



EMPLOYEES' ENGAGEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF TANZANIAN PUBLIC HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS: A CASE OF INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL WORK

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Dominic Nkolimwa

Institute of Social Work, Department of Human Resource Management, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

nkolimwad@yahoo.com, ORCID: 0009-0005-7600-0992

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ABSTRACT

Purpose-This article aimed at analyzing the influence of employees' engagement on public higher learning institutions performance in Tanzania. The performance of organizations worldwide depends on many factors including the availability of talented, committed and engaged employees. Hence, employees' engagement has an impact on organizational performance and national development at large.

Methodology- A quantitative research strategy and a positivism approach were used in the study. The article applied the correlation research design. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze data from 84 questionnaires from the Institute of Social Work, Dar es Salaam. Three hypotheses were tested to verify the model on the Employees' engagement on organizational performance.

Findings-The results demonstrate that Employee Involvement (EI), Employee Working Environment (EWE) and Employee Motivation (EM) have positive influence on Organizational performance (OP).

Conclusion- Managers in public and private organizations should seriously consider engaging employees in various decisions and duties performed at work in order to continue improving the performance of the organizations.

Keywords: Employees' engagement, organizational performance, working environment, involvement, motivation

JEL Codes: M31, E21, D11

1. INTRODUCTION

The performance of organizations in developed and developing nations depends on many factors including the availability of talented, committed and engaged employees. The employee's engagement is referred to as a positive and fulfilling work related state of mind that is characterized by vision, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). However, the performance of higher learning institutions especially in the developing countries including Tanzania is questionable. Higher learning intuitions, as any other organizations, are facing many challenges which are caused by stiff competitions stimulated by today's fast changing business environment which ultimately affects organizational performance due to lack of employees' engagement at work (Al-dalahmeh *et al.*, 2018). This pushed organizations to bolster their hiring, motivational and retention strategies of highly talented, skillful and engaged employees in order to realize organizational performance.

Most organizations intending to improve performance concentrate on hiring talented employees due to the changing marketing environment that attracts efficiency (Akbar *et al.*, 2023). Having employees who view their work as meaningful and thus engage in it is essential because individuals give firms a competitive advantage through their unique contributions (Stoyanova & Iliev). This is attributed to the fact that having people who are upbeat, enthusiastic, and motivated by their work would immediately improve the performance of the firm (Anitha, 2014). Different scholars like Akbar, Natsir and Husen, 2023; Afifuddin, 2015; Joseph, 2015 and Marwansyah (2016) described performance as a result of work in quality and quantity that is achieved by employees in carrying out duties under the given responsibilities. This is the most important part of work behavior of an individual which can be interpreted as the results achieved by a person according to the standards that apply to the work.

According to Mangkunegara (2015), performance is the work achieved or attained by someone based on job requirements. Employees' engagement has a significant role towards the realization of the objectives of an organization, which can be

observed through performance. Therefore, the performance of an individual can be influenced by the level of his commitment to work. Myilswamy and Gayatri (2014) argue that the degree of engagement at work determines people's productivity and their willingness to stay with the organization. Hence, employees' engagement refers to as a situation whereby employees are fully occupied in their work and emotionally attached to their organization (Osman *et al.*, 2022). Employees must be dedicated towards work and should take it as a challenge towards realizing the organizational performance rather than changing the workplace as a place where individuals have nothing creative to do and just sit idle the whole day. Masa'deh, Khalaf & Obeidat (2018) argued that employee engagement is the property of the relation between the organizations with their employees.

Wasilowski (2018) argues that managers believe that engagement has a lot to do with employees as regards work experience and how employees are treated in the organization. Bale and Pillay (2021) argue that a highly engaged employee can increase productivity and performance while reducing costs related to hiring and retention and increasing their competitive advantage (Sudibjo & Riantini, 2023). This is an important aspect since it has a lot to do with emotions which are fundamentally related to drive bottom line success in a company (Grubert *et al.*, 2023). The employee engagement initiative has a direct impact on the organization's productivity. Scholars argue that employee engagement has important elements like involvement, empowerment, job motivation, organizational commitment, working environment, management support and trust to the employees which should be taken into serious consideration and trust to the employees (Almawali *et al.*, 2021). The key factors in engagement are such as alignment of employees toward strategy; enabling employees to have the capability to engage themselves and creating the sense of engagement to the work (Hanaysha, 2016).

