

**ASSESSING EMPLOYEE RELATIONS STRATEGIES AND STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLIC
HOSPITALS IN UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF OLD MULAGO HOSPITAL KAMPALA**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is my original research project and has never been presented to any University or academic institution for any award, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research project has been done under my supervision and is now ready for submission to the School of Research and Postgraduate Studies of Uganda Christian University for examination.

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16th / May / 2024

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all my Lecturers of Public Administration and Management of Uganda Christian University especially my Research Project Supervisor, My Dear Wife Kiconco Agnes, my Children Akampa Flavia, Vanessa and Ivyne as well as my late Parents Gabriel and Merenia and specifically my late Guardian and Mentor Uncle Msgr.Dr. Fr. Rev. Ndamira Francis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBA:	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CVI:	Content Validity Index
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UNHCO:	Uganda National Health Consumers Organisation

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to assess the effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity at Old Mulago Hospital Kampala. Specifically, the study established the effect of: employee communication strategy, employee participation strategy and negotiation strategy on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala. A case study research design was adopted, employing a quantitative research approach. Data was collected from 82 respondents from Old Mulago hospital using self-administered questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were employed for data analysis, while inferential statistics such as Pearson's Correlation coefficient and linear regression were used. The study found that employee communication ($r = 0.504$, $p < 0.05$); employee participation ($r = 0.401$, $p < 0.05$) and negotiation ($r = 0.609$, $p < 0.05$) are significant and positively correlated with staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital. Employee communication, employee participation and negotiation were found to significantly predict staff productivity by 44.1% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.441$). It is concluded that employee communication, employee participation and negotiation as employee relations strategies have significant positive relationship with staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital. To enhance staff productivity, the study recommended that the management of Mulago hospital should: provide training programs to improve managers' and supervisors' communication skills; provide more scope for employees' voice to effectively communicate their concerns to management and build good employee relations that can foster staff productivity; establish a structured feedback mechanism to encourage employee input on various organizational aspects; create more opportunities for employees to express their opinions; implement direct dialogue mechanisms like joint work committees or team meetings; empower their staff to effectively advocate for their interests and engage in constructive collective bargaining agreement; and promote transparent communications during and after negotiations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The concept of employee relations has attracted more attention from various stakeholders as a human resource management aspect that is influencing performance of small and large organizations in the 21st century (George & Jones, 2018). This has been largely triggered by increased competition, changing employee needs, influence of technology and globalization in the changing business environment. Employee relations are concerned with creating an enabling work environment for a pleasant interpersonal relationship in the organization which gears towards the effective promotion of the organizational goals and objectives (Donohoe, 2015). Global and local organisations are driven to maintain good employee relations to enhance their productivity and performance in the changing business environment (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). In fact, global economies that have performed well such as in America, India, European countries are those that have employed effective employee relations for the performance of employees in the organizations (Landy & Conte, 2016). However, the association between employee relations and productivity in the context of Uganda is not yet extensively studied, which acted as a motivation for this study that sought to enhance employee relations and productivity with specific reference to public hospitals in Uganda.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Historical Background

The concept of employee relations has its roots in the industrial revolution, however at the time, it was called industrial relations, which created the modern employment relationship by spawning free labour markets and large-scale industrial organizations with thousands of wage workers (Kaufman, 2014). At the time, society wrestled with massive economic and social changes leading to labour problems. In addition, low wages, long working hours, monotonous and dangerous work, and abusive supervisory practices led to high employee turnover, violent strikes, and the threat of social instability. These led to emergency of industrial relations at the end of the 19th century as a middle ground between classical economics and Marxism, with Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb's Industrial Democracy being a key intellectual work (Farnham, 2018).

In Britain, another progressive industrialist, Montague Burton extended the idea of industrial relations at the universities of Leeds, Cardiff, and Cambridge in 1929–1930 (Sigsworth, 1990), and the discipline was formalized in the 1950s with the formation of the Oxford School by Allan Flanders and Hugh Clegg (Ackers, 2015). Industrial relations were formed with a strong problem-solving orientation that rejected both the classical economists' laissez faire solutions to labour problems and the Marxist solution of class revolution. It is this approach that underlies the New Deal legislation in the United States, such as the National Labour Relations Act and the Fair Labour Standards Act (Kaufman, 2008).

In the 20th century, the concept of employee relations attracted more attention from various stakeholders as a replacement to the industrial relations. Employee relations are concerned with creating an enabling work environment for a pleasant interpersonal relationship in the organization which gears towards the effective promotion of the organizational goals and objectives (Donohoe, 2015). Global and local companies are now driven to maintain good employee relations to enhance their productivity and performance in the changing business environment (Armstrong, 2006). In fact, global economies that have performed well such as in America, India, European countries are those that have employed effective employee relations for the performance of employees in the organizations (Landy & Conte, 2016).

In African countries such as Nigeria, employee relations have undergone rapid development since the return to democratic governance in 1999, with the enactment of the Nigerian constitution which provides for the social fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy and covers the labour matters (Dugeri, 2015). In Kenya, the employee relations system is anchored on the International Labour Organization's Convention No.150 of 178 on Labour Administration, which is domesticated through the Industrial Relations Charter (1984) and the Labour Relations Act (2007). In the United Republic of Tanzania, employee relations are enshrined in the constitution. The government also enacted pieces of legislation to regulate employee relations which include; The Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004 which sets fundamental rights at work and regulates hours of work, remuneration, leave, termination of employment, trade unions and employers' organizations, organizational rights, collective bargaining, strikes and lockouts and sets dispute resolution under the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration (Tubeyi et al., 2015).

In Uganda, the 1995 constitution, which guarantees freedom of association, the right to create and join unions, the right to safe and sanitary working conditions, collective bargaining and representation, and equal pay for equal work, serves as the cornerstone of Uganda's employee relations. Additionally, fundamental rights at work are established by the Employment Act of 2006. It governs working conditions, compensation, leave, hours worked, and employment termination (Uganda Employment act, 2006). They have also enacted Trade Union Act and the Labor Disputes (Arbitration & Mediation) Act both of 2006 which regulates Trade Unions, industrial relations, collective bargaining and re-affirms freedom of association.

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

The study will be guided by the Pluralism theory advanced by Fox (1996). The pluralism theory creates a workplace where there is more than one source of authority and decisions are typically made by a group effort and not according to the authority of one governing body. It is also more focused on individual goals, and supports the functions of trade unions. The theory recognizes that since there is more than one individual involved in decision making, subscribing to different values and objectives, workplace conflict is inevitable. Thus, the pluralist doctrine seeks to redress the shortcoming of the conflicts in order to prevent its drawbacks and safeguard the status quo (Armstrong (2006).

The pluralism theory is the philosophy that emphasizes the possibility of harmonious relations between the oppressed and the oppressor. The pluralist theory maintains that the social system is not a unitary organization but a coalition of individuals and groups with sectional interests and district perception of the social structure (Aborisade, 2008). Thus, the theory is applicable to this study since it gives cognizance to employee voice both direct and through trade union and this fosters good communication and employee participation that affects employee relations where employee commitment and trust is achieved.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

Employee relations, according to Chand (2016), are the harmonious conditions in which both parties engage in working in such a way that they effectively communicate and work amicably, recognizing each other's needs and values in the process and elevating the motivation and morale of the workers. Employee relations relate to the relationship that exists within an organization between the employers and the employees (Bajaj, Sinha & Tiwari, 2013). In this study, employee

relations strategies are conceptualized as employee communication, employee participation and negotiation as a conflict resolution technique. Employee communication is defined as the interaction among employees through information giving and receiving. Employee participation is defined as the act of allowing employees to get involved in make decisions that affect them in the organisation. Negotiation is a discussion between two parties to find out the solution and for the purpose of reaching a joint agreement about differing needs or opinions (Management Guide, 2016).

