

**AN ANALYSIS OF HONESTY AS A LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE FOR GOOD  
GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: A CASE OF MUKONO MUNICIPAL  
COUNCIL**

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## DECLARATION

This is to declare that, this dissertation is my original work and it has never been submitted to any university or higher institution for any award. Where it is indebted to other people's work, due acknowledgement has been made.

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## APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval

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Date: 15/2/2025

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God who has given me life and wisdom to assemble this knowledge into a meaningful academic piece, to my research supervisor who has showed me that even a biggest undertaking can be achieved if it is attended to one step at a time, and to my two daughters (Sarah and Claire) who have given me moral support but also honored my study time.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AG	Auditor General
CD	Central Division
CIPESA	Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and South Africa
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IGG	Inspector General of Government
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LG	Local Government
MMC	Mukono Municipal Council
MOFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MOLG	Ministry of Local Government
NDP III	Third National Development Programme
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PPP	Public Private Partnership
UBOS	Uganda National Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WOUGNET	Women of Uganda Network

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the role of honesty as a key leadership principle in effective governance at Mukono Municipal Council. It aimed to determine whether leaders at the council adhere to honesty, the benefits of such adherence, and the challenges they face in maintaining honesty. Utilizing a qualitative approach with a case study method, data was gathered from 34 respondents, including 20 from Mukono Municipal Council and 14 from Central Division, through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that honesty is crucial for accountability and resource management, enhancing service delivery, community involvement in decision-making, and building public trust. Key motivators for leaders to embrace honesty included professional and organizational policy guidelines, oversight bodies, and personal commitment to public welfare. However, challenges such as cultural norms, weak law enforcement, resource limitations, political pressures, and concerns about job security and favoritism were identified as barriers to practicing honesty. The study concluded that not all leaders at Mukono Municipal Council consistently adhered to the principle of honesty in execution of their duties.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This study analyzed honesty as a leadership principle which was believed to enhance good governance of Mukono Municipal Council. In this study, honesty was the independent variable while good governance was the dependent variable. This chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, general objectives of the study, specific objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and the theoretical frame.

### 1.1. Background to the study

Honesty is a leadership principle central to fostering ethical governance and effective public administration. It involves transparency, accountability, truthfulness, and a commitment to the public good (Ggoobi, Lukwago, and Bogere, 2020; Sharpley, 2024). In an international perspective, honesty is effective in solving governance issues and serves as the foundation for sustainable development. It strengthens people's confidence, eradicates fraud, and promotes transparency, particularly in organizations where leadership honesty is paramount (Garcia & Ching, 2024). It has been established that ethical leadership that is founded on honesty builds organizational performance especially in areas of education, health and infrastructure (Channuwong et al., 2024). According to historical evidences, deceitfulness has been associated with survival and economic wellbeing of nations. For instance, Viroli (1995) argues in *Love for My Country* that patriotism and a shared commitment to moral values, such as honesty, are foundational for good governance. His work draws lessons from the collapse of ancient Rome, where the erosion of ethical principles, including honesty, contributed to systemic failure. This lens sheds crucial light on the importance of truth in modern governance, specifically regarding how to avoid the degradation of institutions and promote their stability.

Globally, institutions and frameworks have stressed on the role of integrity in governance systems across the world. For instance, the World Bank notes that transparency and accountability as well as the fight against corruption feature as fundamental principles of good governance (World Bank, 2012). Ethical governance practices are important in reducing corrupt practices, proper utilization of resources and attainment of developmental objectives (Nakayi & Wiegatz, 2024).

Investigations have shown how leaders engage in fraud, including the embezzlement of funds and procurement fraud, which result in inefficiency and loss of public confidence (Garcia & Ching, 2024). Such issues are not peculiar to the developing world but are manifest across the globe, thus pointing to the need for honesty as a leadership philosophy. Ethical principles borrowed from different cultures and philosophies also uphold the virtue of honesty. For instance, in Buddhism, the governance principles uphold correct leadership practices that emphasize the needs of the entire community over personal profits (Channuwong et al., 2024). Additionally, Roman political thought as analyzed by Hammer (2014) reveal that deception undermines social and organizational values and leads to weakened institutions. These global perspectives support the role of honesty in tackling modern governance issues.

On the subject of governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, it can be noted that the relevant problem concerns accountability, as well as befitting ethical standards for leaders. This area of the region has observed major attempts at having honesty as part of the governance systems as a way of tackling corruption and poor performance in the delivery of public services (Irene, Haluna and Bolatito, 2024). For instance, Uganda's decentralization policy has been critical in enhancing transparency and accountability in the local government (Lubuulwa, 2021). However, multiple factors such as poor leadership training and lack of resources hinder these attempts to the core (Mugabi, 2024). Research carried out in Uganda has revealed that lack of honesty has resulted in systematic failure of governance as witnessed by poor handling of resources and deterioration in service delivery particularly in the health, education and physical facilities sectors (Ggoobi, Lukwago & Bogere, 2020). Such problems highlight the necessity of honest leadership to promote the public interest and improve organizational performance.

Uganda's governance landscape reflects the critical role of honesty in leadership. The principles of good governance, as articulated in the 1995 Constitution of Uganda and other statutory frameworks, emphasize accountability, transparency, and service to the public (Uganda, 1995). However, implementation of these principles has been hampered by systematic barriers such as corruption. For instance, Mukono Municipal Council (MMC) being one of the local governments in Uganda also has problems of accountability in delivering services especially in education and health sectors as highlighted in Mukono Municipal Development Plan (2015/2016 – 2019/2020).

Other variables that have defined the governance context in Uganda include historical factors. During the colonial times, public service delivery involved a lot of ethical practices and remunerations of civil servants were reasonable (Sonko, 2010). Nevertheless, after the attainment of independence this aspect of governance received a setback in the late 1970s when economic crises and instabilities paved way for corruption and erosion of accountability (Langseth, 1996). The focus on good governance reforms was again revitalized in the 1990s through constitutional reforms and the creation of agencies such as the IGG, and the office of the Auditor General (Uganda, 1995). However, despite these implementations, new findings suggest that incorrigibility in following the principle of honesty remains an issue in local governments. For instance, Mukono Municipal Council, the subject of analysis in this study, has been accused of unethical practices including embezzlement of funds through manipulation of procurement procedures and lack of accountability (Nakayi & Wiegratz, 2024). Such challenges necessitate the enhancement of honest leadership and sound governance structures.

This study is based on the Principal-Agent Theory, which explains the interactions between the leaders (agents) and their governing bodies or the public (principals). The theory underscores the need to avoid opportunistic behavior in eliminating information asymmetry, ensuring that incentives are aligned and conflict of interest is contained (Sharpley, 2024). According to the Ugandan local government systems, municipal officials are required to uphold public interest while observing professionalism, truthfulness, and integrity (Lubuulwa, 2021). In this respect, the theory contributes to understanding the patterns of leadership and governance within the context of MMC.

Established in 2010 by an Act of Parliament, MMC operates as a lower local government tasked with delivering essential services to its community (Uganda, 2012). Some of the most pressing challenges facing the Council include the following: the limited availability of resources; unethical conduct by leaders. Nevertheless, MMC still represents a significant location for investigating the relationship between truthfulness and work administration. It is one of the local government entities in Uganda that has both political and technical leaders hence making it easy to study the effect of honesty on the delivery of services and trust (Mugabi, 2024). MMC has been accused of failing to abide by ethical practices most especially in procurement and financial management as

highlighted by the Mukono Municipal Development Plan for the fiscal years 2015/2016 – 2019/2020. These challenges call for enhanced leadership training and proper ethical standards to uphold integrity and accountability in leadership (Mugabi, 2024). The study, therefore, aimed at identifying the factors, which would give a broad understanding of the extent to which honesty as a leadership principle was being observed in the governance at MMC, the advantages associated with its implementation, and the difficulties that leaders encountered in embracing the principle.

Honesty is essential for fostering trust and improving the performance of public institutions (Mugabi, 2024). It serves as a foundation for ethical leadership, which is critical in addressing the governance challenges faced by local governments like MMC. As demonstrated in both historical and contemporary contexts, honesty is not only a moral imperative but also a practical necessity for achieving sustainable development and public trust (Garcia & Ching, 2024). It is anticipated that the insights derived from the study will add to the current literature of governance and offer practical recommendations pertaining to leadership integrity in public organizations.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Honesty as a leadership principle is a core concept towards realization of good governance, especially in local government institutions such as Mukono Municipal Council (MMC). However, this remains a contentious principle to this date (Uganda, 2021). The municipal councils in Uganda including MMC are responsible for a wide range of duties that cuts across service delivery, employment, staff coaching, and rewarding, land and property assessment, procurement, and construction. These responsibilities thus call for ethical leadership that is based on honesty in order to be effective and accountable. Nevertheless, in real-life scenarios, the principle is violated by leaders causing inefficiency, corruption, and reduced citizens' confidence (Ojok, & Kiwanuka-Tondo, 2024; Ggoobi et al., 2020).

Reports from local governments, including MMC, highlight recurring issues such as manipulation of procurement processes, poor financial accountability, and weak service delivery in key sectors like education and health (Mukono Municipal Development Plan, 2015/2016–2019/2020; Nakayi & Wiegatz, 2024). These governance failures can be seen to have illuminated a major disconnect between the principles and values embedded in Uganda's governance policies and the realities of



functioning in municipality. Such astronomical gap has immense repercussions on public service delivery, organizational reputability, and stakeholder confidence.

Moreover, changes in political and technical leadership have often led to opposing strategies at MMC, hence leading to deceit and erosion of organizational values and ethics due to conflict of interest (Irene, Haluna and Bolatito, 2024). Although there is a focus on ethical conduct in the existing governance structures, the strategies that can be employed to encourage honesty among the leadership are well downplayed. This creates the need for a critical analysis on how the leadership principle of honesty can be effectively applied in governance practices. In light of this, this study aimed to fill this gap through assessing the level to which the compliance with honesty improves the governance at MMC.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The main objective of this study was to analyze how observance of the principle of honesty in leadership enhances good governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

In order to achieve the general study objective, the hereunder specific objectives guided the study;

- i. To investigate if leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.
- ii. To establish the benefits that accrue when leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.
- iii. To analyse the challenges faced by leaders in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

In order to achieve the general study objective, the hereunder research questions guided the study;

- i. How do leaders follow the principle of honesty in governance of Mukono Municipal Council?
- ii. What benefits accrue when leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal Council?
- iii. What challenges do leaders face in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council?

## **1.5 The scope of the study**

### **1.5.1 Geographical Scope**

Geographically, the research was conducted at Mukono Municipal Council and Central division, which are located in Mukono Municipality, Mukono District, in the Central region of Uganda. Mukono Municipal Council is bordered by Kayunga Town council and Luwero Municipality in the North, with Buikwe Town council in the East, Buvuma and Kalangala Town councils in the South and Kampala City Authority and Wakiso Town Council. It has a population total of 162,796 people (UNHDS, 2014). Administratively the Municipality has two divisions; Central and Goma divisions. MMC has eight (8) departments; administration, works and technical services, natural resources, public health, community- based services, education, production, finance and planning unit, which totals to seventy five (75) technical staff and forty five (45) political representatives (Mukono Municipal Development plan 2015/2016- 2019/ 2020). Therefore, this research was conducted at the Municipal Council and at the Central Division only.

### **1.5.2 Content Scope**

This study sought knowledge mainly about if the principle of honesty is followed by leaders at Mukono Municipal Council; the benefits of following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council and the challenges faced by leaders in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

### **1.5.3 Time Scope**

In this study, consideration was given to literature covering nine years from 2015- 2024. This is because it is within this period that it was reported especially by the IGG and AG that Mukono District ranked high in dishonest conduct by public officials. This too was reported of Mukono Municipal Council.

## **1.6 Justification of the Study**

Though some studies had been conducted about the principle of honesty, there was inadequate information about this in public sector organizations in Uganda, hence necessitating this study. Moreover, there was little research that had been conducted on the leadership- governance nexus in municipal councils in Uganda, which gave reason for this study to be undertaken. Besides,

public sector leaders and the organizations they work for were increasingly losing public trust, reputation and public image, assumedly for failing to live to the expected standard of behavior, and consideration of honesty (Mwesigwa, 2021; IGG, 2021). This study was indeed needed as tool that would awaken public sector leaders to distance themselves from any scandalous administrative acts especially by choosing to become virtuous hence restore their public trust and reputation.

Annual reports to the Parliament of Uganda, especially by the Inspectorate of Government and the AG for Mukono Municipal Council for the period 2015 to date also give startling statistical evidence about gaps in honesty, transparency and accountability among leadership in the local Government (IG, 2016; IG; 2017; AG; 2018; AG,2021). This study therefore, came in at the right time, to investigate how good governance of the Mukono Municipal council could be achieved and sustained by leadership that adheres to the ethic of honesty.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

How well an organization is governed, is highly dependent upon those in the levers of power. This study was intended to throw more light on the significance of reinforcing honesty among leaders at Mukono Municipal Council, so as to realise good governance of the institution.

Besides, much as good governance of public sector institutions has been pursued for some time in Uganda, little research has been undertaken in the area of honesty among leaders in Municipal Councils, and how this is essential in underpinning good governance therein. Therefore, this research contributes to filling this knowledge gap.

In addition to that, findings from this research could be used by the concerned authorities to examine how well existing ethical frame works might reinforce honesty among Municipal Council officials, and this could become a beginning point to amend the existing ethical structure for the Municipal units in Uganda.

The study also provided comprehensive information about honesty in leadership, its significance in upholding good governance plus the factors that inhibit leaders to sustain it at Municipal

Councils. As a result, public officials could use this information to conduct self-appraisal about how honest they are in their work especially in meeting the objectives of the Municipal Council, in a way that befitted good governance ideals. Ultimately, this could rekindle their personal commitment to serve in the public interest.

The study could serve as an essential cutting-edge resource tool to management practitioners, policy makers, students, development actors in the municipal councils, about honest leadership and public sector governance.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

A Municipal Council is a public sector entity that represents a democratic structure charged with fulfilling Government functions at a Local Government level (Constitution of Uganda, 1995, Articles 176, 180 and 181). In a democratic unit, it is expected that the public or people are treated with supremacy, where their wellbeing and development should be the aim of all government actions (Visser, 2009). It is also an expectation that service to the public is executed by people's representatives, but also, through career professionals with honesty.

The study was guided by the Principal- Agency theory by Jansen and Meckling (1976). This theory proposes that public organizations like Mukono Municipal Council have owners (Principles), and people who work for the owners of the organizations (Agents). It assumes that the Principal (in this case the Government or the public) exist to pursue particular objectives hence employ another person/ persons (agent)- in this case, the professional people and elected political representatives, to execute some objectives/services on their behalf (Jansen, 1996).

The theory assumes that in some circumstances, the principal is unable to effectively undertake some obligatory tasks by themselves, and so, may decide to employ or hire a proper/ competent person(s) (an agent) to do the job on their behalf (Sappington, 1991). In this case, the agent acts on delegated power conferred upon them by the principal, but must use it within the standards laid before them (Alvares and Hall, 2006; Mac cue and Prier, 2008). Consequently, because the agent is hired, the principal gives them a contract, which clearly stipulates expectations about their work, payment for the agency, conduct, and possible situations that can lead to contract termination.

Much as there exists a contractual relationship between the principal and agency, the theory proposes that the two parties have differing interests and this causes a conflict of interests. Other scholars postulate that conflict of interest between the principal and agent may arise from; the principal's need for the agent to perform their tasks to the utmost excellence and efficiency but at the lowest feasible expenditure, the agency's capacity to compromise the quality of their work irrespective of the costs that may accrue from that, the superior competence and information of the agent (hidden agent knowledge) versus insufficient information by the principal about the agent's competence and job responsibilities (hidden action) and the agent's potential to take advantage of the principal, the diverse ways an agency can take to deliver their results against the ability of the principal to effectively monitor the different agency actions and approaches of work, the unanticipated expenses incurred by the agency in the course of their work and the need for the principal to offer realistic recompense to agent (Dixit, 2002; Hussein, 2002 Gailmanard, 2002; McCue and Prier, 2008 ; Keser and Willinger, 2007 and Lupia and MacCubbins (2002).

Complimentarily, other scholars continue to say that; as long as one party delegates another for work execution, possibilities of stepping outside a given mandate, are likely (Marian, 2002). More so, that the principal may suffer from an "adverse selection problem" where they pick at an agent who lacks requisite skills, knowledge, or one who may adamantly decide to contravene the principal's policies, standards and wishes (Kaare (2000; Keser, and Willinger, 2007). As a result, moral slips are possible (Magnus et al 2003). Therefore, a need for some behavior restraining strategies to enable the principal to attain their goals or objectives (Caers et al, 2006; Pagliarussi and Costa (2017).

In addition to the above, this theory too recognizes that there are certain circumstances that may however, interfere with leaders' ability to exercise proper use of organization's resources honestly, therefore, indicating that moral vulnerabilities are possible manifestations in any organization (Caers et al, 2006). As a result, it is assumed that mitigation measures in forms of rules and other incentives must always be put in place by the Principal (the government), as controls and guides to leaders in decision making, conduct and proper allocation and utilization of organizational resources.

Therefore, the Principals have a duty to hire or recruit or vote in office, credible and qualified people based on merit, establish structures within which to operate, reward employees reasonably, to guide and monitor the behavior and actions of the executives, and to motivate and develop staff's competencies as required. Consequently, the theory came in handy to help investigate the nexus between the principle of honesty and good governance at Mukono Municipal Council.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter explored existing literature by different researchers about the notion of the principle of honesty and public sector governance. The review of literature was based on honesty core. The review involved systematic identification, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem that was being investigated that is, the influence of honesty of leaders in the public sector institutions on good governance. The literature was reviewed according to specific objectives of the study. The source of this literature were text books, journals, magazines, conference proceedings, Government reports, policy documents, newspapers and views of the respondents.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

According to the Principal-Agent theory advanced by Jansen and Mecking (1976), it is elucidative to examine the relationships formed between the public bodies such as Mukono Municipal Council and other stakeholders. In its essence, it outlines the interaction between the ‘Principal,’ the government or the public, and the ‘Agent,’ the elected politicians and the civil servants. This relationship is defined by a delegation of authority whereby the principal appoints the agent to perform some duties. However, this relationship is not always this clear-cut due to issues of asymmetric information where the agents have more information than the principals mostly in the sphere of public governance. This imbalance may result in situations where the agents may take actions that will benefit them but not the principals. Based on the model of information asymmetry, Akerlof’s (1970) work titled *The Market for Lemons* best illustrates why several systems, including governance, become inefficient and produce less than the best results. This concept, when extended to public institutions, highlights the importance of intermediation in closing the information asymmetry between principals and agents.

Another component of the Principal-Agent theory is the concept of incentives. In their view, Panda and Leepsa (2017) posited that there is a positive correlation between the probability of agents’ behavior being in the best interest of the principal and the congruence of the goals of the two parties involved. However, the pursuit of perfect alignment is difficult because of trade-offs.

Depending on the quality of public services that agents agreed to deliver, public governance systems use motivators like bonuses, promotions, and acknowledgments to ensure the commitment is met satisfactorily.

Another important element that helps to maintain the balance between the principal and the agent is oversight mechanisms. Jensen & Meckling (1976) posited that these mechanisms are critical for minimizing agency costs—the costs resulting from the disparity between the actions of the agent and the expectations of the principal. In the context of public governance, such mechanisms may involve audits, evaluation of performance, public scrutiny, and accountability structures. However, this relationship is inherently vulnerable to the ‘agency problem,’ wherein the agents may act in their self-interest at the expense of the principals’ interests. According to Eisenhardt (1989), this divergence causes inefficiencies and ethical issues in governance structures. In response to such challenges, the Principal-Agent theory recommends contractual provisions, efficient monitoring, and suitable incentives that can motivate agents to work and act in a manner that is favorable to the principals.

In the context of the Principal-Agent framework, the use of honesty is significant for eradicating information asymmetry. According to Stiglitz (2000), when agents are honest, there is less information asymmetry between the two transacting parties. In governance, this entails establishing measures that support truthful speaking and reporting, including timely and open media briefings, elaborate reporting of decisive actions and occurrences, and clear processes through which decisions are made. In Mukono Municipal Council, promoting sound ethical standards regarding honesty among leaders could improve governance outcomes. According to Treviño, Hartman, and Brown (2000), ethical leadership is crucial in establishing the foundation for honesty within an organization. On the same note, managers who display ethical values in their leadership positions compel the subordinates to embrace the same. This ripple effect can shape the governance environment in a way where honesty becomes the new rule, not the exception.

According to Behn (2001), accountability is one of the basic tenets of public management, especially in the context of principal- agent relationships. In Mukono Municipal Council, the agents (council members and officials) are accountable to the principals (the public) on how they have used funds, time or any other resource entrusted to them. Tools like performance assessment,



open meetings, and outside assessments can support this type of accountability. In addition, Mulgan (2000) agreed with the belief that accountability is not only for the purpose of reporting to the public but for bearing full responsibility for the decision-making and actions irrespective of the results.

It gives principals an opportunity to be more involved with their agents through participatory governance. Fung (2006) pointed out that participatory institutions increase individual power, noting that participatory institutions allow individuals to be involved in governance decisions. This could entail involving community members in the budget proposals, planning and evaluations for Mukono Municipal Council. Measures such as these ensure that the agents will not be corrupt or bias in their dealings with the public.

Thus, there is no doubt that the Principal-Agent theory has a clear stance on the necessity of honesty in governance, mainly for the reasons that the theory was stated above. Resistance from corrupt stakeholders, lack of change culture, and inadequate funding for monitoring and tracking make the process challenging. For instance, as Randall and Saurage-Altenloh (2020) pointed out, absence of drives and measures to punish malice leads to such behaviors being perpetuated. Combating these challenges therefore calls for concerted efforts by stakeholders from government organizations, non-governmental organizations and global cooperation.

In the context of Mukono Municipal Council, is it possible to improve the current governance outcomes just by applying the virtue of honesty in leadership? Open and accountable reporting of agency activities by council members may minimalize agency costs while at the same time enhancing the reputation of the council among the populace. For example, mandatory financial audits and public reporting of such reports can discourage fraudulent behavior and increase transparency. Likewise, the reform of the state through participatory forms of governance guarantees that citizens are involved in decision-making processes that affects them. By applying the framework provided by the Principal-Agent theory while adhering to the virtues of honesty, Mukono Municipal Council can build a resilient governance system, reduce waste, and gain public confidence. However, bringing change to these fundamentals can only be realized after overcoming several barriers such systematic corruption, inadequate resources and rigidity. Thus,

powerful accountability frameworks, ethical leadership, and participatory governance present the proper way to achieve these goals.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

### 2.2.1 Leaders' Adherence to the Principle of Honesty in Governance

Compliance with the principle of honesty in governance is a determinant in the enhancement of good governance and leadership by promoting transparency and accountability. Channuwong et al. (2024) observed that honest leadership creates trust and ethical culture in any organization, thus enhancing good governance. Their research pointed out how adherence to honesty can balance the idea in both business and political administration, a concept relevant to Mukono Municipal Council.