This article used employee involvement, working environment and motivation as important elements in engagement towards realizing organizational performance. The knowledge on how employee's engagement can influence performance in public higher learning institutions is scant in Tanzania. Therefore, this article intends to fill that gap and assist managers and policy makers as to how to engage employees and take efforts to manage the knowledge of the employees so as to increase the performance of the organization using employee's engagement as a tool for organizational performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Dual Factor Theory of Motivation developed by Herzberg (1966) fits in this article because it relates with Employee's engagement and employee's performance as a result of employee's motivation. This is a classical theory of employee motivation which stimulates the morale of employees in the organization. The job itself must provide sufficient varieties, sufficient complexities, sufficient challenges and sufficient skills to engage the worker (Githinji & Muli, 2018). It can take the form of motivation by the work itself when individuals feel that their work is important, interesting and challenging and provides them with a degree of autonomy, opportunities to achieve and advance, and scope to use and develop their skills and abilities (Armstrong, 2012). The social exchange theory was borrowed in order to enrich this article. Githinji and Muli (2018) recommended the social exchange theory as a strong theoretical rationale for employees' engagement on organizational performance. The recommended theory argues that commitments are created through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. According to the theory, relationships develop into trusting, loyal and mutual commitments over time as long as parties abide by certain rules. This is consistent with the description of engagement as a reciprocal relationship of trust and respect between employer and employee (Politeknik *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, it requires an organization's executives and managers to communicate their expectations clearly and extensively to the employees and create a working environment and corporate culture in which engagement would thrive (Ochonogor & Amah, 2021). According to Githinji and Muli (2018), the social exchange theory describes engagement because it sees feelings of loyalty, commitment and discretionary effort as all being forms of reciprocation by employees to a good employer.

2.1. Employees' Engagement and Organizational Performance

Yalabik *et al.* (2017) maintain that employees' engagement is among the important factors that impact organizational performance because it stimulates the morale of workers. It deals with emotional, cognitive and behavioral states of the employee, with an emphasis on the desired organizational outcome (Grubert *et al.*, 2023). It pushes ahead the organization's and employee's agenda (Bergström & Martínez 2016). Shuck and Vollard (2010) state that employee engagement means the intellectual and emotional involvement of employees within the organization. Hence, no organization can maximize profit without investing on employees' engagement by creating a relationship between employees and their work (Muller *et al.*, 2018). Organizations that observe employee engagement tend to reduce absenteeism, accidents, turnover and also improve employee performance as well as organizational efficiency (Hussein *et al.*, 2017). There is a positive relationship between engagement and direct indicators of the effectiveness of the organization such as productivity, quality, performance, customer satisfaction, profit and business development because engaged employees become excited about their work in the organization. Engaged employees are expected to feel emotionally, physically, interaction and intimacy (Engidaw, 2021). The action influences an individual to develop a positive, affective and psychological work-related behaviour (Wasilowski, 2018).

The engaged employees express and prepare themselves emotionally, cognitively, and physically to do their work tasks (Ameen & Baharom). Therefore, to engage employees is very important towards achieving useful business performance outcomes in the organizations (Almawali *et al.*, 2021).

2.2. Employees Involvement and Organizational Performance

Employees who are involved especially at important roles tend to be devoted to working (Pranitasari, 2022). The effectiveness and efficiency of the organization depend on the joint efforts of all employees who have been involved. The theory of employee involvement is considered to be one of the most influential theories of business. Ahmeda, Khanb, Thitivesab, Siraphatthadab and Phumdarab (2020) posit that it predicts that employees who work passionately and engaged usually perform better than others and contribute to the success of the organization. Many organizations are faced with challenges of managing and empowering their employees to actively participate in decision making (Amhalhal *et. Al.*, 2015). In the current economic environment, organizations require creative and innovative employees who can take initiative, embrace change, stimulate innovation and cope with high uncertainty in the market (Azmy, 2019). The idea of empowerment involves the employees being provided with a significant degree of freedom and flexibility to make decisions relating to work without direct involvement of the top management (Pranitasari, 2022). Employee's involvement and participation thus contribute greatly to how organizations make decision and run their businesses (Singh, 2016). It is very important that organizations create an environment for all employees with open feedback to make sure that employees are treated with equal opportunities. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: There is a positive relationship between employees' involvement and organizational performance.