Staff productivity refers to how successfully employees are contributing to the accomplishment of the organization's vision, purpose, and objectives. It relates to how well a person carries out his or her tasks, obligations, and responsibilities, and it also plays a key role in an organization's success (Mathis & Jackson, 2015). Ismail et al. (2009) defines staff productivity as the ability of individuals to achieve their respective work aims, then meet their expectations, achieve benchmarks or accomplish their organizational goals. According to Rizwan et al. (2014) staff productivity contains a quality and quantity of results driven from individual or group struggle completion. This study conceptualizes staff productivity in terms of timeliness, operational efficiency and quality of work. Quality of work refers to the caliber of work produced by an employee (Hakala, 2008). Operational efficiency refers to the achievement of the goals at the lowest possible cost (Abdullah & Qattani, 2007).

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Mulago hospital is Uganda's main national referral hospital founded in 1913. It has a magnificent facility with supportive/auxiliary infrastructure such as staff housing, electricity/solar Power, phone network coverage, water and sanitation among others, to enable it provide health services that satisfy its clients through efficient service delivery (Ministry of Health, 2015). The facility was built with a bed capacity of 1500, however, the facility registers 3000 admissions on a daily basis and between 6000 to 7000 out patients on a daily basis thus exceeding the capacity of the facility. The facility has a mix of medical personnel with different backgrounds and abilities to perform. Serving the big daily population at the facility is hinged on the number of medical professionals in place to offer the diverse services as required by the patients (Nabirye et al, 2011).

Regarding employee relations, the terms of industrial relations as stipulated in the 1995 constitution of Uganda, Employment Act of 2006 and the Trade Union Act and the Labor Disputes

(Arbitration & Mediation) Act of 2006 equally apply to the staff at the hospital. These employment acts guarantee freedom of association, the right to create and join unions, the right to safe and sanitary working conditions, collective bargaining and representation, and equal pay for equal work, which serves as the cornerstone of Uganda's employee relations. In addition, the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), stipulates the terms of service, employee relationship building mechanisms such as internal communication and conflict resolution practices (Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2018). However, Mulago hospital has been characterized by employee conflicts which have often resulted into strikes thus, affecting staff productivity. It was thus, worth assessing the employee relations strategies used in relation to staff productivity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the most pressing issues facing most organizations today is the need to enhance employee productivity. There is a widespread belief that performance improvements can only be achieved through a fundamental reform in employee relations (Blyton et al., 2018). The 1995 constitution of Uganda, Employment Act of 2006 and the Trade Union Act and the Labor Disputes (Arbitration & Mediation) Act of 2006 spell out the employee relations mechanisms such as collective bargaining for conflict resolution, aiming at creating a conducive work environment for employees to perform better. Despite, cases of staff underperformance have been reported at Mulago hospital. It has been observed that some staff at the hospital merely report for work daily as expected but linger around and never fulfill all the assigned duties, work for fewer hours, dodge some assignments and arrive late for work (Uganda National Health Consumers Organisation – UNHCO, 2018). The state of the occurrence is an indication of danger to the organization, could it be employee relations strategies that seem unfounded well, or other issues. This necessitated the need for the study that to assess employee relations strategies in relation to staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To assess the effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity in Public hospitals in Uganda: A case of Old Mulago Hospital Kampala.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- 1) To establish the effect of employee communication strategy on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala.

- 2) To examine how employee participation strategy affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala.
- 3) To establish the effect of negotiation strategy on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala.

1.5 Research Questions

- 1) How does employee communication affect staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala?
- 2) What is the effect of employee participation on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala?
- 3) How does negotiation strategy affect staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Content Scope

The study assessed the effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity at Old Mulago Hospital. The independent variable employee relations strategies were conceptualized as employee communication, employee participation and negotiations. On the other hand, staff productivity was measured in terms of quality of work, operational efficiency, and timeliness.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

This study was carried out at old Mulago hospital located at Mulago hill in the Northern part of the city Kampala, west of Makerere University College of Health Sciences. It is approximately 5 kilometres by road, north – east of Kampala central business district. This geographical area was of interest because the hospital has a magnificent facility however, there are cases of rampant staff strikes associated with poor staff performance (Kiiza, 2018).

1.6.3 Time Scope

The study covered Mulago hospital for the past 5 years from 2018 – 2022 This time was chosen because it is during this time that cases of low staff productivity were recorded at the hospital (Uganda National Health Consumers Organisation – UNHCO, 2018).

1.7 Justification of the study

Over the past three decades, firms have placed more emphasis on building employee relations as the cornerstone for improving employee's productivity (Perkins & Shortland, 2016). Studies in

developed world have indicated that global economies that have performed well such as in America, India, European countries are those that have employed effective employee relations for the performance of employees in the organizations (Landy & Conte, 2016). There is however, limited research in developing countries such as Uganda, relating to employee relations and staff productivity. This acted as a justification for this study that assessed the effect of employee relations on staff productivity with specific reference to Mulago hospital that has over the recent years been characterized by strikes and poor performance.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study is anticipated to be of significance to various sections of people.

1.8.1 Management of Old Mulago Hospital

The study is expected to benefit the management of Old Mulago Hospital by providing empirical evidence to develop clear strategies that can help in maintaining cordial employee relations that support enhancement of staff performance. This would also help the organization to put in place a more elaborate and comprehensive framework that would be used in building employee relations and enhancing productivity.

1.8.2 Researchers and Academicians

The study findings and recommendations are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge that would be useful in enhancing the understanding of researchers and scholars on employee relations. The study also acts as a reference for future researchers wishing to extend this study.

1.8.3 Government of Uganda

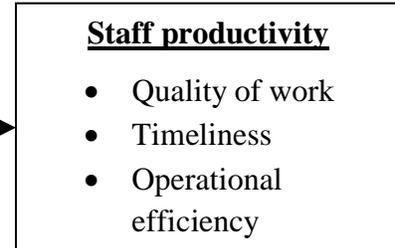
The study findings and recommendations are expected to help the government of Uganda to come up with policies that address the challenges affecting employee relations. This would help the government in developing employee relations strategies that support harmonious employer - employee relationships in Government entities.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable



Source: Adopted with modification from Samwel (2018)

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework for employee relations strategies and staff productivity

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between employee relations strategies conceptualized as employee communication, employee participation and negotiations; and the dependent variable staff productivity conceptualized as quality of work, timeliness and operational efficiency. It is presumed that once the sub – variables of the independent variable mentioned are in place, the outcome will be improved staff productivity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section reviews literature based on previous authors' views concerning the study topic. The review is done based on the specific research objectives of the study. Also included in this chapter is the theoretical review.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The Pluralism theory that was adopted for this study was advanced by Fox (1996). The pluralism theory creates a workplace where there is more than one source of authority and decisions are typically made by a group effort and not according to the authority of one governing body. It is also more focused on individual goals, and supports the functions of trade unions. The pluralism theory recognizes that there are a set of assumptions and values that workplace conflict is inevitable and that management and employees constitute two such groups, who, because of the very nature of the organizational system, are seen as invariably subscribing to different values and objectives. From this perspective, it is also assumed that there will be different sources of authority within an organization, and that the potential for conflict between them will always exist over the organizational work tasks and the allocation of rewards. Thus, the pluralist doctrine seeks to redress the shortcoming of the conflicts in order to prevent its drawbacks and safeguard the status quo (Armstrong (2006).

The pluralism theory is the philosophy that emphasizes the possibility of harmonious relations between the oppressed and the oppressor. The pluralist theory maintains that the social system is not a unitary organization but a coalition of individuals and groups with sectional interests and district perception of the social structure (Aborisade, 2008). Thus, the theory is applicable to this study since it gives cognizance to employee voice both direct and through trade union and this fosters good communication and employee participation that affects employee relations where employee commitment and trust is achieved.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

The literature is reviewed in correspondence with the study objectives in chapter one

2.2.1 Employee Communication and Staff Productivity

Employee communication refers to conversations and exchanges within a company or group of employees (Cole, 2011). The process of communication includes speaking, listening, and understanding (Banerji & Dayal, 2015). According to Cheronno (2018), communication is the exchange of messages between individuals with the goal of achieving shared meanings. Managers find it very challenging to persuade people unless there is a shared understanding of the meanings. While investigating the impact of cultural differences on managerial communication in connection to employee retention, loyalty to the firm, and job satisfaction in India's insurance industry, Reeta and Deborah (2016) found that effective downward communication is critically important determinant of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employees' propensity to leave a company. With effective communication systems in place, managers may provide precise, timely, and clear job instructions and receive feedback on their performance via a variety of channels. Taking these steps would increase employee commitment to their jobs and lower the risk that they would leave.