Moreover, Garcia and Ching (2024) pointed out that adopting a high level of ethical standards in leadership in public institutions increases the degree of accountability and credibility in the eyes of the public. They noted that when leaders emphasize on truth telling, they are more likely to garner the trust of the public, a factor that enhances organizational performance and probity. This discovery is imperative to the management of Mukono Municipal Council since truthful leadership is essential to addressing the public's needs.

Further, the study on the performance of local government by Ojok and Kiwanuka-Tondo (2024) revealed that honesty was critical in leadership in districts. Honest leaders develop structures to improve relations and services; this is well in line with the expectations of the leadership in municipal councils. They pointed out that it involves being truthful, which is essential for creating efficient lines of communication and gaining the public's trust.

Furthermore, Irene et al., (2024) surveyed leadership styles in Namisindwa District and discovered that honesty boosted organizational outcomes. Their research observed that honesty plays a crucial role not only as a determinant of trust but also improves decision making and accountability in governance systems. This finding resonates well with the call for upright leadership at Mukono Municipal Council to deal with multifaceted administrative and political issues.

Lubuulwa (2021) examined the realization of Uganda's decentralization policy on power of local governments and noted that honesty remains an issue with leadership. The study further pointed out that lack of ethical leadership creates inefficiencies and poor use of resources. Therefore, working towards honing the leadership value of honesty can go a long way in dealing with the governance problems and even improve the service delivery of Mukono Municipal Council.

In addition, Nakayi and Wiegratz (2024) also showed how politics interferes with ethical governance in Uganda. They concluded that although populist practices eclipse such principles as honesty, they contribute to governance failures. They posited that leadership requires balancing on the political realities and the ethical imperative to uphold truth in leadership, a view very instrumental in enhancing leadership at Mukono Municipal Council.

Mugabi (2024) conducted a study that showed that leadership training can increase truthfulness compliance among the public servants. The study highlighted the fact that capacity building programs empower leaders on issues of ethical standard in their decision making processes. Therefore, for Mukono Municipal Council, such training programs could help enhance the commitment of leaders to the principles of honesty and better governance results.

Furthermore, Ggoobi et al. (2020) pointed out that due to weak oversight, which fosters dishonesty in public entities, there is a likelihood of such lapses. In their study, they noted that unethical behaviors normally emerge as a result of ineffective supervision and assessment mechanisms. They asserted that improving these mechanisms has a commendable manner of ensuring honor and accountability among the leaders, which is important for the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

More to this, an analysis done by Sharpley (2024) established that ethical and truthful leadership boosts the capabilities of organizations to effectively and efficiently cope with pressures. This research showed that those who establish truthfulness in their organizations face crises effectively and promote transparency. This insight is apt for Mukono Municipal Council since the leaders of this council are faced with dynamic governance issues, yet they are expected to avoid losing the trust of the people.

In the same regard, historical perspectives also provide insights into the role of truth in public leadership. A research by Hammer (2014) showed that lack of honesty in leaders led to the fall of the great empires to capture the importance of ethics in leadership. The findings of this study are relevant to governance issues affecting Mukono Municipal Council, thus the argument that honesty should be the key guiding principle among leaders.

Hence, commitment to honesty contributes to public accountability while also strengthening internal accountability. As noted in Viroli (1995) when discussing patriotism and nationalism, leaders who engage in honest deeds promote virtues in their institutions. This perspective brings out the sociological context of honest governance and its applicability in the leadership system of Mukono Municipal Council.

### 2.2.2 Benefits of Honesty to Good Governance

Honesty in leadership is paramount for avoiding abuses in leadership, corruption, embezzlements, and inefficiencies in service delivery. Channuwong et al. (2024) established that honesty contributes positively to the development of trust and serves as a key fundamental for the implementation of sustainable governance within political and business entities. They also stressed that integrity enhances the credibility of the institutions and the leaders are more effective in performing their duties. This insight comes in handy especially for governance structures such as Mukono Municipal Council whereby trust is a key component of public confidence.

In the same year, Garcia and Ching postulated that ethical leadership, entailing honesty, has a positive impact on transparency and the level of trust in governance. From their research, they deduced that ethical leaders promote free flow of information and decisions, necessary to foster organizational legitimacy. For instance, in public elementary schools, ethical leadership improved relations between stakeholders while governance decisions were supported and well-executed. This correlates with the governance structures of the local governments like the Mukono Municipal Council whereby citizens must be able to understand the agendas and projects being formulated or implemented by their leaders.

Further, Ggoobi et al. (2020) also pointed that the absence of truth in leadership leads to ineffectiveness as well as corruption in provision of services. Their research on Uganda's roads

sector revealed that compliance with the standard of honesty dependent reduced misuse of the resource and enhanced the accomplishment of projects. The authors further averred that, honesty helps leaders to distribute resources well, which improves the quality and effectiveness of the services offered to the public. This should serve as a wakeup call to Mukono Municipal Council to embrace honesty in managing resources for efficiency in service delivery.

Specifically, in the work of Irene et al. (2024), the authors highlighted that the leadership that stress such values as integrity contribute to higher levels of organizational performance. In a study they undertook in Namisindwa District, they found out that the culture of honest leadership promotes accountability and thus enhances the quality of decision made and services provided. They also stressed the importance of integrity in preventing and managing misunderstanding and ensuring that the council's goals are in tune with the expectations of the public, both of which are important in enhancing good governance in Mukono Municipal Council.

A work by Lubuulwa (2021) aimed at understanding the concept of honesty in decentralized governance context of Uganda. The results of the study showed that it is imperative to practice honest leadership to strengthen the local government structures and increase their ability to provide services. The study further established that compliance to the principles of honesty brings about less prevalence of corrupt practices while also guaranteeing due observance and proper use of resources as espoused by the participants. This is especially the case with decentralization policy in Mukono Municipal Council where the policy seeks to enhance local leadership and responsibility.

In addition, in this view, Nakayi and Wiegratz (2024) observed that while populism has detrimental effects on Ugandan governance, honesty is an effective measure against these sentiments. According to their study, the leadership teams that value truthfulness are less likely to compromise their ethical values when confronted with external pressures. They pointed out that ethical leadership ensures stability of governance structures and allows leaders to act in the public interest rather than self interest. This perspective is important for Mukono Municipal Council since the honest leadership can help establish stability and confidence of the population.

In a study conducted by Mugabi (2024), he discussed the importance of leadership training for honesty and ethical governance. According to the study, training programs prepare leaders for handling ethical decision-making and maintaining high standards of ethical practices. In the case of Mukono Municipal Council, this kind of training can enhance the leaders' integrity to be upright in managing the council resources and delivering services to the public.

Furthermore, Sharpley (2024) pointed out that the notion of honest leadership enables the development of organizational resilience and adaptability. The findings of the research indicated that leaders who practice honesty are of more value in developing trust and healthy workplace relations. This strengthens the organization's ability to manage challenges and adopt governance improvements. Honest leadership remains critical in tackling governance issues in Mukono Municipal Council and hence the improvement of services.

Hammer in 2014 in his historical analysis showed how dishonesty in leaders contributed to the downfall of governance structures. The analysis stressed that ethical decision-making model is not only the duty of leaders but also the necessity for the preservation of governance structures. These lessons establish the significance of effective leadership in an organization, especially for a municipal government such as the Mukono Municipal Council and the roles that governance play in the welfare of the governed.

Furthermore, Viroli (1995) stressed that sincerity in leadership contributes to the enhancement of the ethical levels in society as people becomes more patriotic and responsible. This paper concisely noted that the honest actions exhibited by leaders help in inducing confidence and participation of people in the civic responsibilities that are vital in the practice of good governance. This view aligns with the governance agenda of Mukono Municipal Council where truthful leadership can improve the involvement of the people and accountability.

The gains of honesty in governance can also be seen in the area of transparency and the fight against corruption. According to Kolzow (2014), honest leaders promote transparency, and decisions made are made transparent and in the common good. This minimizes risks of corrupt practices as well as increases the overall reliability of governance structures. As for Mukono

Municipal Council, truthfulness can enhance decision-making procedures and restore audience confidence.

In a similar line, Panda and Leepsa have noted that the level of honesty in governance reduces agency issues, ensuring a congruence of interests between leaders (agents) and the public (principals), Panda and Leepsa, 2017). Thus, the research conducted by Themba and Sithole showed that there is a decrease in information asymmetry by discouraging honesty-free leadership, which empowers citizens to exercise accountability measures on the leaders. This is important for Mukono Municipal Council, as governance entails ensuring that all the actions of the leaders are responsive to the needs of the people.

In a paper on municipal service delivery in South Africa, Pretorius (2017) pointed out that there is a correlation between honesty and improved efficiency in governance. The conclusion drawn emphasized that ethical leaders observed policies and guidelines, guaranteeing that resources were appropriately used. This is in line with the governance objectives of Mukono Municipal Council which requires honesty to work towards accountability and transparency.

In addition, according to Randall and Saurage-alternioh (2020), there is a positive correlation between honesty in leadership and organizational performance. From their study, they established that leaders who are truthful help build trust and cooperation, improving the company's ability to perform. This is especially critical for Mukono Municipal Council since leadership has an influence on governance outputs and public confidence.

According to Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (2018), integrity in governance is imperative in public administration so as to enhance accountability and transparency. The report therefore showed that honesty in leaders leads to efficient use of resources and provision of quality services. To Mukono Municipal Council, the general recommendation which relates to honesty is especially important for enhancing its governance and achieving sustainable development.

### 2.2.3 Challenges Faced by Leaders in Following the Principle of Honesty

Leaders in public institutions encounter numerous hurdles in upholding the principle of honesty especially when governing organizations within the complicated political systems such as Mukono Municipal Council. Similarly, a study by Ggoobi, Lukwago, and Bogere (2020) highlighted that resource constraints and institutional drawbacks weaken leaders' ability to uphold honesty. The public institutions mostly operate on meager resources and they may not afford to employ independent technical personnel for checking the transparency in governance hence failing dismally in accountability and ethical considerations. Additionally, the leaders managing organizations in such environments may engage in fraud as a way to work around the systematic issues. In a similar manner, Lubuulwa (2021) also observed that decentralization in Uganda has not adequately provided centralized resources within the local government institutions. Civil servants in municipal councils are expected to deliver on lofty governance goals despite not having the tools needed to help them accomplish their role. This leads to misalignment where leaders are forced to engage in unethical practices in order to achieve organizational goals or personal benefits.

Politics is another area of concern when it comes to maintenance of integrity within the political leadership circles. This study by Nakayi & Wiegratz (2024) evidenced that political players make demands on local government organizations to uphold partisan interests rather than ethical principles. Decision-makers at the municipal level, including Mukono, experience challenges in managing conflict of interest where they are torn between loyalty to party leaders and the responsibility of being honest in their dealings such as grant disbursement or decision-making that favors some politicians. Pretorius (2017) described how political and administrative interactions usually result in compromise situations, especially regarding resource distribution and delivery of public services. Chief executives may be forced into procuring unscrupulous measures like favoritism or nepotism as a way of satisfying political masters, subverting the component of honesty in leadership.

Lack of supervision also complicates the efforts to enhance integrity in the public organizations since oversight mechanisms are usually ineffective. Tumuranye, Ntayi, and Muhwezi (2018) in their research study noted that although whistleblowing is an essential method of promoting accountability in Uganda, its practice is severely restricted by employee fear of reprisal and



inadequate legal safeguards for whistleblowers. Managers who try to promote honesty may find that the system fails to support them, and they end up being frustrated when they want to fight corrupt practices in their organization. In addition, Randall and Saurage-Altenloh (2020) explained that weak accountability structures facilitate corruption because they fail to provide checks and balances on bad behavior in public organizations. It is not uncommon for municipal leaders to function in organizations where unethical behaviors are not effectively addressed which promotes impunity over honesty.

Cultural factors also present some barriers with regard to the practice of honesty by leaders: Research conducted in the year 2024 by Channuwong et al stated that, socio-cultural pressure prevent ethical leadership. In some cases, external cultural norms that may put community or family value above and beyond organizational integrity pose challenges when leaders are hoping to uphold the truth. In her research conducted in 2018, Amaniyo noted that leaders tend to act dishonestly because society expects that from them given the perception of power and wealth. In Uganda especially the public officials when assessed on their financial status, they may be under pressure to embezzle the public resources so as to afford the status symbol of the society thus undermining the factor of honesty.

One factor related to honesty that can cause issues is that of transparency, which is largely obstructed by various structures. Wells and Molina (2017) highlighted that while functioning, leaders face challenges in sharing information when there is limited information availability or where there are many formalities. Such opacity erodes credibility and strengthens insincerity, making it even more challenging for leaders to respond with candor. Likewise, Ojok and Kiwanuka-Tondo (2024) established that weak communication structures in local governments hinder the sharing of appropriate and timely information. People in leadership positions may be inclined to provide biased information in order to protect their position or keep out of the loop, thus treading on the anti-ethic of lying.

Managers tend to experience ethical conflicts which make it difficult for them to practice honesty. Garcia and Ching (2024) noted that there are always dilemmas that arise and force the leaders to make compromises between ethical standards and organizational goals, and/or other stakeholders. In municipal councils, leaders may feel obliged to act in the best political and economic interest

rather than telling the truth especially when pressured by some stakeholders. Panda and Leepsa (2017) opined that according to the Principal-Agent theory, there is always tension arising from the interaction between the main players, which are the principals (citizens or governments) and the agents (leaders or officials). This conflict is most evident in cases where agents use their positions to engage in fraudulent activities while serving in public institutions since they take advantage of the asymmetry of information to advance their interests at the expense of the welfare of the public.

Another factor that avails the difficulties that leaders experience is inadequate training in ethical leadership. A study conducted by Mugabi in 2024 stated that presented leadership training programs in Uganda were lacking ethical and honest aspects in governance. Managers who have had no ethical training are more likely to behave unethically since they may not grasp the consequences of their conduct on the general public and specific institutions. Further, Sharpley (2024) stressed that establishing leadership capacity involves the robust practice of ethical principles and decision-making. Hence, like in any other organization, Mukono Municipal Council leaders may need to undergo special training to reinforce their integrity and to empower them with effective ways of handling the ethical challenges that they may face.

The failure to embrace change and corruption are other important factors that hinder the provision of honesty in governance. Hammer (2014) provided an example how the past instances of cheating establish structural barriers that discourage change toward integrity. Managers seeking to import the value of honesty in the workplace are met with backlash from the colleagues or the shareholders enjoying the fruits of the corrupt practices. Moreover, Kolzow (2014) stated that culture is an essential factor that has a significant influence on the behavior of leaders. They may feel compelled to fit into these systems and conform, even if that means perpetuating dishonesty, and they may struggle to change things without being met with criticisms or simply becoming outcast.

Failure to offer adequate remuneration and the economic challenges also limit leaders in the aspect of honesty. Low salaries and perceived lack of financial rewards in public institutions lead to adjustments for other incentives especially where leaders engage in corrupt practices as noted by Kumar (2015). This challenge is most evident in the local government level like municipal councils due to restricted resource availability and constrained budgets.

### 2.3 Summary of Literature and Research Gap

The reviewed literature underscores the critical role of honesty as a leadership principle in fostering transparency, accountability, and effective governance. The Principal-Agent theory by Jansen and Meckling (1976) serves as a key theoretical framework, highlighting challenges such as information asymmetry, conflicting interests, and agency costs in governance. The theory suggests measures like accountability, good leadership, and internal controls to tackle such problems (Stiglitz, 2000; Panda & Leepsa, 2017). These theoretical insights can be useful in explaining the nature of governance practices in organizations such as Mukono Municipal Council. Analyzing the literature, one can find references to empirical research corroborating the theoretical significance of honesty.

Garcia and Ching (2024) and Channuwong et al. (2024) also pointed out that the ethical leadership based on honesty helps to establish the credibility and trust within the institution. This ethical foundation improves the level of transparency and accountability which are critical in governance. Likewise, Irene et al. (2024) reported that honesty positively impacts the organizational performance since it lowers the incidence of unaccountability, wastage, and irresponsibility in resource utilization. These findings support Ojok and Kiwanuka-Tondo (2024) and Ggoobi et al. (2020) whose studies identify the affordances/effects of honest leadership in the improvement of public service delivery and eradication of corruption in local governments.

Thus, honesty offers more than mere management benefits; it has a broader impact. About honesty, Hammer (2014) and Viroli (1995) stated that historical perspectives showed how this virtue sustains institutions and public trust. Moreover, according to the modern researches of Sharpley (2024) and Kolzow (2014), the practices of honest leadership contribute to the strengthening of organizational resistance and the creation of a trustworthy organizational culture, which in turn helps organizations successfully address the challenges of modern governance.

However, the literature also indicates major concerns that threaten the principles of honesty in governance. Lack of autonomy, political influence, poor supervision structures, inadequate resources, and cultural influences are some of the common issues that contribute to the subversion of the practice of ethical leadership. For instance, Nakayi and Wiegratz (2024) noted that it is

common to find political influences pushing leaders to align their actions with political objectives, regardless of their ethical implications. Equally, Tumuramye et al. (2018) observed that weak measures to protect whistleblowers hinder the promotion of transparent and accountable practices. The current global economic situation and lack of adequate ethical training also contribute to these concerns, as Mugabi (2024) and Kumar (2015) noted.

However, the literature is lacking in certain crucial areas which are primarily related to Mukono Municipal Council and other similar Local Government institutions in Uganda in terms of governance. Firstly, there is no localized interpretation of honesty in governance. Many reviews are based on general governance models while ignoring the specific socio-political and economic environments within Ugandan municipal councils. This restricts the generality of their findings to Mukono Municipal Council only.

Secondly, while certain investigations like Irene et al. (2024) and Ojok & Kiwanuka-Tondo (2024) stress the advantages of honesty, there is a lack of direct identification of the effects on service delivery outcomes at the municipal level. The various ways by which honesty impacts on these outcomes are not well explained.

Thirdly, some barriers relating specifically to local governments are still not addressed sufficiently. Sutton and Miller's (2015) article does not reveal the complexity of political and administrative relations within Ugandan municipal councils despite presenting the concept of barriers to honesty in governance as discussed in Nakayi and Wiegratz (2024) and Pretorius (2017) theoretical perspective.

Fourthly, few studies have examined the impact of ethical training on increasing honesty among leaders at the local government level. It is further noted that leadership training is critical (Mugabi, 2024); however, these programs' efficacy in promoting honesty and ethical governance has not been supported by research.

Fifthly, few concrete measures have been proposed to encourage honesty within local government. Whereas the Principal-Agent theory postulates the elementary idea of oversight and incentive alignment, there is a lack of empirical studies that explore the practice and effectiveness of these approaches in local governments such as Mukono. Last but not the least, the present study has not

explored the mechanism through which community engagement contributes to the enhancement of honesty amongst leaders as a reciprocal principle. Mensah et al. (2015) also acknowledge participatory governance as one which can foster honesty, though it is yet to be seen how the Ugandan municipal councils are going to employ it.

This study fills these gaps by focusing on how leaders give credence to the principle of honesty in governance with reference to Mukono Municipal Council. The study also looks at the application of honest leadership to service delivery and organizational performance while presenting the obstacles leaders encounter in upholding honesty. The study also looks into practical measures that can be taken to encourage ethical practice in governance. Such are the ethical training, the participatory mechanisms, and most importantly, the sound oversight structures. Thus, by focusing specifically on Mukono Municipal Council, this study wants to provide a more specific approach to the concept of honesty as the leadership principle and its practical importance to improve the situation in Uganda.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents information on how the study was conducted. It discusses the research design, target population, study sample, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data quality control, data analysis and ethical issues.

#### **3.1 Study design**

Research design is defined as a roadmap that outlines how data will be collected, measured, and analyzed (Kothari, 2004). It assists in unfolding a systematic way of responding to the research questions and solving the problem under study as suggested by Orodho (2000). The research methodology used in this study was qualitative research that employed a case study method. Hence, qualitative research emphasizes on non-quantitative features that include meanings, emotions, beliefs, and experiences to gain an understanding of social realities (Kothari, 2004). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research is appropriate for studying human experiences and phenomenon in broad social contexts by targeting relatively small but diverse populations.

Creswell's (2003) highlights that qualitative approaches are most suitable in exploring phenomena within the natural setting of participants, thus affording the researcher a rich understanding of participants' experiences and interactions. In this case, the use of an exploratory and descriptive research approach was crucial to developing an understanding of the concept of honest leadership within the municipal council. It enabled the researcher to capture in-depth qualitative data on the nature of honesty behavior in leadership and the implications on governance at Mukono Municipal Council.

Indeed, qualitative research is particularly useful when the phenomenon being investigated is not well understood (Brown et al., 2005). As there was little prior research done on the role and effect of honest leadership in the municipal council environment, this approach was suitable. It enabled a discussion of the shades of honest leadership and how it could positively impact the governing fabric of Mukono Municipal Council. As mentioned earlier, the study sought to understand the

complex views of both technical and political persons, thus providing a rich understanding of how honesty impacts governance in the given setting like Mukono Municipal Council.

As highlighted in the methodological literature, context is indeed central for knowledge acquisition in qualitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Creswell, 2003). The naturalistic context of Mukono Municipal Council was useful in obtaining first-hand data from the essential players in the political and technical fields. These views were valuable in providing a better appreciation of the subject – namely, how the principle of honesty affects the council's governance practices.

This study used a qualitative case study as a method of data collection, thus falling under the more expansive category of a qualitative research method (Kamuzora, 2007). A case study focuses on a single entity like an organization with the aim of establishing how certain phenomena work and present themselves (Berg, 2009). This approach is especially beneficial in research where little or inadequate knowledge exists or when more in-depth examination is needed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The case study design was thus appropriate for exploring the notion of honest leadership within Mukono Municipal Council since more research has not been conducted on the role and importance of this aspect in governance.

Since case studies use multiple sources of data, interviews, documented documents, and direct observations, the validity and reliability of the findings are considered high (Yin, 2009). These methods were employed in this study to give a holistic view of honest leadership and its implications for governance. Despite the criticism of case studies that are perceived to have a small sample size, making it difficult to generalize results, Yin (2009) noted that results are generalizable depending on the angle of viewing while making a comparison to other established data. The findings of this study were envisioned with the aim of increasing the body of knowledge on honest leadership in municipal governance and more so in the Ugandan setting.

