

## ABSTRACT

The creation of Local Governments in Uganda was envisaged to bring increased quantity and quality of services nearer to the communities, however, there is an ongoing debate on how this can be achieved as service delivery still remains a challenge. This study was undertaken to investigate the relationship between change management practices and the performance of selected local governments in Eastern Uganda. Change management practices (executive support, effective communication and employee involvement) constituted the independent variable, while performance of selected local governments (quantity of service and quality of service) represented the dependent variable. The study was guided by three research objectives and three research hypotheses. Pragmatic philosophy, cross-sectional research design was adopted using mixed approaches. Data was collected from 36 local governments, using 268 participants as unit of inquiry for quantitative data and 5 informants for qualitative. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS computer software version 22. Pearson product moment correlation and regression results were used to test the research hypotheses and the influence of the predictor on the outcome respectively. Qualitative data analysis was done using thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that executive support, effective communication and employee involvement ( $r = .464$ ,  $P \leq .01$ ), ( $r = .757$ ,  $P \leq .01$ ) and ( $r = .362$ ,  $P \leq .05$ ) respectively have a strong positive relationship with performance of selected local governments in Eastern Uganda. The findings also revealed that variation in all the independent variables combined caused up to 56.7% variation in performance. The study concludes that effective communication is the key contributor to performance of local governments in Eastern Uganda. It is therefore recommended that stakeholders need to critically pay attention to change management practices especially effective communication so as to improve performance of Local Governments.

**Key words:** Change management, Executive support, Effective communication, Employee involvement, Performance, Local Governments, Eastern Uganda