Employee communication promotes a sense of unity among the employees of an organization; this ultimately becomes a management discipline. Organizational management is expected to establish possible management policy to increase employee performance through internal communication channels. As an organization becomes complex, effective internal communication enhances employee performance as a result of clear management objectives being communicated (Erogluer, 2011). Fraser (2017) insists that a good communication is the strong thread that ties people, strategy, and commitment –in other words, the organizational structure together. The level of effective internal communication determines the employee engagement with serious managers. Once internal communication is effective, there will always be smooth way of achieving goals. Internal communication covers most activities which management expect to improve employee performance internally.

One glaring view is that while studying the impact of employee communication on organizational performance in Kenya, Otieno, Waiganjo, and Njeru found that communication allows the interchange of ideas and information within the company, which boosts productivity. This view was extended by Nanzushi (2015) who found that the effectiveness of communication between managers and employees as well as between employees and their coworkers, has a favorable

impact on employee performance. The levels of trust between employees and management rise with proper, consistent, and effective communication, which in turn improves staff performance. The fact that this study was conducted in the banking sector, leaves a space for research in the health sector sector.

Ershadi (2021) argues that as the internal communication function matures within the organization, then, it may come to play a wider role in facilitating conversations (upwards, downwards) and across the organization. Organizations increasingly see employee communication as playing a role in external reputation management. People at work communicate regardless of the intention of their leaders. There is communication on behalf of the organization and there is the day-to-day intercourse within work groups or between managers and subordinates. It should be noted that communication between employees is very often far more powerful than any communication from employer to employee. This is reinforced by Rajhans (2015) who emphasizes interpersonal communication in an organization. Large organizations have a long history of promoting a sense of unity among the employees of a company.

2.2.2 Employee Participation and Staff Productivity

Employee participation means that every employee is regarded as a unique human being, and is involved in helping the organization meet its goals (Nwoko & Emerole, 2017). Nachiket (2014) views employee participation as ‘a range of processes designed to engage the support, understanding and optimum contribution of all employees in an organization and their commitment to its objectives’ to enable them contribute to the continuous improvement and the ongoing success of their work. In endeavors to boost organizational proficiency, employee participation has been an interesting area of research (Lawler, 2010). Employee participation is based on the observation that taking part in goal-setting is associated with acceptance of and subsequent commitment to the goals set forth, which results in beneficial performance and attitude outcomes (Harzing & Ruysseveldt, 2014).

Odhong and Omolo (2014) contend that by incorporating workers individually and through unions, the result is improved productivity and positive employee relations. This resonates with the works of Nanzushi (2015) who argued that, for employee involvement and participation mechanisms to be effective, they must be well-established throughout the business and an integral part of daily operations. The largest barriers to effective employee voice, however, appear to be middle

managers who act as blockages out of choice or ignorance, a partial lack of employee excitement, and a lack of the skills required to design and run employee voice initiatives. In line with this, a study by Cheron (2018) found that the degree of productivity was found to be greatly increased by the employees' participation. This suggests that incorporating workers in decision-making through direct dialogue between staff members and their immediate supervisors, through the union as a collective voice for buy-in, and through joint work committees has a beneficial influence on organization productivity and growth. However, the study did not contextually look at participation as an employee relation strategy in regard to staff productivity thus, an indicative of the gap the current study sought to address.

According to Ojokuku and Sajuyigbe (2014), employee participation in decision making has been recognized as a managerial tool for improving organizational performance by striving for the shared goals of employees and managers. This is actualized by way of allowing workers' input in developing the mission statement, establishing policies and procedures, pay determination, promotion, and determining perks. According to Pyman (2015), the participation of employees in the organizational operations not only motivates them but also enables them to contribute more effectively and efficiently. Employees with high level of participation could be described as one whose job is the center of his/her life. As such, many theorists have hypothesized that employees with high level of participation will put forth substantial effort towards the achievement of organizational objectives and less likely to lead to turnover (Komal, 2013; Komal, Samina & Akbar, 2017).

2.2.3 Negotiations and Staff Productivity

According to Dawson (2016), negotiation is a process by which two parties, each with its own viewpoint and objectives, attempt to reach a mutually satisfactory result on a matter of common concern. Negotiation can also be defined as the interaction between two or more parties with divergent interests in order to reach an agreement (De Dreu & VanVianen, 2011). Negotiation is used to minimize conflict affecting individuals so as to maximize cooperation and keep conflict to acceptable levels, which in turn drives performance (Wall & Callister, 2015). This view is amplified by Management Guide (2016) that avers that negotiation as a discussion between two parties helps to find out the solution and for the purpose of reaching a joint agreement about differing needs or opinions. It involves using the art of 'persuasion' to get others to understand and

agree with your viewpoint. It works best when an individual has a win-win attitude. Negotiation takes place when two parties meet to reach an agreement concerning a proposition, such as a pay claim, one party has put to the other.

According to Olang (2017), there are several negotiation tactics that can be applied. These include Face-to-face tactic whereby a mutual confidence as a foundation for negotiation can be established; Persuading tactic which assumes using different methods and manners to win over partners and to reach a better negotiating position; Deceitfulness tactic which assumes presenting false data and arguments; Threat tactic is based on deterrence from the side which holds a better position, or has more power; Promise tactic is based on having a better position and more power, with the stronger side persuading the weaker that it will keep its promises; and Concession tactic which is the most important tactic in the negotiation strategy. All actors in the conflict count on both sides making a concession since negotiation increasingly gains importance as a popular and constructive way to manage conflict. De Dreu and Weingart (2013) assert that negotiators can help adversaries communicate with each other in many ways.

According to Zhu (2013), negotiation is an antecedent to employees in the organization to have constructive dialogues and which in turn influence employee's motivation and their performance more so the undertaking of responsibilities, the worker decision to stay or leave the firm and their decision to cooperate in the future. Employees who feel that are part of the firm are likely to discuss controversy issues compared to those who feel as if they are outsiders. This is in tandem with Forsyth (2019) who opines that negotiation as the techniques and procedures to conflict resolution helps promoting the amicable resolution to problems and build good employee relations. Through negotiation processes, members actively tell the rest of the group about their opposing goals or ideas in an effort to end group problems (Malin, 2012). This view is extended by Downie (2017) who conducted a study among large Canadian organizations and revealed employees equated negotiation with fairness since participation led to creation of shared values. Thus, employee involvement in negotiation to arrive at solutions to problem solving is key aspect in industrial relations. This study was however done in Canadian organisations, thus necessitated the same to be done in the health sector setting in Uganda to fill the literature gap

2.3 Staff Productivity

Staff productivity is measured by how successfully they are contributing to the accomplishment of the organization's vision, purpose, and objectives. It aids in determining if a person carries out his or her duties and obligations properly, and it also plays a crucial role in an organization's success (Mathis & Jackson, 2012). Various metrics for measuring employee productivity have been advanced by scholars, however, the most effective metrics for tracking employee productivity will vary depending on the organization and the various functions of the employees. The indicators of employee productivity used in this study include quality of work, which is defined by Byremo (2015) as the value of work delivered by an individual, team or organization. This can include the quality of task completion, interactions and deliverables. Another indicator of employee productivity used in this study is operational efficiency which is defined by Avolio et al. (2001) as the optimal use of available resources in order to achieve value added in the organization, value chain. Thus, the efficiency means the achievement of the goals at the lowest possible cost (Abdullah & Qattani, 2007). Timeliness has also been used as an indicator of employee productivity and refers to staff ability to complete tasks in the set time. In an organisation such as Old Mulago hospital, timeliness can be in terms of how fast nurses or medical practitioners attend to the patients.