The qualitative case study research strategy was adopted in order to address the complexities of honest leadership at MMC and its role in good governance. This method offered the required elasticity and specificity to examine the intricate relationships, impressions, and account of the stakeholders, so that the obtained understanding was both substantial and nuanced.

### **3.2 Population of study**

According to Kamuzora (2007) study population denotes the total of objects under study. Friedman et al (2010) interprets a study population as a section of the population which possesses the required qualities defined by the eligibility criteria. It is essential to choose a segment of the populace (sample) which is typical of the whole population.

For the purpose of this study, the target population for the study was Mukono Municipal Council headquarters employees (bureaucrats) and management (political leaders) plus Central Division staff (political and career professionals). Trochim and Donnelly (2008) recommends two major considerations for choice of a population of study and these are; accessibility and proximity. A population such as this permits an investigator to obtain in-depth data and understanding of the phenomenon. The choice of this population for this study, was based on ease of access and proximity. The basis for selecting Mukono Municipal Council headquarters and Central division to carry out this study was done to find out how honest leadership can enhance good governance in a municipal entity in Uganda. The convenient location of the two units of study in Mukono Municipality too, inspired their choice for study too.

#### **3.2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Eligibility criteria (inclusion criteria) considers the characteristics that describe the study population (Polit and Beck, 2010), but may also establish the basis for exclusion based on qualities that people may lack (Polit and Beck, 2010). This inclusion / exclusion criterion is vital for indication in a study, to guide a researcher's choice of who qualifies or fails to qualify for membership in the study population (Brink, 2006). The inclusion/ exclusion formula of this study can be indicated as below;

##### **3.2.1.1 Inclusion criteria**

In order for one to be included in the sample, the respondent had to be;

- An administration staff under whom there was at least a junior staff.
- An officials whom Municipal/ Central division administration gave consent of.



- A Councillor who had just been re-elected to political office (or served the Municipal council at least for more than one year).
- An official who had given informed consent.

#### 3.2.1.2 Exclusion criteria

- Officials who were not willing to participate in the study
- Administrators who were on annual leave, off for study, maternity leave or field assignments.
- Officials who were at the last level of management and had no one they supervised/ a junior.
- Political or careers officers who had recently joined the council /division for the first time.

### 3.3 Sample size

Generally, there is no agreed upon sample size with regard to qualitative studies (Leedy and Ormrod (2005). Using qualitative studies, it is not advisable to decide the kind of participants or their number in advance in a careless way or by use of a formula. According to Marshall (1996) an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately attains the research goals. That is why Wertz (2005) and Kothari (2014) declare that researchers who adopt qualitative approach can employ a small sample size which allows them to gather data up to saturation point. This study therefore, targeted a population of forty (40) respondents; twenty five (25) employees of Mukono Municipal Council and fifteen (15) from Central Division because of the variation in size of staff. According to Martins (1999), a correct sample size in any study depends on the nature of the population and the purpose of the study. The sample size usually depends on the population to be sampled. For the case of this study, the subjects were all employees and supervisors to others or political appointees of the Municipal Council some of whom had just been re-elected in the political office and these were assumed to have a wealth of knowledge on the topic of study as administrators and implementers of public service activities and are bound by the public service (local government) ethics. Therefore, a simple tabular description of the selected sample size can be demonstrated as below;

**Table 1: Distribution of the population and sample size of the study participants**

Mukono Municipal Council (Headquarters)				Central Division (MMC)			
Planned	No	Actual	No	Planned	No	Actual	No
Town clerk	1			Principal town clerk	1	Principal town clerk	1
Deputy town clerk	1	Deputy town clerk	1	Division treasurer	1	Division treasurer	1
Senior human resource officer	1			Public health inspector	1	Public health inspector	1
Municipal engineer	1	Assistant engineering officer (civil)	1	Agricultural extension officer	1	Agricultural extension officer	1
Senior environmental officer	1	Senior environmental officer	1	Community development officer	1	Community development officer	1
Senior physical planner	1	Physical planner	1	Education officer	1	Education officer	1
Principal education officer	1			Town agents	4	Town agents	2
Senior internal auditor	1	Senior internal auditor	1	Councilors	5	Councilors	6
Senior procurement officer	1	Senior procurement officer	1				
Senior probation & welfare officer	1	Senior probation & welfare officer	1				

Communication officer	1						
Principal commercial officer	1	Principal commercial officer	1				
Principal community development officer	1	Principal community development officer	1				
Assistant records officer	1	Records officer	1				
Medical officer of health services	1	Medical officer of health services	1				
Water officer	1						
Agricultural officer	1	Assistant agricultural officer	1				
Senior Veterinary officer	1	Veterinary officer	1				
Librarian	1	Librarian	1				
Roads inspector	1	Roads inspector	1				
Councilors	5	Councilors	5				
Total	25		20	Total	15		14

### 3.3.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

It was essential to establish the respondent's demographics and I specifically looked at their individual designations, years of service in the organization, age, gender and education level. These particular aspects would influence their perception about the practice of honesty at their work places.

Majority of respondents for this study were female and this was because more women were in leadership positions in Mukono municipal council than men. According to Zenger and Folkman (2019), any organization which has more women in leadership positions tends to perform better because they enjoy wide ranging perspectives which women are believed to introduce together with new ways of not only running an organizations but also, addressing problems.

In addition, majority of respondents had served the municipal council for ten years, while a corresponding number of respondents was relatively new because had served for just two years. However, a significant number of respondents had also served either eight, twelve or thirteen years. This shows that although many officials of the municipal council were new, most of them had served at the municipal council for some time.

More so, more than half of the respondents, were above forty years of age as shown above and a big number of these, had been in service for ten years and above. This could be attributed to the fact that this category of officials have ability and commitment to undertake their responsibilities in the right way hence stay long on the job.

Concerning level of education, majority of respondents revealed high degree of education achievement and this being a municipal council, situated at the headquarters of Mukono district, has opportunities for employing educated members of the community. Since the municipal council is a government entity, it employs people who possess the requisite credentials and experience in line with the requirements for qualifications stipulated under the Public Service Standing Orders.

On the other hand, section 116 of the Local government Act 1997, does not spell any academic attainment required for anyone to become a councilor at Municipal council other than stating that as long as one is sound in mind, they become eligible to vie for a political office of councilor. Likewise, this is emphasized by ACODE (2021) who proposed that the Agency (technical staff) are far more qualified than the Principles (Councilors) and this climaxes into political leaders finding it hard to comprehend all the technical information from the technocrats presented to them or to other stakeholders.

### **3.4 Sampling techniques**

Sampling is a significant aspect of qualitative studies since it is not possible to undertake a study of an entire population because of time, financial, human resource constraints plus information needs. Therefore, a subset of the population (sample) that is regarded as informed about the research topic, is selected from an entire population and the findings obtained from them can be considered as truly representative of a bigger population (Kothari, 2014). As a result, this study adopted purposeful sampling strategy due to the research questions which demanded for respondents who were knowledgeable about the topic. According to Creswell (2007), a purposeful sampling criterion is common in qualitative studies and is used to choose locations, participants or documents because they have the information about the research topic. Therefore, participants was considered to the sample, based on the office, responsibility they held or by delegation from an official. This enabled the researcher to obtain a sample of informed people about the topic under research.

A purposeful sampling criterion was also used to select a sample of twenty five (25) municipal council headquarters and ten (10) of the central division professional staff. It was hoped that these could likely provide a balanced and informed view on the phenomenon which was being studied since they worked with the municipal council headquarters or central division and had a clue about what was taking place at their daily work life.

### **3.5 Data collection methods**

#### **3.5.1 Primary Data Collection**

Primary data for this study was collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

##### **3.5.1.1 Key Informant Interviews**

Key Informant Interviews are defined as focused discussions between a researcher and a respondent on a specific set of topics, aimed at obtaining detailed information (Mathers et al., 2002). Creswell (2007) highlights that interviews for case studies can take various forms, including face-to-face, telephone, or group interviews. While telephone interviews are often preferred in

certain circumstances for cost and time efficiency (Carr & Worth, 2001), this method was not employed in this study. Instead, face-to-face interviews were conducted with respondents, with the telephone only used for initial contact, scheduling, and follow-up clarifications.

Face-to-face interviews are particularly effective for gathering in-depth information and understanding respondents' perspectives, as they allow the researcher to observe non-verbal cues, such as body language and tone of voice (Creswell, 2003). As a result of this method, the researcher was able to obtain robust information from the key informants. In this study, twenty (20) individuals were interviewed in person at Mukono Municipal Council headquarters and fourteen (14) at the Central Division (see Table 1). These locations were chosen because of their proximity, which facilitated coordination and access.

Despite the advantages, face-to-face interviews can be time-consuming and costly (Kothari, 2004). However, this challenge was mitigated by selecting respondents from easily accessible offices along the Jinja highway, ensuring that interviews could be conducted during working hours with minimal logistical issues. To address the potential difficulty of accessing key officials, the researcher scheduled interviews in advance and, when necessary, accepted substitutes or revised appointment times.

Another challenge identified by Yin (2009) is the possibility of respondents providing socially desirable answers to please the researcher, as well as the risk of bias arising from poorly phrased questions. To minimize these issues, the researcher ensured that the interview questions were clear and allowed ample space for respondents to freely express their opinions.

#### 3.5.1.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are a qualitative method in which a small group discusses a specific topic in depth. Longua et al. (1999) describe FGDs as effective in capturing a range of opinions, experiences, and ideas from participants. Nicholas (2011) adds that participants should have relevant experience or knowledge about the topic under study. In this research, two FGDs were conducted—one with five councilors at the Municipal Council headquarters and another with six councilors at the Central Division. Participants were selected based on their experience, with

only those who had served for at least one year in their respective offices invited to ensure the depth of discussion.

FGDs offer several advantages, including the ability to explore participants' inner thoughts and allow them to react to each other's views (Longua et al., 1999). This interaction can provide valuable insights into the participants' perspectives on leadership honesty in governance. However, FGDs also have potential disadvantages. For example, one participant may dominate the discussion, or others may hesitate to speak if they feel they are being scrutinized. Additionally, organizing FGDs can be resource-intensive.

To address these challenges, the researcher initially contacted newly re-elected councilors at both the Municipal headquarters and the Central Division through the Mayor's office and the Local Council three (LC3) office. After introducing the research and its objectives, individual appointments were made for two suggested days and times. Each participant was informed that the discussion would take about one hour, and assured of confidentiality in handling their responses. During the FGDs, the researcher ensured that all participants had an equal opportunity to share their views, and the discussions adhered strictly to the guiding questions to maintain focus.

### 3.5.2 Secondary data

For this study, document analysis was used to obtain secondary data. In a qualitative case study, analysis of published documents is utilized to provide additional information to data obtained through interviews (McNabb (2008). Hence, after the researcher got the required authorization, she was allowed access to appropriate local government documents. The researcher therefore examined documents like the constitution of the republic of Uganda and local government documents to look for data that depicted the manner in which a municipal council encouraged honest leadership. In addition, the researcher also examined published articles, books, dissertations or theses to obtain sufficient information about the principle of honesty among leaders in an organization's setting. The researcher used literature that was published from 2015 to 2024, to underpin the discussion of findings.

### **3.6 Data collection tools / Instruments**

In research, data is of two types; primary and secondary data. Primary sources of data include people, descriptive observation of events among others. On the other hand, secondary data is collected through examination of organizational records, earlier studies made, and government reports, published data among others (Kothari, 2014). On the other hand research instruments are tools for measuring variables of concern (Bowling, 2002).

Regarding this study, the researcher used data collection tools that suited the subject of study. The researcher used interview guides and focus group discussion guides. Amin (2005) supports the use of many instruments so that the weaknesses of one instrument are covered by other instruments for better and authentic results. When a researcher utilizes several data collection tools, they are able to cover weaknesses of one instrument (Amin, 2005).

#### **3.6.1 Key Informant Interview guide**

According to Engel & Schutt (2014), an interview guide is a type of data collection instrument which contains a set of questions a researcher asks during an interview. This study adopted a structured interview guide. According to Cress well (2003), a structured interview guide is a research tool which contains open ended questions about key areas of interest for a study but with a blend of some few close ended questions. These questions are structured in a way that they are not so many yet should be able to prompt the views, impressions, experiences and opinions of respondents about a matter. These questions are asked to every interviewee to obtain responses.

Regarding this study used interview guides for key individuals in the organization. Majorly, open and closed ended questions were contained in the interview guide plus a few follow up questions and this mix was used to solicit for detailed information about the leaders' adherence to the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal council. This was useful because it generated clear, detailed, consistent responses which could vary little yet could be comparable across a number of respondents. In particular, open ended questions were utilized for the interviews because they permitted free expression of each respondent on the principle of honesty and the governance of Mukono municipal council. The questions also, permitted probing so as to



obtain further information from respondents like in instances where a respondent did not provide complete responses and sufficient information (Babbie, 2007).

### **3.6.2 Focus group discussion guide**

As a way to obtain a wide range of opinions about the subject of study, the researcher also used focus group guides. Engel and Schutt (2014) define a focus group guide as a set of specific questions that guide a discussion about a given topic. The duo suggest that an ideal focus group should involve people who share a similar background or experiences which assumedly ought to make them able to discuss the matter presented before them. The discussion is led by the researcher, who asks specific questions as they appear on the interview guide, but spends most time guiding, listening to the discussion and writing down or recording the different responses of individual respondents. The tool begins with easy- to answer general factual questions then proceeds to key questions on the topic. This tool is useful in solicitation of good ideas and people's views about the subject of discussion (Engel and Schutt (2014). Sometimes some of the questions on the guide can be reacted to with useful nonverbal responses like gestures and this can enrich the insights a researcher about the issues under study. For the case of this study, a focus group discussion guide was utilized with two groups of councilors; one at municipal council headquarters and the second, at the Central division. During the course of interaction between the researcher and interviewees, each respondent was given equal chance to express their views about every question while at the same time, it was allowed for other respondents to react to each other's views.

### **3.7 Data quality control**

Qualitative research aims not to measure but to understand, explain or represent something particularly one of complex nature (Pyette, 2003). That is why it is necessary that data under the qualitative paradigm is credible and dependable lest it is considered to be of little significance (Pyett, 2003). In agreement, Yin (2009) affirms that the quality of data needs to be checked for dependability and credibility for it to be of great significance. Based on this premise, Stalh and King (2020) propose tactics of quality data management for a case study design and these include; designing the data collection tools in line with the study objectives, piloting of the data collection tools, triangulation, seeking respondent's validation, timely note taking among others. Basing on this criteria the appropriate quality control measure suitable for a qualitative study was adopted in

this study. The data collection instruments were developed based on the objectives of the study. This was in addition to piloting of the data collection tools where they were tested and in case some information was missing, it was corrected immediately. Another data quality control technique was triangulation- which means, data for this study was collected from many sources of information. This kind of multiplicity improved the quality of data. Also, validation of respondents was undertaken and data from respondents was also noted down immediately in the course of the interviews.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Once the information was collected, various strategies were employed to analyze the data so as to capture the key findings and effectively present them to fellow researchers and other research consumers. These strategies are:

#### **3.8.1 Editing**

Editing was done to remove irrelevant and unwanted information, validate the data and also check its consistency.

#### **3.8.2 Coding**

Analysis of qualitative data includes organizing and putting in order, the collected, yet formless data and summarizing it into themes through a procedure of coding then finally creating a narrative which depicts the analysis (Creswell, 2007). The data obtained from key informant interviews and focus group discussions was coded and grouped according to the patterns that emerged to form “meaning and interpretation” (Saldana, 2009). Responses were entered on Microsoft Excel and data was subsequently analyzed using NVivo, which facilitated the creation of categories and coding of different data segments. By organizing the data into manageable parts, NVivo made it easier to identify patterns and trends, allowing the researcher to link these findings with the study's research questions and objectives.

#### **3.8.3 Establishing themes**

Data was analyzed using specific themes that were in turn used to establish systematic linkages and conclusions for this study. Braun & Clarke (2006) indicate that a theme captures something

important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. The main themes that were established include; how the leaders follow the principle of honesty; benefits of following the principle of honesty; challenges faced by leaders in adhering to the principle of honesty in their work and recommendations. Validation of the findings was done by comparing them with other sources to enhance the credibility of the results.

### **3.8.4 Report writing**

The research report was developed based on the themes and conclusions derived from the findings presented in this document. The data processing and analysis methods employed in this study ensured a rigorous and systematic approach to handling the data. The use of editing, coding, thematic analysis, and validation techniques contributed to the reliability and depth of the study's findings.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The following were the necessary ethical considerations the researcher took; firstly, the researcher sought approval from Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee. Babbie (2007) states that every academic research proposal that includes subjects that are living humans, ought to be reviewed by an institution's internal research body and this is done to protect the human rights and interests of the respondent. That is why Uganda Christian University necessitates that every student's research first undergoes review and approval by the research ethics committee before they proceed to the field for data collection. This study therefore, fulfilled that requirement. Thereafter, the researcher got a letter of introduction from Uganda Christian University, department of Research, Grants and Publications, to introduce her to the organizations where she was going to conduct her study. The organizations in return, consented to her request for permission to conduct her study at their entities (see appendix).

In addition, the researcher sought for participants informed consent which meant that individual participation in the study, needed to be voluntary and not compulsory but out of free choice based on participants acquired information from the researcher about what the research was all about, why it was being conducted and any important information that they needed to know so as to earn

their confidence to take part in the study. According to Babbie (2007), study participants must not be forced to take part in a study except that they be told about the essence and purpose of the study but also about the fact that they have a right to withdraw from the study any time they feel they no longer want to be part of it. Participants were also informed that an interview guide would be used to obtain their responses with regard to the nexus of honest leadership and good governance and that, the interviewer would need to note down their views as the interview proceeded. This made the participants expressed their views willingly.

Additionally, the researcher pledged to honor the respondents' right to privacy and this was done either through according confidentiality to their individual responses or by keeping their names anonymous hence upholding the principles of confidentiality and anonymity (Trochim and Donnelly, 2008).

### **3.10 Challenges faced during the study**

The researcher faced some challenges however these were addressed in order for her to complete the study. Firstly, getting the participants for this study was not an easy task. Whereas this research targeted officials who held certain technical or political positions, some of these were not easily obtainable at office. This made the researcher make some call backs and this increased the expenses the researcher had to bear during data collection. However, On the other hand, some of the officials who were available at office, had busy schedules hence could not set aside some time for the interviews. Others cancelled the appointments they had made with the researcher. That is why particular officials were substituted by delegation. This enabled the researcher to still obtain the information she needed from suitably informed officials.

Another challenge the researcher faced concerned travelling long distances against tight Covid 19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) concerning curfew on public transport. This was overcome by the researcher commencing on the data collection exercise as early as possible and ending it early enough to enable her travel timely from the field to home but also, through making prior appointments with respondents.

In addition to the above, the subject of study seemed to be a sensitive one which appeared to send most participants into self-evaluation. This at first caused hesitancy in some respondents about their response to some questions. The researcher resolved this by clearly stipulating the purpose of the study and assuring them that she was upholding the research values of anonymity, confidentiality and protection of participants from whichever harm that could result from taking part in this study.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter three presented the research methodology which was used in collecting data for this study. It discussed the study design which was adopted in the study and this was a qualitative case study of Mukono municipal council. The researcher interviewed thirty four (34) respondents and these were professional and local politicians. The researcher used interview guides plus focus group discussions guides for data collection and thereafter, analyzed the data using themes to form conclusions for this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the study and a further interpretation of results in line with the study objectives.

#### **4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents**

The respondents of this study exhibited diverse demographic characteristics.

##### **4.1.1 Years of service of respondents**

In terms of years of service, the distribution ranged from two (2) to twenty two (22) years, with the highest representation being among those with two (2) years and ten (10) years of service. This highlights a mixture of both newer and more experienced staff.

##### **4.1.2 Age**

Concerning the age composition of the respondents of this study, findings showed that a significant number of respondents were above forty (40) years, suggesting a seasoned workforce with considerable experience.

##### **4.1.3 Gender**

With reference to the gender of the respondents, there were twenty four (24) female and ten (10) male respondents, demonstrating greater female representation.

##### **4.1.4. Education qualification**

Educational qualifications of the respondents revealed that twenty seven (27) respondents held degrees, while others had attained diplomas or certificates, reflecting a highly educated workforce. These demographic insights provide a solid foundation for understanding the context of the findings discussed in this chapter.

## **4.2 Principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council**

The researcher sought to find out whether the principle of honesty was upheld at Mukono Municipal council and the responses showed that;

### **4.2.1 Understanding of honesty as a principle of leaders at Mukono municipal council**

Respondents' views were sought on whether they understood if the principle of honesty was among the principles that leaders were expected to follow at Mukono municipal council in their work.

Given the significance of honesty among leaders, interesting findings were obtained since all respondents offered similar opinion of YES, on the question whether they understood if the principle of honesty was among the principles expected of leaders to follow at Mukono municipal Council. It seems that honesty is widely acknowledged as an important principle for organizational leadership. As a result, it can be inferred that the principle of honesty is part and partial of organization's leadership behavior.

The interviewer further sought to interrogate how the respondents got to know about honesty being a necessary principle for leaders to follow in their work. Majority of the respondents said that they had learnt about it from school while they were still pursuing their academic studies. Probably because it is at school that formally, the next generation is taught ethical and moral standards by their teachers and school administration in general, through the subjects or course units covered, established school rules, regulations, sanctions, exemplary conduct of teachers and many other different ways. This is as well underscored by Daniels et al (2019) who proposed that there is no better place than school for people to acquire and apply the principle of honesty in their dealings. They assert that school is a social entity where honest school leaders have personal obligation not only to adhere to principle of honesty, or put in force suitable rules to realize it but also introduce the principle of honesty to the school community. This means that honesty is not a spontaneous or even an inborn trait but can be learnt and adopted through a system that intentionally propagates it. Likewise, where there is laxity in inculcating it in a given social unit, chances are that the members may not regard it as very necessary in streamlining their behavior and actions.

Some respondents, indicated that they were introduced to the principle of honesty during their induction as new employees in the organization. Ideally, induction sessions are aimed at ushering in the new employees to the organization by preparing them for their newly found jobs and positions but also aid them to get integrated into the organization. It is during induction, that the new employees or leaders who have assumed a new position in the organization, are taken through the nitty gritty of a job like the organizational policies, procedures of work, code of conduct among others. All this is done with anticipation that the new staff will abide by the standards of conduct of their organization, succeed in their work. Although this submission was made by just a handful respondents, it still suggests a way an organization can utilize to equip its new employees with the necessary standards of their work though it seems, Mukono municipal council does not consider it so.