2.3. Working Environment and Organizational Performance

According to Danish, Ramzan and Ahmad (2013), work environment is related to the climate of a particular organization where its employees do their duties. Work environment is a key factor that affects employee's satisfaction and commitment toward organizational performance. According to Almawali, Hafit, Hassan (2021), work environment should be conducive such that it protects employees from all work-related risks. In order to protect employees from work-related risks, organizations should design their work environments in a way that they can increase the level of employees' commitment and motivation, which would ultimately translate into favorable outcomes (Sittar, 2020). Undoubtedly, facilitative and safe work environment can attract employees as their needs are likely to be satisfied (Bustasar *et al.*, 2019). For employees to be more engaged and work hard when they feel that they are secured, organizations should design their work environments in a way that can increase the level of employees' commitment and motivation. Therefore, managers should improve the aspects of work environment to ensure the welfare of their employees. Work environment comprises factors such as involvement; team cohesion; supervisor's support; task orientation; work pressure; autonomy; clarity; innovation, physical comfort, psychological climate, working conditions and organizational culture. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between working environment and organizational performance.

2.4. Employees Motivation and Organizational Performance

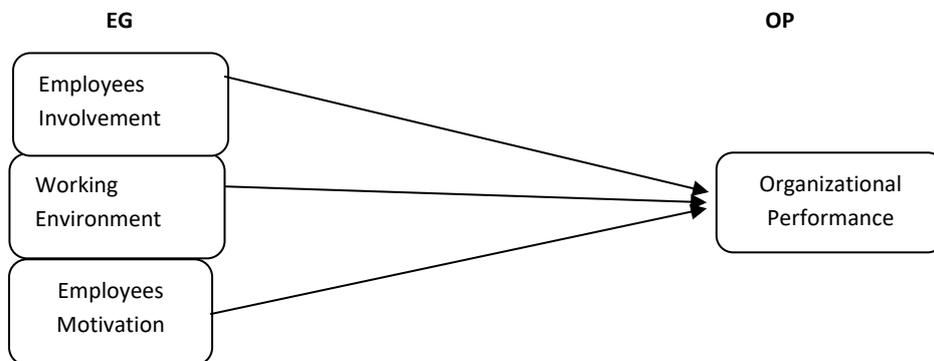
Motivation is the energy that moves employees toward performing an action at work (Engidaw, 2021). It strengthens the willingness of employees to work and, in turn, it increases the organization's effectiveness and competence (Parashar, 2016). It is an important factor for understanding and managing organizational behavior because it explains why employees behave or act in a particular way (Engidaw, 2021). When employees are well motivated in the organization, they tend to be engaged in the work or an action which stimulates organizational performance. Therefore, motivation has a major role to improve the performance of the employees in higher learning institutions (Sutapa *et al.*, 2022). The significance of motivation at workplace cuts across all working environments and plays a commendable role to public and private organizations. Mariza (2016) argues that motivation is categorized into monetary which is based on bonuses, salaries, and wages to causal employees while another category of motivation is non-monetary such as working condition, recognition, job status, job security, and job enrichment. Khan (2013) argues that there is a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation which encompasses job appreciation, satisfaction, and stress on employee engagement and extrinsic motivation which comprises job security, good wages, promotion and growth, and recognition on employee engagement (Ochonogor & Amah, 2021). Therefore, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have a strong positive impact on employee engagement. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: There is a positive relationship between employees' motivation and organizational performance

2.5. Conceptual Framework

The framework proposed for this study was based on theoretical results as described in the introduction. The conceptual framework underlies the relationship between employees’ engagement which is measured by employees’ involvement, employees’ working environment and employees’ motivation on organizational performance at public higher learning institutions in Tanzania. Based on the description above, the conceptual framework of this study can be described as follows:

Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework



3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study applied a quantitative research strategy and a positivism research approach. The correlation research design was employed so as to determine the extent of relationship between independent and dependent variables by using statistical data. The research design was selected because it recognizes the trends and patterns of data. The five-point Likert Scale questionnaire was used to gather data from employees at the Institute of Social Work, Dar es Salaam where 84 respondents were involved. The SPSS version 21 was used to perform the regression analysis. The Cronbach alpha was used in a pilot study to test the reliability and validity of data in this study.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Multiple regression analysis is often used to explore the predictive ability of a set of independent variables on dependent variable (Prasad, 2018). It allows comparison of the power of independent variables to find the best set of variables that predicts a dependent variable (Frost, 2017). The article intended to investigate the relationship between employee’s engagement and organizational performance. It focused on three variables namely Employees Involvement, Employees Working Environment and Employees Motivation. Each variable was evaluated in terms of its predictive power (Ochonogor & Amah, 2021). Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the strength of the relationship between variables, to determine how well the data fits the model, how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables, to provide an indication of the relative contribution of each independent variable, to determine the statistical significance of the results in both the model and individual independent variables, to estimate model coefficient and the last is to test the hypothesis of the study (Ochonogor & Amah, 2021). The following are the results of the analysis done by multiple regression aimed at achieving the study objectives on employees’ engagement on organizational performance.