Katua et al. (2014) discovered that human relations can enhance the performance of a firm; that firms ought to develop and document strategies for human relations with the object of enhancing both employee and organizational performance. A healthy working environment enables an employee have a positive psychological feeling towards their work. Employees tend to believe that they are valued at work and that their job is a good fit with their abilities and interests when they are recognized and rewarded for their input (Kossek et al., 2012). An employee with a positive attitude towards work will devote their effort in achievement of the organizational set targets which ultimately lead to better organizational performance. Managers are in position to create a safe working environment and good relationship with employees who in turn feel valued and conduct their duties diligently leading to better employee productivity.

2.4 Summary of the Literature Gap

From the literature reviewed, studies have been done relating to employee relations and performance. However, none of the above reviewed studies clearly examines the effect of

employee relations strategies on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital, indicating a geographical gap. A few studies done in relation to employee relations did not conceptualize employee relations variable in the context of employee communication, employee participation and negotiation; and staff productivity in the context of timeliness, quality of work and operational efficiency, which indicates a contextual gap. Further, the reviewed studies were mostly taken from different countries other than Uganda, yet generalization of the study findings is difficult due to differences in country contexts, thus, this study was instituted to close this gap by examining the effect employee relations strategies on staff productivity in the context of Uganda's health sector and in particular Old Mulago hospital.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed review of the literature related to the study and presented the theoretical review. In the next chapter, the researcher presents the methodology that will be used for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, study population, sample size selection, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, data quality assurance, data analysis, ethical considerations, and study limitations.

3.1 Research Design

Creswell (2009) defines a research design as a sketch used to answer the questions of when, where and how data is collected and analysed. This study adopted a case study research design, with a quantitative research approach. A case study design will be preferred because it is a very effective method of analysis that entails thorough and in-depth observation of a social unit (Daniel & Sam, 2011). The quantitative approach was chosen because it is more reliable and objective, and allows statistical analysis of the data collected (Creswell, 2014).

3.2 Study Population

Population is defined by Sunders (2011) as the entire set of case or group participants. Old Mulago hospital has a total population of 2076 staff (Ministry of Health, 2019). However, the study targeted accessible population of 160 staff from the medical department. This population was targeted because it was knowledgeable and had adequate understanding of the variables under study.

3.3 Sample Size Determination

Oso and Onen (2008) define a sample as part of the target population selected to represent it. The sample size of 113 was selected using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table that suggests a sample size given a study population.

Table 3.1: Sample size distribution

Category	Population	Sample size	Sampling Technique
Medical Department			
Medical officers	20	15	Simple random sampling
Senior health officers	20	15	Simple random sampling
Nurses/midwives	60	48	Simple random sampling
Allied health professionals	20	15	Simple random sampling
Intern doctors and nurses	40	20	Simple random sampling
Total	160	113	

3.4 Sample Technique

Sampling is the process of choosing a sufficient number of research units from a predetermined population (Phrasisombath, 2009). Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents to take part in the study. Simple random sampling involves selecting respondents from the population listing by chance (Amin, 2005). This technique was used because it allows everyone an equal chance of being selected to take part in the study, thus, it reduces biasness (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009).

3.5 Data Types and Sources

Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. A primary data source is a source from which data is obtained for the first time (Persaud, 2010). Primary data included data from respondents in the field and was collected using self-administered questionnaires. Primary data was used because it enables the researcher to communicate directly with the information source and obtain data that is original and has not been altered to support particular hypotheses (Amin, 2005). On the other hand, a secondary source is one that offers information or data that is not entirely original (Galvan, 2013). A systematic literature review, which entails doing a thorough search for all pertinent publications on a topic matter, was conducted in order to acquire secondary data as suggested by Chen (2017). Secondary source was employed because it is flexible and the best option in situations when it is simple to access a network of data archives.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study used a questionnaire as a data collection method. According to Amin (2005), a questionnaire is a form that respondents fill out in writing and contains pertinent questions regarding the research problem being investigated and based on the study's objectives. Data from medical personnel was collected using this technique. The usage of questionnaire surveys was made possible by the fact that they allowed respondents time to consider their responses before responding. Additionally, it was a less expensive option (Sekaran, 2005).

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used a self-administered questionnaire as a data collection instrument. While using a questionnaire, the researcher developed a questionnaire for complete in writing, with closed ended questions covering various components of employee relations strategies and staff productivity. The items in the questionnaire were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 being

the strongest agreement and 1 being the strongest disagreement. The questionnaire also contained demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, education qualification and years in service. The use of a questionnaire was preferable since it allows for consistency in the manner in which questions are posed, resulting in responses that are more compatible (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

3.8 Data Quality Control

To ensure the quality of the data collected, steps were taken to ensure validity and reliability of the research tool.

3.8.1 Validity of Research Instruments

The researcher ensured validity of the research instruments by presenting the research instruments to two lecturers who were asked to comment on the items' applicability in order to ensure the study's validity. The researcher then computed a Content Validity Index (CVI) by dividing the number of items rated right with the total number items in the tool. Findings are indicated in table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Validity Test

Variable	Content Validity Index	Number of items
Employee communication	0.80	10
Employee participation	0.70	9
Negotiation	0.80	9
Staff productivity	0.85	15
Overall CVI	0.788	43

Source: *Researcher (2024)*

Results from table 3.2 indicate a content validity index of 0.788, which was above the acceptable threshold of 0.70 for social sciences, suggesting that the instrument was valid for the study as suggested by Oso and Onen (2008).

3.8.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability is the extent to which a study produces consistent results if conducted over and over again following the same procedure (Saunders, 2011). Reliability was measured by doing a pilot study on a sample of 10 respondents using a questionnaire, to establish consistence in their responses. Reliability analysis was then computed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 25, and findings are indicated in table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Employee communication	0.739	10
Employee participation	0.745	9
Negotiation	0.736	9
Staff productivity	0.765	15
Overall Cronbach's Alpha	0.746	43

Source: *Primary Data (2024)*

Results in the table 3.3 indicate an overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.746, above the acceptable threshold of ≥ 0.7 according to George and Malley (2003), thus instruments were reliable.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts and percentages for demographic characteristics of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were utilized to analyse respondents' perspectives on employee relations strategies and staff productivity. The association and the magnitude of the relationship between employee relations strategies and staff productivity were established using inferential statistics that is, Pearson correlation coefficient, and regression analysis.

3.10 Research Ethical Consideration

The researcher upheld the respondents' anonymity by maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents and the information provided. This was accomplished by providing them with guarantees that the data they submitted would only be used for academic reasons and that their identities would never be revealed to outside parties.

Respondents were asked to participate in the study on voluntary basis. Without any type of force, respondents actively participated in the survey. Everyone was treated with respect, including those who chose not to participate in the study or later change their minds.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

The study used only three constructs of employee relations strategies namely: employee communication, employee participation and negotiation, yet, there are other employee relations strategies that were not be studied such as compensation, mediation, arbitration and conciliation, among others. However, the study overcame this limitation by suggesting areas for further study to include others variables not included in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This study assessed the effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity in Public hospitals in Uganda: A case of Old Mulago Hospital Kampala. Specifically, sought to: establish the effect of employee communication strategy on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala; examine how employee participation strategy affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala; and establish the effect of negotiation strategy on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala. This chapter presents analyses and interprets the study findings. Data is presented using tables.

4.1 Analysis of Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 113 respondents, and a sample of 113 questionnaires were disseminated to the respondents, out of which 82 questionnaires were returned fully completed. This gave a response rate of 72.6%, which was excellent for the study as suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a 60% response rate is good whereas 70% and over is excellent.

