government.

Given the above, this study conclusively defines Public Relations as a service delivery tool when an entity, organization, or institution has deliberate feedback mechanism embedded in its programming and input of its public on the services or goods provided is given action respond by management or authority of the entity. The implication is that PR shall enhance service delivery.

6.2 Recommendation

Since Gulu district uses majorly one-way model of communication to communities using church, Radios, and funerals, the study recommends investment in building public accountability forums like barazus for community dialogue which could allow feedback on specific public services or good

The study recommends Gulu district local government to develop a communication strategy for all public goods and services as it is found in water and road sector embedded in pro community committees which provide good feedback to the district and community on areas which needs improvement. Accountability and transparency would be checked (Mbogo, 2011)

Since communication department is under-funded and under-staffed, the study recommends the Ministry of public service and Ministry of Local Government to cure the structural human resource gap with funding allocation for implementation of it activities. The Ministry of public service has widened communication or PR positions from Assistants, senior, Principal and Chief Communication Officers in Public universities and other entities in government parastatals, a similar arrangement needs to be propagated for local governments.

The study recommends Gulu district local government to urgently allocate the funding for online presence by putting up the website and other social media handles.

The study recommends the Ministry of Local Government and Public Service to develop communication policy where political leader's role in communication is outlined without interferences with communication officer or technical officers' roles. The Communication Policy will also be a great guiding document for Gulu district local government to adopt a serious communication strategy conversant with service delivery approach to the people of Gulu district local government.

The study also recommends Gulu LG to utilize NUMEC for their press briefing and releases since it can mobilize journalist quickly beyond just the district reach.

The study finally recommends that elected leaders and all technical officers who head a department need in-depth training on communication with a deliberate manual on community feed-back mechanism as the basis of success in service delivery.

6.3 Areas for further studies

Further studies should be conducted on the impact of human resource gap on communication performance of local government.

The challenges faced by the public relations office/department in Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Introduction

I am Ojok James Onono a student at Uganda Christian University, Mukono, I am currently conducting a study on the “roles of Public relations in the delivery of public services by Gulu District Local Government” as a prerequisite for the award of the Master’s degree in Strategic Communication of Uganda Christian University, Mukono.

You have been selected to participate in this study because the contribution you make to your local Government is central to the kind of information required. The information provided to the researcher in this study will be kept very confidential and will only be used for purposes of this study and only accessible to parties involved in the study.

Your participation in this study is highly appreciated.

Sign:

Date:

Part A: Biodata

1. What is your age range (years)?
 - a) 25 – 34
 - b) 35 – 44
 - c) 45 – 54
 - d) 55 - Above
2. What is your gender?
3. What is the description of your area of residence
 - a) Rural
 - b) Urban
 - c) Peri-Urban
4. What is your level of education?
 - a) No formal education
 - b) Primary
 - c) Secondary
 - d) Tertiary
 - e) University
5. What is your occupation?
 - a) Formally employed
 - b) Peasant
 - c) Self-employed

Instructions:

For the following sections (Part A, Part B, Part C, Part D and Part E) tick the most appropriate option.

Key:

Ranking:

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree

Program:

COVID-SOPS: Corona Virus prevention through the enforcement of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in 2020 which was decentralized to district level and managed under the local government taskforces at the district level.

COVID- VAC: The Corona Virus mass vaccination program that started in late 2021 and continues to date.

Water Project: The Water projects under Gulu District Local Government.

WORKS: Road works, maintenance, repair, and redevelopment projects under the Gulu district LG.

EMYOOGA Fund: The Emyooga fund under the Gulu District Local Government and supported by the microfinance support center.