On the other hand, some other respondents declared that they picked knowledge of the principle of honesty through a process of socialization. According to them, honesty is just one of the significant ethic expected of every human being in society and one of the major ways it is demonstrated, is through a tendency to tell the truth. This implies that everyone is anticipated to be honest depending on how emphatic their society is about the moral education of their members. In agreement, Crowding (2016) found out that honesty is part of the ethics every society utilizes to direct people's behavior and character. He emphasized that in Africa, every society teaches knowledge about honesty to its members by means of moral education, which results into widespread awareness of a society's preferred values and principles most important being honesty. Nevertheless, he sounded a warning that Knowledge does not automatically translate into action implying that there is a possibility that a person may well know about the need to be honest like in executing ones work assignments but may likely fail to apply this principle in certain circumstances which may result into consequences.

The unanimous recognition of honesty as a fundamental leadership principle among respondents at Mukono Municipal Council offers a profound insight into the cultural and institutional values that underpin public governance in this context. This finding is particularly significant when viewed through the lens of the Principal-Agent theory, which posits that the effectiveness of any governance structure is heavily dependent on the ethical conduct and trustworthiness of its agents



(leaders). The fact that many respondents learned about the importance of honesty during their academic pursuits underscores the role of formal education in shaping ethical leaders. Educational institutions, by instilling values like honesty, play a crucial role in preparing future leaders for their responsibilities in public governance. This aligns with the Principal-Agent theory, which suggests that well-informed agents are more likely to act in the best interest of their principals (the public). The educational system, in this case, acts as a foundational platform for instilling the necessary ethical standards in future leaders.

The acknowledgment that honesty is also learned through socialization processes reflects the broader societal expectations and cultural norms regarding leadership. This aspect ties back to the concept of societal norms and values as a guiding force in shaping the behavior of individuals, particularly those in leadership positions. The Principal-Agent theory emphasizes the importance of aligning the agent's values and actions with the expectations of the principal. In this context, the societal emphasis on honesty as a core value plays a critical role in ensuring that leaders are not just legally compliant but also morally aligned with the expectations of the public. The widespread awareness of honesty as a key leadership principle suggests a high level of alignment between societal values and institutional expectations. However, as Crowding (2016) points out, awareness does not always translate into action. This gap between knowledge and practice is a critical area of concern in the Principal-Agent framework. While leaders may be aware of the importance of honesty, the challenge lies in consistently applying this principle in their daily governance practices. This gap can lead to issues of trust and effectiveness in public governance, as predicted by the theory. The findings also hint at the challenges inherent in embedding honesty within the fabric of public governance. Despite the recognition of its importance, there are often systemic and individual barriers that hinder the full realization of this principle. These barriers could include entrenched bureaucratic practices, personal interests, and the complexities of managing public resources. Overcoming these challenges requires not only individual commitment but also systemic reforms that encourage transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership. Therefore, understanding of honesty as a principle of leadership at Mukono Municipal Council reflects a strong alignment with societal values and educational teachings. However, the challenge still lies in translating this awareness into consistent practice, a key concern of the Principal-Agent theory. Addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach that includes

continued ethical education, systemic reforms, and a cultural shift towards greater transparency and accountability in public governance.

#### **4.2.2 Mukono municipal council officials' adherence to the principle of honesty in their work**

Participants interviewed were asked to provide their opinions on how officials at Mukono Municipal Council upheld the principle of honesty. The respondents had to choose multiple responses based on their experiences.

One prominent observation from the majority of respondents was that municipal leaders “tell the truth about their work, entity opportunities, and organizational plans.” This could be attributed to the general expectation that, as with any other municipal council in Uganda, Mukono Municipal Council is subjected to central authority, making truth-telling a standard practice. Honesty, in this case, is not only an ethical requirement but also a legal one. The practice of truth-telling enhances accountability, which is crucial in local governance. When leaders provide accurate information about the available resources, job opportunities, and tenders, it ensures that the public is well-informed and can actively participate in decision-making processes. As one respondent noted:

“Leaders tell the truth about their work and the plans of the council, which helps in ensuring that there is accountability. Without this, the public would not know how the resources are being utilized” (Respondent 4, FGD, Female).

The expectation of transparency also extends to the process of awarding tenders, which is a critical aspect of municipal governance. However, while many tenders are made public, some respondents pointed out that local companies sometimes face difficulties in competing for contracts. For instance, a respondent indicated that “*tenders for waste management in the Central Division of Mukono are sometimes awarded to companies like De Waste and Bin It Uganda Limited, which are based in Kampala and lack local offices* (Respondent 6, FDG Male). This situation can create difficulties for local citizens who may not have direct access to these companies for reporting issues related to garbage collection. While this does not necessarily imply dishonesty, it highlights gaps in the tendering process that could affect the perceived honesty of the municipal council's operations.

Moreover, the principle of honesty is supported by the regulatory frameworks governing public service in Uganda, including the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders (2021), and the Code of Conduct and Ethics for Public Service (2005), among others. These documents emphasize the importance of truth-telling in the performance of public duties. Public officials are expected to adhere to these standards, which are designed to ensure that their actions align with the principles of integrity and transparency. Additionally, municipal leaders, who are well-known in the community, are expected to act with honesty, as they are seen as important decision-makers. Their actions are often scrutinized by the public, which acts as a check on any potential dishonest conduct. As one respondent explained:

“As a leader, you know people are watching and expect you to be transparent. This keeps us in check, ensuring we remain truthful in what we do” (Respondent 17, KII, Female).

In practice, municipal officials at Mukono provide regular updates on available resources, job opportunities, tenders, and ongoing projects. This information is often disseminated through the municipal website, meetings, and local radio programs. Such efforts to keep the public informed align with the broader expectations for transparency and accountability in local governance. However, as with any system, challenges exist, particularly when it comes to maintaining absolute truthfulness.

One such challenge is illustrated by the case of Mr. Ssemyalo Mulambuzi Ismael, the Assistant Town Clerk of the Central Division Mukono. In 2021, he was implicated in a financial scandal that involved mismanagement of funds and fraudulent activities. The internal audit revealed that Mr. Mulambuzi had failed to account for one billion shillings of local revenue and was also accused of misusing forty (40) million shillings. Additionally, he was found to have manipulated documents in an attempt to cover up his actions. One respondent noted:

“You cannot claim honesty when the money meant for local services is misused by those who are supposed to manage it. The assistant town clerk's case is a good example” (Respondent 2, KII, Male).

The scandal led to Mr. Mulambuza's interdiction, highlighting the difficulties in ensuring that all officials adhere to the principle of honesty. This case serves as a reminder that even in systems with strong regulatory frameworks, dishonest practices can still occur, undermining public trust.

In addition to the direct cases of dishonesty, respondents also noted that technical staff within the municipal council sometimes engage in fraudulent activities, although these are not always easily detectable. One example provided by a respondent described a situation where a technical staff member requested funds to repair a grader but failed to carry out the repairs, despite receiving the money. This type of dishonesty, while not always visible, is detrimental to the efficiency of the municipal council. As one respondent explained:

“A technical staff member might request money for equipment repairs, knowing fully well that they are just seeking personal income. Even when money is released, you will never see evidence that the grader was repaired because it remains grounded” (Respondent 8, FGD, Female).

This type of misconduct underscores the importance of leadership in ensuring that all levels of the municipal council adhere to the principles of honesty. Leaders are expected to set an example by following the law and guidelines established by the council. When leaders act with integrity, it is expected that their subordinates will follow suit. This view is supported by Kozminska and Olszewska (2018), who argue that leaders play a crucial role in fostering a culture of honesty within organizations. They assert that when leaders act honestly, it sets the tone for the rest of the organization. In the case of Mukono Municipal Council, the Assistant Town Clerk's dishonesty was seen as a bad example, leading to his outlawing. This case highlights the importance of holding leaders accountable for their actions to maintain the integrity of the organization as a whole.

In contrast to the cases of dishonesty, many respondents also highlighted that the majority of municipal leaders strive to follow the law, guidelines, and standards in their work. These officials are bound by the laws of Uganda, which are designed to ensure that public resources are used efficiently and lawfully. The legal framework governing public service in Uganda encourages transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct among public officials. The importance of this legal framework was emphasized by one respondent:

“Leaders must follow the law and guidelines set by the council. If they didn’t, it would create confusion and undermine the system” (Respondent 7, FGD, Male).

The legal framework within which municipal officials work is vital in promoting honesty in their work. This includes the Constitution of Uganda, the Local Government Act, the Leadership Code Act, and other relevant laws and regulations. These documents provide clear guidelines for public officials and ensure that they are held accountable for their actions. For example, the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders (2021) specify that public officers must utilize public resources efficiently and effectively and are not permitted to hold multiple government jobs. One notable case exposed in a report by the General Auditor for the financial year 2021 on MMC, involved the Town Clerk and the Human Resource Officer of Mukono Municipal Council. Later these were arrested for facilitating a fraudulent double salary payment. This case further highlights the importance of adhering to legal and ethical standards in the public sector.

In addition to legal adherence, many respondents also noted that municipal officials are committed to serving the public, rather than their personal interests. This commitment to public service is a core principle in the Ugandan public service code of conduct. Public officials are expected to work for the greater good of the community, and their decisions should reflect this commitment. As one respondent explained:

“They are committed to serving others and not themselves” (Respondent 5, FGD, Male).

This sentiment aligns with the core values of public service, which prioritize the welfare of the citizens over individual gain. However, as evidenced by the cases of dishonesty and financial mismanagement, challenges remain in ensuring that all officials consistently adhere to these principles.

While Mukono Municipal Council has made strides in promoting honesty among its officials, there are significant challenges to fully realizing this principle in practice. The legal and ethical frameworks that guide public service provide a solid foundation for promoting honesty, but incidents of financial mismanagement and dishonest conduct by some officials reveal that there is still room for improvement. To strengthen the adherence to honesty, it is essential that leadership at all levels of the council set a positive example and that robust oversight mechanisms are put in

place to address ethical lapses. Furthermore, ensuring open access to information and increasing transparency in decision-making processes can help to build public trust and improve accountability.

**Table 2: Assigned functions and services of Municipal Council / Divisions**

Municipal Council functions	Functions of Divisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff establishment structure and setting remuneration levels.</li> <li>- Setting service delivery standards.</li> <li>- Recruitment of staff, payment and training.</li> <li>- Property valuation</li> <li>- Setting levels of trade licenses and fees.</li> <li>- Monitor the administration and provision of service delivery.</li> <li>- Making ordinances.</li> <li>-Setting taxation levels and supply of receipting receipts.</li> <li>- Procurement of drugs.</li> <li>- Central laboratory services.</li> <li>- Mortuary and cemeteries.</li> <li>- Local examinations (schools).</li> <li>- Co-curricular activities.</li> <li>-Procurement and management of refuse tipping sites.</li> <li>- Procurement and maintenance of heavy plant and equipment.</li> <li>- Loan payment (external).</li> <li>-Roads construction and maintenance (tarmac).</li> <li>- Installation of traffic signals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Payment of salaries of approved staff.</li> <li>- Determine the level of staff (support staff).</li> <li>- Division council expenses.</li> <li>- Poverty eradication.</li> <li>- Administration of licenses.</li> <li>- Revenue collection.</li> <li>- Health education and visiting.</li> <li>- Vector and vermin control.</li> <li>- Secondary drains.</li> <li>- Curative services (clinics).</li> <li>- Immunizations.</li> <li>- Food and drug inspection.</li> <li>- AIDS education.</li> <li>- Administration of markets.</li> <li>-Control of development- enforcement of building rules.</li> <li>- Primary and nursery education.</li> <li>-Monitoring and utilization of grants to schools.</li> <li>- Grass cutting and maintenance of parks.</li> <li>- Road sweeping.</li> <li>- Repair of murram and earth roads.</li> <li>- Environmental care and protection.</li> <li>- Neighborhood structure plans.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Construction and maintenance of major drains.</li> <li>-National and District functions.</li> <li>-Legal services (interpretation and prosecution).</li> <li>-Architectural and design standards.</li> <li>-Approval of building plans.</li> <li>- Municipal Councilor’s expenses.</li> <li>- Master structure plans.</li> <li>- Cadastral survey and mapping.</li> <li>- Approval of schemes.</li> <li>- Street light energy charges.</li> <li>- Audit.</li> <li>- District Service Commission expenses.</li> <li>- Broad policy and objectives guidelines.</li> <li>- Advertising standards.</li> <li>- Mailo land administration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local land management.</li> <li>- Resolving local land issues.</li> <li>- Law enforcement.</li> <li>- Welfare and community services.</li> <li>-Agriculture and veterinary extension services.</li> <li>- Youth, persons with disabilities, women and sports.</li> <li>- Cooperative societies and groups.</li> <li>- Spring protection and provision of drinking water.</li> </ul>
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Source: Adapted from the second schedule of the Local Government Act, 1997

Generally, the central government devolved the above services and functions to municipal councils which in turn devolved some to division level, as indicated above. The intention of such an arrangement is largely intended to deliver desired services to the grassroots people. However, the central government retained the responsibility to make sure that the required technical, financial or human resources are in place to warrant that these lower local government units are able to execute their responsibilities efficiently, effectively or authentically hence achieve social economic development of their local communities. However, even though central government finances local governments, its funds are mostly conditional therefore, denying these local governments in this case, municipal councils, of any discretionary powers over these funds. As a consequence, municipal councils are denied discretion to decide how to spend such central government remittances like on such areas as maintaining infrastructure, let alone, determining the

exact time these funds must be provided by central government to them. Probably this is partly why it is possible to see some infrastructure that are in poor state or are incomplete for some time. One respondent remarked;

“We are willing to provide the services which our community needs but the government usually releases the funds to use for such projects very late and with strict conditions”  
(Respondent 20, KII, Male)

Besides, central government remittances, municipal councils are also funded by locally generated revenues. According to part IV of the Local Government Act (1997), local governments are given mandate to collect revenue from their local sources like parking fees, fines and penalties, market dues, permits, licenses, taxes (like Local service tax and hotel tax) and to make decisions especially concerning how finances ought to be spent in adherence to local government laws and regulations. This provision is premised mainly on the rationale that habitually, central government funds which come as grants which are either conditional or unconditional, are often inadequate or given out late. Because of this, in order to empower local governments to keep their activities in progress, local governments like municipal councils are allowed to supplement this funding from government, with locally mobilized resources. However, the base for this local revenue at Mukono municipal council, seems limited hence necessitating disbursements from central government in form of conditional or unconditional grants.

According to Chapter 14 article 233(2) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda the, Code of conduct and ethics for Uganda public service (2005) and the Revised charter on accountability and ethical code of conduct for local government (ULGA, 2006), it is expected that public officials use their power and resources under their care to push for the agenda that serves the interests of the people as a whole rather than serving their personal interests. That is why irrespective of whether resources are from local or central government sources, should be earmarked for local development and genuine service delivery incase individual municipal officials do not misuse these funds by diverting them to their individual pockets.

Another way submitted by respondents to exemplify whether leaders of Mukono municipal council adhere to the principle of honesty in their work was that “they welcome information volunteered



by staff about alleged dishonest practices”. The organization encourages staff to share any information concerning suspected malpractice. This is because the entity recognizes that employees are an essential source for discovering dishonesty in an organization. That is why, staff can bring to light any wrong doing to a respective head of department or another person at the municipal council who is capable of correcting the wrong doing.

In general terms, it is a duty of an organization to put in place mechanisms for raising concerns within. At Mukono municipal council, officials may raise a matter through a suggestion box, municipal council’s website, a telephone hotline, a person’s supervisor, reporting directly to a head of department or by writing a confidential letter to the Town clerk. These mechanisms are believed to offer safety to people who choose to volunteer information like in form of blowing the whistle about malpractice at Mukono municipal council with sincerity and confidence that they will not be victimized, hated or dismissed.

The above mechanisms reported at Mukono municipal council are akin to what is reported by governance scholars at municipal councils elsewhere in the world. For example, in Cape town, South Africa and Manchester City council, in United Kingdom, it was noted that a framework as the above, was employed in both contexts though, they seemed to have more channels of information plus tangible evidence of their utilization (Transparency International, 2015). We can therefore conclude that information sharing is a global necessity for organizations to fight malpractice and also prevent loss of colossal sums of public funds to public officials.

Transparency International (2015) however, emphasized that it is generally a risky venture to volunteer information about anyone or anything in an organization where things are assumed to be apparently going on well moreover, in an atmosphere where one is not sure of being protected from victimization by any official or officials reported to be involved in a suspected irregularities or felony.

In line with the above, the existence of the whistleblower Act (2010) can affirm that Mukono municipal council officials can be protected to report dishonest acts at their workplaces or to external agencies which are said to possess the authority to resolve it. Such voluntary sharing of

information can be a significant component in augmenting governance of the municipal council by providing an opportunity to buttress transparency and ethical culture in the organization. However, whistle blowing behavior may be successful in an atmosphere where past whistle blown cases were successfully handle or people are assured of protection when they blow the whistle. Interestingly, sometimes the people who blow the whistle are made witnesses before panels or court in so doing being exposed and this may compromise their safety. A scenario of such nature however, was not retrieved at Mukono municipal council.

Respondents also indicated that another way they believed that leaders of Mukono municipal council demonstrated adherence to the principle of honesty in their work was through “*apprehending whoever would be found guilty of some offense or illegality at work*”. Being a public institution, Mukono municipal council utilizes a practice of apprehending anyone found guilty of some offense or illegality at work to maintain integrity and honesty and also to uphold the ethic of transparency and accountability at the municipal council.

At Mukono municipal council, employees who are found guilty of some offense or illegality at work like abuse of office, dishonesty or deceit, corruption, failure to comply with procedures, laws, regulations, misbehavior among others, are liable to being apprehended. This is in accordance with upholding the rule of law and attests to the fact that nobody can claim to be above the law. This conveys a tough warning to municipal officials that dishonest behavior cannot be condoned at the institution. Therefore, when an official at Mukono municipal council who is found to be guilty of offense is apprehended, this becomes an essential stride in upholding honesty at the entity because it acts as a warning to the rest of the officials who could be contemplating to do a related dishonest act. In addition, when employees of an organization realize that there exists consequences for an individual’s actions, they may restrain from committing certain offences or illegalities at work as a result, observing the law and the ethic of honesty in their work.

It was therefore realized that arresting and taking a legal action of an official found guilty of some offence can be an important measure to reinstate community trust in Mukono municipal council and the entire government. When officials are held accountable in lieu of their actions, it is

interpreted by the citizens that they can trust the institution because its operations are aimed at realizing people's interests and not the official's personal agenda.

In addition to the above, some respondents also gave another opinion about Mukono municipal council leaders abiding by the principle of honesty in their work in a way that they "freely explain the procedures they use to make some decisions". Procedures stipulate what is and not regarded as right and suitable manner of doing one's work by those who hold public offices in Uganda. As a result, to uphold the principles of accountability, lawfulness, participation or transparency, Mukono municipal council officials provide information about some decisions to the public. Generally, this is done through providing reports about their decisions on certain matters, also through council meetings or other channels.

As a rule, Mukono municipal council officers are expected to use procedures as a key driver to decision making. This is because they are legally obliged to serve the public within their jurisdiction and as a result, some decisions they make draw public interest as people seek to be familiar with the road map the leaders have adopted for the delivery of basic services to them. That is why the decision making of Mukono municipal council should adhere to well indicated procedure which should always be in line with the law and when this is done, it is most probable that resources get utilized on appropriate activities as specified in sector guidelines. When this is not done, it may become probable that procedures may be flaunted at liberty and the end result of this may be that municipal leaders may become incompetent or begin to misuse their powers and also become uncomfortable to detail the procedures they use in their work with truth.

As a result, Mukono municipal council officials consciously undertake their activities like planning, procurement, financial expenditure, information dissemination especially with external stakeholders, tendering out contracts, disciplining staff, retirement of employees among others, in compliance with policy, procedure plus reporting mechanisms which can be helpful in keeping employees on the right path. Nonetheless, having policies and procedures in an organization does not necessarily mean that employees will spontaneously want to comply with them. However, when leaders are seen to regularly follow policies and procedures in their work, employees too,

will follow suit. Certainly this can be most probable when the leaders institute a functional system of discipline and correction.

However, owing to the significance of honesty amongst leaders, it is fascinating that not all respondents provided response on this question. Consequently, it can be established that the clarity by which a leader demonstrates the procedure he or she followed in making some decisions, influences the assessment of a leader's honesty.

In addition to the above, some respondents said that another way leaders at Mukono municipal council depicted that they abided by the principle of honesty in their work was that "the leaders provided feedback to juniors but were also open to receive opinions from them". Generally, feedback is an essential aspect of leadership and genuine communication in every organization. As a result, the respondents indicated that indeed Mukono municipal council officials provided feedback to juniors about work related matters and were also willing to obtain opinions from the staff.

In general, there exists a number of channels which Mukono municipal council officials can use to give feedback to their employees as well as employees in turn, can utilize to give their opinions to the leaders. The selection of which channel to use, is contingent upon the kind of feedback and the regularity by which communication takes place plus the particular needs of the staffs. Officials at Mukono municipal council provide feedback through; i) meetings- Mukono municipal council officials holds meetings with employees to share feedback about their work. At such meetings, employees too can express their views and issues but also enjoy such opportunity of meeting their leaders directly to voice their concerns; ii) municipal website, emails and memos- which provide written feedback on particular tasks, projects or existing opportunities; iii) Suggestion boxes- which encourage staffs to provide feedback in an anonymous way hence enable employees who are not comfortable to talk directly to their superiors to voice their concerns; iv) Notes boards- where selected information is placed on notes boards to interest and inform both the employees and external people about certain matters; v) Direct talk- this is where employees talk directly to their leaders to give feedback or views from workforce about certain matters. This makes employees feel that their views count.

Therefore, giving feedback to employees can be one approach of bolstering transparency, accountability and participation at Mukono municipal council. This in turn can advantage to boost not only the general performance of the entity, but also its success.