4.2 Demographic Data

This section determines the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Demographic characteristics enabled the researcher ascertain whether the respondents had characteristics to make them better study participants. Findings are presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	43	51.2
	Female	39	48.8
	Total	82	100.0
Age	18 - 27 years	12	14.6
	28 - 37 years	42	51.2
	38 - 47 years	28	34.1
	Total	82	100.0
Education level	Diploma	13	15.9
	Bachelor's degree	46	56.1
	Master's degree	15	18.3

	Other qualifications	8	9.8
	Total	82	100.0
Time spent working at Mulago hospital	1-5 years	18	22.0
	6-10 years	40	48.8
	11- 15 years	15	18.3
	Above 15 years	9	11.0
	Total	82	100.0

Source: Field Data (2024)

Findings from table 4.1, show that 51.2% of the respondents were males and 48.8% were females. This implied that the number of males and females in the study were almost the same hence a representative of the sample study hence giving valid findings.

Findings also indicate that majority of the respondents 51.2% were between the age of 28 - 37, followed by 34.1% that were between the age of 38 - 47 and 14.6% were between the age of 18 - 27. This implied that the respondents were in their adult age thus, more informed and able to give valid information for data analysis hence valid findings.

The study findings in table 4.1 further show that majority of the respondents at 56.1% had a bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education, 18.3% had a master’s degree, 15.9% had a diploma and 9.8% had other qualifications. The results show that all the respondents had either Bachelor degree, diploma, or Master’s Degree implying that respondents were in position to understand the questions that were asked to them and respond accordingly leading informed and valid findings.

Regarding the time respondents had spent working at Mulago hospital, majority of the respondents accounting for 48.8% had working with Mulago for a period between 6 – 10 years, followed by 22% who had been worked with UCAA for 1 – 5 years, 18.3% had spent a period between 11 – 15 years and those who had spent above 15 years were 11%. The results show that majority of respondents had had experience since they had been working for above 5 years thus, they were able to give relevant answers for the study.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of study variables

This section looks at the descriptive statistics of the independent variable of the study which is Employee relations strategies. The independent variable was measured using employee communication, employee participation and negotiation. In order to get an understanding of how

employee relations strategies (employee communication, participation and negotiation) affect staff productivity, respondents were asked to give their opinions on statements related to the phenomenon using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not sure, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree. The results are interpreted using mean and standard deviation and summarized in tables. The mean is interpreted using the scale in the table below 4.2.

Table 4.2: Scale for interpreting Mean

Legend	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	very high
3.41-4.20	high
2.61-3.40	moderate
1.81-2.60	low
1.00-1.80	very low

Source: *Dawes (2008)*

4.3.1 Employee Communication and Staff Productivity

Results on effect of employee communication on staff productivity are presented in table 4.3

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics on employee communication and staff productivity

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The hospital management effectively communicates important information to me.	82	4.22	.455
I have access to reliable communication channels (e.g., email, intranet) for receiving information.	82	4.60	.563
My opinions and ideas are heard and respected by my supervisors or management.	82	2.44	.957
The communication from management within the hospital is clear and timely.	82	4.34	.697
I feel comfortable providing feedback or suggestions to my supervisors or the management team.	82	2.35	.519
There are established mechanisms or platforms for me to share my feedback or ideas with the hospital.	82	4.16	.575
The hospital management values and encourages staff feedback.	82	2.43	.522
My suggestions or concerns are addressed in a timely manner by the management	82	3.13	.828
There are regular opportunities for dialogue and open discussions within the organization.	82	2.51	.960
I feel well-informed about changes in policies, procedures, or other relevant matters within the hospital.	82	4.11	.472
Average Mean and Standard Deviation		3.429	0.655

Source: *Field Data (2024)*

From table 4.3, respondents were asked to give their opinions to which they strongly agree or disagree with statements regarding employee communication at Old Mulago hospital. The first statement required respondents to state whether the hospital management effectively communicates important information to the staff. This statement was largely responded to in agreement ($M=4.22$, $SD=0.455$). This implied that management communicates important information to the staff at Old Mulago hospital. Majority of the respondents also demonstrated agreement to the statements that: I have access to reliable communication channels (e.g., email, intranet) for receiving information ($M=4.60$, $SD=0.563$); I feel well-informed about changes in policies, procedures, or other relevant matters within the hospital ($M=4.11$, $SD=0.472$); and that the communication from management within the hospital is clear and timely ($M=4.34$ $SD=0.697$). This implied that the hospital staff have access to communication channels such as e-mails and management, through which they get clear and timely information regarding their work. It is important to keep employees informed of any changes in policy and other related matters as this, makes them aware of the new expectations and guidelines. It also prepares the mind of employees to new changes and helps them to accept and comply with new changes. These findings are in line with Deborah (2016) who argued that with effective communication systems in place, managers may provide precise, timely, and clear job instructions and receive feedback on their performance via a variety of channels.

Respondents were of the view that there are established mechanisms or platforms for employees to share feedback or ideas within the hospital ($M=4.16$, $SD=0.575$). However, the statement that “I feel comfortable providing feedback or suggestions to my supervisors or the management team”, was also largely responded to in disagreement ($M=2.35$, $SD=0.519$). There was also a disagreement from the respondents to the statements that: my opinions and ideas are heard and respected by my supervisors or management ($M=2.44$, $SD=0.957$); the hospital management values and encourages staff feedback ($M=2.43$, $SD=0.522$); and that my suggestions or concerns are addressed in a timely manner by the management ($M=3.13$, $SD=0.828$). This implied that there are established mechanisms through which employees can provide feedback or suggestion to the management, however, they do not feel comfortable to provide feedback and suggestions since they feel that their ideas are not respected and their issues responded to in a timely manner by the

management. Failure to allow employees to effectively voice out their concerns could affect employee – employer relations, which has a negative consequence on staff productivity. Employee feedback is an important aspect as it enables the management to know what employees think and feel of the organization, know what their concerns are, and come up with creative ways to improve employer – employee relations. This is in line with Thompson (2015) who argued that employees appreciate honest feedback and become motivated to improve their performance.

The statement requiring respondents to state whether there are regular opportunities for dialogue and open discussions with in the organisation, was largely responded to in disagreement as demonstrated by a low mean score (M=2.51, SD=0.960). This indicated that the staff at the hospital believe that they are not given opportunities for dialogue and open discussions to resolve their issues. On the contrary, it is imperative to note that dialoguing is vital in building effective employee relations in the organization. Through dialoguing, amicable solutions can be reached at, and this can be a basis for eliminating conflicts within the organization. This resonates with Thompson (2015) who opined that managers benefit through negotiations by receiving insightful input on ways to improve both their leadership styles and departmental operations, to build successful employee – employer relations.

There was an overall average mean score of 3.425 indicating that on average, respondents agreed that employee communication is used as a strategy for employee relations at Old Mulago hospital. The low standard deviation of 0.655 suggests that responses were consistent and there were few variations in the opinion of respondents regarding employee communication at Old Mulago hospital. It is imperative to note that employees will perform better if they are given regular, accurate information about their jobs such as updated technical instructions, targets, deadlines and feedback. Their commitment is also likely to be enhanced if they know what the organisation is trying to achieve and how they as individuals can influence decisions.