Part B: The Model of Public Relations Adopted

No.	Logical Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	The communications regarding the program were simply informative	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
2	The communication as regards the program provided an opportunity for feedback	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
3.	The feedback in the communications towards the program was put into consideration	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
4.	The information in the program was presented in a way similar to news and press releases	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
5	The model of local government information is simply targeted towards effecting the implementation of the programs through continuous persuasion	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
6	The program would have been more successful if it would allow to have feedback of the community and include their views and opinions	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					

Part C: The Experience and Expertise of PR Staff and Personnel

No	Logical Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	The persons handling the communication of the program did it to my satisfaction.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
2	The persons communicating the programs showed adequate levels of knowledge.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
3	The personnel tasked with communicating as regards these programs were responsive to our questions.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
4	The personnel conducting the communication regarding the program communicated all the important details.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
5	The persons tasked with the communication managed to dispel all misconceptions and misinformation.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
6	From the communication, I got a comprehensive understanding of the programs at hand.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
7	The information shared by the communication experts was complementary with that from the other sources.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
8	The communicator showed expertise in the way they passed on information and engaged the public during information sharing sessions.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
9	The persons handling this communication programs are known to have conducted communication works on public matters before	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					

Part D: The Impacts of PR on the Delivery of Public Goods

No	Logical Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	The information shared during the communication program greatly improved my knowledge of the program	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
2	The information shared as regards the program motivated a uptake of the program	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
3	I can still recall the information shared from the communicators because it has been very important	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
4	The information was generally received in my community and upon sharing with my fellow community members I was able to decide	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
5	I performed the recommended tasks briefly but later stopped after realizing the information shared did not reflect in the results	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
6	The communication as regards these programs brought about community practices to support the activities	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
7	The communications of programs has brought about a backlash from the community	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
8	The communications as regards the programs was a main factor in ensuring its success	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					

Part E: The Challenges Faced by PR in the Delivery Of public Goods

No	Logical Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	The communication about the program was continuous throughout the life of the project hence it kept reinforcing it.	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
2	The positive public trust in the government is important for digesting the communication shared and has improved community uptake	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
3	There is harmonized communication among the several stakeholders involved in the programs	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
4	The content of the communication is shared on numerous platforms such as radio, print media and social media	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					
5	The communications as regards programs is done in several languages	<i>COVID-SOPS</i>					
		<i>COVID VAC</i>					
		<i>Water Project</i>					
		<i>Works</i>					
		<i>Emyooga Fund</i>					

Appendix2: Proposed Work Plan

	PROPOSED WORK PLAN									
PLANNED ACTIVITIES	YEAR 2022									
MONTHS	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
1. Identification of research area and topic and review of literature and methodology										
2. Development of proposal										
3. Consultation on the procedures										
4. Development of questionnaires and relevant tools										
5. Well tuning the proposal, organizing for presentation										
6. Presentation of the proposal and corrections required										
7. Field data collection										
8. Data dispensation and analysis										
9. Data interpretation and report writing										
10. Presentation of final dissertation										

Appendix 3: Proposed Budget

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	BUDGET
Development of proposal, printing and photocopying	150.000
Air time for conference and coordination	80.000
proposal pre-work	70.000
Research questionnaires interview guide, printing and photocopying	120.000
Data collection operating cost	1000.000
Data processing, analysis and associated expenditures	200.000
Data interpretation and writing dissertation	400.000
Other Logistical expenditures	600.000
Dissertation presentation to faculty	Nil
TOTAL	2.620.000

Appendix 4: Approval Letter from UCU Research Ethic Committee



22nd March, 2022

Ojok Onono,
Uganda Christian University,
P. O. Box 4, Mukono
Tel. +256779705652
poetjames7@gmail.com

UG-REC-026 APPROVAL NOTICE

To: Ojok Onono, Principal Investigator
Re: UCUREC Approval Letter for Ojok Onono entitled: *Analyzing the role of Public relations in service delivery by Local Governments; The case of Gulu district Local Government in Northern Uganda.*

Application Number: UCUREC-2023-479
Version: 4.0

Type: Initial Review
 Protocol Amendment
 Letter of Amendment (LOA)
 Continuing Review
 Material Transfer Agreement
 Other, Specify:

I am please to inform you that the UCUREC 2023-479; UCUREC approved the above referenced application.

Approval of the research is for the period from 22nd March, 2023, to 22nd March, 2024.

This research is considered minimal risk category.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.



1 of 2

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P.O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda (East Africa), Plot 67-173, Bishop Tucker Road, Mukono Hill, Tel: +256 (0) 31 235 0800, www.ucu.ac.ug
Ugandachristianuniversity @UCUniversity, Founded by the Pronvince of Church of Uganda, Chartered by the Government of Uganda.



