

THE EFFECTS OF LOGISTICS SUPPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF
CUSTOMER SERVICE STAFF: (CASE STUDY: UMEME UGANDA)

BY
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and to the best of my knowledge, it has never been presented for a degree in any other university.

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Declaration by the supervisor

This project has been submitted with my approval as university supervisor

Dr Nyaboga Signature..... Date.....
Associate Dean-School of Business and Management

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my late grand mother, Sile, who laid foundation for my academic life and to Kibiwott Robert who provided me with all the support I needed to accomplish this study.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

1. CO Commercial Officer
2. DV Dependable variable
3. IDV Independent Variable
4. ITV Intervening Variable
5. No Number
6. SCO Senior Commercial Officer
7. SWOT Strength, weakness, opportunity and threats
8. SZM Sub Zone Manager
9. TS Technical Supervisor
10. UEDCL Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited
11. UETCL Uganda Electricity Transmission Company
12. ZE Zone Engineer
13. ZM Zone Manager

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of logistics support on the performance of customer service staff. While Umeme standard for customer care was prompt and efficient response to customer complaints, there seemed to be difficulty in meeting this standard due to constraints in logistics support. The study focused particularly on what customer service staff felt about the logistics support that was provided for their work.

Through literature review the key concepts of logistics development and customer service were defined and explained. Customer service was described from the perspective of internal and external customers. The relationship between logistics support and performance of customer service staff was described in terms of facilitating the capacity of the staff output/productivity as well as motivating them in their performance.

The research design was a case study of Umeme electricity distribution service. Self administered questionnaires and review of written documents were the data collection methods used in the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed. Most of the data was presented in form of table and some were presented in form of charts. The study population was the staff of Umeme limited and the target population was the electricity distribution staff.

The study revealed that the logistics support had a strong impact on the performance of customer service staff. Bottlenecks in logistics support had an adverse effect on the performance of customer service staff in terms of both their output/productivity and their motivation. Some components of logistics support were inadequate for effective customer service. Efficiency of the use of available logistics support seemed to be high because they rarely or never remain idle. Lack of logistic support reduces staff output/productivity, increases anxiety/stress among staff and causes them to abandon work and wait for solution from their superiors.

A number of measures were recommended and suggested to reduce the bottlenecks in logistics support and thereby improve the performance of the customer service staff. The result of the study implied that the logistics support system should be critically reviewed with the aim of streamlining it to improve the performance of electricity distribution staff.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The research proposal was for a study of effects of logistics support on the performance of customer service staff of Umeme limited to deliver service to their customers. The staff of Umeme limited are well known for electricity distribution service. However, the staff had a time expressed feelings of frustration over difficulties they faced in trying to secure the logistics support required for service delivery. The logistics available to Umeme staff did not always seem to be commensurate with the level of service expected of them. On the other hand managers sometimes wondered whether their staff did not simply fail to make optimal use of available logistic. The staff were expected to use logistic more efficiently and effectively. The idea of the study arose from a desire to find out the extend to which logistic support affects the performance of Umeme customer service staff.

1.2 Background

The focus of the background helps to look at the operations of Umeme limited in relation to effects of logistics support on the performance of customer service staff. There is need to identify the brief history of Umeme limited and the responsibilities of the company as far as its services are concerned. Umeme is a utility company with the mandate to operate and provide electricity distribution service in Uganda on a sound commercial and viable basis.

Umeme is the sole distributor of electricity network service in Uganda. Umeme limited is a Ugandan registered company owned by Globeleg limited United Kingdom. Globeleg is therefore entrusted with management and operation of the electricity distribution network under a twenty (20) year concession leased period from the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL). The concession date was 01st march 2005. Umeme buys power supply from Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL).

Umeme has a wide range of customers, both domestic and industrial. The total numbers of customers served by the company is about 270,000 and are billed weekly on cycle

basis. Electricity distribution or electrification involves such activities as connection or re-connection of electricity supply, installation of electricity meters, replacement of cable wires and rotten poles. The mission statement of Umeme is to improve the relationship between the electricity distribution utility and its customers, to improve the quality of supply to customers, and to re-establish the financial viability of Uganda's distribution business. The vision is to be the leading East African electricity distribution company by 2010 by any measure.

Customers expect prompt and effective response by Umeme staff whenever their service is needed. The direct implication of this customer expectation is strong pressure on the electricity distribution staff to be a high state of readiness to deliver service. Umeme has a system of providing logistics support to staff for service delivery. The logistic elements required for electricity distribution service include transport and communication; materials, i.e. electricity meters, transformers safety materials and tools such as spanners, screws. Availability of materials and tools, means of transport and communication can be a critical factor in service delivery especially when prompt and effective responsiveness is a key measure of performance. There might be other critical success factors in the performance of the electricity distribution staff apart from the logistics support made available to staff, such as their remuneration terms, conditions of service and levels of education and training as well as the management policies and leadership style in Umeme. However, this study focused mainly on the relationship between logistics support and the performance of electricity distribution staff. The particular issue under study was the effects of logistics support on the performance of the electricity distribution staff.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Umeme's existing mechanisms for logistics support seemed to constrain the capacity of staff for effective service delivery. While the Umeme performance standard for customer service was effective response to customer complaints promptly and efficiently, apparently the actual performance in electricity distribution seemed to have felt short of the standard. Managers and supervisors who were involved in electricity distribution service were often faced with situations of shortages of materials, inadequate tools;

inadequate maintenance of motor vehicles; inadequate means of transport and communication systems.

This study was prompted by the researcher's concern over the aforementioned problem situations and how they impact on staff performance. The central issue was the extent to which the existing logistical support constrained the performance of the electricity distribution staff. Performance might also be affected by other factors like remuneration, working conditions, training, management policies and leadership style. However, for the purposes of this study such factors were set aside because the focus was on the effects of logistics support on the performance of the electricity distribution staff.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General objective

To examine the relationship between logistics support and the performance of electricity distribution service staff in Umeme limited.

1.4.2 Specific objective

To identify the bottlenecks in logistics support experience by Umeme distribution staff

To examine how efficiently the logistics support available for Umeme distribution work is used by the staff.

To examine how lack of logistics support affects the Umeme distribution staff

To determine measures to reduce the bottlenecks in logistics support for Umeme distribution service.

1.5 Research questions

- 1) What bottlenecks in logistics support do Umeme electricity distribution staff experience?
- 2) How efficiently is the available logistics support available for electricity distribution work used by the staff?
- 3) How does lack of logistics support affect the electricity distribution staff?
- 4) What measures can reduce the bottlenecks in logistics support or electricity distribution service?

1.7 Scope of the study

1.7.1 Physical Area

The study was carried out in Umeme limited, Kampala district whose geographic coverage include the whole of Kampala district with area offices in Banda, Kampala central, Wandegaya, Najjanankumi, Natete, Bugolobi, Kabalagala, Nakulabye, Entebbe and Mpigi. However, due to time constraint, the study was specifically undertaken with the electricity distribution staff attached to the head quarters offices located on the 2nd and 6th floors of the Rwenzori house, located opposite the High court buildings in Kampala.

1.7.2 Subject of the Study

The study is about the effects of logistics support on the performance of Umeme electricity distribution staff. It is focusing on how the mechanisms for providing logistics support affected the capacity of electricity staff to deliver service. The whole study is concerned with internal customer management as a means of achieving the goal of effective customer service.

1.7.3 Target Population

The target population comprised the Umeme staff who played a direct role in electricity distribution service. These staff fell into two specific categories: the field staff who actually performed electricity distribution activities on a daily basis and the staff who routinely supervised the field staff who perform electricity distribution activities.

1.7.4 Period

The study focused on the situation prevailing at the time of the study as the springboard to the way forward. Some data from the years 2005 and 2006 that were relevant to the prevailing situation was referred to in order to put the situation in the context of recent developments.

1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure I is a schematic diagram of the conceptual framework of the relationships between the main variables of the study. The basic premise is that logistics support has

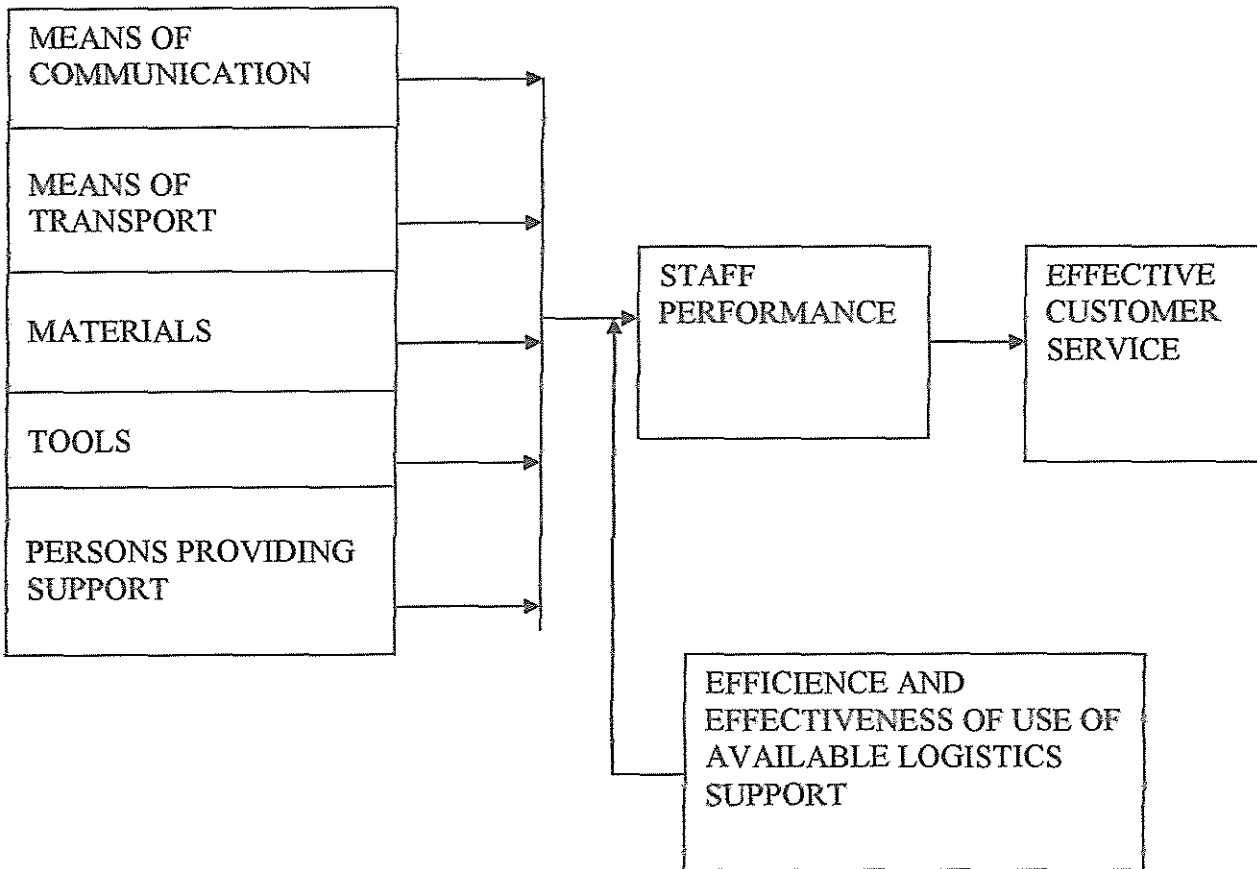
significant effects on the capacity of the staff to deliver service and is hereby a critical success factor in customer service staff performance.