4.3.2 Employee Participation and Staff Productivity

Results on effect of employee communication on staff productivity are presented in table 4.4

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics on employee participation and staff productivity

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
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I am given opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect my work.	82	2.23	.768
My opinions and suggestions are valued when decisions are made within the organisation.	82	2.47	.573
I feel empowered to contribute ideas and suggestions to improve work processes and operations.	82	2.56	.523
The management of Mulago hospital actively seeks staff input when making important decisions.	82	4.38	.536
Overall, I believe that my participation in decision-making is encouraged and valued.	82	2.41	1.140
The hospital has initiatives or programs to foster employee engagement and participation.	82	3.71	.853
I feel connected and engaged with the organization's mission and objectives.	82	3.61	.926
There are platforms or activities that promote collaboration and teamwork among the staff at the hospital.	82	3.91	.971
This organisation recognizes and rewards staff contributions and achievements.	82	4.54	.526
Average Mean and Standard Deviation		3.215	0.729

Source: *Field Data (2024)*

From table 4.4, respondents were asked to give their views to which they strongly agree or disagree with statements the management of Mulago hospital actively seeks staff input when making important decisions (M=4.38, SD=0.536). However, there disagreement from majority of the respondents to the statements that: I am given opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect my work (M=2.23, SD=0.768); my opinions and suggestions are valued when decisions are made within the organization (M=2.47, SD=0.573); I feel empowered to contribute ideas and suggestions to improve work processes and operations (M=2.56, SD=0.523); and that overall, I believe that my participation in decision-making is encouraged and valued (M=2.41, SD=1.140). With majority of the respondents expressing disagreement to the statements, it implied that respondents believe that they are not participating in making decisions that affect them while at work. The standard deviation of 1.140 was high suggesting that responses of respondents were widely spread out from the mean, indicating lack of consensus among the respondents regarding whether their participation in decision making is encouraged and valued by the management. The findings with Gennard et al. (2016) who stressed the importance of employee participation and argued that employees will get better information about

the rationale for decisions, which can help them to understand decisions and reduce resistance to change. This can be attributed to the fact that employee participation encourages the relationship between managers and employees, and it also opens up the idea of accepting each other's ideas and makes the workplace a better place, which in turn drives performance.

On the other hand, respondents agreed to the statements that: the hospital has initiatives or programs to foster employee engagement and participation ($M=3.71$, $SD=0.853$); I feel connected and engaged with the organization's mission and objectives ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.926$); there are platforms or activities that promote collaboration and teamwork among the staff at the hospital ($M=3.91$, $SD=0.971$); and that this organisation recognizes and rewards staff contributions and achievements ($M=4.54$, $SD=0.526$). This implied that respondents agree that the hospital has initiatives or programs to foster employee engagement and participation. Employee engagement programs are effective in promoting participation within the organisation because they motivate employees, bring a sense of ownership, being valued, which improves their engagement levels. Rewarding employees for achieving certain goals and work targets is important as it drives their motivation, improves morale, and makes them willing to work hard and contribute ideas that can boost their performance. This resonates with Kossek et al. (2012) who argued that employees tend to believe that they are valued at work and that their job is a good fit with their abilities and interests when they are recognized and rewarded for their input.

There was an overall average mean score of 3.215, indicating that on average, respondents were of the view employee participation, however much being practiced as a strategy for employee relations is still lacking at Old Mulago hospital. The low standard deviation of 0.729 proposes that responses were consistent and there were few variations in the opinion of respondents regarding employee participation at Old Mulago hospital. It can be argued that employee participation is important as it gives employees a sense of belonging to the organization and as a result, they become more dependable, accept greater responsibility for their work and achieve better results. This agrees with Odhong and Omolo (2014) who contend that by incorporating workers individually and through unions, the result is improved performance and positive employee relations.

4.3.3 Negotiations and Staff Productivity

Results on effect of negotiations on staff productivity are presented in table 4.5

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics on negotiations and staff productivity

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am encouraged to provide input and express my opinions during negotiation processes.	82	4.52	.832
I feel that my perspectives and interests are considered during negotiations within the organisation.	82	2.32	.606
The hospital management values staff input and seeks to incorporate it into negotiation outcomes.	82	2.35	.674
I feel well-represented by labor unions or employee associations during negotiations.	82	4.68	.690
The staff representatives effectively advocate for staff interests during negotiation processes.	82	4.12	.455
The management of the hospital engages in fair and respectful collective bargaining with staff representatives.	82	2.59	.565
I believe that the negotiation outcomes reflect the concerns and needs of the staff.	82	2.42	1.044
The hospital management communicates information about ongoing negotiations.	82	4.62	.697
I am well-informed about the progress, decisions, and outcomes of negotiation processes.	82	4.51	.472
Average Mean and Standard Deviation		3.57	0.659

Source: *Field Data (2024)*

From table 4.5, respondents were asked to give their views to which they strongly agree or disagree with statements regarding negotiation as an employee relations strategy at Old Mulago hospital. There was agreement from majority of the respondents to the statements that stated that: I am encouraged to provide input and express my opinions during negotiation processes (M=4.52, SD=0.832). On the other hand, there was disagreement to the statements that: I feel that my perspectives and interests are considered during negotiations within the organization (M=2.32, SD=0.606); and that the hospital management values staff input and seeks to incorporate it into negotiation outcomes (M=2.35, SD=0.674). This implied that respondents believe that they are encouraged to provide input during negotiation processes, however, their input is not valued by the management and does not incorporate them into the negotiation outcomes.

Respondents expressed agreement to the statements that stated that: I feel well-represented by labor unions or employee associations during negotiations (M=4.68, SD=0.690); and that the staff representatives effectively advocate for staff interests during negotiation processes (M=4.12,

SD=0.455). This implied that employee representatives are involved in negotiations through collective bargaining agreements, where they advocate for employees' interests.

On the other hand, respondents expressed disagreement to the statements that: management of the hospital engages in fair and respectful collective bargaining with staff representatives (M=2.59, SD=0.565); and that I believe that the negotiation outcomes reflect the concerns and needs of the staff (M=2.42, SD=1.044). This indicated that respondents are of the view that the management does not engage in fair and respectful collective bargaining agreements and the negotiation outcomes do not reflect the concerns and the needs of the staff. This contradicts the findings of Downie (2017) who stressed the importance of engaging in fair negotiations and opined that employees value negotiation with fairness since participation leads to creation of shared values. Thus, employee involvement in negotiation to arrive at solutions to problem solving is key aspect in industrial relations.

Respondents expressed agreement to the statements that: the hospital management communicates information about ongoing negotiations (M=4.62, SD=0.697); I am well-informed about the progress, decisions, and outcomes of negotiation processes (M=4.51, SD=0.472). This implied that respondents were of the view that employees receive communication during negotiations processes. Communicating outcomes from the negotiations is also key as it informs employees what resolutions have been taken to improve their relations. It is important to consider that the outcomes of the negotiation can improve relations or worsen relations if the outcomes are not well sought or are poorly communicated. This agrees with Laddha et al. (2012) who opined that in any negotiation exercise the outcome will either promote group cohesiveness or buildup of tensions. It is thus important to clearly communicate the outcomes of the negotiations in a way that is well understood by the employees.

There was an overall average mean score of 3.455 indicating that on average, respondents agreed that negotiations are used as employee relations strategy at Old Mulago hospital. The low standard deviation of 0.659 suggests that responses were consistent and there were few variations in the opinion of respondents regarding negotiation at Old Mulago hospital. It is important to note that negotiation is key in building employee relations since it helps to secure a consensus in resolving conflicts by making sure all members understand the reasons behind the compromises made by individual members. Creating good relations among the employees and with their supervisors in

turn drives improvement in staff performance. In line with, Wall and Callister (2015) purported that negotiation is used to minimize conflict affecting individuals so as to maximize cooperation and keep conflict to acceptable levels, which in turn drives performance.

4.4 Staff Productivity

Results staff productivity e are presented in table 4.6

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics for staff productivity

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quality of work			
I endeavor to consistently produce work of high quality	82	4.40	.518
I pay attention to detail in my work to ensure accuracy	82	4.04	.711
I produce work that is free of errors meeting the required standards	82	3.91	.971
I often provide suggestions to enhance the quality of services	82	4.54	.526
I take pride in delivering work that meets or exceeds expectations	82	4.05	.494
Average mean and standard deviation		4.188	0.644
Operational efficiency			
I effectively prioritize tasks to ensure efficient operations.	82	4.41	.543
I am proactive in identifying and implementing process improvements.	82	4.06	.635
I am able to meet deadlines and deliver work in a timely manner.	82	3.98	.889
I effectively utilize resources to optimize operational efficiency.	82	4.28	.774
I collaborate with colleagues to streamline workflows and minimize delays.	82	4.23	.790
Average mean and standard deviation		4.192	0.726
Timeliness			
I always arrive for duty in time to start my work	82	4.07	.409
I always start my work in time every day	82	4.00	.816
I endeavored to meet deadlines as set by supervisors	82	3.84	.793
I sometimes worked beyond the specified time to attendant to patients	82	3.85	.970
I attended to my work with speed and accuracy	82	3.79	1.003
Average mean and standard deviation		3.91	0.798
Overall Average Mean and Standard Deviation		4.103	0.722

Source: *Field Data (2024)*.