The adherence to honesty by officials, as mandated by various legal frameworks, reflects the Principal-Agent theory's focus on the agent's duty to act in the principal's interest. This adherence is a form of accountability, crucial in the Principal-Agent relationship. The encouragement of whistleblowing and the existence of various reporting mechanisms within the council align with the theory's emphasis on oversight and transparency. These mechanisms serve as tools to mitigate the agency problem, as noted by Eisenhardt (1989). The officials' practice of explaining decision-making procedures to the public aligns with the theory's emphasis on reducing information asymmetry and enhancing transparency, crucial for effective Principal-Agent relationships. The practice of providing and receiving feedback within the council reflects the theory's focus on communication as a tool for aligning the interests of principals and agents. This open communication channel helps in mitigating the risks associated with information asymmetry. The results from Mukono Municipal Council can be effectively linked to the Principal-Agent theory. The council's practices in governance, adherence to honesty, decision-making transparency, and feedback mechanisms are all reflective of the key tenets of this theory, highlighting the dynamics between the principals (citizens) and agents (council officials) in the realm of public governance.

#### **4.2.3 What compels officials of Mukono municipal council to observe honesty in their work**

The researcher sought to understand what compelled officials of Mukono municipal council to observe honesty in their work and participants had to select multiple responses.

##### **4.2.3.1 Professional Guidelines**

Majority of respondents selected professional guidelines as a major incentives that compelled officials of Mukono municipal council to observe honesty in their work. Professional guidelines encompass varied themes among which are professional behavior, standards of quality, ethical conduct, competence details, compliance with laws among others and these guidelines are initiated by professional associations or oversight agencies to encourage honesty and ethical behavior in

general and uphold good performance in the members of a profession. Interestingly, because the key informants to this study were professionals and men and women of massive experience at their work, they easily related to this interrogation about the need for professional guidelines in calibrating honesty in their work.

When leaders of an institution follow professional guidelines in their work, it is most likely that they will not only observe the recognized procedures but also the protocols of executing their obligations and this can discourage them from cutting corners because that may possibly compromise the value of their work by tempting them to indulge in dishonest acts. Elsewhere in South Africa and Nigeria, scholars in agreement to this, made further observations that the possibility of Municipal officials or public sector officials in general, to fully achieve sustained professionalism in their work, may be unattainable due to the leadership apostasy characterizing the current times when leaders are suffering from degeneracy in honesty and convoluted corrupt attitude yet for any society to succeed or fail, it is largely dependent on the behavior of its leaders Masiya et al (2021); Imhonopi and Ugochuku (2020).

Consequently, professionalism is highly regarded at Mukono municipal council for this determines how well or poorly the officials will perform their duties let alone, work with the right agenda in mind, that is, to meet the interests of the public rather than their own. If selfish interests influence the work of a municipal official, it may lead to unprofessional behavior such as misusing resources, corruption, deception, abuse of power, moonlighting, misuse of official work time, mediocre work among others. That is why the laws and guidelines are important to guide the decisions and actions of the municipal council hence avert unprofessional behavior among officials at the institution. However, for the relevant laws and guidelines to be adhered to by the officials, they should be enforced consistently. When this is done, a value of compliance is instituted although, it is also vital to enable officials to know the consequences of failing to follow the law and the guidelines.

In the framework of the Principal-Agent theory, professional guidelines serve as a contractual basis that aligns the interests of the agents (officials of Mukono Municipal Council) with those of the principals (the public and the government). By setting clear expectations and standards, these guidelines work towards reducing the information asymmetry that inherently exists in such

relationships. They act as a bridge to fill the gap between what the agents know and what the principals should be informed about, thereby mitigating potential conflicts of interest and self-serving behaviors. Professional guidelines influence the behavior of agents in several ways. Firstly, they establish a clear set of expectations and norms that guide daily operations and decision-making processes. This clarity helps in reducing ambiguity and the temptation for agents to act in ways that are not aligned with the principals' interests. Secondly, these guidelines often come with a system of rewards and penalties, which further incentivizes agents to adhere to the set standards, thereby aligning their actions with the expectations of the principals. While professional guidelines are essential, their effectiveness largely depends on their enforcement and the culture within the organization. In the context of Mukono Municipal Council, the enforcement of these guidelines can be challenging due to various factors such as entrenched practices, resistance to change, or lack of adequate resources for monitoring and implementation. Therefore, it is crucial for the council to not only establish these guidelines but also to ensure they are consistently and fairly enforced. The leadership within Mukono Municipal Council plays a pivotal role in the implementation and adherence to professional guidelines. Leaders set the tone for the organization and their commitment to these guidelines can significantly influence the behavior of other officials. By prioritizing ethical behavior and professionalism, leaders can foster a culture where honesty and integrity are valued and practiced.

#### **4.2.3.2 Organizational Guidelines/ policies**

Another factor selected by respondents to explain the factors that compelled public officials to follow the principle of honesty in their work was “organizational guidelines/policies”. Every organization puts in place guidelines or policies to guide the way the employees carry out their official work and this results into predictable outcomes. As a result, the respondents indicated that as a standard practice, Mukono municipal council officials adhered to specified guidelines/policies in their work. This was a way of realizing honesty plus ethical behavior in general. These guidelines/ policies are intended to not only guide but also govern municipal employees’ conduct including that of officials.

In general terms, guidelines/policies talk about expectations of honesty plus ethical behavior at a workplace. As a result, these enabled the municipal officers to recognize what the municipal council anticipated from them and the call to abide by these standards or policies. This was a result

of their acquired understanding about the need for ethical conduct in their work, personal behavior and how possibly this could be realized particularly through the application in their work, of these ethical principles. Occasionally, information about these ethical principles can be shared at meetings, workshops or through other avenues. For the case of Mukono municipal council, the respondents did not recall any occasion where the municipal council ever organized a meeting, workshop or any other event to educate the staff about ethical principles as a strategy to streamline their actions and behavior upon the foundation of honesty or ethical observance.

Whereas it is beneficial for municipal employees to have knowledge about organizational guidelines/policies that they need to adhere to in their work, it is crucial that the municipal council clearly informs its employees the repercussions of non-compliance which may comprise of taking a disciplinary action against the official, cancellation of his or her employment contract or by taking a legal action against them. When the staff get to know that there is a price to pay for non-conforming behavior and actions, they may become cautious and avoid indulging in unethical behavior and this may be one way to encourage respect for organizational standards or policies.

In line with the above, the existence of the Code of Conduct and Ethics for Uganda Public Service (2005) and the Revised Charter on Accountability and Ethical Code of Conduct for Local Governments by Uganda Local Government Association (2006), among others, offers guidelines by which ethical behavior can be realized among municipal officials. For example, the two codes give emphasis to the prominence of honesty, transparency, integrity, accountability above all else that comprises the work of a local government or municipal official.

In addition, the codes encourage officials of local government to distance themselves from conflict of interest hence do their work focusing on public interest and also be willing to volunteer any information about corruption or dishonest behavior at the organization. Guidelines concerning procurement procedures, how to manage finances well plus other key aspects of a municipal official's work are outlined as well. All these institute a strong culture of honesty and lay a foundation for accountability as well as enforcement in case they fall short of these standards.



In the context of the Principal-Agent theory, the organizational guidelines and policies are instrumental in aligning the actions of the agents (officials of the council) with the interests of the principals (public and government). By clearly outlining what is expected of the agents in their professional capacity, these policies reduce the ambiguity that often leads to the misalignment of interests. They act as a binding agreement, ensuring that the agents' actions are consistently in line with the principals' objectives. One of the critical challenges in the Principal-Agent relationship is information asymmetry, where the agent has more information than the principal. Organizational guidelines and policies can mitigate this by establishing transparent processes and clear reporting lines. This transparency ensures that the principals are well-informed about the agents' actions and decisions, thereby reducing the likelihood of mismanagement or unethical behavior. Organizational policies often include mechanisms for accountability, such as performance reviews, audits, and feedback systems.

These mechanisms are crucial in the Principal-Agent framework, as they provide a means for principals to monitor and evaluate the actions of agents. In the case of Mukono Municipal Council, such accountability measures ensure that officials are answerable for their actions and decisions, fostering a culture of responsibility and ethical conduct. While the theoretical framework of organizational guidelines and policies is robust, its practical implementation faces several challenges. These include resistance to change, the complexity of public governance, and the potential for entrenched corrupt practices. Overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort from both the leadership of the council and the broader community, including regular training, effective enforcement of policies, and a commitment to ethical leadership. Organizational guidelines and policies play a pivotal role in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council. They are essential tools in aligning the actions of council officials with the interests of the public and government, reducing information asymmetry, and enhancing accountability. Effective implementation of these policies is key to fostering an environment of honesty, transparency, and ethical governance within the council.

#### 4.2.3.3 Oversight organizations

The respondents also stated that oversight organizations are among the factors that compel officials of Mukono municipal council to observe the principle of honesty in their work. Generally, oversight organizations are put in place to independently monitor, supervise and demand

accountability from government institutions, municipal councils inclusive. As a result, they are able to contribute a great part in upholding honesty plus ethical behavior in general.

In Uganda, there are a number of oversight organizations which are mandated to not only monitor but also make sure that public officers, who include the ones working at municipal institutions, adhere to the ethic of honesty in addition to ethical conduct while carrying out their official duties. Some of these include;

- **Inspectorate of government:** This is a constitutional entity created to prevent and foster the eradication of corruption, misuse of power, and abuse of public office which includes Mukono municipal council. This oversight organization is mandated to investigate whatever complaints have been received from the public or reported cases of misconduct by government officials and to take a proper response against the wrong doers. One such response is through making a report of the findings and presenting it to appropriate authorities for additional action.
- **Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA):** In Uganda, this office has the authority to regulate and monitor public procurement and disposal of public assets, even in municipal councils. This entity makes sure that fairness, transparency and competitiveness characterize procurement processes but also to guarantee that government funds are utilized with efficiency and effectiveness.
- **The Auditor General's Office:** This office is responsible for conducting audits of financial statements made by all government institutions, which include municipal councils. This audit function is done to make sure that all public units adhere with the relevant laws and procedures. This office also holds a responsibility to conduct investigations of cases about financial mismanagement and fraud.
- **The Parliament of Uganda:** Article 161(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda mandates the Parliament of Uganda to monitor all expenditure of public funds and it does this through financial accountability committees of parliament like Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Local Government Accounts Committees (LGAC). Specifically, the Local Government Accounts Committee investigates the frugality by which local governments, including municipal councils, expend the public funds entrusted to them

through reviewing the audit reports of the Auditor General plus the reports by the Local Government Accounts committee which are accessed to parliament, by the minister of local government. The final goal is to reinforce accountability and the efficient delivery of services to the public.

Nonetheless, in Uganda, for oversight organizations to be effective in requiring government officials and municipal council officials to uphold honesty in their work, it is contingent on some conditions like;

- **Independence:** Oversight organizations have a mandate to carry out investigations and to act against officials who are found culpable of dishonesty. For oversight organizations to carry out this mandate well, they must operate with autonomy from government interference in their work so they can be able to exercise their authority without anticipating any revenge or undue influence or pressure from government in a bid to protect some selected few officials found in transgression.
- **Adequate resources:** Oversight organizations require sufficient resources from government for them to conduct their work well. As a result, they require equipment, money, enough staff to undertake their mandatory audits and investigations.
- **Legal framework:** It is good for oversight organizations to work in an environment where there exists laws that clearly stipulate their responsibilities and powers in addition to the process to be followed while investigating and enforcing their directives. The laws should also guarantee the safety of whistleblowers but also bite the officials proven to have involved themselves in misconduct.
- **Political will:** This refers to the sincerity by which the political leaders commit to promote honest behavior in government institutions and one way to demonstrate this is by supporting the efforts of oversight institutions. This supportive gesture can be shown through giving the oversight entities the needed resources or by taking steps against officials implicated in malpractice.
- **Public participation:** The public can play a vital role in the work of oversight organizations by contributing important information about suspected incidences of honesty in government institutions. They can willingly do this if they get to know how important their information can be in cultivating a practice of accountability and transparency in

government institutions but also that when they volunteer such information to oversight organizations, their safety from reprisal is assured.

It can therefore be said that political will, strong laws, public participation, availability of resources, and independence of oversight organizations among others, can play a major role in achieving effectiveness of oversight organizations. Where these factors are not honored, the oversight organizations may become less effective in fulfilling their mandates. Probably that explains why dishonest behavior is still a common phenomenon in government institutions of Uganda. This could have been the reason why few respondents identified oversight as a factor that indeed compelled Mukono municipal council officials to adhere to the ethic of honesty in their work. Oversight organizations are pivotal in the Principal-Agent framework, especially in the context of Mukono Municipal Council. They provide essential checks and balances, ensuring that agents act in the best interest of the principals. However, their effectiveness is contingent upon factors like independence, resources, legal framework, political will, and public participation. Addressing these challenges is crucial for these organizations to fulfill their mandate effectively and for the promotion of honesty and ethical behavior in public governance.

#### **4.2.3.4 Absence of an alternative choice**

Another response selected by respondents to explain the factors that compelled officials of Mukono municipal council to follow the principle of honesty in their work was that “they have no other choice”. In general terms, Mukono municipal council officials are obligated to adhere to the ethic of honesty in their work since it is an ethical and lawful responsibility because they are employees of government. Since they are government officials, they are entrusted with a duty to serve the public and to be in charge of government resources which they should ensure they are utilized in an honest and accountable way.

In addition to the above, the existing frameworks of ethics plus the law in Uganda, necessitate that public officers, which includes municipal officials, to uphold integrity and honesty in their work. For example, public officers, which includes municipal officials, are demanded under the Leadership Code Act (2002), to publicly reveal to the Inspectorate of Government, their assets, income and liabilities every year, In case individuals fail to make such a declaration, they may face a disciplinary measure which includes, being sacked from work. Therefore, there are consequences that are felt by the public in case municipal officials and all government officials indulge

themselves in dishonest acts because such acts cause misuse of public resources, compromise in the provision of public services, public mistrust in institutions of government and contempt of public officials among others. Indeed there is a price for dishonesty.

As a result, Mukono municipal council officials find themselves with no other choice but to observe honesty while undertaking their duties since it ethical and a legal requirement and if they fail to do so, they are likely to face some disciplinary measures or legal action. Besides, upholding honesty by municipal officials in the course of their duties is an important practice that can encourage accountability and efficiency which are crucial for local community development and improved quality of citizens' lives.

The finding that officials at Mukono Municipal Council observe honesty in their work due to the absence of an alternative choice can be intriguingly analyzed through the lens of the Principal-Agent theory. This scenario presents a unique dynamic where the usual discretionary space often available to agents (officials) is significantly constrained, leading to a form of enforced compliance with ethical standards. The Principal-Agent theory emphasizes the alignment of incentives. In the case of Mukono Municipal Council, the absence of alternative choices acts as a negative incentive – the avoidance of consequences rather than the pursuit of positive rewards. This approach might be effective in the short term but does not necessarily cultivate intrinsic motivation for honest behavior. The scenario at Mukono Municipal Council, where officials observe honesty due to the absence of an alternative choice, presents a unique case in the application of the Principal-Agent theory. While this approach ensures compliance with ethical standards, it raises important questions about the autonomy of agents, the sustainability of such enforced honesty, and the need for a more holistic approach that combines enforcement with the cultivation of intrinsic ethical values. This scenario underscores the complexity of applying theoretical frameworks to real-world governance challenges and the need for nuanced strategies that go beyond mere enforcement.

#### **4.2.4 Specific incidences or activities when an official may not act honestly**

In order to establish if acts of dishonesty were being done at Municipal council, respondents were asked to give opinion if they knew of any incidence or activities when an official may have acted

dishonestly. The majority of respondents said “Yes”, meaning that they were aware of some incidences or activities that the officials at Mukono municipal council had involved themselves in which were dishonest.

It is likely that officials of Mukono municipal council can become aware of dishonest incidents or activities performed by the officials. If the municipal council encourages transparency in all its activities or if it has internal control systems which are effective and if the council has people willing to volunteer information about any wrong doing or where the officials are diligent to investigate and handle the reported incidences of dishonesty, it is possible that the officials may likely get to know about such acts of dishonesty at the municipal council.

In instances where the internal systems of control are weak, or transparency is lacking and if the leaders do not have any information concerning suspected incidences of dishonesty, officials may find it hard to detect dishonest acts hence they may continue working in ignorance of wrongdoings characterizing their workplace.

#### **4.2.4.1 Specific incidences or actions of dishonestly**

Furthermore participants were requested to give an account of specific activities they had observed where an official may not have acted honestly and some of their responses were;

- .....someone claiming to have done work yet they had not.
- .....when reports of audits come and showed some inaccuracies in accountability of finances that were allocated.
- .....officials acting dishonestly in order to get money from people.
- .....poor time management.
- .....and when they promote junior staff who would have just joined service but with similar qualifications and leaving the staff who will have been in service for quite long.

In their responses above, respondents mentioned acts of falsifying records of work, poor financial accountability, bribery, poor time management and unfairness in staff promotions as incidents of

dishonesty that they had taken note of about the municipal officials. This is indicative of the facts that some Mukono municipal council officials are not really honest. The respondents showed that some of Mukono municipal council officials are not honest in their conduct and actions yet it is vital that they should uphold honesty in their work because unless they do so, they fall short of being true and faithful leaders who deserve to be trusted by the people.

When a leader lacks honesty, he or she is not likely to guarantee good governance because they may fail to appropriate public resources to make available to the people, the services they need. A dishonest and unethical leader may not fear to steal public resources for their personal gain or misrepresent their records of work because the conscience of such an official easily accepts such wrong doing. That is why it is interesting to find out that some Mukono municipal officials sometimes provided falsified financial accountability or records of work. This may be so probably because they were uncomfortable to present some facts in their records which could have landed them in trouble. Therefore, it can be said that the promise of good governance at Mukono municipal council including all public sector organizations in Uganda, mainly rests on the leaders' sincerity and integrity. An honest leader will likely give attention to their responsibilities and ethical commitment to utilize the offices they hold, to attend to the interests of the public instead of their own. However, incidences where an official first extorts money from members of the public in order to serve them, most probably signify the fact that some Mukono municipal officials place their personal interests above public interests and this may probably indicate that such officials do not care about peoples' welfare but their own.

As a result, it appeared that the syndrome of making money quickly, dictated the behavior and actions of some officials at Mukono municipal council. The love for quick money making at a workplace may likely lead an official to neglect the interests of the very people they are supposed to serve. In fact, the practice of soliciting for money from people so as to offer them a service is dishonest and a corrupt practice. Moreover, since they are public servants, Mukono municipal officials were given the duty to not only serve the public but also to offer them the essential services. Therefore, any acts of soliciting for money from people so as to carry out their obligations most probably undermined their legal and ethical obligations and also could have weakened the confidence and trust that the people accorded them as their leaders.

Data collected from documents like the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders (2021), provide the procedure of employment of bureaucrats in Municipal councils. Here, eligibility for employee promotions are clearly spelt out under section A-g. For instance;

Paragraph 2: An officer can only be fit for promotion if they possess the requisite competences and should have served at a lower grade for a minimum of a three (3) years period.

Paragraph 3: An officer on probation cannot be considered for promotion or given duties of a level higher than them.

Paragraph 4: An officer will not qualify for promotion unless they have served for a minimum period of three (3) years in their substantive rank.

Paragraph 6: An officer can be found to be suitable for an accelerated promotion to a next or even two levels higher than their current grade even if they have not yet completed a minimum period of three years in their substantive position or grade.

Paragraph 10: A junior may be eligible for promotion above somebody who is above them even if their senior has served for a period beyond five (5) years and this is a competence based promotion.

The above mentioned presents a uniform framework of promoting officials in the local government, within which system Mukono municipal council is located. Where those officials at Mukono municipal council who are responsible for handling human resource management function fail to adhere to the principle of honesty in their work, the above criteria may not be followed in promoting some members of staff. Interestingly, respondents reported incidences of this vice at Mukono municipal council which implies that officials in the Human Resources management unit, failed short of honesty by not fulfilling their work on the basis of the Standing



Orders. This could potentially mean that some officials at Mukono municipal council could have been holding positions they were not competent and experienced to occupy. Such dishonest practices are likely to cause a crisis in achieving good governance of Mukono municipal council.

Interestingly, the study participants also revealed that Mukono municipal council officers use their offices for self gain. Honest leaders should use their offices to serve the interests of others because they have concern for them. For example respondents mentioned that officials;

“Connive with technical suppliers to supply fake products” (Respondent 4, FDG, Male).

“Who have overstayed at MMC personalize their offices office” (Respondent 1, FDG, Female).

In line with the above, it is a corrupt act for Mukono municipal council officials to engage in any acts of connivance with suppliers and when this is done, there is a possibility that the integrity expected of the process of public procurement is manipulated. If the public should realize the greatest value for their money, the process of public procurement ought to be guided by competitiveness, fairness and transparency. This means that in circumstances that some officials tend to connive with suppliers, it is possible that contracts may be awarded to some suppliers in a way that does not follow the correct procedures and may lead to exaggeration of prices, services or goods of poor quality hence a wastage of tax payers money.

As a result, conflict of interest may be likely, where some officials of Mukono municipal council engage in collusion with suppliers or personalization of their offices. This may injure the trust that public has been according the municipal council and may also result into lessened expectation in the public to continue hoping that the municipal council truly has the will and capability to offer them the services that they need. That is why such kind of conduct by the officials should not be condoned instead, it is good to take the necessary steps to guarantee that municipal officials who may be associated with such acts be held responsible for their deeds. For instance, Ivan (2022) reported in a media space an incidence of interdiction of the Assistant Town Clerk of Central division by the Town clerk of Mukono municipal council for alleged pervasive acts of corruption

of this nature and this served as testimony about how dishonesty is not tolerated by Mukono municipal council.

In addition, Nassuna (2022) presented in the media another instance where the Town Clerk of Mukono municipal council together with the Human Resource officer, were arrested by Parliamentary police at the recommendation of Public Accounts Committee (PAC), for failing to be diligent to detecting some act of dishonesty on the municipal payroll and failure to remedy it. This shows that municipal council officials are held answerable for their actions by both internal and external mechanisms for effective outcomes.

What remained unclear however, was how and when the municipal council planned to hold the Town Agents at Mukono Central division responsible for their actions. These Town agents were suspected to have a tendency to sometimes collude with the traders in the municipality while billing them. One respondent revealed that *“the tax billing system is officially done online but sometimes the Town Agents opt to do it manually because of poor internet connectivity on some days yet it was necessary that taxation process had to take place uninterrupted by internet...but money obtained from this arrangement is sometimes not often declared at the office”* (Respondent, 23, KII, Female). As a result, it was suspected that manual taxation was a possible ground for corruption because the Town Agents would never declare such money remitted manually as tax payment. Such dishonest acts if not checked, potentially affected the amount of revenue collection and also compounds the realization of genuine accountability and transparency by municipal officials.