Logistics support is the Independent Variable (IDV), efficiency and effectiveness of use of available logistics is the Intervening Variable (ITV) whereas staff performance is the Dependent Variable (DV).

Logistics support for electricity distribution service has five components:

1. **MEANS OF COMMUNICATION:** This variable denotes the methods of conveying information about electricity distribution. This include the means of conveying oral, written and graphic information by face-to-face meeting, telephone, two-way radio, paper and e-mail.
2. **MATERIALS:** This variable denotes the physical items that the electricity distribution staff install or fix on the distribution infrastructure by way of maintenance, repairs and extension of service. Materials include electricity meters, poles and related items.
3. **TOOLS:** This variable denotes the implements that the staff use to do electricity distribution work. These include spanners, screw drivers, hacksaws and machines such as compressors.
4. **MEANS OF TRANSPORT:** This variable denotes the vehicles used for the conveyance of staff, materials, equipment and tools. Motorcycles and pick-up trucks are the commonly used.
5. **PERSONS PROVIDING SUPPORT:** this variable denotes the designated Umeme officers who have specific logistics support roles such as items requisitions, approval of requisitions, issue or release and delivery of items.

Fig 1
LOGISTICS SUPPORT
COMPONENTS



EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF USE OF AVAILABLE LOGISTICS denotes how well the available logistics items are used for customer service. The issue of concern is whether or not Electricity meters, (materials), tools, and means of communication and transport are optimally used when made available for the electricity distribution work.

STAFF PERFORMANCE denotes the efficiency and effectiveness with which the staff execute their electricity distribution work. This entails the electricity distribution staff having at their disposal the logistics support they need to deliver a good service to their customers.

Logistics support may itself provide a strong positive motivation for the staff to try to be more effective in service delivery. Staff performance is a variable of internal customer management. It is a means to the desired goal of **EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE**, which is the final output of the electricity distribution staff and is the ultimate purpose for

which they are provided with logistic support service delivery, customer service and customer care are synonymous items in this study.

1.8 Significance of the study

The findings of the study should enable managers of Ugandan and other African urban electricity utilities to appreciate better the importance of logistics management in the performance of staff in service delivery. More specifically managers of Umeme limited should be able to improve staff performance for more effective service delivery by streamlining the provision of logistics support. The experience of Umeme electricity staff as logistics users was given prominence in the study. In addition to addressing a management problem, the study should also generate more knowledge on the relationship between logistics management and performance management.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are various factors that can affect the service delivery performance of an organization. For instance, low performance of the Uganda civil service at one time was attributed to its being "...over-centralized, ill-equipped, over-sized, grossly under paid, demoralized and demotivated to such an extent that it has become uncommitted and unresponsive to public needs" (Report of the Public Service Review and Reorganization Commission (1990 p.16). An organization that is "ill-equipped" does not have adequate logistics to deliver the services it is meant to. This literature review highlights the impact of logistics support on the performance of customer service staff by attempting to define the concepts of logistics management and customer service performance in general

2.1 KEY CONCEPTS

Logistics management and customer service

2.2.1 Logistics Management

Logistics management provides customer service with facilities to enable them to deliver service to their customers. Customer service staff might be well trained and offered fair terms and conditions of employment but not be able to perform effectively unless they are effectively provided with logistics support. Therefore logistics should be seen as one of the critical factors of the performance of customer service staff. Being the provider of electricity services to the public over an extensive area, Umeme is concerned with delivering a continuous and reliable service to its customers. Therefore, there must be a logistics system in place to ensure there is sufficient logistics support for the electricity distribution staff to deliver customer service effectively. The logistics support is usually in the form of materials, tools, means of transport and means of communication used by the staff to carry out their jobs. This study focuses on the logistics support needs of Umeme electricity distribution staff whose main task is to perform effectively as customer service staff.

Although there seems to be no universal standard definition of logistics management, its main purpose is customer service. It is thus defined by Fawcett et al (1992 p.3):

“...logistics management is a business strategy, the focal point of which is customer service.” Another definition says: “...logistics management involves the planning, implementing and controlling the flow and storage of goods, services and related information from point of origin to point of consumption to conform to customer requirements.” (Learn Logistics Management at Sedaya (203))

Shapiro and Heskett (1985 p.1) cite the National council of Physical distribution Management's definition and further describe the characteristics and functions of logistics as follows:

The integration of two or more activities for the purpose of planning, implementing and controlling the efficient flow of raw materials, in process inventory and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. These activities may include but are not limited to customer service, demand forecasting, distribution communications; inventory control, materials handling, order processing, parts and service support, plant and warehouse site selection, procurement, packaging, return goods handling, salvage and scrap disposal, traffic and transportation and warehousing and storage.

Logistics management includes a wide range of commercial and industrial activities that add value to goods and services through customer service. Mital (2003 p.491) cites the definition given by the US-based Council of Logistics Management and points out the significance of logistics in customer service: “the process of planning, implementing and controlling of the effective flow and storage of goods, services and related information from the point of origin to point of consumption for meeting customer needs. The main purpose of supply logistics is to ensure speedy availability of products and services”

Christopher (1986 p.1) specifies the logistics elements that are common business concerns: “Logistics is just as much concerned with plant and depot location, inventory levels, materials management and information systems as with transport.”

Greasley (1999 p.196) lists the basic activities that fall under the logistics functions of a company, which include among others: “procurement and delivery of consumable items...capital assets,”; “assembly of labor force”; “internal distribution of all those items”; and “the rendering of service”

Logistics include information systems for gathering, processing, transmitting and storing data and information that are vital for an organization’s functions. Shapiro and Heskett *ibidem* (p.6) highlight the information system element of logistics:

The host of information gathering and processing activities that take place at all levels within the firm and within all functions. These add value by changing the ‘state of knowledge’ about the product, the process, and the market. They involve collecting and processing data concerning suppliers, customers and inventories into information useful for decision making by logistic management.

This implies the provision of logistics support for staff should include means of communication for transmission of information among the staff as well as between the staff and their customers.

2.2.2 Customer service

Customer service consists of all arrangements and activities carried out by an organization to ensure that its clients get what they need. Usually an organization designates a specific category of staff to deliver a particular form of service.

Zeithaml and Bitner (2003 p.4) define customer service as; “customer service is the service provided in support of a company’s core products. Customer service most often includes answering questions, taking orders, dealing with billing issues, handling complaints, and perhaps scheduling maintenance and repairs.” Certainly, maintenance and repairs is a central feature of the service performed by the electricity distribution staff which needs constant logistics support.

Mital *ibidem* (p.491) describes customer service as:

.....nothing but output of a supply chain logistics service after performing interrelated activities. Effectiveness of these activities determines the level of the customer service. These logistic services that directly affect customer service should receive greater focus for improvement.

A good electricity distribution service should be the expected output from Umeme staff when they get the right logistics. They should be able to perform more effectively as a result of adequate logistics support.

2.2.3 Internal Customer versus External Customer

A customer is a person who needs the services of another person. An internal customer is an employee who needs the services of a fellow employee within the firm. On the other hand, an external customer is a person outside a firm who needs the services of the staff of the firm.

Wellemin (1998 p.25) defines a customer as: “everyone who uses the output of our work is a customer be that person inside the company or an external user.” This inclusive definition puts the logistics needs of the electricity distribution staff in a better focus. Umeme electricity distribution staff are clearly the internal customers of the other staff whose responsibility is to provide the necessary logistics. The staff who are involved in providing the electricity distribution staff with logistics support are themselves a component of the logistics system. The study will be concerned with the extent to which the logistics needs of the electricity distribution staff as internal customers are made so as to enable them render service to the external customers.

2.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOGISTICS SUPPORT AND STAFF PERFORMANCE

2.3.1 Logistics Support and Performance of Customer Service Staff

An efficient logistics support should result in more effective performance of the customer service staff, provided that other factors that can affect their performance are conducive. To be able to deliver electricity distribution service effectively, Umeme needs to have an efficient logistics system to serve its staff. The efficiency of the logistics system should match the expected level of staff performance.

Christopher ibidem (pp5, 79) explains the relationship between a logistics system and customer service performance in terms of inputs and outputs:

Customer service is the output of the logistics system and it results from the combined effects of the activity centers within the ‘logistics mix.’ All these

activities are important in establishing a desired level of customer service performance. They are also interdependent, if one activity fails, creating poor performance, and destabilizing workloads in other areas, resulting in poor cost effectiveness for the system as a whole..... Productivity may simply be defined as the ratio of the outputs of a system to the inputs. In the logistics context we can think of customer service performance as the output and the logistics mix elements (e.g. inventory, storage and handling, transportation and order processing etc) as the inputs.

The performance of Umeme electricity distribution staff should be regarded as dependent to a significant extent on the logistics system. The inputs from the logistics system include materials, tools, means of transport and communication. Productivity of the electricity distribution staff may be seen as the ratio of their performance to the logistics support they are provided with.

There may be gaps between the actual and expected performance of due to shortfalls in logistics inputs available to staff. Management would then have to do something about the logistics system in order to close such performance gaps. On the need to close gaps in the performance of customer service staff, Zeithaml and Bitner *ibidem* (p.335) say among other things:

To efficient and effective in their jobs, service worker require internal support systems that are aligned with their need to be customer focused. This point can not be overemphasized. In fact, without a customer focused internal support and customer-oriented systems, it is nearly impossible for employees to deliver quality service no matter how much they want to.

Logistics support must be sufficient and oriented for customer service; otherwise the performance of customer service staff becomes constrained even when they feel a strong commitment for their work.

On the other hand, the customer service staff must use the available logistics resources efficiently; otherwise there would be under-utilization and wastage of the resources.

There is need to balance the provision of adequate logistics support with efficient use for optimum utilization. This is highlighted by Wild (1995 p.8):

Given infinite resources, any system should be able to provide adequate customer service. Problems for operations management arise from the fact that operating systems must satisfy multiple objectives. Customer service must be provided simultaneously with the efficient use of resources. Operations management is concerned with achievement of both satisfactory customer service and resource utilization. Often both can not be maximized, hence a satisfactory performance must be achieved on both, and sub-optimization must be avoided.

Inadequate logistics can become a constraint on the capacity of the Umeme distribution staff to deliver customer service. Sub-optimization means wasting of resources. The study will examine to what extent the constraints in sufficiency of logistics affects customer service performance. It will also examine whether there is under-utilization of the available logistics support due to inefficient use by the customer service staff.

The performance of customer service staff can be negatively affected when their needs for logistics support are not efficiently provided for. Wellemin ibidem (p.24) rightly asserts that lack of logistics support for customer service staff can hinder their performance: "staff in direct contact with customers can not provide a good service to them unless they in turn are sufficiently supported by their colleagues along the chain." For Umeme distribution service, the staff will not serve their customers well unless they are efficiently provided with the materials, tools and means of transport and communication to enable them to perform effectively.