Findings from table 4.6 indicate that majority of the respondents agreed to the statements that: I consistently produce work of high quality and accuracy (M=4.40, SD=0.518); I pay attention to detail in my work to ensure accuracy (M=4.04, SD=0.711); I actively seek feedback and make improvements to enhance quality (M=3.91, SD=0.971); I follow established quality control processes and procedures (M=4.54, SD=0.526); I take pride in delivering work that meets or exceeds expectations (M=4.05, SD=0.494). The average mean scores of 4.188 indicates that respondents agreed that staff productivity has been improving in terms of quality of work produced. The low standard deviation of 0.644 indicates that there were minimal varying responses regarding quality of work produced by staff at Old Mulago hospital.

Respondents also demonstrated agreement to the statements that: I effectively prioritize tasks to ensure efficient operations (M=4.41, SD=0.543); I am proactive in identifying and implementing process improvements (M=4.06, SD=0.635); I am able to meet deadlines and deliver work in a timely manner (M=3.98, SD=0.889); I effectively utilize resources to optimize operational efficiency (M=4.28, SD=0.774); I collaborate with colleagues to streamline workflows and minimize delays (M=4.23, SD=0.790). The aggregate mean score of 4.192 indicates that respondents agreed that there has been improvement in staff productivity in terms of efficiency of operations at Old Mulago hospital

Regarding timeliness, majority of the respondents expressed agreement to the statements that stated that: I always arrive for duty in time to start my work (M=4.07, SD=0.409); I always start my work in time every day (M=4.00, SD=0.816); I endeavored to meet deadlines as set by supervisors (M=3.84, SD=0.793); I sometimes worked beyond the specified time to attend to patients (M=3.85, SD=0.970); I attended to my work with speed and accuracy (M=3.79, S=1.003). The average mean score of 3.91 was high indicating that respondents on average, agreed that there has been improvement in staff productivity in terms of timeliness. The low standard deviation of 0.798 indicates that there were minimal varying responses regarding timeliness by the staff at Old Mulago hospital.

CHAPTER FIVE
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Correlation Analysis

To establish the relationship between employee relations strategies and staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital, a Pearson correlation analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 25. The results of this test are presented in table 4.7

Table 5.1: Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient for the relationship among the study variables

		Employee Communication	Employee Participation	Negotiation	Staff Productivity
Employee Communication	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	82			
Employee Participation	Pearson Correlation	.031	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.780			
	N	82	82		
Negotiation	Pearson Correlation	.482**	.506**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	82	82	82	
Staff Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.504**	.401**	.609**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	82	82	82	82

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

Source: *Field Data (2024)*

Table 5.1 shows the matrix of Pearson’s correlation coefficient for the study variables. In the first place, the study tested the relationship between employee communication and staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital and found a significant positive relationship between the study variables ($r = .504^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). The implication of the correlation coefficient is that with better employee communication strategies, staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital is said to improve. This can be attributed to the fact that communication enables employees to have a clear direction of the organization, have a clear grasp of what is expected of them in terms of job description, and creates harmony within the organization, which ultimately improves staff performance. The finding is in agreement with Ngui (2016) who purported that there is a significant positive relationship between managers' and employees' quality of communication and performance.

The study also tested the relationship between employee participation and staff productivity and found a significant positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.401^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This implied that employee participation significantly improves staff productivity at old Mulago

hospital. In line with, Cheron (2012) found that the degree of productivity was found to be greatly increased by the employees' participation. This suggests that incorporating workers in decision-making through direct dialogue between staff members and their immediate supervisors, and through joint work committees has a beneficial influence on organization productivity and growth.

The study further tested the relationship between negotiation and staff productivity and found a significant positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.609^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This implied that negotiation significantly contributes to staff productivity, where an improvement made in employee negotiations at Old Mulago hospital leads to improvement in staff productivity. This can be attributed to the fact that negotiation as a conflict resolution strategy helps to find amicable solutions to pressing issues, create harmony and develop good relations which consequently improves staff productivity. The finding aligns with Okoth (2014) opined that conflict resolution strategies of negotiation are effective in increasing performance.

5.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

In order to determine the extent to which employee relations strategies (employee communication, employee participation and negotiation) affect staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are summarized in table 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

Table 5.2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.680 ^a	.462	.441	.13226

a. Predictors: (Constant), Negotiation, Employee Communication, Employee Participation

Table 5.2 shows an adjusted R square of 0.441 indicating that 44.1% of the change in staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital can jointly be explained by the change in the predictor variables (employee communication, employee participation and negotiation), while the remaining 55.9% can be explained by other factors not included in this study.

Table 5.3: ANOVA Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.171	3	.390	22.313	.000 ^b
	Residual	1.364	78	.017		
	Total	2.535	81			

a. Dependent Variable: Staff Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Negotiation, Employee Communication, Employee Participation

Source: *Field Data (2024)*

Findings of the Analysis of Variance indicate a significant value of 0.000, thus the regression model accurately predicts the effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity.

Table 5.4: Summary of multiple regression coefficients results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.038	.385		2.694	.009
	Employee Communication	.245	.072	.336	3.400	.001
	Employee Participation	.171	.078	.221	2.203	.031
	Negotiation	.332	.114	.335	2.919	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Staff Performance

Source: *Field Data (2024)*

Table 5.4 indicates that employee communication has a statistically significant positive effect on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital (beta = 0.336, P =0.001). This implied that employee communication significantly affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital by 33.6%. Findings also show that employee participation has a statistically significant positive effect on staff productivity (beta = 0.221, P =0.031), implying that employee participation affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital by 22.1%. Findings further indicate that negotiation has a statistically significant positive effect on staff productivity (beta = 0.335, P =0.005). This implied that negotiation as an employee relations strategy significantly affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital by 33.5%. The general implication of the findings is that all the predictor variables (employee communication, employee participation and negotiation) are significant contributors of staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital, with the employee communication being the biggest contributor, followed by negotiation and lastly employee participation according to this study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This section presents summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study findings and suggests areas for further research.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The primary objective of this study was to assess the effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity at Old Mulago Hospital Kampala. Specifically, the study sought to: establish the effect of employee communication strategy on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala; examine how employee participation strategy affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala; and establish the effect of negotiation strategy on staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital Kampala. The study findings indicate that employee communication ($r = 0.504$, $p < 0.05$); employee participation ($r = 0.401$, $p < 0.05$) and negotiation ($r = 0.609$, $p < 0.05$) are significant and positively correlated with staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital. The adjusted R^2 is 0.441, indicating that 44.1% of the variation in staff productivity can jointly be explained by employee communication, employee participation and negotiations as integral components of employee relations strategies at Old Mulago hospital. The correlation findings were also supported by regression results which showed that: employee communication ($\beta = 0.336$, $P = 0.001$); employee participation ($\beta = 0.221$, $P = 0.031$); and negotiation ($\beta = 0.335$, $P = 0.005$), significantly predict staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital. The general implication of the findings is that all the predictor variables (employee communication, employee participation and negotiation) are significant contributors of staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital, with the employee communication being the biggest contributor by 33.6%, followed by negotiation by 33.5% and lastly employee participation by 22.1% according to this study.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 Employee Communication and Staff Productivity

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between employee communication and staff productivity. Consequently, the study concludes that employee communication significantly affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital. Thus, implementation of good communication

strategies leads to an increase in staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital at an Average mean of 3.429 and 33.6%.

6.2.2 Employee Participation and Staff Performance

Findings indicated a significant positive relationship between employee participation and staff productivity. Accordingly, the study concludes that employee participation is a significant positive contributor to staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital. Improving employee participation leads to improvement in staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital at an Average mean of 3.215 and 22.1%.