The findings from section 4.2.4 of the study on Mukono Municipal Council highlight significant challenges in maintaining honesty and ethical behavior in governance. The core of the Principal-Agent relationship is trust. When officials engage in dishonest behaviors, it leads to a breakdown of this trust, making it challenging for effective governance to take place. The principals (public) may become skeptical of the agents' (officials') intentions and actions, leading to a lack of cooperation and support for governance initiatives. The reported inaccuracies in financial accountability and instances of bribery are indicative of corruption and mismanagement. These actions not only represent a direct violation of ethical standards but also reflect a deeper systemic

issue within the governance structure. In the Principal-Agent context, these acts can be seen as agents prioritizing personal gain over their fiduciary responsibilities to the principals. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, involving structural reforms, enhanced oversight, cultural change, and a commitment to transparency and accountability. By understanding these challenges through the lens of the Principal-Agent theory, strategies can be developed to mitigate the agency problem and foster a more effective and honest governance system.

### **4.3 Benefits that accrue when leaders follow the principle of honesty in their work**

Participants were further asked whether there were benefits that accrued when leaders followed the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal council. The researcher noted from the results, just how vital the principle of honesty is these days in the governance of organizations given that all responded said YES and further noted the benefits as shown below.

#### **4.3.1 Leaders being accountable**

Respondents selected multiple responses and all of them agreed that “leaders provide accountability for what they do, how they use resources and time as a benefit that accrue when leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council”. This implies that the benefit of leaders following the principle of honesty mostly is with leaders being more accountable about their work, the way they expend the public resources under their stewardship as well as how they wholly dedicate to municipal work for timely outcomes.

Indeed, all participants held a conviction that honesty is an essential quality which may be helpful to municipal officers to give an accountability of what they do, the resources they have used and the time invested on different official activities. Firstly, Honesty stands as an essential quality which can aid a municipal leader to account for the activities they are in charge of. When a municipal leader is honest, it is likely that they will provide an accurate report of the activities they have executed, as well as the resources they have used. Such kind of accountability, can be a great safeguard against misuse and wastage of public resources but also a guarantee that an official undertakes only those activities that address the needs of the people they are mandated to serve. In fact, the presence of internal and external auditors who examine the financial records of the Municipal council coupled with the scrutiny of anticorruption bodies like the Inspectorate of

Government and the Auditor General play a major role in making this a reality at Mukono municipal council.

In other words, honesty can be a great aid to a municipal leader to give information which is truthful and accurate concerning the resources that they utilize for their official work. One way to do this is through keeping clear, accurate records of all their transactions and having the courage to indicate any likely errors. When this is done, it safeguards them from any accusations of wrongdoings or mishandling of funds. This is indeed in accordance with the Public Finance Management Act (2015) which requires every accounting officer to prepare financial statements which are free from error or fraud. Even if this is the requirement for attainment of genuine accountability in public entities, the Auditor general's report for the financial year 2020/2021 revealed that Mukono municipal council financial records had not been prepared with the required honesty. For example, it was established by the Auditor General that pensioners were not paid in the year 2020/2021 and this resulted to an accrued amount of Uganda shillings 106. 996.782. The same Auditor's report revealed that staff who had either died, transferred, previously retired or absconded, were still on Mukono municipal council pay roll and an amount totaling to 11.152.696 UGX was paid to them, This was contrary to the Public Standing orders (2021) Section B-a paragraph 12 which requires immediate discontinuation of salary payment to such category of employees and because the municipal council did not heed to this requirement, it led to loss of tax payers money. As if that was not enough, the same Auditor General's report revealed that Mukono municipal council did not deduct Pay as you earn (PAYE) from the political officials gratuity a sum amounting to Uganda shillings 8.692.200. This was in breach of the Income Tax Act Section 19 (1) hence the government was denied would - be income. Whether such municipal council records were so by error or fraud, give an indication that the municipal council officials failed to Maintain or present genuine accountability records.

Nonetheless, honesty is indeed an important factor in aiding municipal leaders to offer accountability about their time. It is more possible for leaders who are honest to truthfully report on the tasks they undertake and the time they spend on them. This kind of reporting can allow transparency about the leaders' record of work and can be a basis upon which they can be held accountable by the citizens. It seems also possible that if leaders report correctly about how they

utilize their time at their duties, it is probable that they can accord their responsibilities the needed priority but also do their work with efficiency. The result of this is that leaders can avoid careless spending of public resources and make sure that activities are accomplished within time and budget.

Therefore, when leaders give account and are transparent about their actions, resources and time, this can be considered to be essential to achieve good governance of an organization. Evidently, only those officials who adore honesty can adopt such accountability required to realize good governance. It is also possible that when honest municipal officials give accountability of their work, they are most likely willing to explain, justify or inform the public what they have accomplished but also give an account of those things they have not been able to do using the resources that they were entrusted with. This can be a good thing to not only keep the citizens informed about municipal business, for it builds citizens trust in the municipal council that there are efforts by the municipal council to meet their needs but also forestalls likelihood of misuse of taxpayers' resources.

Consequently, for good governance to be fostered, leaders ought to be held accountable by the citizens for their responsibilities. For instance, the career officials at Mukono municipal council are accountable to their appointing authority or the central government since the performance indicators originate from the central government. On the other hand, the political council leaders have the obligation to inform their constituents about what the municipal council is doing in service to the public and this is one way their reelection greatly depends especially for those who still want to be given a new term in the subsequent democratic elections.

The high level of accountability reported in Mukono Municipal Council aligns with the Principal-Agent theory's emphasis on the importance of oversight and alignment of incentives. The theory posits that when agents (in this case, municipal leaders) are held accountable for their actions and resource management, it reduces the risk of information asymmetry and misaligned incentives. The reported instances of financial mismanagement and lack of transparency in Mukono Municipal Council illustrate the challenges of ensuring accountability in practice. This reflects the

theory's assertion that despite mechanisms like audits and performance reviews, achieving perfect alignment and reducing agency costs is challenging.

#### **4.3.2 Community involvement in municipal decision making and activities**

Respondents also indicated that another benefit that accrued when Municipal leaders followed the principle of honesty in their work was that “leaders involve community members in the decisions and activities of the organization”. Involving community members in decision making and activities of the municipal council involves creating occasions for engagement and discussion with the aim of taking note of the community concerns, opinions and support. This enables the municipal council to make decisions which are informed and reflect people’s needs.

Secondary data indicated that the law in Uganda obligates municipal councils with responsibility to make their plans as well as budgets. But these should be in line with the objectives of National Development Plan (NDP 111). According to article 190 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, these should be incorporated in the broad and integrated plans of the higher local government prior to being submitted to sector ministries. At the same time, although municipal divisions are semi-autonomous entities which have statutory responsibilities and obligations to generate their own plans and budgets, according to the Local Government Act (1997), Municipal councils are obliged to honestly assist them (municipal divisions) to come up with viable programs for development and services in the plans and budgets they generate. These division plans which encompass their main development concerns are submitted by the Assistant town clerk in the second week of April to the municipal councils so that they can be integrated in the municipal development plan. This means, a municipal council involves both the lower and higher local governments in its decision making and activities because it is legally expected so.

Therefore, when leaders of a municipal council are honest, they consider it right to include members of the community in decision making and activities, because community involvement is an essential element of accountable and transparent municipal council governance. To realize this, Mukono municipal council utilizes many avenues which include; a) Holding Meetings- where municipal officials and community members or leaders meet to dialogue about issues that affect the community but also to let the public know about any important forthcoming decisions hence

seek for their feedback about this; b) Use of social media/ online platforms- for the municipal council to brief the public on some activities being undertaken by the council; c) Alliance with some organizations in the community- where the local organizations are invited to municipal meetings or even work with them jointly on certain projects; d) The Councilors- these are peoples political representatives at the municipal council who assist to find out what the needs of their communities are, assess the efficiency of municipal services and propose improvement; d) Internships- municipal council has opportunities for internships and these enable some members of the community like university students to take part in the municipal work for a given period of time; e) Radio-The municipal council utilizes a local radio station for talk shows where members of the public who are the target audience, are presented with an opportunity to contribute to the discussion by calling in the studio using their mobile phones to appreciate the radio program, supplement the discussion or to ask questions. But this kind of anticipated interaction can only be possible with members of the community who own mobile phones or have credit to call in but also those who have awareness and access to the aforementioned channels and are willing participants because of recent, people seem to want to involve themselves in activities where there is a promise of immediate self gain or something for their stomachs and when they do not see that likelihood, they may not avail themselves to participate.

Nonetheless, if Municipal leaders are honest and open about their decision making and activities it is probable that they will indeed seek participation of the citizens and will likely give consideration to their opinions. This may result into good decisions which reflect the community's needs and desires. This can enhance the citizens' confidence in the decisions that are made and also officials earn trust among public members because of their honesty and openness in the actions they take even in times when they do not agree with certain decisions which are being formed. Where it is supposed that municipal officials are lacking in honesty and trustworthiness, there can be a possible collapse in a relationship that the municipal council officials have been enjoying with the citizens and this may compound their ability to serve the community needs.

The involvement of community members in decision-making processes in Mukono Municipal Council can be seen as an application of the Principal-Agent theory's emphasis on reducing information asymmetry. By involving the community, the council is effectively narrowing the

information gap between the agents (council leaders) and the principals (community members). This participatory approach, as suggested by Fung (2006), empowers citizens and enhances transparency, leading to decisions that better reflect the community's needs and priorities.

#### **4.3.3 Leaders being efficient**

Respondents also indicated that another benefit that arose from leaders following the principle of honesty in their work, was that “leaders are efficient because they provide services which are good quality to meet people’s priorities and needs within the resource envelop. This denotes that honesty is a necessary attribute which can facilitate a municipal official to exercise genuine commitment to meeting the priorities and needs of the people they serve. By doing so, they are most likely to make the best use of the apportioned resources in an efficient way hence maximize their outcome.

Indeed it is a general expectation that since municipal council leaders are public servants, they ought to not only seek out and meet the needs of their local community, but also address their expressed preferences. This can possibly be executed by leaders who uphold the principle of honesty in their work since honesty is a vital element of ethical behavior. Because honest officials tend to abide by ethical criterion of their work, it can instil in them a desire to abide by regulations, the official rules and standards. This enables them and their teams to circumvent such acts as corruption, unfairness in apportioning resources among others. That is why honest municipal leaders can have potential to frugally expend the public resources placed into their stewardship, to deliver the needed services.

In other words, honesty nurtures a sense of obligation in a leader to provide services of good quality and makes a leader want to keep his or her focus and his or her team members, on meeting the needs of the community. Because of such a mindset, leaders get driven by a desire to utilize their given power to accord priority to the local peoples’ needs and not their personal agenda. In fact, it seems that when public administration fails to accord key focus to public needs and priorities, this may lead to unethical conduct and corruption among the officials. Thus, a model of honest leadership may perhaps guarantee good governance of an entity, economic and social development and also check the hazard of corruption in Uganda’s lower local governments like municipal councils.



However, municipal councils sometimes go through times where the resources available are inadequate. Such conditions may drive the municipal officials to take some tough decisions about provision of services, in a way that they may give priority to some above others and if the local community lacks information about such decisions, they may mistake the municipal council for ignoring their needs and priorities. For example, there is evidence that there is ongoing construction of administration blocks both at Mukono municipal council headquarters and at the Central Division (LGMSD, 2021). These initiatives are good but one may question if they are an answer to the immediate needs and priorities of the local community.

Nonetheless, it is beneficial for Mukono municipal council officials to espouse honesty in their work for them to be able to offer efficient services which align with people's needs and priorities, within the resource envelop. By observing transparency, lawfulness, accountability, and participation, Mukono municipal leaders can realize effective allocation and utilization of resources consequently addressing people's priorities and needs.

The efficiency of leaders in providing quality services within resource constraints is a reflection of the alignment of incentives, a core aspect of the Principal-Agent theory. When municipal leaders act with honesty and prioritize the community's needs, they align their actions with the expectations of their principals (the public). This alignment, as discussed in the theory, is crucial for ensuring that agents act in the best interest of the principals, leading to efficient and effective governance.

#### **4.3.4 Leaders and organizations obtain public trust**

Another response selected by respondents about the benefit realized when leaders followed the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal council was that "leaders and organizations obtain trust". By implication of this finding, public trust is earned. Ordinarily, when officials of an organization are perceived to be honest, the public will most likely accord them their trust. Actually, the actions and behavior of municipal leaders also have substantial bearing on the way the public comprehends the organization for which they work.

When an organization's leaders act honestly, the public will most likely ascribe a good reputation upon it probably because it signifies that the public's priority interests are at the center of the organization's existence and probably because of that, there is in place, an effective ethical infrastructure that can bite any official or employee in the organization who may be found to have acted dishonestly in their official work. For example, the case of the Principle Town Clerk of the Central division mentioned inter alia, where the Town Clerk of Mukono municipal council recently interdicted him for alleged rent seeking behavior and by doing this, he attempted to rescue the reputation of the municipal council because it is applauded to be exemplary in being accountable by the Ministry of Local Government. When such cases of alleged dishonesty are not counteracted by the municipal council, the public may perceive it that the council no longer cares about their wellbeing but their personal interests.

On the other hand, honesty tends to engender consideration for transparency in the manner municipal leaders execute their duties. Therefore, when municipal officials are perceived to be open and sincere in their work, it is more probable that the public will allot them trust and consider them to be doing their best to fulfil the interests of the public and not their own personal interests. Nonetheless, in such times as these where there is evident leadership apostasy, public trust is becoming an elusive matter. As a result, municipal officials have to prove themselves to deserve the public to trust them. One way to do this is through leaders and their teams, to exercise consistent transparency in their work or else the public suspects that they could be hiding some facts with ill intent. Because of such a reason and many others, Mukono municipal council utilizes noticeboards and the municipal website ([mukonomunicipalcouncil.go.ug](http://mukonomunicipalcouncil.go.ug)) among other channels, to reach to communities about important issues as the latest job opportunities, information on unconditional grants, latest bid notices, and ongoing projects among others. No wonder the municipal council appears contented that it is providing services closest to the people. For example, they are now boasting of building classroom blocks, pit latrines and teachers houses for some schools in the divisions, renovating health services, repairing some roads, lighting some streets to mention a few and these interventions seem to be a fulfilment of people's dreams they have held for years.

However, availability of the enumerated services above is not enough to cause people to celebrate immediately. Such services should be accompanied by clear and accurate accountability detailing

how the financial resources were committed to such projects. Of late, it is becoming a regular practice in Uganda for some organization's leaders to inflate the costs of such projects may be because they may desire to allocate themselves a fraction of such monies hence leverage from their jobs in such a manner. For example, a recent report by Uganda Road Fund in 2016 on Mukono municipal council revealed mismanagement of resources by elites. The report identified such issues as; deviation from the designs and standards of implementation, narrow roads, an inadequately explained expense of a whopping sum of money amounting to forty four million and sixty four thousand Uganda shillings (44,064,000 UGX), inconsistencies in rates of units for roads maintenance, poor procedures of controlling cost and quality, poor records of how finances were managed, lack of a progress report, among others. Such facts seem to indicate that Mukono municipal council is sometimes unable to uphold a quality of excellence yet this is crucial for realizing good quality of service provision. Probably this could be a result of a culture of inadequate oversight or absence of accountability characterizing the municipal council yet this kind of practice can injure community trust for the organization and the officials who work for it.

As a result, it seems to be a demanding thing to build and maintain public trust because it appears to require endless effort and something beyond just being honest as a leader. Additional factors like attention to public good, accountability, transparency can be essential to build and maintain the public trust.

The acquisition of public trust through honesty in leadership practices is closely related to the concept of ethical leadership and its impact on reducing information asymmetry. As Arrow (1985) and Treviño, Hartman, and Brown (2000) suggest, ethical behavior and transparency in leadership foster trust and reduce the risks associated with information asymmetry. In the context of Mukono Municipal Council, leaders acting honestly and transparently can build trust with the public, aligning with the Principal-Agent theory's emphasis on the importance of trust and ethical conduct in governance.

#### **4.4 Challenges faced by leaders in following the principle of honesty in their work**

Respondents were asked whether there were challenges leaders faced by following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal council and the majority said YES while a few

of them said NO. This finding suggested that indeed following the principle of honesty by a leader in the governance of a government institution like Mukono municipal council had associated unique challenges.

One challenge identified by respondents was “*the cultural setting which does not support honesty*”. This finding suggests that the culture of the community in which an organization is located, operates and most probably obtains some of its staff from, has potential to pose challenges to its leaders with regard to abiding by the ethic of honesty in the way they execute their duties. Aspects of a community’s culture may encompass shared attitudes, norms, values, or behaviors. These may direct the lives of the members of a community but also can determine the way they handle their responsibilities and roles. For instance, in a community where dishonest behavior is tolerated or supported, officials can face a challenge of resisting it or exposing it. Such an environment can make it hard for some leaders to preserve their honesty and integrity. For example, a respondent indicated that;

“*Society puts pressure on us to make money and develop fast*” (Respondent 11, KII, male)

He explained that;

“*If society gets to know that you have access to organizational funds but failed to eat it, they will laugh at you*”.

This shows how society glorifies dishonest behavior by encouraging Mukono municipal council leaders to steal public funds in their care to realize accelerated personal development. Perhaps this could be a result of utter moral decay in local communities where stealing public funds seems to now be condoned.

On the other hand, respondents suggested another facet of a cultural setting to be an organization’s culture. This was indicated to be a major challenge for leaders to adhere to the principle of honesty in their work. For example, respondents indicated that acts of dishonesty at Mukono municipal council are usually sustained by a practice of connivance among a chain of leaders right from top management. They clarified that municipal officials sometimes work in syndicate in a subtle manner to utilize the organizational resources for their personal gain yet this affects the operations of the municipal council and attainment of proper financial accountability. Therefore from these

results, it is clear that leaders of Mukono municipal council are probably privy to acts of dishonesty that happen at Mukono municipal council since they are suspected to be part of the racket of staffs who utilize the municipal resources for their personal gain as opposed to public interest.

Relatedly, respondents also indicated that the culture in public institutions like municipal councils in Uganda, tends to give long and stable job contracts to bureaucrats and this assures them of job security probably till their retirement age in the same job or organization. One respondent indicated that;

*“A culture of serving for a long time in particular positions causes complacency and impunity among officials”* (Respondent 2, FGD, Male)

This finding suggests that because some Mukono municipal council leaders have served for some time in their respective jobs, they seem to feel secure and have no or little fear that they can lose their jobs due to dishonest behavior. Probably shorter renewable job contracts could put pressure on the officials to perform their duties well or else their contracts are not renewed on the basis of non- performance of their official duties.

Another challenge proposed by respondents was poor government salaries paid to municipal officials. This was considered by the respondents to be a big challenge for Mukono municipal council officials for them to be honest in their work. This means that low salaries can increase the likelihood of Mukono municipal council officials to yield to temptations of engaging in corrupt practices. When their salaries fail to meet their basic needs or sustain a fair living standard, this may compel the leaders to turn to dishonest ways at their work place to augment their basic salary. Today, the cost of living especially in urban areas is high yet government salaries are not adjusted to match these costs and this probably creates difficulties for municipal officials to have enough financial capacity to meet their needs. This may encourage them to look for any means to earn additional incomes, often such alternatives if located at a workplace, are likely to be unethical. Therefore, this study finding could certainly be regarded as a general outcry for a need for salary enhancement in government entities as the leaders indicated that they could hardly leverage from their jobs, a situation that was mentioned as a big hurdle for them to observe honesty in their work. Moreover, a participant offered an additional view, explaining a factor behind incidents of corruption at Mukono municipal;

*“Councilors do not get salary and this doesn’t enable them to open up on issues of corruption”* (Respondent 3, FDG-Male).

Another way it is challenging for Mukono municipal leaders to follow the principal of honesty is the fear to be segregated because of exposing acts of dishonesty in the organization. A respondent indicated that anyone who dared expose acts of dishonesty at the municipal council would risk to be segregated;

*“Members of the organization segregate someone who is very honest. They take you to be weak due to your honesty. Members also distrust you due to your honesty and they will not involve you in some decision making”* (Respondent7, KII, Female).

Based on this finding, it is clear that the fear to be segregated, labelled or sidelined can make a municipal official to keep silent about matters of dishonesty they know about at the municipal council, making such acts to continue unabated in the organization. It therefore seems that for one to fit in well at the municipal council, it is required that one keeps silent about dishonest acts or paint a different picture that shows that all is going on well yet probably not, hence committing a misleading image about what is truly going on.

Relatedly, respondents indicated another challenge to be the fear to collide with one’s supervisor especially if they are not a type that is upright. In many societies, it can be considered an act of disrespect or disobedience for one to speak against their supervisor, creating a challenge for one to take a step to volunteer valuable information about them. Even when a leader succeeds to garner courage to step forward to report their supervisor about some acts of dishonesty, this may result into the official being hated by their superior or even by fellow leaders. The implication of this finding is that the culture that intimidates juniors from exposing actions of dishonesty performed by supervisors, can be interpreted as one that prioritizes loyalty and protects officials in positions of authority over accountability, transparency and honest behavior. This type of culture can breed feelings of reluctance or fear to expose acts of dishonesty among supervisors since it appears that the motivation behind such a culture is to protect the interests of supervisors and their reputations and not for this culture to openly deal with the problem of dishonesty. In line with this, there is a common saying in Uganda which is used in general terms to underscore such kind of practice;

*“leave matters of generals to generals”* which simply means that some issues should be handled by only people in more senior positions who are believed to possess superior experience and expertise for better outcomes. This leaves one wondering how far a junior leader ought to interest themselves in the matter of ethical standing of their supervisors within acceptable limits? Moreover, according to a focus group member,

*“The Local Government Act does not compel councilors to have a certain level of academic attainment as long as someone has a sound mind and this makes the technical people have too much competence power which many of us don’t have..”* (Respondent 4, FDG, Male).

This creates a dilemma for councilors to be able to hold the technical staff to account for their actions.

The above situation showcases leaders as not trusting the integrity of the reporting system at Mukono municipal council especially its ability to assure protection to a whistleblower from retaliation and this was another challenge that was submitted by respondents. When leaders of Mukono municipal council expressed fear about lack of confidence in the municipal council’s reporting system to protect them against retaliation, it suggested that laws regarding protection of whistleblowers seemed not to be enforced at the entity and this posed a challenge to officials who would have wanted to express their views regarding dishonest acts since they feared to face possible retaliations from such an atmosphere that lacked robust safeguards. It seems the reporting mechanism at Mukono municipal council did not offer confidentiality to the reporting official’s identity and this seemed to evoke hesitancy among organization’s leaders to take steps to report acts of dishonesty at the entity. Moreover, Mukono municipal council seems not to be a large entity and also the fact that most of the officials seem to be descendants of Mukono district which makes them have some common roots that reasonably knits them together. Therefore, maintaining anonymity of a whistleblower against any official in such a context, may be challenging hence their identities can certainly be exposed, causing possibilities of retaliation from superiors or colleagues. Such circumstances make officials get clues about acts of dishonesty at the municipal council but keep quiet to protect their dear lives, jobs, reputations and collegial workplace relationships. Therefore, it is probable that when the public does not hear of any reported incidents

of dishonesty about the Municipal council, it may not mean that none is really being done by some official in there. The truth could be that those who would have reported such incidents have been silenced.