Much as is important that management takes trouble to establish the needs of the external customers, it is equally necessary to know the logistics needs of the internal customers. Wellemin ibidem (p.26) points out that a common cause of logistics problems that impede customer service performance is the tendency of companies to spend "a great deal of effort and money in establishing external customer needs whilst ignoring the simpler task of encouraging a similar approach to find out exactly what one person (or department) requires from another. Yet unless the internal processes work satisfactorily, a favorable external result will be much more difficult to achieve." This implies that if the

logistics needs of the water distribution staff were adequately met by their colleagues who are responsible for providing means of transport and communication, materials and tools, the electricity consumers would greatly benefit from improved performance of the electricity distribution staff.

It might be necessary to critically review the logistics management system in order to streamline its structure and thereby improve logistics support for the customer service staff. Wellemin ibidem (p.46) explains the need to improve logistics mechanisms to promote effective customer service performance:

To complete the cycle, company procedures and systems must be customer and operator friendly. Staff will not be able to satisfy customer needs if the tools at their disposal do not allow them to do this efficiently.this means that internal procedures have to be viewed from the customers' point of view, and systems supporting these procedures must make them a real aid to assist our staff in helping customers and potential customers in their dealings with our company.

Since they deliver electricity distribution service in the field and are often in direct contact with customers, the electricity distribution staff should be in a position to specify the logistics support they need as well as to point out the bottlenecks in logistics support which should be tackled in order to improve their performance.

Customer service staff such as Umeme electricity distribution staff work at the consumption end of the supply chain. As such their performance depends greatly on logistics support from some of their colleagues who work further upstream in the supply chain. Conversely, the upstream staff should respond positively and efficiently to calls and signals from their downstream colleagues for logistics support.

Allnoch (1997) citing Pumwani and Trump, writes that one of the steps to consider in identifying and exploiting supply chain improvement opportunities is: "Focus on internal customers. . . .Employees working within a utility supply chain often are the best sources of information on how to improve processes. As a result, the leaders of supply chain

activities should involve their colleagues in improvement efforts and learn how they can serve the needs of their internal customers better.”

2.3.2 Logistics Support and Staff Motivation

Apart from directly facilitating the capacity of staff in customer service performance, logistics support also appears to have an impact on employee motivation. Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy (2004 p.57) say:

Motivation can be defined as that which energizes, directs and sustains human behavior. In human resource management, the term refers to a person’s desire to do the best possible job or to exert the maximum effort to perform assigned tasks. An important feature of motivation is that it is behavior directed toward a goal.

Cooper (2002 p.314) explains: “In the workplace, motivation refers to a psychological concept that is primarily concerned with increasing the strength and direction of peoples’ work-related behaviors to influence the quality and quantity of peoples’ performance output.”

Motivation is a serious issue that is widely accepted as a primary responsibility of the managers of employees. Sutherland and Canwell (2004 p.183) explain: “Motivation implies the instilling in employees of a drive to take action. In human resource terms this means inducing or providing an incentive to employees to perform to the best of their abilities.”

McConnell (2004 p.275) gives a more explicit and specific explanation:

A significant part of managing employee performance involves addressing the obstacles that can hinder the achievement of desired performance. Obstacles or barriers can annoy or frustrate employees and reduce their willingness and even ability to perform.....prominent under physical circumstances affecting performance are problems presented by aging or inadequate equipment, shortage of appropriate materials or supplies, and inefficient layout or insufficient space in which to function effectively.

The physical circumstances affecting the performance of employees that are referred to by McConnell are actually components of logistics support.

Dessler (2002 p.272) explains how empowerment can be used as a technique of motivation:

Empowering employees means giving employees authority, tools and information they need to perform their jobs, with greater autonomy, as well as the self-confidence required to perform the job effectively. Empowering is inherently a motivational approach: it boosts feelings of self-efficacy and enables employees to more fully use their potential, thus satisfying higher level needs of achievement, recognition and self-actualization.

Obviously, providing employees with logistics support empowers and motivates them to perform more effectively. Customer service managers need to realize the importance of their responsibility to provide their staff with logistics support. Schneider and Bowen (1993 p.39) conducted research on employees' requirements for service quality and their report say:

This research points out that managers, in their pursuit of service quality, need to create two related, but different, climates: a climate for service and a climate for employees well-being. The first requires practices such as systems and logistics support-anything that creates an organizational setting in which customers feel their needs are being met. The second focuses on meeting the needs of employees through quality human resource management practices.

Our research indicates that a climate for employee well-being serves a foundation for a climate of service. Employees need to feel that their own needs have been met within the organization before they can become enthusiastic about meeting the needs of customers.

The foregoing research finding implies that the provision of logistics support achieves the most effective customer service performance when it goes together with quality human resource management practices that meet the other needs of the employees. Although how the other needs of employees are met are outside the focus of this study, it is

apparent that lack of logistics support can impinge on the well-being of employees. It has been mentioned that lack of logistics support can annoy and frustrate staff and lower their motivation to perform. Sutherland and Canwell *ibidem* (p.247) mention “inadequate resources” as one of the innumerable reasons why stress can occur among employees. Heery and Noun (2001 p.190) say: “job stress is a condition where an aspect of work is causing physical or mental problems for an employee.” Lack of logistics support would therefore not only hinder employee performance but also impinge on employee well-being if it is related to a stressful experience.

Zeithaml and Bitner *ibidem* (p.336) assert the need to support customer service staff with logistics: “when employees do not have the right equipment, or when their equipment fails them, they can be easily frustrated in their desire to deliver quality service. To do their jobs effectively and efficiently, service employees need the right equipment and technology.” This implies that adequate logistics motivates staff to perform whereas inadequate logistics demoralizes staff and lowers their performance. The study will attempt to identify the logistics needs of the electricity distribution staff and to examine the availability and adequacy of the logistics support that is availed to them.

2.4 Conclusion

Logistics management is an important factor in service delivery because logistics seems to have a dual effect on staff performance. On one hand logistics support facilitates the customer service staff to do their work. On the other hand it appears to motivate staff in customer service. The study will attempt to verify this assumption for Umeme electricity distribution staff.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main purpose of the study was to describe the prevailing situation of logistics support for Umeme electricity distribution service and the effect of logistics support on the performance of the electricity distribution staff. Therefore, the researcher's choice of research design, sampling technique and data collection and management methods was largely dictated by that purpose.

3.2 Design of the study

The research design was a case study of Umeme electricity distribution service. A case study has the advantage of focusing investigation on one aspect of concern and of making an in-depth study of it. Denscombe (1998, p.30) explains these advantages:

The logic behind concentrating efforts on one case rather than many is that there may be insights to be gained from looking at the individual case that can have wider implications and importantly, that would not have come to light through the use of a research strategy that tried to cover a large number of instances- a survey approach. The prospects of getting some valuable and unique insight depends on being able to investigate things in a way that is different from, and in some senses better than, what is possible using other approaches. What a case study can do that a survey normally cannot do is to study things in detail.

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, p.173) explain, "The primary purpose of the case is to determine factors and relationships among the factors that have resulted in the behavior under study. The investigation therefore makes a detailed examination of a single subject, group or phenomenon."

Collins and Hussey (2003, p.68) say, "A case study is an extensive examination of a single instance of a phenomenon of interest.....A unit of analysis is the kind of a case to which the variables or phenomenon under study and the research problem refer, and about which data is collected and analyzed. A case study approach implies a single unit of analysis, such as a company or a group of workers, an event, a process or even an individual."

Mugenda and Mugenda *ibidem* (pp 14-15) explain further that:

The unit of analysis, also called the unit of statistical analysis, refers to those units that are initially describe for the purpose of aggregating their characteristics in order to describe some larger group or abstract phenomenon. Units of analysis are therefore the individual units about which or whom descriptive explanatory statements are made... A unit of observation is the subject object, item or entity from which we measure the characteristics or obtain the data required in the research study... In the majority of studies, the unit of observation is also the unit of analysis... However, in some studies, the unit of observation is not necessarily the same as the unit of analysis.

In this case study, each respondent was a unit of observation because the required data was obtained from individual members of Umeme electricity distribution staff. Each member of staff was also a unit of analysis although the findings and the final results related to the whole group of Umeme electricity distribution staff.

The research study was both qualitative and quantitative. Being qualitative means that there was an attempt to give a detailed description of the impact of logistics support on electricity distribution staff performance. Sekaran (2003, p.409) states:

“Description of the matter under study is the main essence of qualitative research and a range of interpretive techniques can be used to decode, translate, decipher patterns, and discover the meaning of phenomena that occur”

Mugenda and Mugenda ibidem (p.155) also explain, “Qualitative research includes techniques and measures that do not produce discrete numerical data. More often the data are in the form of worlds rather than numbers and these words are often grouped into categories.”

Quantitative analysis was mainly done on categorical data, using tables, percentages and pie charts to complement qualitative analysis. Johnson and Harris (2002, p.101) say:

It is important to recognize that quantitative and qualitative research methods need not live in total isolation from each other. The two approaches should not be seen as discrete either/or options. They can be viewed as labels that describe two ends of a continuum. The two methodologies can complement each other.

3.3 Target Population

The study population comprised the serving Umeme employees. The target population was the Umeme electricity distribution staff, who were the staff directly involved in electricity distribution service delivery on a daily basis either as field staff or their supervisors, zone engineers, commercial/senior commercial officers and zone/sub-zone managers who numbered about 85 on the Umeme staff list.

The researcher's initial plan was to use 100% of the target population, that was 85 respondents, because the target population is fairly small and could be reach with relative ease. However, the reality on the ground distasted a reduction to 75 respondents. The reason for this reduction was that some of the staff were unavailable or unreachable at the time when the questionnaires were issued to respondents with the help of three research assistants. Eventually, out of the seventy five (75) questionnaires that were given to respondents, fifty seven (57) were completed and returned to the researcher. This was a 76% questionnaire response rate.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in the study was purposive sampling, which is sometimes referred to as judgmental sampling and is a non-probability sampling technique. The researcher's focus was on obtaining in-depth qualitative data from respondents who had the same or similar work experience, that is electricity distribution work at Umeme. Sekaran ibidem (p. 280) sounds a warning about judgment sampling whereby subjects are selected on the basis of their expertise, which may be the only meaningful way to investigate a phenomenon, that the findings may not be generalizable to the entire population. She (p. 281) sums up the criteria for deciding judgment sampling:

- Representatives of sample not critical to the study
- Information relevant to and available only with certain groups
- Looking for information that only a few "experts" can provide

In the study, representatives of the electricity distribution staff vis-à-vis the rest of the Umeme staff was not a critical issue. The information that was sought in the study was

relevant to and only available with electricity distribution staff, who were “experts” in their work by virtue of their experience.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods that were used in the research study were self-administered questionnaires for primary data from respondents and written documents for documentary secondary data. The self-administered questionnaires (see appendix.....) used in the study was the delivery and collection type, which Saunders et al (2003, p.476) explain is a “Data collection technique in which the questionnaire is delivered to each respondent. She or he then reads and answers the same set of questions in a pre-determined order without an interviewer being present before the completed questionnaire is collected.”