6.2.3 Negotiations and Staff Performance

The study found a significant positive relationship between negotiation and staff productivity. The study concludes that negotiation significantly affects staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital at an Average mean of 3.57 and 33.5%.

. Negotiations help to build employee relations by securing a consensus in resolving conflicts which in turn drives staff productivity high.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Employee Communication and Staff Performance

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are suggested to improve employee communication and staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital:

The management of Mulago hospital should offer training programs for managers and supervisors to enhance their communication skills, both in one-on-one interactions and within teams. This will enable them to provide clear job instructions, constructive feedback, and regular updates on organizational goals and objectives, leading to improved staff productivity by an Average mean of 3.429 and 33.6%.

The management of Mulago hospital should provide more scope for employees' voice to effectively communicate their concerns to management and build good employee relations that can foster staff productivity. Employees demonstrate higher levels of productivity if the work

environment is one in which they have a voice in the sense that they can share their concerns, opinions and ideas with their employers.

6.3.2 Employee Participation and Staff Performance

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are suggested to improve employee participation and staff productivity at Old Mulago hospital:

The management of Mulago hospital needs to encourage a culture of employee involvement by establishing mechanisms for direct dialogue between staff members and their supervisors. Implement joint work committees or team meetings to allow employees to participate in decision-making processes, share their knowledge, and contribute ideas to improve work processes and operations.

The management of Mulago hospital needs to continue empowering employees to be involved in matters that affect them. By involving employees in decisions that affect them, they will feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes, leading to easier implementation and increased dedication to the organization. This empowerment will also make work more interesting and satisfying for employees, resulting in improved productivity by an Average mean of 3.215 and 22.1%.

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6.3.3 Negotiations and Staff Performance

There is need for the management of Mulago hospital, to empower their staff to effectively advocate for their interests and engage in constructive collective bargaining agreements. Building employees' negotiation capabilities will enable them to find amicable solutions to conflicts, promote cooperation, and create better working relationships, ultimately leading to improved staff productivity by an Average mean of 3.57 and 33.5%.

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There is also need by management of the hospital to foster transparent communications during and after negotiations. Ensure that employees' opinions are considered and incorporated into negotiation outcomes. Clear and open communication about the results of negotiations will promote fairness, trust, and a sense of shared values among employees. It will also help them understand the resolutions that have been taken to improve employee relations.

6.4 Areas for further study

The study was geographically limited since it was only conducted at Old Mulago hospital. Further study should be done by other researchers in other government hospitals, to equally find out the effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity.

The study used three constructs of employee relations strategies namely: employee communication, employee participation and negotiation, yet, there are other employee relations strategies that were not studied such as compensation, mediation, arbitration and conciliation, among others. Thus, further study should be done to include other employee relations strategies to get a detailed understanding of effect of employee relations strategies on staff productivity in government hospitals in Uganda.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i: Questionnaire for staff

Dear respondent

I am Murangira Tanazio Hillary a student of Uganda Christian pursuing a Masters of Public Administration. As a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of this degree, I am conducting a study titled: “**Employee Relations Strategies and Staff productivity, using a case study of Old Mulago hospital.**” You have been selected to participate in this study; your views will be treated with uttermost confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes. Thank you in advance for your cooperation

PART 1: Respondent’s Bio Data

1. Gender

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

2. Education Level

- 1. Diploma
- 2. Bachelor’s Degree
- 3. Master’s Degree
- 4. Other Qualifications

3. 4. Time of work/ Experience

- 1. 1- 5Years
- 2. 6- 10 years
- 3. 11-15years
- 4. Above 15 years

PART II: SECTION B: Employee relations Strategies

For the statements below, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by ticking among the alternatives, using a likert scale where 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Not sure, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree

No.	Scale	SA	A	NS	D	SD
	Employee communications					
EC1	The hospital management effectively communicates important information to me.	5	4	3	2	1
EC2	I have access to reliable communication channels (e.g., email, intranet) for receiving information.	5	4	3	2	1
EC3	I feel well-informed about changes in policies, procedures, or other relevant matters within the hospital.	5	4	3	2	1
EC4	The communication from management within the hospital is clear and timely.	5	4	3	2	1
EC5	I feel comfortable providing feedback or suggestions to my supervisors or the management team.	5	4	3	2	1
EC6	There are established mechanisms or platforms for me to share my feedback or ideas with the hospital.	5	4	3	2	1
EC7	The hospital management values and encourages staff feedback.	5	4	3	2	1
EC8	My suggestions or concerns are addressed in a timely manner by the management	5	4	3	2	1
EC9	There are regular opportunities for dialogue and open discussions within the organization.	5	4	3	2	1
EC10	My opinions and ideas are heard and respected by my supervisors or management.	5	4	3	2	1

Employee Participation						
EP1	I am given opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect my work.	5	4	3	2	1
EP2	My opinions and suggestions are valued when decisions are made within the organisation.	5	4	3	2	1
EP3	I feel empowered to contribute ideas and suggestions to improve work processes and operations.	5	4	3	2	1
EP4	The management of Mulago hospital actively seeks staff input when making important decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
EP5	Overall, I believe that my participation in decision-making is encouraged and valued.	5	4	3	2	1
EP6	The hospital has initiatives or programs to foster employee engagement and participation.	5	4	3	2	1
EP7	I feel connected and engaged with the organization's mission and objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
EP8	There are platforms or activities that promote collaboration and teamwork among the staff at the hospital.	5	4	3	2	1
EP9	This organisation recognizes and rewards staff contributions and achievements.	5	4	3	2	1
Negotiations						
N1	I am encouraged to provide input and express my opinions during negotiation processes.	5	4	3	2	1
N 2	I feel that my perspectives and interests are considered during negotiations within the organisation.	5	4	3	2	1
N 3	The hospital management values staff input and seeks to incorporate it into negotiation outcomes.	5	4	3	2	1
N4	I feel well-represented by labor unions or employee associations during negotiations.	5	4	3	2	1
N5	The staff representatives effectively advocate for staff interests during negotiation processes.	5	4	3	2	1
N6	The management of the hospital engages in fair and respectful collective bargaining with staff representatives.	5	4	3	2	1
N7	I believe that the negotiation outcomes reflect the concerns and needs of the staff.	5	4	3	2	1
N8	The hospital management effectively communicates information about ongoing negotiations.	5	4	3	2	1
N9	I am well-informed about the progress, decisions, and outcomes of negotiation processes.	5	4	3	2	1

PART III: Staff Productivity

No.	Scale	SA	A	NS	D	SD
	Quality of work					
SP1	I endeavor to consistently produce work of high quality	5	4	3	2	1
SP2	I pay attention to detail in my work to ensure accuracy	5	4	3	2	1
SP3	I produce work that is free of errors meeting the required standards	5	4	3	2	1
SP4	I often provide suggestions to enhance the quality of services	5	4	3	2	1
SP5	I take pride in delivering work that meets or exceeds expectations	5	4	3	2	1
	Timeliness					
SP6	I always arrive for duty in time to start my work	5	4	3	2	1
SP7	I always start my work in time every day	5	4	3	2	1
SP8	I endeavored to meet deadlines as set by supervisors	5	4	3	2	1
SP9	I sometimes worked beyond the specified time to attendant to patients	5	4	3	2	1
SP10	I attended to my work with speed and accuracy	5	4	3	2	1
	Operational efficiency					
SP11	I effectively prioritize tasks to ensure efficient operations.	5	4	3	2	1
SP12	I am proactive in identifying and implementing process improvements.	5	4	3	2	1
SP13	I am able to meet deadlines and deliver work in a timely manner.	5	4	3	2	1
SP14	I effectively utilize resources to optimize operational efficiency.	5	4	3	2	1
SP15	I collaborate with colleagues to streamline workflows and minimize delays.	5	4	3	2	1

***** *Thank You for Your Time******

Appendix 1i: Table for determining sample size from a given population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384