Additionally, respondents submitted that another challenge likely to be experienced by a leader who chooses to follow the principle of honesty in their work is a challenge of nepotism and favoritism. When favoritism and nepotism are practiced in society, organizational leaders like of Mukono municipal council too are confronted with the pressure to yield to the interests of friends, relatives or powerful individuals in society yet this compromises adherence to the principle of honesty at the municipal council. One respondent indicated that;

*“Leaders are in jeopardy because of the demands of people close to them against job requirements as a result of decentralization”* (Respondent 16, KII, Female).

This finding implies that there are temptations to compromise merit based recruitment of officials into the municipal council especially in circumstances that acquaintances of leaders desire to be favored, irrespective of their competences or qualifications. Appointing officials through personal connections and not by merit can lead to recruitment of officials who are not well suitable in regard to the needed skills or expertise or who may feel a desire to reciprocate support to the officials who enabled them get their jobs at the entity. They may also feel indebted to establish an atmosphere that enables dishonest acts to occur since they also potentially enjoy the support of individuals with influence. This kind of connection may make them believe that they have immunity to accountability or scrutiny and this can undermine realization of honesty in the organization. Yet, it is important that every municipal leader’s actions should be underpinned by honesty given its essential role in augmenting good governance of the municipal council.

In addition to the above, respondents also suggested *“insufficient resources”*, as one major challenge that leaders face when in following the principle of honesty in their work. This means that sometimes, Mukono municipal council experiences inadequacy in resources to enable its leaders to undertake some important projects or services. For example, whereas it is their mandate to uphold the quality of ethical compliance by leaders in the entire municipality and good governance through adequate supervision on behalf and for the interests of the community, the



political leaders require sufficient resources to do this. However, a focus group member indicated that;

*“Little facilitation for councilors does not allow us to go to the field to monitor...”*  
(Respondent 3, FDG, Male).

This implies that the activities and accomplishments of municipal officials are sometimes not subjected to monitoring and oversight due to shortage of funds and because of this, it is possible for some officials to take advantage of this to engage in dishonest behavior because the councilors are unable to keep a keen eye on the officials work. This means that for good governance of the municipal council and ethical observance to be attained, there is need for adequate resources to be availed to officials for them to do their work effectively. But as things stand, inadequacy in municipal resources is still a big hurdle for leaders to honestly fulfil their mandates.

In addition, insufficient resources are also likely to pose a challenge to officials to identify which services or projects should be given priority over others and this may result into misuse of resources because leaders may prioritize projects from which they can personally advantage from, instead of those which truly address the interests of the public. Ideally, the actions and choices of a leader should be in line with principles, regulations and rules of the public service ethics and these should enable a leader exude the significance of ethical conduct in serving the public. That is why it is expected that a leader should be exemplary and where they fail to demonstrate a good example, like if they get to be known to be as a type that wants to get involved in only those projects that will promise them some personal benefits, one wonders what type of legacy such kind of leaders are establishing at the organization.

Besides the above, participants also mentioned weak enforcement of the law and regulations as another challenge that municipal officials face in following the principle of honesty in their work. Ideally, laws and regulations should be an essential part of an organization’s setting in that they indicate the conduct expected of a municipal council establishment. By doing this, laws and regulations clearly establish the requisite standard of conduct that municipal council leaders must adhere to. In other words, these legal frameworks define what is considered ethical and honest behavior hence become a point of reference for leaders’ decision making and actions. However, it is possible for laws to remain on paper in case they are not applied to fulfil their intent. For them

to be respected in an organization, they should be implemented so that people can realize that there are legal consequences for yielding to temptations of dishonest behavior in one's official work and that none is above the law. When officials realize that laws and regulations are really imposed by an organization and that anyone one who is found to indulge themselves in dishonest behavior, faces the wrath of the law, they most likely get committed to right doing. But when there is weak implementation of regulations and laws like those against corruption (anti-corruption laws), the leaders may start to involve themselves in dishonest acts believing that the chances for them to be caught and face any serious consequences are low. For example, a respondent revealed that the law seems to be bent in the matter of awarding municipal council contracts. *“Whereas the procurement law clearly stipulates how contracts should be awarded, it seems that in some instances, the leaders do not follow the right procedure but use their discretionary powers to award some tenders at Mukono municipal council”* (Respondent 11, FDG, Male). This may create an atmosphere where acts of corruption may arise due to lack of transparency in the way things are being done. It can also lead to awarding of tenders this way may lead to service providers who may offer ineffective services.

Another surrogate illustration concerning impunity against the law was by a respondent who intimated that this kind of impunity has spreaded out even to the community

*“Some people now days do not fear to break the law as long as something works for them. They can build an illegal market or kiosk in the road reserve without fear that they will be held accountable for it and when you decide to damage such illegal structures, people will resist you...in such instance we commit them to the mini municipal court and that is when they realize that the law can bite”* (Respondent 19, KII, Male).

This testifies that if people are left to do whatever they want without the law being enforced, it may normalize wrong doing in an organization and the local community it serves. When officials realize that some people can indulge in dishonest acts without suffering the repercussions, this may set a precedence for others to think that this kind of conduct may have become acceptable. So they too may begin practicing the same kind of behavior. Therefore, weak implementation of the law can destroy people's respect for right doing in an organization hence make it a challenge for municipal officials to uphold honesty in their actions and decision making.

Furthermore, politicization of municipal work is another challenge mentioned by respondents. According to them, politics is entrenched in the work at Mukono municipal council and this can affect their adherence to the principle of honesty. The uniqueness of Local government institutions for instance like the lower level councils like Mukono municipal council, is that they comprise both the professional and political staff. These two strands of leadership lay a foundation for the inclusion of politics in the day to day operations of the municipal council. When the work of Mukono municipal council is politicized, political reasons or personal plans begin to shape the way services are provided and managed. For example, the political leaders at Mukono municipal council are charged with a duty of ensuring that ethical behavior is adopted at the municipal council, making sure that the entity is governed well and exercising robust oversight in search for the realization of public interest. Although this is a noble set of responsibilities, a focus group member indicated that their work can be criticized or even resisted at the municipal council and could earn them a backlash

*“You can lose your political seat... that is, your critics can support your political opponent so you don't attain your office again...a good riddance campaign”* (Respondent 5, FDG, Male).

This finding suggests probable conspiracy and interference that may arise amongst the bureaucratic and political arena for a need to dislodge an official who performs their mandate well. This kind of possible collusion with political opponents to remove councilors who execute their mandates well, indicate some officials can act partisan using their positions to influence the political landscape for the purpose of getting rid of a colleague at the municipal council. Bureaucrats at Mukono municipal council should remain impartial and work in the best interests of the municipal council using their expertise. If the professional staff involve themselves in actions intended to get rid of a councilor based on work performance, this interferes with the channels of accountability anticipated to be in a municipality which is functioning well.

On the other hand, politicization of the municipal council work can also manifest in the form of political interference or pressure on the career officials. To begin with, although the elected officials represent the interest of their constituents especially by cooperating with the technical

staff to ensure that the needs and priorities of their electorates are met through municipal plans and projects, some of these elected officials sometimes turn against the municipal council resolutions so as to appease their electorates for potential re-election. For instance, media reports indicate that at one time, council through the works committee, passed a resolution to evict all road side traders for purposes of beautification of the town. To their amazement, the area woman Member of Parliament took side with the people who had been evicted claiming that roadside trading was legal and an emerging modern way of doing business in many areas of the world (Kisa, 2018).

When local politicians begin to meddle with the decisions made by the professional leaders of the municipal council instead of complimenting each other, this may signify that this is an act demanding for authentic commitment to public accountability from the technical leaders. By questioning the decisions of the council, probably, the political leaders aim to ensure that the council remains fair, answerable and transparent about its decisions. So, instead of the technical staff of Mukono municipal council considering this as an act of politicization of municipal work, this seems a genuine act of checks and balances by the local political leaders, just to hold the council officials accountable for their actions and promoting good governance. However, we may not totally rule out the fact that the local politicians who oppose municipal decisions could be driven by opportunistic motives. It is possible that some local politicians can use public discontent as opportunity to increase their political mileage. If this is so, then such a politician would be primarily focused on their own political advantage and this can become a challenge for the technical staff to execute their work without compromising their honesty.

The challenges faced by leaders in Mukono Municipal Council, as identified in the results, can be effectively analyzed and understood through the Principal-Agent theory. The cultural setting, which does not support honesty, exacerbates the information asymmetry between the principals (citizens) and agents (council leaders). In a culture that tolerates or even encourages dishonest behavior, agents are more likely to withhold information or act in ways that are not aligned with the principals' interests. This misalignment reflects the core challenge of the Principal-Agent theory, where agents prioritize personal gains over their duty to the principals. The organizational culture and long-term job contracts at Mukono Municipal Council can lead to complacency and a lack of accountability. This situation reflects a misalignment of incentives, where the agents'

personal goals diverge from those of the principals. The theory suggests that effective oversight mechanisms are crucial in such scenarios to realign the agents' actions with the principals' objectives. The politicization of municipal work reflects the agency problem where political influences can sway agents away from acting in the best interest of the principals. The theory suggests that reducing political interference and promoting impartiality are key to maintaining honesty and integrity in governance. The Principal-Agent theory highlights the importance of aligning incentives, strengthening oversight mechanisms, promoting ethical leadership, and ensuring effective legal frameworks to mitigate these challenges and promote honesty in governance.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter offers a detailed analysis and discussion of the findings brought out in Chapter Four with a focus on accomplishing the objectives of the study as well as the theoretical framework which is the Principal-Agent theory. A critical appraisal of the findings is provided alongside relevant literature to show their congruence or incongruity with prior studies.

#### **5.1 Leaders' Adherence to the Principle of Honesty in the Governance of Mukono Municipal Council**

The findings of this study revealed that leaders at Mukono Municipal Council demonstrate an understanding of honesty as a core principle in governance. This study revealed that honesty is recognized by leaders of Mukono Municipal Council as one of the principles they uphold in their operations. This is in agreement with Channuwong et al. (2024) who note that honesty is necessary for good governance, especially when establishing the ethical framework of leadership concerning business and politics. Honest communication is crucial, as it provides an ethical standard that helps create a culture where leaders and team members are held accountable for their actions and words, thereby increasing the trust between team members and improving the team's productivity. In the same vein, using inspiration, motivation, and honesty in leadership increases organizational performance based on a study by Irene, Haluna, and Bolatito (2024) in local government.

According to the findings, leaders of Mukono Municipal Council supported the principle of transparency by making key information available to the public through the council's official website and social media platforms. These actions complements Garcia and Ching's (2024) analysis where the author posited that increased transparency in governance enhances peoples' confidence in leaders and their behaviors to uphold ethical practices. Furthermore, the disclosure of organizational plans and financial activities by the municipal leaders is in tandem with public accountability principles as discussed by Ggoobi, Lukwago, and Bogere (2020). Transparency helps reduce risks associated with poor management and ensures that resources are utilized for improved governance. However, the study also indicated that there was a failure in the

implementation of these mechanisms. Cases of fraud and corruption involving financial misappropriation were highlighted and there was no accurate accountability as identified in the Auditor General's report for the year 2021. These findings support Hammer (2014) who notes that even if ethical standards are acknowledged, organizational structures and lack of compliance can prevent their implementation.

Relating to ethical leadership, the aspect of honesty among the leaders is significant. According to Sharpley (2024), the concept of ethical leadership helped expand leaders' capabilities to spearhead organizations toward the achievement of sustainable ethical performance. At Mukono Municipal Council, the leaders were seen to influence ethical behavior among their subordinates by engaging them and other stakeholders in the decision-making processes in order to ensure compliance with the set laws and the interests of the public. The issues that leaders experience, including the dilemmas of being forced to adhere to deceptive behavior or bypass ethical standards, are generic and not confined to Mukono. Nakayi and Wiegratz (2024) also describe a similar situation regarding Ugandan governance stating that corruption and populist practices weaken ethical leadership. Such challenges make it imperative for societies to consciously work towards the enhancement of checks and balances as a way of promoting the principle of honesty.

Honesty is a vital leadership quality that is influenced by the institutional and cultural factors that surround a leader. Another work that provides insights in the context of Uganda is by Lubuulwa (2021) where they argue that while decentralization policies have enhanced local leaders' decision-making authority, bringing with it chances for ethical decision making, corruption possibilities due to inadequate oversight structures might occur. Mukono Municipal Council therefore functions under this decentralized system where leaders are supposed to exercise their independence while also being answerable to their superiors and the public. Culture though it plays a key role in dishonesty, it arises from the self-interest and resource allocation systems that work in societies which force leaders to go against ethical standards. This supports Ojok and Kiwanuka-Tondo (2024) who assert that public relations and societal expectations hence impact governance practices in local governments.

The general honesty exhibited by leaders in Mukono tenancy is in tandem with the tenets of the Principal-Agent theory, as it seeks to ensure that agents act in the best interest of the principals.

Ethical and genuine behaviors help avoid cases of information asymmetry, an issue highlighted by Panda and Leepsa (2017) in their research on agency issues. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that systematic deficiencies like inadequate stinginess, lack of compliance with the set rules and regulations, and poor internal controls deepen agency issues where the management may act in self-serving or parsimonious manners. The challenges of implementing honesty in governance as practiced in Mukono Municipal Council are therefore indicative of trends of local governance in practice across the world. For instance, Pretorius (2017) also notes some of these problems in South Africa, arguing that politics and bureaucracy influence service delivery and ethics in municipalities. There is a need for periodic review of codes of ethics, frequent supervision, and adequate staff training to enhance the spirit of honesty in the society.

## **5.2 Benefits of Following the Principle of Honesty in Governance**

The findings showed that adherence to the principle of honesty in governance at Mukono Municipal Council provided significant benefits that align with the broader objectives of good governance. The research revealed that honesty enhanced accountability among leaders especially in allocation of resources as well as decision-making process. Accountability practices such as leadership transparency enabled reporting on the activities of the council, enhancing the public's trust in the council (Uganda, 2017). It corroborates Channuwong et al. (2024) who stressed the importance of honesty for leaders to ensure that they remain accountable to the public and promote ethical actions under governance systems.

In addition, the study established that due to increased transparency there are fewer chances of embezzlement and corruption. For instance, Mukono Municipal Council held informative financial statements and status reports of ongoing projects to curb suspicion of these malpractices. Similar findings have been recorded by Ggoobi, Lukwago, and Bogere (2020) whereby they posited that leadership transparency is core in demanding accountability in public resource management. Nevertheless, a gap in the enforcement of these measures as pointed by revelations of missing funds in some audits displays the need for improvement in enforcement mechanisms.

The study revealed that leaders who acted honestly in governance received high esteem from the public. This developed a positive perception of the council through integrity and focus on the



welfare of the community. This is supported by Garcia and Ching (2024) who indicated that ethical leadership promotes transparency and trust which are vital in governance. Similar to Mukono Municipal Council, creating a welcoming and communicative environment by engaging with the public through forums and/or consultations helped build this trust. These interactions gave the citizens a feeling that their demands were considered and they were also getting what they wanted. Similarly, Sharpley (2024) posited that the leadership and people's trust fortify governance structures, thus facilitating efficient implementation of policies. Nevertheless, once in a while, some individuals have defaulted by engaging in dishonest behaviors, and this has led to the loss of this trust, which means ethics should not be in the hands of a few individuals, but rather consistently practiced among all.

Thus, the study showed that honest leadership enhanced service delivery since resources were properly allocated and used in addressing the needs of the community. For example, while considering the funding for schools and roads as some of their key projects, the council was seen to be responding to public needs. This accords with the study conducted by Irene, Haluna, and Bolatito (2024) which posited that ethical leadership boosts organizational performance and results in the provision of quality services. Also, this research noted that honesty led to improved resource allocation, preventing decision-making mistakes that wasted resources. Managers who embraced integrity were keen on outcomes, effectively utilizing the available resources to benefit the community. The above observations support the assertion of Ggoobi, Lukwago, and Bogere (2020), who noted that ethical leadership reduces resource loss, thus improving the quality of service delivery. However, challenges including slow implementations of projects and sometimes poor financial management showed that there was room for some improvements.

The results showed that when the leaders of an organization are honest, it creates an ethical environment that is embraced by all members of the organization and external stakeholders. Superiors are people who respect the ethic of honesty in their work, thus implying a high level of ethical behavior on the part of their subordinates. This aligns with the assertions of Channuwong et al. (2024), who noted that promoting ethical leadership fosters organizational moral culture. The study also revealed that ethical practices at Mukono Municipal Council facilitated staff ownership of accountability. The emergence of this culture fostered a new culture of cooperation at the workplace, such that employees felt obliged to work in line with the goals and aspirations of the

organization. In a similar vein, Pretorius (2017) identified ethical organizational culture as having a positive impact on decreasing conflicts as well as increasing cooperation.

The research established that compliance to the principle of honesty led to increased participation in policy-making among the members of the community. Political decision-makers who valued openness and cooperation provided stakeholders with ways to participate in municipal processes and thus, embrace their roles and responsibilities. For example, through public forums and consultations, Mukono Municipal Council engaged citizens in governance issues, thus capturing their needs. This participatory approach concurs with Nakayi and Wiegratz (2024) who noted that integrity and ethical leadership enhances legitimacy and relevance in governance decisions. This way, the council not only expanded the range of stakeholders who could be confident in the council's decisions but also made sure that the decisions themselves reflected the community's expectations.

The study showed that, through the efficiency and effectiveness of honest governance, Mukono Municipal Council had improved its longevity and sustainability. The leaders' approach to practicing and supporting ethical behaviors ensured that the governance structures were well developed to support any incidences and changing needs within the communities. This is in tandem with Hammer (2014) who proposed that ethical governance practices promote institutional stability through the development of trust, accountability, and efficiency. Further, the study also noted that the use of honest leadership reduced the occurrence of conflict and promoted cooperation in the continuation of DMG's governance. Nevertheless, some systematic issues including the failure to enforce ethical standards or, in rare cases, lack of accountability were noted in the areas that needed more attention in order to fully unleash the potential of honest governance.

### **5.3 Challenges Faced by Leaders in Following the Principle of Honesty**

The study revealed that the leaders at Mukono Municipal Council faced various difficulties in upholding the principle of honesty in their leadership practices. Cultural practices and expectations were said to be a major hindrance to leaders embracing the values of honesty. Some leaders stated that they faced pressures in society to quickly amass wealth and fit into the communities, which at times approved unscrupulous actions. For instance, several of the leaders remarked that if they did

not use their authority to embezzle funds, then they were considered ‘weak’. This supports the idea presented by Randall, and Saurage-alternioh. (2020), who stated that internal and external values and norms can cause a shift in the ethical standards of leaders especially when the cultures foster the gains at the individual or the group level at the expense of organizational virtues. In addition, the study also found that the existing practices in Mukono Municipal Council including facilitation of staff’s corrupt practices through collaborating to manipulate organizational resources further exacerbated these challenges. The same finding supports Nakayi and Wiegatz’s (2024) argument that systemic dishonesty becomes entrenched in institutions and becomes challenging for ethically-minded leaders to resist the culture and remain employed.

Consequently, employing dishonesty with flexibility was easy because ethical standards and regulations were poorly implemented at Mukono Municipal Council. Managers raised issues of inequitable implementation of policies, and lack of elaborate surveillance systems that can help in identifying instances of unethical compliance. This assertion is in line with Ggoobi, Lukwago, and Bogere (2020) who argued that lack of proper mechanisms of supervising and ensuring compliance in public entities compromises the fight against honesty. Additionally, respondents noted that although rules like the Public Service Standing Orders outlined ethical behavior, these guidelines were not always practiced because of the lack of political will and inadequate resources. This finding supports Pretorius (2017) who noted that weak policy enforcement contributed to poor governance in the local government institutions.

The study revealed that poor remuneration and unfair rewards were some of the major obstacles that leaders faced in embracing integrity. It appeared that most leaders claimed they were underpaid with most noting that the income they received could not fund basic needs in the society hence posed pressure to gain more income through corrupt practices. This challenge aligns with the study by Irene, Haluna, and Bolatito (2024) where it was established that low pay results in the promotion of unethical behavior in a bid to earn an additional income. Further, a source of concern referred to the fact that councilors did not receive salaries which proved a major factor that hindered their effectiveness in supervising the operations of the municipal. This accords with Lubuulwa (2021) who pointed that adequate financial compensation of local government officials is crucial in ensuring their commitment to ethical behaviors.

The research showed that people who tried to address untruthfulness or uphold integrity experienced consequences like revenge or ostracism at the workplace. Those in leadership positions mentioned that whistleblowing can cause deterioration of interpersonal relations with co-workers and supervisors, some even mentioned losing their job, or not being included in important decisions. This is in agreement with Tumuramy, Ntayi, and Muhwezi (2018), who also noted that fear of retaliation was a key factor that hindered whistleblowing in the Ugandan public sector. Furthermore, the study revealed that due to the absence of a proper whistleblowing protection system, these fears were further enhanced to hinder leaders from acting against dishonest practices. In a similar vein, Wells and Molina (2017) noted that if there are no sufficient protections, people will not come forward to report unethical conduct in organizations.

The study revealed that a major issue that prevented leadership honesty was acts of nepotism and favoritism during recruitment and other decision-making activities. Managers and supervisors asserted that there was favoritism practiced by some leaders in the organization to select and promote employees based on who they knew instead of employee performance. This assertion resonates with Kolzow's (2014) opinion that nepotism reduces public confidence in leaders and hampers organizational performance. Interviews conducted at Mukono Municipal Council revealed that decentralization policies played a role, as it provided the local leaders with more discretionary power to recruit staff but at the same time created chances of corruption. This observation is in line with Kumar (2015) who, while acknowledging that decentralization has dual implications of positive and negative impacts, pointed out that the extent of accountability or unethical behavior depends on institutional factors.