The questionnaire was constructed and pre-tested by the researcher by making a group of three staff of Umeme commercial department staff complete them. None of the staff who pre-tested the questionnaire were selected as respondents to complete the final questionnaire. Pre-testing the questionnaire revealed a few weaknesses and errors that the researcher corrected by rephrasing vague and ambiguous questions and merging questions that seemed to duplicate each other. The researcher was also able to ascertain the kind of data expected from respondents.

The questionnaire included both structured or close-ended and unstructured or open-ended items. Denscombe ibidem (p. 101) distinguishes between the two types of questionnaire items: “open questions are those that leave the respondent to decide the wording of the answer, the length of the answer and the kind of matters to be raised in the answer.” Whereas “closed questions structure the answers by allowing only answers which fit into categories that have been established in advance by the researcher. The researcher, in this case, instructs the respondent to answer by selecting from a range of two or more options supplied in the questionnaire.”

Mugenda and Mugenda ibidem (p.72) explain structured or close-ended questions as “questions which are accompanied by a list of all possible alternatives from which respondents select the answer that best describes their situation.” And unstructured or

open-ended questions as “questions which give the respondent complete freedom of response. These free response questions permit an individual to respond in his or her own words.”

Most close-ended items in the questionnaire were based on adaptation of a five-point Likert-style rating scale to collect opinion data and a few were ranking type scale to discover the relative importance of given items. Saunders et al (pp.295-296) explain: “A ranking question asks the respondent to place things in rank order. This means that you can discover their relative importance to the respondent.” and that “scale or rating questions are often used to collect attitude and belief data. The most common approach is the Likert-style rating scale in which you ask the respondent how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement or series of statements, usually on a four, five, six or seven point rating scale.”

Sekaran ibidem (p.202) calls the type of ranking scale used in this study the forced choice and explains; “the forced choice enables respondents to rank objects relative to one another, among the alternatives provided. This is easier for respondents, particularly if the number of choices to be ranked is limited in number.” The respondents were not required to disclose their identities in the questionnaire and any data they offered remained anonymous.

Written records of the proceedings of Umeme workshops held before will be used to collect documentary secondary data. Saunders et al ibidem (p.190-191) state:

“Documentary secondary data include written documents such as notices, correspondence, minutes of meetings, reports to shareholders, diaries, transcripts of speeches and administrative and public records.....can be used to help to triangulate findings based on other data such as written documents, and primary data collected through observation, interviews or questionnaires”

Two written documents were found to contain data and information that appeared relevant to the study.

- a) A record of the proceedings of Umeme- stretch out programme workshop.

- b) Umeme business plan (The twelfth schedule of internally delegated administrative management contract between Umeme head office and all district heads) formulated in March/April 2006

The two documents were official records of the collective efforts of Umeme management and staff. The use of both questionnaire and written documents was an attempt by the researcher to ensure a certain measure of triangulation in the study. Saunders et al ibidem (p. 492) define triangulation as “The use of two or more independent sources of data or data collection methods within one study in order to help ensure that the data are telling you what you think they are telling you.”

3.6 Data Management and Analysis

The returned questionnaires were first checked for legibility, clarity, completeness and relevance. They were then sorted, arranged and re-arranged according to the various characteristics of the respondents. The data was analyzed through thematic reduction and categorization of frequency counts of categorical data.

Categorical data was manually analyzed in detail to establish similarities and constraints in meaning. It was then summarized, arranged and presented in tables. Percentages were used where applicable to show the proportional composition of wholes and totals. Visual data displays were used mainly in the form of a multiple-column bar graph and pie charts using micro soft Excel software.

Documentary secondary data was identified by perusing the written documents and recording. It was then arranged and compared with the primary data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, primary and secondary data are presented and analyzed and the finds are interpreted. The primary data for the self administered questionnaires are expected to yield findings on the general characteristics of the respondents, the logistics support bottlenecks experienced by the electricity distribution staff and the measures to reduce logistics support bottlenecks in the electricity distribution service.

4.2 General characteristics of the respondents

The respondent comprised the fifty seven (57) adults whose ages ranged from under 25 to 45 years. Forty (40) respondents were male while seventeen (17) were female. All the respondents were involved in electricity distribution work according to assurance given by the Umeme officers who acted as the research assistants in giving out and collecting the questionnaires. Apart from five (5) respondents whose length of service with Umeme was under one (1) year, all the others had length of service ranging from one (1) to over ten (10) years.

The number and percentage of categories of respondents by job title, gender, age group and length of service are shown in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 as well as figure 2 below.

4.2.1 Job Title

The respondents were in four broad categories of job titles of Zone managers/Sub-zone managers, Senior commercial officer/commercial officer, Technical supervisor/Zone engineer and surveyor as table 1 shows below. The job titles combined in each category had similar/comparable duties and level of responsibility. ZM/SZM & SCO/CO had supervisory duties and responsibilities at the zone offices most of the time and occasionally in the field. TS and ZE had supervisory duties and responsibilities in the field most of the time and once in a while at the zone offices. Surveyors did customer service fieldwork and most of the time and a little work in the office.

Table 1: Category of respondents by job title

Job title	No.	%
ZM/SZM	8	14.04
SCO/CO	11	11.0
TS/ZE	19	31.33
Surveyor	19	33.33
Total	57	100

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

4.2.2 Gender

The ratio of male to female respondents was over 2.3 to 1 as table 2 shows below. This reflected roughly the proportion of male and female electricity distribution staff.

Table 2. Category of respondents by gender

Gender	No.	%
Male	40	70.2
Female	17	29.8
Total	57	100

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

4.2.3 Age group

The respondents were found in only three (3) age groups ranging from less than 25 to 45 years as table 3 shows below. This reflected roughly the proportion of the electricity distribution staff in terms of age.

Table 3. Category of respondent by age group

Job title	No.	%
Under 25 years	7	12.3
25-35	38	66.7
36-45	12	21.0
46-55	0	0
Over 55	0	0
Total	57	100

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

4.2.4 Length of service with Umeme

The length of service of the respondents ranged from less than one year to over ten years as table 4 shows below. The proportion of respondents by length of service reflected roughly the proportion of the electricity distribution staff in terms of length of service.

Table 4: Category of respondents by length of service

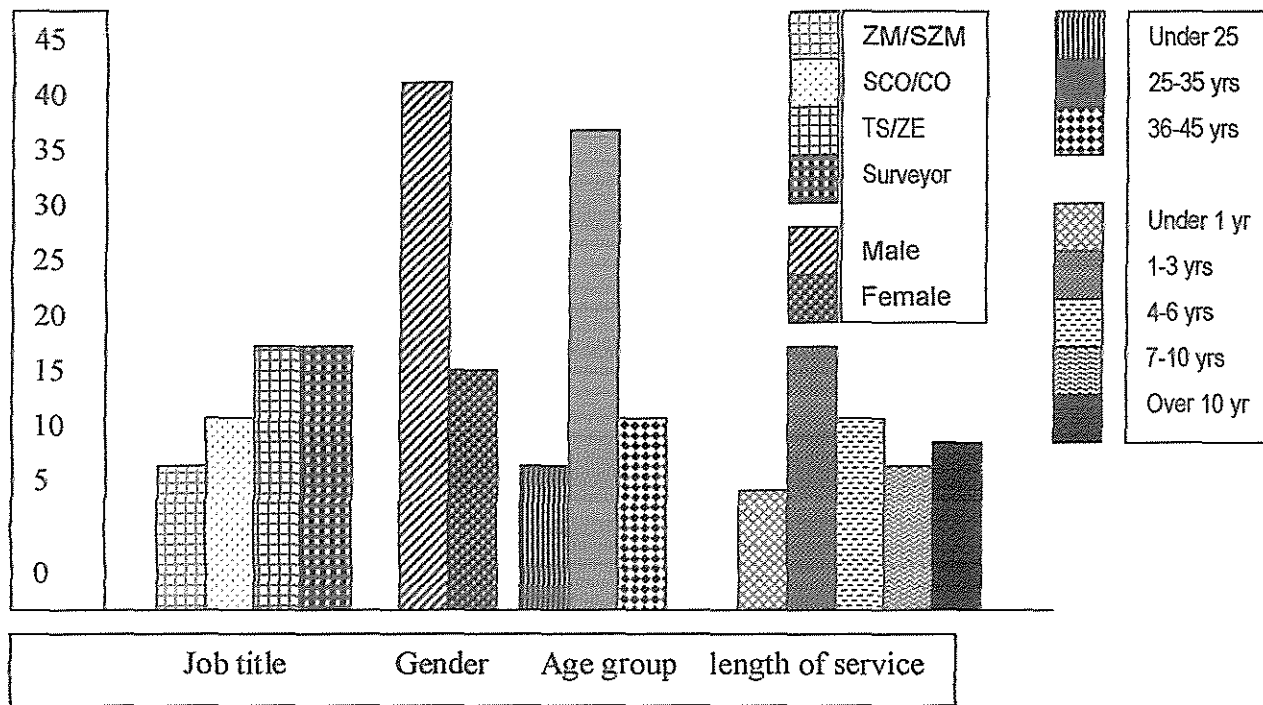
Length of service	No.	%
Under 1 year	5	8.8
1-3 years	19	33.3
4-6	14	24.6
7-10	7	12.3
Over 10	12	21.0
Total	57	100

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

The general characteristics of the respondents seem to correspond to the demographic composition of Umeme Electricity distribution staff as the multiple-column bar graph in figure 2 below shows. In this study the respondents job titles, gender, age group and length of service are demographic factors which do not bear much significance on the effects of logistics support on the performance of the electricity distribution staff.

Figure 2: Proportions of the respondents by job title, gender, age group and length of service.

General characteristics of the respondents



Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

4.3 Logistics bottlenecks experienced by the electricity distribution staff.

Bottlenecks/problems in logistics support that were experienced by the electricity distribution staff were indicated in terms of adequacy of items usually provided for electricity distribution work, accessibility of the persons responsible for providing logistics support.