3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the REC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for REC review.
4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the REC eight weeks prior to the above expiration date of 22nd March, 2024 in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by UG-REC _026:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Research Proposal	English	1.0	22 nd February, 2023
2.	Informed Consent Form	English	1.0	22 nd February, 2023
3.	Data Collection Tools	English	1.0	22 nd February, 2023

Signed and Stamped

Prof. Peter Waiswa,
UCUREC Chairperson,
pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug



Appendix 5 Letter Seeking Permission

Uganda Christian University
P.O Box 4,
Mukono
(U)

17th /04/2023

The Chief Administrative Officer
Gulu District Local Government
P.O Box 2, Gulu Uganda.

RE: 'Analyzing the Role of Public Relations in Service Delivery by Local Governments: The Case of Gulu District Local Government in Northern Uganda'.

The above caption refers;

I'm a Master's Student at Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing the above research topic as a pre-requisite of Masters of Arts in Strategic Communication of UCU. Having satisfied the UCU Research Ethics Committee with my Data Collection Tools, I have been granted permission to collect data in your District for academic purposes.

Below is the assessment of thematic areas under this study in Gulu District Local Government between January 2017 and December 2021. The programs identified for the study include the;

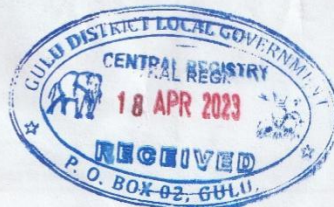
- Corona Virus prevention through the enforcement of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in 2020 which was decentralized to district level.
- The Corona Virus mass vaccination program that started in late 2021 and continues to date.
- The Water projects.
- Road works, maintenance, repair, and redevelopment projects under the Gulu district LG.

. The Emyooga fund under the Gulu District Local Government.

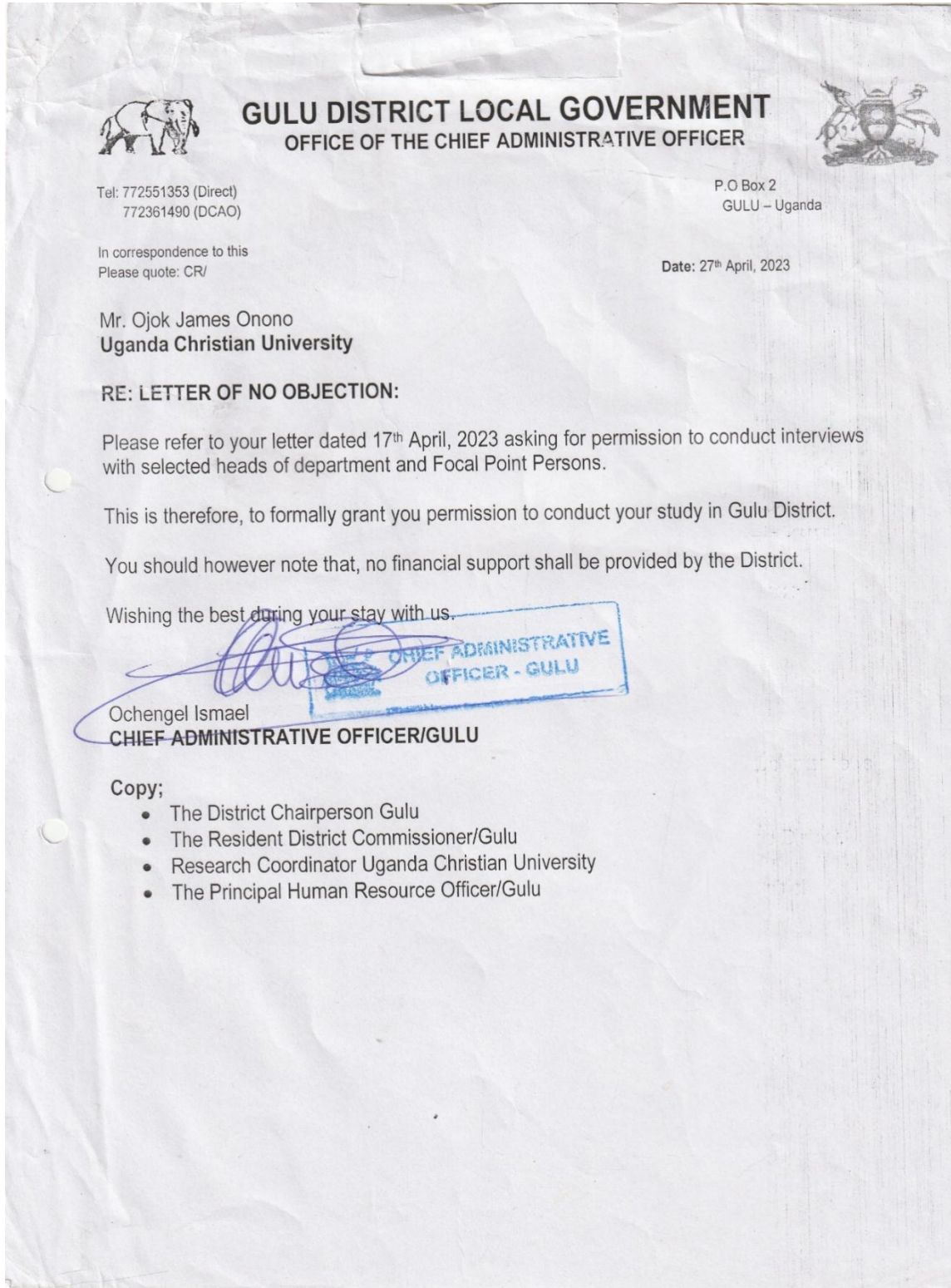
Therefore, this is to humbly request your office to allow interviews with the technocrats or heads of departments whose work correspond with the above thematic areas under study strictly for academic purpose. Attached is the approval letter from UCU Research Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Ojok James Onono