The model summary of correlation coefficients is represented by R. The table below presents the information from the analysis. Frost (2017) states that if R lies between 0.10 and 0.29 it is an indication of a small correlation, 0.30 and 0.49 indicates medium while 0.50 and 1.0 indicates large correlation.

Table 1: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.580 ^a	0.64	0.61	3.51931	2.008

a. Predictors: (Constant), EM, EWE, EI

b. Dependent Variable: OP

The results from the model summary indicate that the value of correlation coefficient R is 0.580. This implies that there is large correlation between variables. The value shows that all Employees’ engagement factors are a good indicator for the occurrence of organizational performance. This has also been supported by Frost (2017) who argued that if the value of correlation coefficient R is above 50 percent, then it indicates that the data fits the model, which implies that there is a strong

relationship between variables. The coefficient of determination presented by R square was used to find out the variance. The R square is defined as the proportion of variance in the organizational performance that can be explained by employees' engagement factors. It is the proportions of the variation counted for by the regression model above and beyond the means model. Frost (2017) proposed that the highest R square (above 50%) is considered to be one of the indicators of a good model. The results from the analysis (Table 1.0) indicate that the value of R square is 64.7. This value implies that employees' engagement factors explain 64.7 percent of the variability of organizational performance and only 36.3 percent of variation is caused by other factors indicated in the model. That means the proposed employees' engagement factors exactly predict the organizational performance. The adjusted R square shows how much of the variance the organizational performance is explained by the employees' engagement factors included in the model. Table 1.0 shows that 0.061 percent of the variation in the organizational performance is explained by the employees' engagement factors. Frost (2017) argues that the low discrepancy between R square and adjusted R square indicates a good fit of the model. Table 1.0 indicates R square which is 64.7 percent and adjusted R square which is 0.061 percent whose discrepancy is low at 3 percent which is less than 5 percent. This small deviation implies that they are closely related. Stephen (2018) argued that for a good model, adjusted R square should always be less than 5 percent.

The study intends to test whether the independent variables (employees' engagement factors) significantly predict the dependent variable statistically (Organizational performance). F – test was used to test whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data at the selected probability level. It was intended to check if the Engagement factors (EI, EWE and EM are statistically predicting the Organizational performance (OP). The predictor is said to be statistically significant if the P value is less than 0.05 and if more, then they are said to be insignificant. The data in ANOVA table show that the F-ratio is given by F (3, 79) =13.348, P 0.000. The good fit of data in this analysis of regression model implies that the Employee Engagement is statistically significant predicting the organizational performance as indicated in the data.

Table 2: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	495.951	3	165.317	13.348	.000 ^b
	Residual	978.458	79	12.386		
	Total	1474.410	82			

a. Dependent Variable: OP

b. Predictors: (Constant), EM, EWE, EI

Source: Field data (2023)

It was important for the study to know the contribution of each employee engagement factors, included in the model, in predicting the organizational performance. The results will provide an indication to the Institute of Social Work to concentrate much on employees' engaged factors which have a high contribution if it plans to improve performance. The study proposed that each employee's engagement included in the model has a contribution to the organizational performance.

The study used the standardized coefficients from coefficient Table 1.3 which compares different employees' engagement factors by considering the β values. Using standardized coefficient means that all values for each of the different engagement factors have been converted to the same scale so that comparison can be made simple. The coefficients table represents the standardized coefficient β values for each employee's engaged factors and their significance marked. The β values represent the contribution of each employee's engagement factor to organizational performance. Results from table 3 show that the β values under standardized coefficients for EI, EWE and EM were 0.296, 0.317 and 0.473 respectively. Since the study intended to compare the contribution of each engagement factor by considering the β values, the results imply EM has the largest beta value followed by EWE. This implies that EM has a stronger or greater explanatory power to the organizational performance followed by EWE while EI has the least contribution.

Table 3: Evaluation of Contribution of Each Employee's Engagement Factor Model Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	15.228	2.291		6.646	.000		
	EI	.064	.068	.296	.939	.035	.805	1.242
	EWE	.072	.061	.317	1.167	.024	.834	1.199
	EM	.331	.076	.473	4.344	.000	.708	1.412

Dependent Variable: OP

The multiple regression analysis was used to test the proposed hypotheses which are H1, H2 and H3 related to organizational performance and employees' engagement related factors. Results from the regression coefficient show that there is a significant relationship between EI and OP ($\beta = 0.296$, Significant at 0.035), another result from the regression coefficient

shows that there is a significant relationship between EWE and OP ($\beta = 0.317$, Significant at 0.024). The results from the regression coefficient also show that there is a significant relationship between EM and OP ($\beta = 0.473$, Significant at 0.000).