4.3.1 Adequacy of logistics support provided for electricity distribution work.

The number of respondents who indicated their opinion of the adequacy of the various items that were usually provided for electricity distribution work is shown in table

Table 5. Respondents' opinions of the adequacy of the items usually provided for electricity distribution work

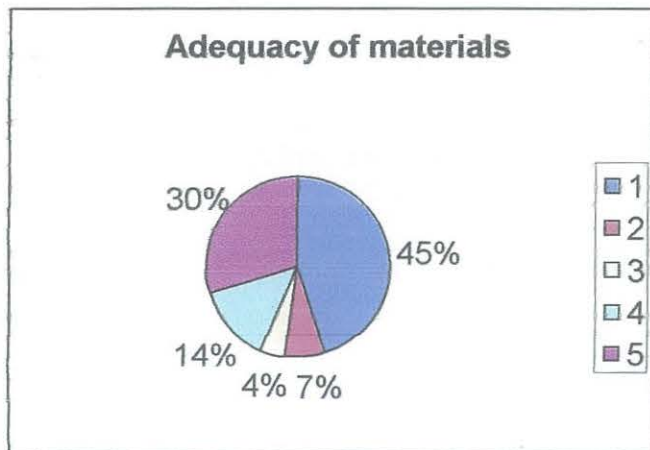
Items usually made available	Number of respondents					
	Always adequate	Often inadequate	Sometimes adequate	Rarely adequate	Never adequate	Total
Materials	8	17	26	4	2	57
Electricity meters	4	6	24	11	12	57
Tools	11	15	18	9	4	57
Means of transport	19	13	19	5	1	57
Means of communication	10	15	14	13	5	57
Average for all components	10.4	13.2	20.2	8.4	4.8	57

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

The proportions of the five shades of opinions of the respondents for each of the given items are shown in figures 3 to 8 below

Figure 3: Proportion of respondents' opinions on adequacy of materials

Key: 1=sometimes adequate, 2=rarely adequate, 3=never adequate, 4=always adequate and 5=often adequate

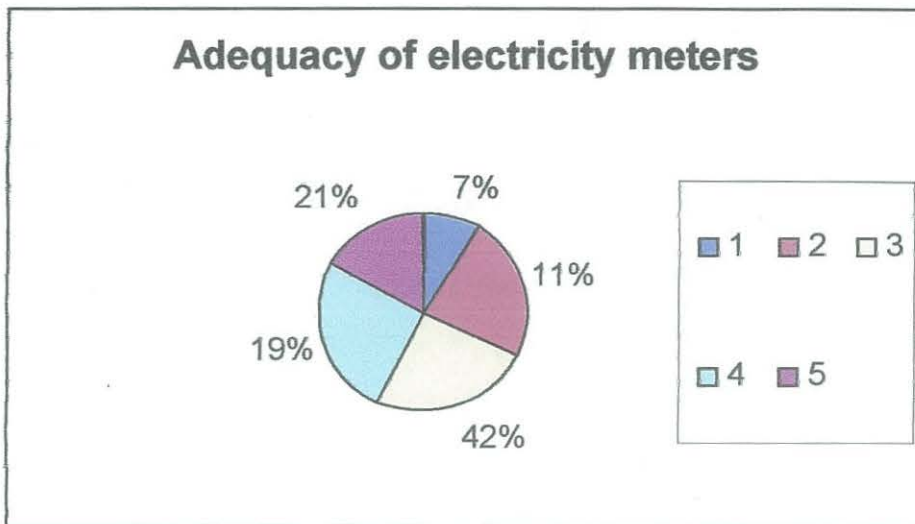


Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Adequacy of materials was felt by only 14% of the respondents to be always adequate; by 30% to be often adequate, by 45% to be sometimes adequate, by 7% to be rarely adequate, and by 4% to be never adequate for water distribution work. Thus, a combined proportion of only 44% of the respondents felt high or very high satisfaction while 45% felt moderate satisfaction with the adequacy of materials.

Figure 4. Proportion of respondents' opinions on an adequacy of electricity meters

Key : 1=Always adequate, 2=often adequate, 3=sometimes adequate, 4=rarely adequate and 5=never adequate

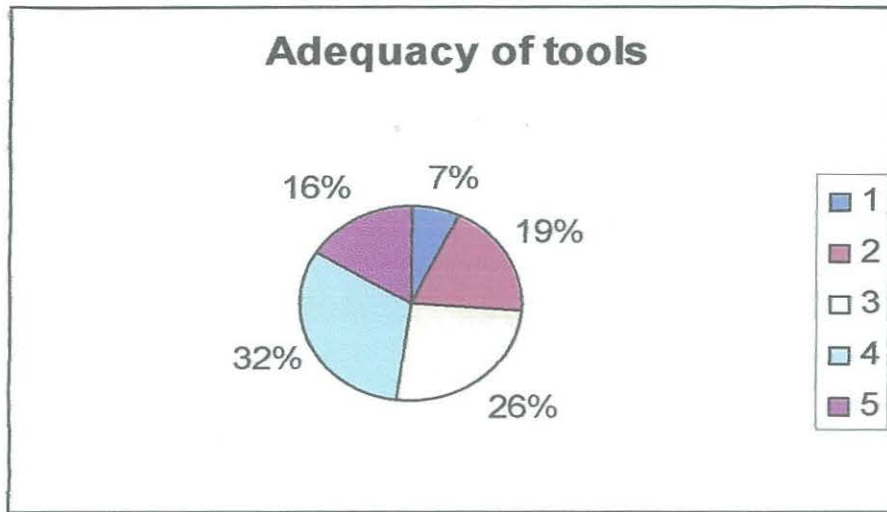


Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Adequacy of electricity meters was felt by only 7% of the respondents to be always adequate by 11% to be often adequate; by 42% to be sometimes adequate; by 19% to be rarely adequate; and by 21% to be never adequate for electricity distribution work. Thus, a combined proportion of only 18% of the respondents felt a high or very high satisfaction; 42% felt moderate satisfaction; and 40% felt low or very low satisfaction with the adequacy of electricity meters.

Figure 5: Proportion of respondents' opinions on adequacy of tools

Key: 1=never adequate, 2=always adequate, 3=often adequate, 4=sometimes adequate and 5=rarely adequate

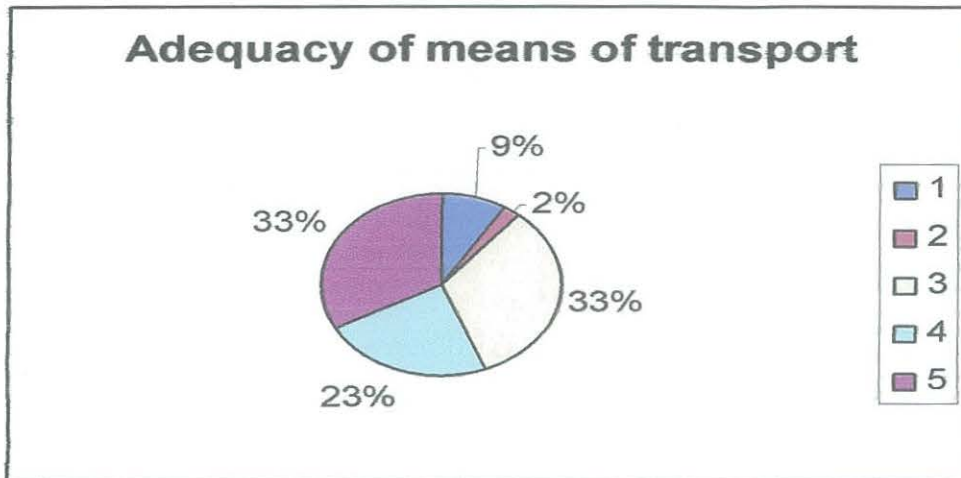


Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Adequacy of tools was felt by only 19% of the respondents to be always adequate; by 26% to be often adequate; by 32% to be sometimes adequate; by 16% to be rarely adequate and by 7% to be never adequate for electricity distribution work. Thus a combined proportion of 45% of the respondents felt a high or very high satisfaction; 32% felt moderate satisfaction; and 23% felt low or very low satisfaction with the adequacy of tools.

Figure 6: Proportion of respondents' opinions on adequacy of means of transport

Key: 1=rarely adequate, 2=never adequate, 3=sometimes adequate, 4=often adequate and 5=always adequate



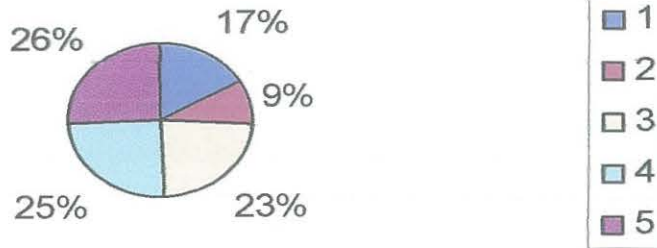
Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Adequacy of means of transport were felt by only 33% of the respondents to be always adequate; by 23% to be often adequate; by 33% to be sometimes adequate; by 9% to be rarely adequate; and by 2% to be never adequate for electricity distribution work. Thus, a vast combined proportion of only 89% of the respondents felt moderate to very high satisfaction while only 11% felt low or very low satisfaction with the adequacy of means of transport for electricity distribution work.

Figure 7: proportion of respondents' opinion on adequacy of means of communication

Key: 1=always adequate, 2=never adequate, 3=rarely adequate, 4=sometimes adequate and 5=often adequate

Adequacy of means of communication



Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

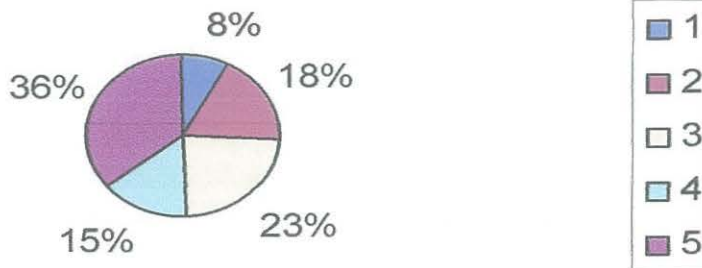
Adequacy of means of communication was felt by only 17% of the respondents to be always adequate; by 26% to be often adequate; by 25% to be sometimes adequate; by 23% to be rarely adequate and by 9% to be never adequate for electricity distribution work. Thus, a combined proportion of 43% of the respondents felt a high or very high satisfaction; 25% felt moderate satisfaction; and 32% felt low or very low satisfaction with the adequacy of most of communication.

Table 5 and figures 3-7 shows a high level of satisfaction among the respondents with the adequacy of means of transport and lower levels of satisfaction with adequacy of materials, tools and means of communication in that order. More respondents were least satisfied with the adequacy of electricity meters.

Figure 8: Proportion of average respondents' opinions on adequacy of logistic items usually provided for electricity distribution work

Key: 1=never adequate, 2=always adequate, 3= often adequate, 4=rarely adequate and 5=sometimes adequate

Adequacy of means of communication



Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Figure 8 shows that on average adequacy of logistics items was felt by only 18% of the respondents to be always adequate; by 25% to be often adequate; by 36% to be sometimes adequate; by 15% to be rarely adequate; and by 8% to be never adequate for electricity distribution works. The respondents felt very high level of satisfaction with adequacy of means of transport but very low level of satisfaction with adequacy of electricity meters. Overall, the opinion of the respondents was that logistics components provided for electricity distribution were adequate.