The work also revealed lack of resources to support oversight and monitoring processes as factors that hindered honesty in leadership in the study. For example, councilors made a comment that due to financial constraint they are unable to visit project sites to see the extent of implementation and utilization of resources. This assertion is supported by Advocate Coalition for Development and Environment (2021) who noted that resource challenges in local governments limit independent supervision and compliance. This limited the abilities of leaders to provide ethical training as well as develop appropriate accountability procedures. Writing in 2024, Sharpley also acknowledged the need for adequate leadership and organizational capacity to enable proper ethical governance, bearing in mind that resources could be limited.

The findings showed that due to an extended stay in positions of authority, officials tend to have less motivation towards integrity. Those leaders who assumed that their positions are safe from change were also less likely to be willing to adhere to ethical standards and embraced the norms practiced in the company. It is in this regard that Hammer (2014) explained that when leaders remain in their positions for long without any accountability, they become dormant and result to unethical practices. At Mukono Municipal Council, complacency was further encouraged by the lack of promotional prospects in the organization, thereby reducing the motivation of leaders to perform optimally in their assigned positions. This is in line with Randall and Saurage-alternioh (2020) who pointed out that when there is lack of mobility in leadership roles, organizational performance and ethical standards reduce.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

The study aimed at analyzing the principle of honesty a leadership principle in the governance of Mukono municipal council. Literature was reviewed on the principle of honesty, how it is followed, the associated benefits that accrue when leaders uphold it in their work and the challenges that leaders face when they follow the principle of honesty in their work. The literature for this study was obtained from government reports, scholarly pieces of work, newspapers, policy documents and UN reports on governance. The study utilized thirty four (34) respondents whereby twenty (20) were from Mukono municipal council and fifteen (14) from Central division. A qualitative research method was adopted for this study to obtain the findings for this study. The study area was Mukono municipal council and the respondents were the technical officials and political leaders of Mukono municipal council and Central division.

#### **6.1 Conclusion from the research**

The Conclusions below, were derived from the study findings with the guidance of the study objectives along with the research questions. The main objective of this study was to analyze how observance of the principle of honesty in leadership enhances good governance of Mukono municipal council. The study was intended to establish if leaders of Mukono municipal council followed the principle of honesty in their work, the benefits that accrue when leaders of Mukono municipal council followed the principle of honesty in their work, the challenges leaders face in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal council and the way in which these challenges could be resolved.

##### **6.1.1 Adherence to the Principle of Honesty**

In this study, it has been established that leaders in Mukono Municipal Council, for the most part, acknowledge the significance of the principle of honesty in leadership. A preponderance of the respondents agreed that integrity was an appropriate ethical standard that needs to be practiced by leaders irrespective of the organizational level. From academic learning, orientation programs, and socialization within the leadership circles, the leaders are reminded that honesty is a basic requirement of leadership. Also, many officials were noticed being ethical by reporting the facts

about their work, following the legal processes, and being clear in their actions. Other aspects that were established as being part of the leadership behavior of Mukono Municipal Council include freedom of information and the ability to use honest communication.

However, the study also revealed that when it comes to the practical application of this principle, not all the leaders in the council are fully implementing it. Some of the observed cases of dishonesty include falsification of records, poor financial management, bribery and unethical promotions which indicates a disparity between theoretical understanding of honesty and its continued practice. These cases suggest that although people endeavor to be truthful, structures and cultures in organizations prevent them from being so. This divergence implies that although leaders may be aware of the significance of truthfulness, other facets of organizations, as well as societies, enable or even promote dishonesty.

The conclusion of the study also supports the Principal-Agent Theory where it states that ethical misconduct occurs where there is no congruity between the leaders and the governed population. The case of Mukono Municipal Council is not an exception since lack of policy harmonization, practical implementation mechanisms, and cultural norms that support lie and deception all pull the leaders back from practicing honesty in governance. Altogether, while leaders within Mukono Municipal Council acknowledge the value of honesty, chances are that various relational and institutional forces will influence this political culture and its corresponding practice in a negative manner.

The consequences of the above findings are far-reaching as lack of compliance with the principle of honesty in leadership negates public trust and efficiency in the governance of the council. The presence of deceitiveness compromises the integrity of public entities and leadership, thus causing the inauguration of communities and accountability to become challenging. The apples of honesty are also inconsistent when it comes to its external operations especially when it comes to soliciting support from other organizations, national government, potential and actual donors, and members of the public. Thus, it is imperative for leadership within Mukono Municipal Council not only to appreciate the value of honesty but also to work towards eradicating the causes of dishonest practices so as to promote integrity within the whole of the municipality.

Therefore, although it is evident that the principle of honesty is well espoused as a requisite leadership value among the leaders of Mukono Municipal Council, the practice is not without several challenges. Tackling such issues involves collaborative efforts from the leaders and the other governance structures to ensure that the practice of honesty is achieved. Of course, this would also mean that leaders should not only be personally committed to change but organizational structures that foster a culture of integrity and common ethical standards to be enforced.

### **6.1.2 Benefits of Following the Principle of Honesty**

From the study, it can be concluded that embracing the principle of honesty in leadership at Mukono Municipal Council has several positive implications for the leaders and the populace. The study also demonstrated that leadership quality such as honesty significantly influenced the principles of accountability especially in the management and utilization of resources. It was also evident that leaders who were honest proved more responsible in their financial dealings, time management and even the use of public resources. The evidence presented in the study concurs with this notion, whereby the leaders' good manners make them more liable for their behavior, and this brings about the protection of the public.

Moreover, the study showed that leaders who used truth telling and reporting in their leadership practices were able to involve the community in the decision making process, which is an important facet of effective governance. The more the citizens believe that their voices are needed and that their opinions are important in the decision making processes, the more they would have trust in the municipal council and its leaders. This level of trust is important in managing the community relations and in making sure that the council's decisions reflect the true needs and desires of the people. Evaluating community participation and public trust is significant for any government since it assists in fashioning policies that embrace the people's needs to boost efficiency in the delivery of services.

The other notable advantage highlighted by the research study is the impact of honesty in enhancing the efficiency in service delivery in Mukono Municipal Council. The leaders who have the interests of the public at heart and not those of personal interests are in a better place to utilize every resources in the right manner in order to provide public services. This study identified that



ethical practices by leaders encouraged organizational service, whereby leaders are committed to servicing the needs of society and guarantee that community assets were being utilized effectively for the benefit of all parties. Due to their orientation towards the attainment of long term goals and the overall well-being of the society, honest leaders ensure that the needs of the society are appropriately addressed.

Further, the study revealed that honesty in leadership generates positive fortunes to the reputation of Mukono Municipal Council. When a leader is perceived as being honest the public and the outside world which includes government agencies and development partners will respond positively by offering their support. This enhanced reputation, in turn, enhances the council's capacity to attract more resources and partnerships, while also providing a positive workplace for municipal employees. The research results suggest that honest leadership is a factor that influences the municipality's ability to fund and allocate resources, which is crucial for the continuation of the development projects and the enhancement of the well-being of the inhabitants of the region.

The benefits of following the principle of honesty in leadership at Mukono Municipal Council are clear: It results in enhanced accountability, increased public confidence, efficiency in service delivery as well as a better reputation for the council. As such, these factors are key drivers that help to address the general aims of good governance and sustainable development. However, for these benefits to be realized in the council fully, it is necessary for leaders not only to appreciate the role of honesty but also ensure that mechanisms to enhance ethical practices are instituted. This will involve recognizing and altering the organizational features that do not allow the constant and voluntary implementation of honest leader behaviors as well as institutionalizing a governance framework of integrity within the system.

### **6.1.3 Challenges Faced by Leaders in Following the Principle of Honesty**

According to the study, it was revealed that although the leaders of Mukono Municipal Council understand that promoting honest leadership is vital, they have to encounter several huge challenges to adhere to the said principle. Among the areas of concern that were raised was the conflict with the local culture of the country where corruption is rife and the emphasis is placed on selfish work ethic. This culture affects management and the practice of honesty in the

organization because leaders will have to deal with the culture that expects them to lie or be deceitful in business. Such values as greed evidenced by the willingness to amass wealth through corrupt means and permanence evidenced by expectation of job security and low wages contribute to low ethical standards among leaders.

The last issue labelled as an impediment was a culture of complicity and cooperation that dominated the municipal council. Managers who adhere to the cherished values of integrity are likely to encounter unethical behavior from co-workers. There are many reasons for this, including the absence of an adequate reporting channel and the threat of retribution, making it impossible for people to challenge dishonest behavior due to possible repercussions or isolation from their coworkers. The culture of silence, lack of accountability in organizations hinders leaders in managing dishonesty and gives room for unethical practices to thrive.

The council was also found to lack strict compliance with laws and regulations, which was seen as a major impediment to honesty. Such incentives promote impunity, which may make leaders think that, they can engage in dishonest actions without facing any punitive measures or scrutiny. This lack of accountability goes against the promotion of ethical standards since it tells managers and employees that corruption is not punishable as other sins. If there are no effective sanctions for enforcing honesty, then individuals can choose to be honest but not compelled by any regulation.

Further, the study examined how nepotism and favoritism influenced leadership practices in the council. Selection and promotion based on favoritism, instead of employees' performance, can result in the selection of individuals who are likely to indulge in fraudulent behavior. It weakens the fabric of the municipal council and augments the challenges of crafting positive change toward integrity and truthfulness.

Interference from politicians was also cited as a concern – political power may work against the goals of good governance sometimes. This implies that political pressures can distort decision making in that decisions made may not reflect the interests of society but rather the political interests of those in power in a process that tends to be dishonest. The political control of municipal

work generates an intricate context in which leaders may have conflicts of loyalty between their moral compass and the power holders.

Despite acknowledging that honesty is a central aspect of leadership, there are several factors that hinder leaders in Mukono Municipal Council from following this principle. Cultural barriers, absence or ineffectiveness of accountability structures, favoritism, corruption and political influence are some of the factors that make it hard for leaders to practice honesty. To overcome these challenges there is need for systemic reforms that tackle both the structural and cultural obstacles to honest leadership and cultivate a culture that supports integrity of leadership at all echelons of governance.

## **6.2 Recommendations from the study**

The recommendations resulting from the findings of the study are intended to project the principle of honesty as deserving a full adoption by leaders at Mukono municipal council in their work for good governance of the entity to be attained. This being so due to the fact that the principle of honesty is recognized as a necessary ethic in their work if they should attain good governance at Mukono municipal council. It was identified as an ethic necessary to adopt in the work of leaders for greater impact at Mukono municipal council and the whole public sector of Uganda. As a result, the following recommendations have been made;

### **6.2.1 Recommendations for the government**

Government should revise employment laws and allow an off work station model because this would reduce on the daily expenses incurred by staff and also provide a flexible work environment for staff. Government should also revise the salary scale for municipal council professional staff to enable them to have enhanced salaries and also review the law to establish a monthly salary for municipality councilors in all municipal councils and their salary should be centralized to make it uniform for all municipal councils.

In addition, government should undertake ethics training for all public officials, provide sufficient and timely resources to municipal councils so as to avoid delays in service provision and shoddy work. There is also need to review the law to allow municipal councils to collect their local

revenues and spend it without first sending it to the consolidated fund for this incapacitates municipal councils from providing timely and needed services.

Government should also strengthen and implement the law on whistleblowing for this will encourage the public and organization's staff to volunteer useful information to relevant offices for further action. It is also important that government should bring to book all corrupt officials as a way of promoting frugal utilization of public funds by public officials but also effectively monitor the services offered by municipal councils.

In addition, government can think of an alternative way of boosting the welfare of public officials like those working at municipal councils through giving them asset loans though on the other hand, the government should revise employment contracts for its employees to shorter renewable terms for this could inspire the public officials to execute their duties optimally to be assured of a renewal of their contract.

### **6.2.2 Recommendations for Mukono municipal council**

Mukono municipal council should continually demand for transparency and accountability from its officials by instituting mechanisms for accountability and oversight, reporting and regular audits and also make sure that it holds its officials answerable for their actions.

More so, Mukono municipal council should avail sufficient resources to its officials to enable them to undertake their duties uninterrupted by inadequate resources. In addition, the entity should enforce the law without fear or favor, sensitize its staff about the beauty of adhering to the principle of honesty in their work and also sensitize staff and local community about the responsibilities of the municipal council. It is anticipated that this sensitization will inform the local community about what the municipal council does so they will not have high expectations on the council. In addition the council should do community outreaches and educational programs to promote the importance of ethical behavior and honesty in specificity. In the same regard, ethics training for Mukono municipal council officials should be adopted as a regular practice hoping that when the officials receive understanding about ethics in the context of public entities, this will facilitate them to act in the right way in their duties.

Additionally, new job entrants at Mukono municipal council should receive thorough induction before they assume their offices so they can be aware of their mandate, how to use tax payers money for intended purposes, avoid misuse and diversion of municipal funds, strategies they can adopt at personal level, to diversify their income base by seeking for income generating opportunities besides their salaries.

### **6.2.3 Recommendation for further research**

It is important that additional research should be conducted on what strategies are used by Municipal councils to promote adherence to the principle of honesty and guard against corruption.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Key informants

#### Introduction

Good morning/afternoon Sir/Madam? My name is Birungi Doris Enid a Master’s Degree Scholar from Uganda Christian University. I am carrying out research on how the observance of the principle of honesty in leadership enhances good governance of Mukono Municipal Council and I would therefore like to ask you a few questions. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study, there is no negative repercussion resulting from your participation. Your participation is voluntary and the information you give me will be kept with utmost confidentiality, and your identity will remain anonymous. The interview will take between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Start time:.....

#### SECTION 1: BIO-DATA OF RESPONDENT

1. Name of respondent (Optional)?	
2. Designation?	
3. Years of service in the organization	
4. Age of respondent a) 20-30 b) 30-40 c) 40+	

5. Gender a) Male b) Female	
6. Education level a) Certificate b) Diploma c) Degree	

**SECTION 2:**

If leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

7. Are you aware that honesty is among the principles expected of leaders to follow at Mukono municipal council in their work?


Yes

No

7.1 If yes, how did you get to know about it?

7.2 If yes, what opinion do you have about whether officials of Mukono municipal council abide by the principle of honesty in their work? (Please check all that apply)

	They tell the truth about their work, entity opportunities, Organizational plans.
	They provide open access to needed information because they see no reason to hide it.
	They provide feedback to juniors but are also open to receive opinions from them.
	They welcome information volunteered by staff about alleged dishonest practices.
	They freely explain the procedures they use to make some decisions,
	They don't lie about their performance and also don't support lies in the organization.
	They are committed to serving others and not themselves.
	They follow the law/ guidelines/ standards of the Municipal council, in their work.
	They apprehend whoever is proven guilty of some offence or illegality at work.
	Others (specify).....

8. In general, what do you think compels officials of Mukono municipality to observe honesty in their work? (Tick all that apply) .....

<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional guidelines
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal interest in citizen's welfare
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organizational guidelines/ policies
<input type="checkbox"/>	They have no other choice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over sight organizations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify).....

9. In your opinion, are there specific incidences or activities when an official may not act honestly?

Yes

No

9.1. If your response above is yes, please explain your answer and thereafter, suggest what can be done to address such scenarios so they do not deliberately occur?

**Section 3:**

The benefits that accrue when leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council:

10. In your opinion, are there benefits that accrue when leaders follow the principle of honesty in their work? Yes/ No.

10.1. If yes, Please check all that apply

Benefits of honesty	True	False
---------------------	------	-------

1. Leaders provide accountability for what they do, how they use resources and time		
2. Leaders are efficient; they provide services which are of good quality to meet people’s priorities and needs within the resource envelop.		
3. Leaders involve community members in the decisions and activities of the organization		
4. Leaders and organizations obtain public trust		
5. Others (specify)		

**Section 4:**

Challenges faced by leaders in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

11. In your opinion, are there any challenges leaders face in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal council?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

11.1. If yes, please describe them and suggest what could be done to overcome them.

Thank you

End time.....

**Appendix 2**  
**Focus Group Discussion Interview Guide**

**Introduction**

Good morning/afternoon Sir/Madam? My name is Birungi Doris Enid, a Master’s degree Scholar from Uganda Christian University. I am carrying out research on how the observance of the principle of honesty in leadership enhances good governance of Mukono Municipal Council and I would therefore like to ask you a few questions. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study, there is no negative repercussion resulting from your participation. Your participation is voluntary and the information you give me will be kept with utmost confidentiality, and your identity will remain anonymous. The discussion will take between forty five minutes (45) minutes to 1 hour.

Start time:..... Date:.....

**SECTION 1: BIO-DATA OF RESPONDENT**

1. Name of participants (Optional)	
2. Designation	
3. Age	
4. Sex	
5. Academic qualification	

**SECTION 2**

If leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

6. Honesty is among the principles expected of every leader at Mukono municipal council to observe in their work.

- a) Yes
- b) No



7. If yes, please suggest the characters leaders are likely to exhibit to show that they adhere to the principle of honesty in their work.

8. In your own opinion, how do leaders follow the principle of honesty in governance of Mukono municipal council?

9. Are there incidents at Mukono municipal council, where leaders may act in dishonesty?

a) Yes

b) No

10. If yes, please explain what these incidents could be.

The benefits that accrue when leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

11. It is beneficial for leaders of an organization to follow the principle of honesty in their work.

a) Yes

b) No

12. If yes, what do you think are the benefits that occur when leaders follow the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal Council?

13. In your opinion, how does honesty among leaders lead to good governance of an organization?

14. What strategies should be put in place to improve honesty in the governance of Mukono municipal council?

Challenges faced by leaders in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council.

15. Governing an organization with a practice of honesty, can be challenging sometimes.

a) Yes

b) Not

16. If yes, what challenges do you think leaders face in following the principle of honesty in the governance of Mukono Municipal Council?

17. What solutions can be adopted to overcome the challenges/limitations in leaders following the principle of honesty?

Thanks for participating

End time:.....

**APPENDIX 3**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Good morning/afternoon Sir/Madam! My name is Birungi Doris Enid, a Master’s degree Student at Uganda Christian University. I am carrying out research entitled; “An analysis of honesty as a leadership principle for Good Governance of Public Institutions: a case of Mukono Municipal Council”. I therefore request you to participate in the study by answering a few questions. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study, there is no negative repercussion resulting from your participation.

**Participation**

Your participation is voluntary and the information you give me will be kept with utmost confidentiality, and your identity will remain anonymous. You are at liberty to decline request and/or you can withdraw your consent anytime you feel uncomfortable. I however request you to take part in the study, you can ask any questions regarding the study at any time.

**Duration**

The discussion will take between forty five minutes (45) minutes to 1 hour.

**Risks and benefits**

This study has minimal risks as stated above. It is entirely academic and does not have any anticipated harmful effects physically, psychologically, or otherwise.

**Research Ethical Concerns**

In case of any Research ethical concerns, you can contact Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCUREC) Chairperson; Prof. Peter Waiswa, 0772405 357 or pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug, or UCUREC Administrator; Mr. Osborn Ahimbisibwe, 0775737627, oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug

If you agree to take part in the study sign below please,

Participant’s Signature.....

Principal Investigator’s signature.....

Date.....

**APPENDIX 4**  
**Introductory letter**



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**  
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa



To whom It might Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

*Received and received  
9/8/2021 24/08/2021*

**RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR DORIS ENID BIRUNGI**

Warm greetings from Uganda Christian University!

This serves to introduce the above named; **Doris Enid Birungi**, as our student pursuing a Masters degree of Public Administration and management registered number **RS14/M12/101**.

Doris is conducting a research as a requirement for the award of the above mentioned degree entitled; *"An Analysis of Honesty as a Leadership principle for good Governance of Public Institutions: A Case of Mukono Municipal Council*.

She has fulfilled all clearance requirements such as getting Research Ethics Approval from UCUREC which is accredited and regulated by Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST).

Any assistance given to her to achieving this goal will be highly welcome.

Thank you so much.

Yours faithfully,

**Prof. Peter Ubomba-Jaswa**  
Head, Research, Grants & Publications  
Uganda Christian University  
[pubombajaswa.ucu.ac.ug](http://pubombajaswa.ucu.ac.ug)

cc. Executive Secretary, UNCST

A Complete Education for A Complete Person

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

## APPENDIX 5

### Permission for Research- Mukono Municipal Council

LANDLINE:..... 0414 290203/04  
TOWN CLERK:..... 0772 432046/0701  
Email: [info@mukonomunicipalcouncil@gmail.com/](mailto:info@mukonomunicipalcouncil@gmail.com/)  
[gbkisekka@gmail.com](mailto:gbkisekka@gmail.com)  
FOR ANY CORRESPONDENCE ON THIS SUBJECT,  
PLEASE QUOTE: FIN/MMC/105



MUKONO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL  
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK  
P. O. BOX 201  
MUKONO - UGANDA

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Ms. Doris Enid Birungi  
Uganda Christian University  
Mukono

#### PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH WITHIN MUKONO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

I am in receipt of your letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 requesting for permission to conduct a research survey within Mukono Municipal Council.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research under your selected topic '*An analysis of honesty as a leadership principle for good governance of Public Institutions; a case study of Mukono Municipal Council*'.

Yours,

  
Godfrey B. Kisekka  
TOWN CLERK - MUKONO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



Cc. The Head, Research, Grants and Publications – UCU  
Cc. The Deputy Town Clerk – Mukono Municipal Council

## APPENDIX 6

### UCU-REC Approval Notice



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

UG-REC-026 Approval Version: 4.0

23rd July, 2021

23rd July, 2021

Doris Enid Birungi  
Uganda Christian University  
+256 782745127  
Email: [debirungi@ucu.ac.ug](mailto:debirungi@ucu.ac.ug)

UG-REC-026 APPROVAL NOTICE

To: Doris Enid Birungi, Principal Investigator

Re: UCU-REC Application titled: An Analysis of Honesty as a Leadership principle for good Governance of Public Institutions: A Case of Mukono Municipal Council

Application Number: UCUREC- 2021-104-12

Version: 4.0

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



I am pleased to inform you that the UG-REC-026; UCUREC approved the above referenced application.

Approval of the research is for the period from 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2021, to 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2022

**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.
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.

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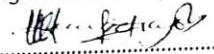


4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Regulations require review of an 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 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2022 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.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. Your research details have been shared with the Executive secretary of Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and you are **not** required to get clearance since you are a Masters Degree research. Refer to UNCST Research registration and clearance Policy and guidelines (July 2016) in Uganda section 6(e).

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

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Protocol	English	1.0	2021-07-20
2.	Data collection tools	English	1.0	2021-07-20
3	Informed Consent Form	English	1.0	2021-07-20

Signed and Stamped

  
 Prof. Peter Waiswa.  
 UCUREC Chairperson,  
[pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug](mailto:pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug)