Appendix 6: Permission Letter from Gulu District Chief Administrative Officer for Data Collection





UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 13th /5/2024.

Name of Candidate: Ojok James Onono Reg. No: REG.NO:RS20M54/205

Title of Dissertation Analyzing the Role of Public Relations in Service Delivery by the Local Governments: The Case of Gulu District Local Government in Northern Uganda.

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Findings should not be over explained.	This was handled	highlighted statement in page 55 was removed
2	Extract of new knowledge for the study to be vivid under conclusion and recommendation Chapter.	This was added.	The study concrete addition to PR was added in the last paragraph under sub-heading of conclusion in page 80.

3	Unnecessary Capitalization of sub-titles needs to be addressed within the work.	This was addressed	From Cover page to the last page.
4			
5			

SN	COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Update Literature	This was updated.	Literature was updated with latest studies relevant to this work. It was also effected in the reference page as advised .
2	Presentation chapter lacks coherence; findings need better integration with theory.	This was comprehensively handled.	This is now visible and handled under chapter and five
3			
4			
5			

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Update literature.	Literature was updated.	Literature was updated with the latest as of 2022 in page 11 (Carroll and Olegario, 2020; Fehrer, et.al,2022)
2	Presentation chapter lacks coherence; findings need better integration with theory.	This was comprehensively handled.	This is now visible and handled under chapter and five.

3	Inconsistencies in unit of analysis	The unit of analysis is the public services under study and has been updated. “The service delivery was assessed basing on the following areas; Corona Virus prevention through the enforcement of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in 2020, the Corona Virus mass vaccination program that started in late 2021, the Water projects. Road works, maintenance under the Gulu district LG and the Emyooga fund under the Gulu District Local Government” supported by the Microfinance Support’ Centre	This is now captured in Chapter four in the introduction as well to create the consistency
4	Lack of qualitative data.	This is handled.	The qualitative data runs through in chapter four
5	Objectives need alignment with the topic	This was handled	The objective aligned to the topic.
	Recommendation is necessary as an objective.	This was also handled	Recommendation is catered for in Chapter Six.
	Improve table for public presentation, consider using charts or graphs.	This comment by the Panel was just for noting by the candidate for his public presentation of the research.	The Candidate has noted.

Ojok James Onono

Candidate’s Name

Signature

Prof.Kiwanuka-Tondo James

Supervisor’s Name

Signature