4.3.2 Accessibility of the person responsible for providing logistics support

The number of respondents who indicated their opinions of the ease of accessibility of the person responsible for providing logistics support for electricity distribution work is shown in table 6

Table 6: Respondents' opinions of the ease of accessibility of the persons providing logistics support for electricity distribution work

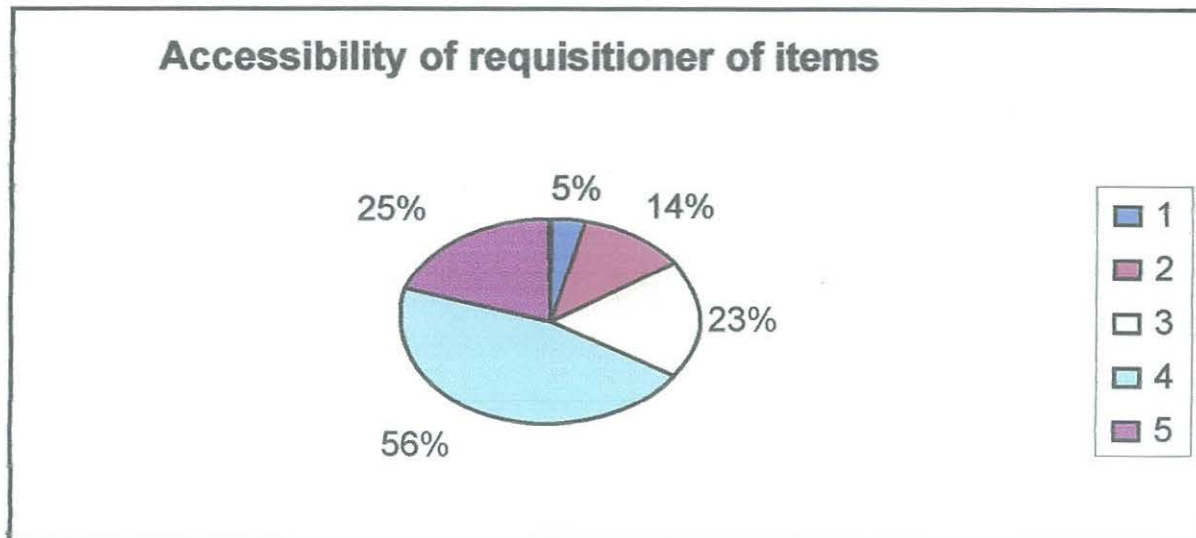
Persons responsible for providing logistics support	Number of respondents					
	Always easy	Often easy	Sometimes easy	Rarely easy	Never easy	total
Requisitioner of items	32	14	8	3	0	57
Approver of requisitions	21	17	14	3	2	57
Issuer/releaser of items	18	24	12	2	1	57
Deliverer of items	29	17	7	2	2	57
Average for all components	25	18	10.25	2.5	1.25	57

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

The proportions of the five shades of opinion of the respondents for the persons responsible for providing logistics support are shown in figures 9 to 13 below;

Figure 9: Proportion of respondents' opinions on accessibility of requisitioner of items

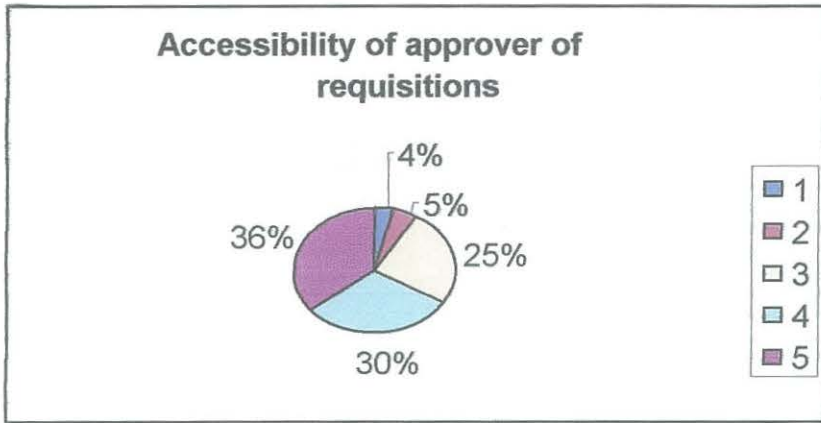
Key: 1=rarely easy, 2=sometimes easy, 3=often easy, 4=always easy and 5= often easy



Accessibility of requisition of items was felt by only 56% of the respondents to be always easy; by 25% to be often easy; by 14% to be sometimes easy; and by 5% to be rarely easy. Thus, a combined majority 81% of the respondents felt high or very high satisfaction and only 19% felt moderate low or very low satisfaction with accessibility of requisitioner of items.

Figure 10. Proportion of respondents' opinions on accessibility of approver of requisitions

Key: 1=never easy, 2=rarely easy, 3=sometimes easy, 4=often easy and 5=always easy



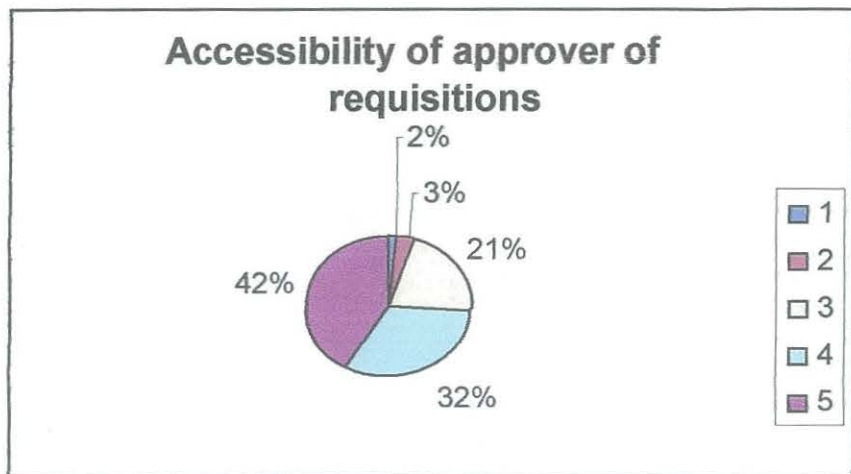
Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Accessibility of approver of requisitions was felt by 36% of the respondents to be always easy; by 30% to be often easy; by 25% to be sometimes easy; by 5% to be rarely easy; and by 4% to be never easy.

Thus, a combined majority of 66% of the respondents felt high or very high satisfaction and only 34% felt moderate, low or very low satisfaction with accessibility of approver of requisitions.

Figure 11: Proportion of respondents' opinions on accessibility of issuer/releaser of items

Key: 1=never easy, 2=rarely easy, 3=sometimes easy, 4=always easy and 5=often easy



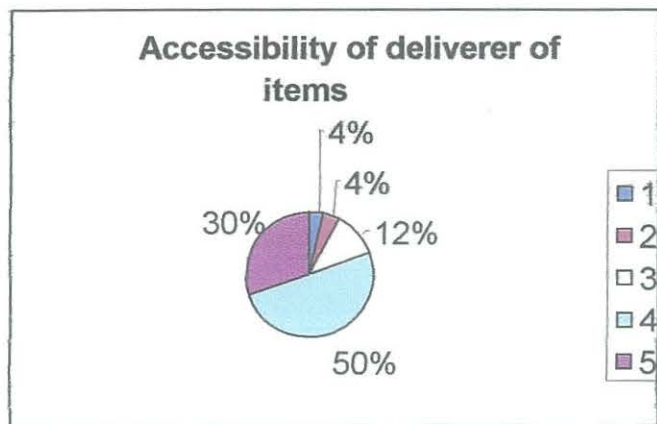
Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Accessibility of issuer/receiver of items was felt by 32% of the respondents to be always easy; by 42% to be often easy; by 21% to be sometimes easy; by 3% to be rarely easy; and by 2% to be never easy for electricity distribution work.

Thus, a combined majority 73% of the respondents felt high or very high satisfaction and only 27% felt moderate, low or very low satisfaction with accessibility of issuer/releaser of items.

Figure 12. Proportion of respondents' opinions on accessibility if deliverer of items

Key: 1=never easy, 2=rarely easy, 3=sometimes easy, 4=always easy and 5=often easy



Accessibility of deliverer of items was felt by 50% of the respondents to be always easy; by 30% to be often easy; by 12% to be sometimes easy; by 4% to be rarely easy; and by 4% to be never easy for the electricity distribution work

Thus, a combined majority of 80% of the respondents felt high or very high satisfaction and only 20% felt moderate, low or very low satisfaction with accessibility of deliverer of items.

Table 6 and figures 9-12 show that the persons who were responsible for providing logistics support all seem to be easily accessible when their services were required. The most easily accessible was the requisitioner followed by the deliverer, issuer/releaser and approver in that order.

Figure 13: Proportion of average respondents' opinions on accessibility of persons providing logistics support for electricity distribution

Key: 1=always easy,2=often easy,3=sometimes easy, 4=rarely easy and 5=never easy

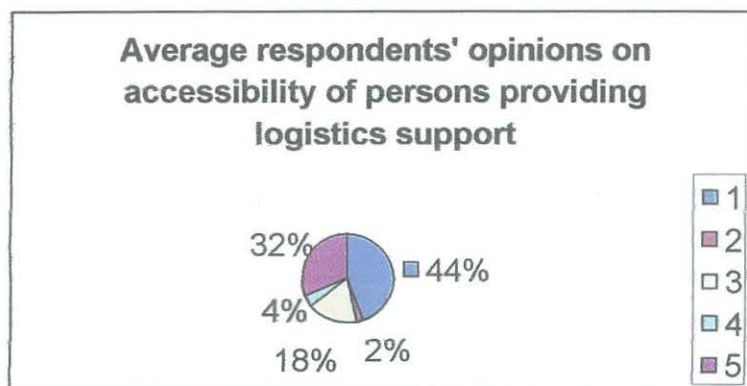


Figure 13 shows that a vast majority 76% of the respondents thought that accessibility of the persons providing logistics support for electricity distribution work was always or often easy.

4.4. Efficiency of the use of the available logistics support components

Efficiency of the use of the available logistics support was indicated through the respondents' opinions on how often the items available for electricity distribution work

remained idle/unused and the reasons why the available items remained idle/unused.

4.4.1 How often available items remained idle/unused

A big majority of the respondents indicated that the items made available for electricity distribution work rarely or never remained idle/unused as can be seen in table 9:

Table 9: Respondents' opinions on how often items were made available but remained idle/unused.

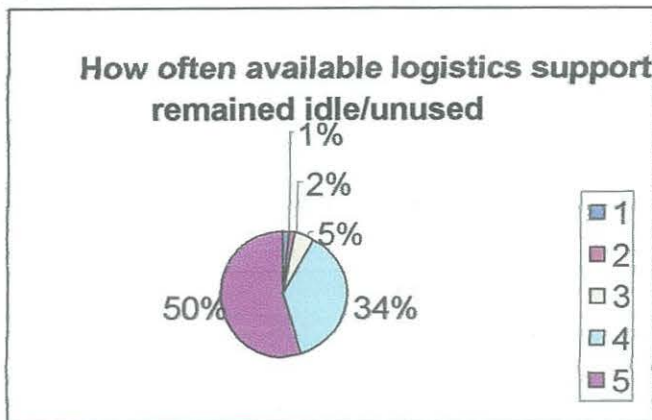
Items available but idle/unused	Number of respondents					
	Always idle	Often idle	Sometimes idle	Rarely idle	Never idle	total
Materials	2	2	2	27	24	57
Electricity meter	1	1	2	16	37	57
Tools	1	0	3	21	32	57
Means of transport	2	0	3	15	37	57
Means of communication	1	0	4	17	35	57
Average for all components	14	0.6	28	19.2	33	57

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

The proportion of respondents who indicated how often available items remained idle/unused is shown in fig. 15 below.

Fig. 15: Proportion of average respondents' opinions on how often available logistics support remained idle/unused.