4.1. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results show that EI has a positive influence on realizing the organizational performance. Therefore, if organizations tend to involve employees in various decisions and duties, the performance tends to rise. Grubert, Steuber and Meynhardt (2023) supported the findings by arguing that involved employees are motivated to continue working hard. Employees' involvement in the organization especially in higher leaning institutions is a key factor in maintaining and stimulating the morale of staff at worker place. This has also been supported by Ochonogor & Amah (2021) who urged that employees should be involved in decision making. The attitude towards working hard, with a sense of ownership, rises when employees have been involved by management (Jalal & Hanaysha 2016). The employees' working environment is vital towards realizing organizational performance. This concurs with the findings of this article which revealed that EWE has a positive influence in realizing OP. Hanaysha (2016) maintained that improving employees' working environment is significant towards assuring health and safety at workplace to all employees. The environment which has been maintained provides an alert to employees about the risks associated with work (Oakman, & Bartram, 2017). The results revealed that EM has a strong influence on realizing OP since employees become committed if they have been motivated. Mariza (2016) argued that management has a significant role to play towards motivating employees at work. Motivation appeared to be strongly preferred by all employees at all workplaces and higher leaning institutions (Hanaysha 2016). Employees can be motivated to work hard if there are achievements, recognition, promotion opportunities, responsibilities, and opportunities for personal growth (Engidaw 2021).

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The article investigated the influence of employees' engagement on Public Higher Learning Institutions' Performance. The literature informed that employees' engagement has a contribution to the organizational performance (Bergström & Martínez 2016). Employees' engagement is measured by employees' involvement, working environment and motivation. Therefore, this article concludes that employees' engagement has a significant influence on the organizational performance. Hence, management of the organizations should place emphasis on the employees' engagement in order to realize organizational performance.

The results revealed that employee engagement has a significant relationship with Public Higher Learning Institutions' Performance. Thus, organizational performance will be improved if all organizations, especially public organizations, emphasize on employees' engagement. Managers should therefore put emphasis on engaging employees in making various decisions in the organization like involving employees in preparation and design of strategies which aim at improving performance.

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Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondents, this questionnaire intends to collect information on the research titled Employees’ Engagement on the performance of Tanzanian public higher learning institutions. The main objective of this study is to analyze the Influence of Employees’ Engagement on the Performance of Tanzanian Public Higher Learning Institutions. You are kindly requested to provide relevant information that will assist the achievement of the study objectives. I assure that the collected information will be confidential and the names of individual and organization will not be included in the reporting of the findings. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this study.

1. Sex
 - (a) Male
 - (b) Female
2. Age
 - (a) 18 or 35
 - (b) 36-45
 - (c) 46-55
 - (e) Above 55years
3. Marital status
 - (a) Single
 - (b) Married
 - (c) Divorced
 - (d) Widow
4. What is your highest level of education?
 - (a) Diploma level
 - (c) Bachelor degree level
 - (d) Postgraduate qualification

Strongly disagree=1, Disagree=2, I don’t know=3, Agree=4 and Strongly agree=5

S/N	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
A	Employees Involvement					
5	I am involved in decision making					
7	I am involved in preparation of organization objectives					
8	I am involved to implement the organization objectives					
9	The strategies of organization aim to raise my performance					
10	I am results oriented toward meeting the organization objective					
11	I am part and parcel of the organization success					
12	I am determined to realize the organization objectives					
B	Employees Working Environment	1	2	3	4	5
13	The working environment support employee’s performance.					
14	I am attracted with working environment					
15	There all needed facilities with support efficiency at work					
16	Creativity at work is important to me in order rise efficiencies					
17	The organization provides the conducive working environment					
18	I am determined to realize the organization objectives					
C	Employees Motivation	1	2	3	4	5
19	I am eager to work hard at the organization					
20	I am happy to work with this organization					
21	My company provides fair promotion opportunities					
22	Promotion should be based on performance					
23	My job is beneficial to my career					
24	My boss allows me to have my ability fully utilize					
25	It’s enjoyable to go to work					
26	The companies value my service					
27	I am satisfied with the working condition					
D	Organisation Performance	1	2	3	4	5
28	I am empowered to realize the organization performance.					
29	Management do empower employees in archiving organization formance					
30	Employees’ empowerment influence organization performance					
31	I understand the plan and priorities of the organization.					
32	I understand the purpose and objectives of the organization					
33	I have received an appropriate training to do my job efficiently and effectively.					
34	I understand how our working environment has an impact on our organization goals.					
35	Top management always communicate values and vision of our organization					