Key: 1=often idle/unused, 2=always idle/unused, 3=sometimes idle/unused, 4=rarely idle/unused and 5=never idle/unused



Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Table 9 and Figure 18 show that incidences of available logistics support components remaining idle/unused were minimal. Available logistics support was felt by only 2% of the respondents to be always idle/unused, by 1% to be often idle/used; by 5% to be sometimes idle/unused, by 34% to be rarely idle/unused, and by 58% to be never idle/unused for electricity distribution work. A vast proportion of 92% of the respondents felt they had very high, high and moderate choices to make suggestions to a responsible person; 18% and 13% felt that they had low and very low chances respectively. This implies that there is optimal use of the available logistics component.

4.4.2 Reasons why available items were idle/unused.

The minimal incidences of available logistics support remaining idle/unused were due to unsuitable quality, defective condition and use of an item not being authorized. Lack of skilled staff and other reasons were not applicable at all as can be seen in table 10. The table shows reasons to questions 9, which was contingency question that was applicable only when the respondent's opinion rating for an item in question 8 was 1, 2 or 3. Only eleven 11 out of a total of fifty seven 57 respondents had such ratings.

Table 10: Respondents' opinion on the reasons why available items remained always, often or sometimes idle/unused

Item always, often or sometimes idle/unused	No. of respondents					
	Unsuitable quality	Defective condition	Use not authorized	No skilled staff to use	Other reason	total
Materials	4	0	0	0	0	4
Electricity meters	2	1	0	0	0	3
Tools	0	3	0	0	0	2
Means of transport	2	0	2	0	0	2
Means of communication	1	0	4	0	0	5

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

4.5 How lack of logistics support affected the electricity distribution staff.

Respondents cited how lack of logistics support affected the electricity distribution staff by stating the effects of lack of items needed for electricity distribution work felt by the concerned staff and also described what the concerned staff did when items required for electricity distribution work were not available.

4.5.1 The effect of lack of logistics support needed for electricity distribution work on the concerned staff.

Respondents mentioned four different effects of lack of logistics support needed for electricity distribution work on the concerned staff. Table 13 shows the effects as well as the number and percentage of respondents who mentioned each one.

Table 13: Respondents' views of the effects of lack of items needed for electricity distribution on the concerned staff.

Effects of lack of logistics support on the concerned staff	No of respondents	% of total respondents
Reduced staff output/productivity	50	87.7
Increased anxiety/stress among staff	20	35.1
Reduced staff morale	14	24.6
Reduced confidence of the staff in the management	3	5.3

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

The percentage of the respondents who mentioned the various effects can be seen as corresponding indicators of the effects of lack of logistics support on the electricity distribution staff. This implies that the greatest effects of lack of logistics support was reduced staff output/productivity, followed by increased anxiety/stress among staff, reduced staff morale and reduced confidence of staff in the management in that order.

4.5.2 Respondents' description of what the concerned staff did when items needed for electricity distribution work were unavailable.

Respondents described four things that the concerned staff did when the logistics support they needed for electricity distribution was not available. These are shown in table 14 which also shows the number and percentage of respondents who mentioned each one.

Table 14. What the concerned staff did when the items needed for electricity distribution work were not available.

What the concerned staff did when the items needed for electricity distribution work were unavailable	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
1. Abandon the work/wait for solution of supervisors	34	59.6
2. Initiate/follow up requisition of item	20	35.1
3. Try to improve with available means/things	8	14.0
4. Ask the affected customer to provide the required items	2	3.5

The percentage of respondents who mentioned particular things that the concerned staff did can be seen as corresponding indicators of what the concerned staff were inclined to do whenever the logistics support they needed was not available. This implies that the concerned staffs were most inclined to abandon work/wait for a solution by their superiors. This is followed by the inclination to initiate/follow up requisition of the item, try to improve with available means/things and ask the affected customer to provide the required item- in that order

4.6 Measures needed to reduce the bottlenecks in logistics support for electricity distribution work.

Respondents recommended and suggested measures and requirements to improve logistics support for electricity distribution work.

4.6. 1 Recommendations on the most frequently used means of communication

Respondents made recommendations on mobile telephone, radio call, landline telephone and face-to-face conversation/meeting that were the most used means of communication for electricity distribution work. Table 15 shows a summary of the recommendations as well as the number and percentage of respondents who gave each.

Table 15: Respondents recommendations on the most used means of communication for electricity distribution work

Recommendations on the most used means of communication	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
Provide more mobile telephone airtime for staff	31	54.4
Provide more radio call/walkie-talkie sets	17	29.8
Increase access to landline phone for staff	9	15.8
Hold more face-to-face meetings	5	8.8

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

A majority of respondents recommended the provision of more mobile telephone airtime for electricity distribution staff. Fewer recommendations were for provision of radio call

sets, increased staff access to landline telephone and holding of more face-to-face meeting—in that order.

4.6.2 Suggestions for improving means of communication for electricity distribution work.

Respondents gave their own suggestions for improving means of communication for electricity distribution work. The suggestions are summarized in table 16 which also shows the number and percentage of respondents who gave each one.

Table 16: Respondents suggestions for improving means of communication for electricity distribution work.

Respondents suggestions for improving means of communication for electricity distribution work	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
Provide more mobile telephone airtime for staff	39	68.4
Provide more radio call/walkie-talkie sets	39	68.4
Provide more mobile phone sets to key staff	9	15.8
Increase credit for landline phones	7	12.3
Install toll-free phone lines	2	3.5

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

An equal majority of respondents suggested both the provision of more mobile telephone airtime and the provision of more radio call sets. Fewer respondents suggested the provision of the mobile telephone sets for key staff, increased prepaid credit for landline reception and installing a toll-free telephone line—in that order. The respondents' suggestions in table 16 correspond fairly closely with their recommendations in table 15 on the most used means of communication. The respondents were asked to give their suggestions apart from their recommendations in order to check for similarity or difference.

4.6.3 Recommendations on the most frequently used means of transport

Respondents made recommendations on company motorcycles and company car/ trucks, which were the most used means of transport for electricity distribution work. Table 17

shows a summary of the recommendations as well as the number and percentage of respondents who gave each one

Table 17: Respondents recommendations on the most used means of transport for electricity distribution work

Recommendations on the most used means of communication	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Provide more company motorcycles	22	38.6
Provide more company car/trucks	17	29.8
Improve maintenance of company vehicles	13	22.8
Provide more fuel for company vehicles	9	15.8

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Nearly 39% of the respondents recommended the provision of more company motorcycles for electricity distribution staff. Fewer respondents recommended for provision of more company cars/trucks, improved maintenance of company vehicles and more fuel for company vehicles-in that order.

4.6.4 Suggestions for improving means of transport for electricity distribution work

Respondents gave their suggestion for improving means of transport for electricity distribution work. The suggestions were summarized in table 18 which also shows the number and percentage of respondents who gave each one.

Table 18: Respondents' suggestions for improving means of transport for electricity distribution work

Respondents suggestions for improving means of transport for electricity distribution work	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
Improve maintenance/repair of company vehicle	32	56.1
Provide more company cars/trucks	26	45.6
Provide more company motorcycles	20	35.1
Provide more fuel for company vehicles	6	10.5
Facilitate staff to get own vehicles to use at work	6	10.5
Relax place/time parking regulations for company vehicles	5	8.8

A majority of respondents suggested improvement of maintenance/repair of company vehicles. There were further suggestion for providing more company cars/trucks, providing more company motorcycles, providing more fuel for company vehicles, facilitating staff to get their vehicles to use at work an relaxing parking regulations for company vehicles- in that order. The fact that fewer respondents suggested providing more company cars/trucks points to a general belief that maintenance/repair of the cars/trucks rather than their actual number was the problem that should be tackled more urgently. The respondents' suggestion in table 18 for improving the means of transport do not correspond exactly with but still reinforces their recommendations in table 17 on the most used means of transport. As with means of communication the respondents were asked to give their suggestions apart from their recommendations in order to check for similarity or difference.

4.6.5 Suggestions for improving availability of materials for electricity distribution work

Respondents gave their own suggestions for improving availability of materials for electricity distribution work. The suggestions were summarized in table 19 which also shows the number and percentage of respondents who gave each one.

Table 19. Respondents' suggestions for improving availability of materials for electricity distribution work

Respondents suggestion for improving availability of materials for electricity distribution work	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Adequate/bulk provision of materials that are in constant demand	42	73.3
Streamline procedures for providing materials	13	22.8
Consistent checks for actual materials required (quantity/quality)	13	22.8
Material procurement and storage set up in zones	7	12.3
Establish reliable alternative suppliers	5	8.8

A big majority suggested adequate/bulk provision of materials that were in constant demand. A fewer but equal percentage of respondents suggested both streamlining the procedures for providing materials and constant checks for actual materials, quantity and quality requirements. Far fewer respondents suggested setting up materials procurements and storage in the zones and establishing reliable alternative suppliers.

4.6.6 Suggestions for improving availability of tools for electricity distribution work

Respondents gave their own suggestions for improving availability of tools for electricity distribution work. The suggestions are summarized in table 20 which also shows the number and percentage of respondents who gave each one.

Table 20: Respondents' suggestions for improving availability of tools for electricity distribution work

Respondents suggestion for improving availability of tools for electricity distribution work	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Adequate/prompt provision of tools	21	36.8
Proper accountability and care/use of tools	2	36.8
Streamline procedures for providing tools	18	31.6
Constant checks for actual tools required-quantity and quality	22	21.1
Tools procurement and storage set up in zones	4	7.9

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

An equal but fewer than majority percentage of respondents suggested both adequate provision of tools and proper accountability and care/use of tools to improve availability of tools for electricity distribution work. The suggestion of proper accountability implies that efficient and effective use of available tools was a matter of concern because available tools might not be optimized due to wastage or misuse. Fewer respondents suggested streamlining the procedures for providing tools, constant checks for actual tools, quantity and quality requirement and setting up tools procurement and storage in the zones-in that order.

4.6.7 Other requirements for electricity distribution work

The respondents describe other requirements they believed were necessary for electricity distribution work. Since it was a very open-ended question, respondents mentioned anything they thought was good for electricity distribution staff as can be seen in the survey in table 21.

Table 21: Respondents' description of other requirements for electricity distribution work

Other requirements for electricity distribution work	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
More pay for staff	13	22.8
Heavy work equipment	9	15.8
Protective wear	9	15.8
Extra manpower	3	5.3
Training	2	5.3

Source: Survey May 2007, primary data

Among the things mentioned as required for electricity distribution work, only work equipment and protection wear can be considered as logistics support components. To induce more pay for staff, extra manpower and training would be overstretching the definition of logistics, although they might be legitimate requirements by other criteria providing these non-logistics requirement could have positive effects on performance of staff by motivating them with higher pay, boosting their number to tackle the workload more effectively and giving them more knowledge and skill for their work.

4.7 Findings from Umeme workshops on logistics support bottlenecks and strategies for addressing them.

A workshop was held in May 2005 for the management and staff of Umeme its main purpose was to develop a management improvement scheme known as stretch out programme for Umeme. During the workshop, policy and operations bottlenecks and constraints as well as the strategies to address them were discussed and documented. Another workshop was held in March/April 2006 for the management and supervisory staff of Umeme. The main purpose of the workshop was to formulate a two year business

plan for Umeme which would be implemented through a Internally Delegated Area Management Contract between Umeme Head Office and Heads of all districts in the country. During the workshop, a SWOT analysis was carried out to identify the bottlenecks/constraints in all Umeme policy and operational areas and strategies to address them were laid out.

For purposes of this study, the researcher perused the official records of the proceedings of the two workshops. Data and information that appeared to be relevant to the impact of logistics support on the performance of the electricity distribution staff were identified and noted.

4.7.1 Logistics support bottlenecks/constraints and improvement strategies from the first workshop of May 2005

The first Umeme workshop (Umeme 2005, pp2, 8-10) noted the following bottlenecks/constraints and strategies related to logistics support for electricity distribution service;

- a) centralization of certain roles that could be carried out at zonal or departmental levels
- b) slow pace at which requisite documents for procurement and other activities are prepared

Performance improvement strategies related to logistics support for electricity distribution service;

- a) remove unnecessary bureaucracy in acquiring materials required
- b) central stores should store enough materials at all times
- c) equip zones with repair tools
- d) install toll free phone line to encourage reports of emergencies
- e) streamline the procedure for servicing and repairing vehicles to ensure continuity of field operations

although the records of the first Umeme workshop was not detailed and specific on logistics support bottlenecks, the improvement strategies implied that the bottlenecks revolved around persons providing logistics support, provision of materials and tools and means of communication and transport. The record was an indication that there were logistics support bottlenecks hindering the performance of the staff.

4.7.2 Logistics support bottlenecks/constraints and improvement strategies from the second workshop of March/April2006.

The second workshop ("The twelfth schedule: Business plan-main document" in Umeme 2006 pp. 12-56 of 106) noted the following bottlenecks/constraints and strategies related to logistics support for electricity distribution service:

- a) Inadequate logistics (equipment, transport, electricity meters) for new electricity connections
- b) Inadequate planning for procurement and stocking of maintenance and repair materials for distribution network
- c) Underutilization of field staff in normal working hours due to delays in issuing work programmes and logistics
- d) Aged vehicle breakdown frequency and hinder fieldwork
- e) Unreliable transport
- f) Inadequate supply of electricity meters
- g) Inadequate tools and equipment

Performance improvement strategies related to logistics support for electricity distribution staff:

- a) Maximize staff productivity during normal working time by planning for work orders a day in advance to minimize time wastage in moving mobilization
- b) Develop a cost effective maintenance schedule for motor cycles, motor vehicles and other equipment
- c) Procure and stock enough electricity meters to meet the monthly connection target
- d) Carry out monthly procurement planning meeting for a minimum of two months in advance of requirement
- e) Procure the required or right tools and equipment of higher quality
- f) Establish a 24-hour call centers with a toll free line
- g) Provide radio handsets for the zones to enable staff on standby to readily reached
- h) Re-organize parking provisions for motor cycles and vehicles allocated to zones to enable prompt response to reported emergencies outside working hours

The record of the second Umeme workshop was more detailed and specific on logistics support bottlenecks that were more or less the same as those of the first

workshop. The record of the second workshop also implied that the logistics support bottlenecks had persisted. This could have been due to the improvement strategies for the first workshop not being implemented as expected.

4.8 Conclusion

There is close similarity between the bottleneck in logistics support identified through the questionnaire and those identified in the written document data. There is also a close similarity between recommendations and suggestions for improvement made by the respondents through the questionnaire and the strategies for improvement laid out in the written document. However, the bottlenecks identified by the respondents and the recommendations and suggestions they gave should be more relevant than the bottlenecks and strategies for improvement in the documents because of two reasons:

First, the respondents were more current than the written document by over one year.

Secondly, the respondents yielded more detailed and varied data than the written records.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to examine the effects of logistics support on the performance of customer service staff of Umeme. The research design was a case study and the data collection methods used was self-administered questionnaires and official written records. Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were done. This chapter gives a summary and conclusion of the research findings and results as well as recommendations for possible actions and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 The logistics support bottlenecks experienced by Umeme electricity distribution staff

The bottlenecks were identified by assessing the adequacy of the logistics support availed to the staff, the accessibility of the persons providing logistics support to the staff, the opportunities the staff got to make suggestions to responsible persons about logistics support and the rank order of the seriousness of logistics support bottlenecks and the urgency of the need for solutions to them.

- 1) Adequacy of means of transport was high, of materials and tools was fair, of means of communication was rather low and of electricity meters was very low. Generally, the logistics support components were not adequate for the electricity distribution staff.
- 2) Accessibility of requisitioner of items and of deliverer of items was very easy while accessibility of approver of requisitions and of issuer/releaser of items was easy. Generally, accessibility of persons providing support was easy for the electricity distribution staff.
- 3) Opportunity to make suggestions to responsible persons about required logistics support was split among the staff. About half of the staff often got opportunity while half did not often get opportunity. However, the study did not set out to reveal whether the staff sought for the opportunity to make suggestions or waited to be given the opportunity.

4) In terms of both the seriousness of the existing bottlenecks and the urgency of need for solutions to them, the ranking of logistics support factors, in order of descending priority, were: electricity meters, materials, means of transport, tools, means of communication and persons providing support. This implied that the more serious a logistics support bottleneck was, the more urgent was the need for a solution to the bottleneck which was affecting the performance of the electricity distribution staff.

5.2.2 Efficiency of the use of available logistics support

Efficiency of the use of the available logistics support was indicated by how often the various logistics support components remained idle/unused, except when the item were of unsuitable quality, defective condition or when use of the item was not authorized. Efficiency of the use of the means of communication and transport was often indicated by how often the various means were used for electricity distribution work. The more used means of communication was mobile telephone, followed by face-to-face communication/meeting, landline telephone, radio call, written memo/letter and e-mail. The most used means of transport was company car/truck, followed by company motor cycle, walking, personal motor cycle/car and hired motor cycle/car. Generally, logistics support items availed for electricity distribution work were optimally used by the staff.

5.2.3 How lack of logistics support affected staff performance

The effects of lack of logistics support on the electricity distribution staff were reduced staff output/productivity, increased anxiety/stress among staff, reduced staff morale and reduced confidence of the staff in the management. All the effects appeared to be adverse on the performance of staff. Whenever the logistics support required for electricity distribution work was not available, the staff were inclined to act in a number of ways. The most common inclination was to abandon work or wait for a solution from their superiors, followed by the inclination to initiate/follow up requisition of the item required or try to improvise with whatever was available or to ask the customer to provide the required item. Most of the actions that the staff were inclined to take are not commendable customer service practice.

5.2.4 Measures to reduce the bottlenecks in logistics support for electricity distribution work

Although the measures put forward by the respondents to reduce bottlenecks in logistics support were to those laid out in the written document, those of the respondents were more current, detailed and varied. The measures recommended and suggested by the respondents are summarized below;

- 1) Recommendations and suggestions to improve means of communication emphasized providing more mobile telephone airtime and more radio call sets
- 2) Recommendations and suggestions to improve means of transport emphasized providing more effective maintenance for company motor vehicles and more company vehicles
- 3) Suggestions to improve availability of materials emphasized providing adequate materials that were in constant demand, especially electricity meters; streamlining procedures for providing materials; and constant checks for materials quantity and quality
- 4) Suggestions to improve availability of tools emphasized providing adequate tools; proper accountability, care and use of tools; streamlining procedures for providing tools; and constant checks for tools quantity and quality

5.3 Limitations of the study

The short time available for the study limited the geographical coverage to Umeme headquarters, main offices at Rwenzori court. However, being the co-coordinating office, the study was expected to capture the key issues in logistics management that are largely applicable in other Umeme areas. Some of the target electricity distribution staff had left the service of Umeme and the knowledge they had gained from being experience in service was missed in the study. Nevertheless, there were still many serving staff with at least three years of service experience who were identified and selected to participate in the study. There were also a few new staff who seemed to have picked up quite well despite having served for not quite one year in Umeme.

A significant number of respondents failed to rank their priorities of the logistics components in terms of both the seriousness of the existing bottlenecks and the urgency

of need for solutions to them. This was probably due to lack of familiarity with or difficulty in comprehending the procedure of ranking such items.

5.4 Conclusions

The most serious bottlenecks in logistics support experienced by Umeme electricity distribution staff were inadequate materials, particularly electricity meters, and to a smaller extent means of communication. The electricity distribution staff optimally used the logistics support that was available for electricity distribution work. Lack of logistics support had adverse effects on the performance of the electricity distribution staff, both in terms of output/productivity and employee motivation

Measures to reduce bottlenecks in logistics support for electricity distribution staff consisted mainly of improved availability and adequacy of means of communication and transport, materials and tools. All in all, inadequate logistics support hindered the performance of the electricity distribution staff. This fact implies the validity of the converse: Adequate logistics support enhances the performance of the electricity distribution staff.

5.5 Recommendations

The following are the recommendations for possible action to improve the provision of logistics support;

- 1) Bottlenecks in logistics support should be addressed by providing adequate materials, especially electricity meters. Means of communication and transport as well as tools needed for electricity distribution work should also be adequate in order to enhance the performance of electricity distribution staff
- 2) The electricity distribution staff should be given more opportunity to make constructive criticism of the system for providing logistics support. This would generate ideas for improvement from the staff who are the actual users of logistics support. The wisdom of this recommendation is in the English proverb that says the wearer of the shoe knows best where it pinches. Thus, the suggestions made by the electricity distribution staff should be taken seriously
- 3) The entire logistics support system of Umeme should be critically reviewed with a view to streamlining it so as to minimize the chances of bottlenecks arising. This would not only improve logistics support for the performance of the electricity

distribution staff, but of the staff involved in other Umeme customer service as well.

5.6 Suggestions for future research

A similar research study should be done on the overall impact of logistics support on the performance of Umeme customer service staff in order to be certain of the specific bottlenecks that could be affecting their performance. This would enable solutions to those bottlenecks to be developed to improve their performance.

Before this study, performance related problems had been identified and strategies were formulated to address them. However, implementations of the strategies seemed not to have been smooth. A research study might also be helpful to examine the factors that affect the implementation of performance improvement strategies.

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APPENDIX 1

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

BARCHELOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLIES MANAGEMENT

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear sir/madam,

I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected to be a respondent in an academic research study on the impact of logistics support on the performance of customer service staff.

Logistics support simply means the things or service that the staff should be provided with for electricity distribution work. Electricity distribution service includes all the activities that enable customers to get electricity, such as new connections and operations and maintenance of the electricity distribution network.

In completing the questionnaire, you need not reveal your personal identity. You are assured of the utmost respect for your dignity and rights as a private individual and as an employee of Umeme limited. Any information that you offer will be treated confidentially and will only be used for this academic research.

I hope you will willingly respond to all the questions to the best of your knowledge and experience.

Please follow the instructions and read each question carefully.

Yours truly;

Chirchir Cheruiyot Isaac

Student-Kampala International University

BSP/4560/31/DF

15th May 2007