# Effect of Employee Relations on Employee Performance and Organizational Performance-Study of Small Organizations in Tanzania

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#### <sup>8</sup> Abstract

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Employee relations is one of the key fundamental elements of organizational performance, 9 prosperity and sustainability. Good employee relations results in a highly committed, 10 motivated and loyal employees in the organizations. The aim of this paper is to examine the 11 effect of employee relations on employee performance and organizational performance and at 12 the same time identify various employee relations practices used by small organizations in 13 Tanzania. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and used a stratified 14 random sampling technique to select a sample size of 387 respondents from selected small 15 organizations in Tanzania. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews 16 and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis and the results presented 17 using tables. The findings of the study show that small organizations in Tanzania are aware of 18 the benefits of maintaining good employee relations and correct remedial actions taken to 19 minimize poor employee relations in the organization. The findings further indicate a positive 20 significant relationship between employee relations and employee performance as well as 21 between employee relations and organization performance. Moreover, the findings reveal the 22 use of unfair labour practices in small organizations in Tanzania. The study recommends that 23 small organizations in Tanzania should focus more on implementing fair labour practices and 24 building effective and sustainable employee relations that will ensure their growth and survival. 25

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#### <sup>29</sup> 1 I. Introduction

rganizations cannot perform better and achieve its objectives if there is a bad relationship between employees 30 and employer, therefore it is very important for managers to create and maintain good relationship with their 31 employees. Effective employee and management relationship is vital to the workplace whether at the time of 32 33 recruitment, during an employees' tenure or at the time of separation (Rose, 2008). Good employer-employee 34 relations is essential to the organization because it inspires employees to work better and produce more results 35 (Burns, 2012). The application of human relations in managing human resource is critical in today's business Author: Ph.D, East Africa Regional Human Resource Manager, Ausdrill East Africa, Mwanza, Tanzania/Part-36 Time Senior Lecturer, Mount Meru University. e-mail: janes.samwel@yahoo.com competitive environment 37 (Christen, Iver & Soberman, 2006). Factors such as job satisfaction is achieved when there is a great working 38 relationship between labour and management (Boyle, 2006). Yes, organizations can have competent, qualified and 39 motivated employees but if there is no peace and harmony at the workplace their performance will be in danger. 40 Because the relationship between the employer and the employee is very crucial, employers need to pay attention 41

Index terms— employee relations, employee performance, organizational performance, small organizations
 and tanzania

# 5 B) FACTORS LEADING TO EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION

to this relationship if they want their businesses to grow and succeed (Bhattacharya, 2008) and that firms should 42 actively seek good employee relations whether or not they are bound by union contracts (Pearce and Robinson 43 (2009). Organizations need employees who can peacefully work together towards the achievement of the set 44 45 objectives and goals, and this can only be achieved if there is a good employee relations in the organization as the 46 objectives of employee relationship is to achieve harmonious employee relations and minimize conflict practices in employment (Torrington & Hall, 1998). Employee relationship management has many documented positive 47 effect in organizations such as strengthening corporate communication and culture, fostering about company 48 products, services and customer providing real-time access to company training, targeting information to an 49 employee based on their needs ??Wargborn, 2008). 50

#### <sup>51</sup> 2 a) Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that in today's competitive business environment employee relations is one of the pillars and crucial functions of human resource management which leads to effective employee performance and organizational performance. Small organizations in Tanzania seems to throw employee relations behind them by not giving it special attention and priority, as a result, they are still struggling to establish and maintain effective employee relations, this causes unnecessary disputes in these organizations which in turn affect their performance. Poor relations between the employer and employees among organizations operating in the globally and locally markets has become the challenge (Kaliski, 2007).

## <sup>59</sup> **3** b) Research Hypothesis

## <sup>60</sup> 4 II. Literature Review a) The perception of employee relations

According to Torrington and Hall (1998), the relationship between employees and management is a framework of 61 organizational justice consisting of organizational culture and management styles as well as rules and procedural 62 sequence for grievance and conflict management. Gennard and Judge (2002) stated that employee relations is 63 a study of the rules, regulations and agreements by which employees are managed both as individuals and as a 64 collective group. Lewis et al (2003) explained that employee relations suggest a wider employment canvas being 65 covered with equal importance attached to non-union employment arrangements and white collar jobs. Armstrong 66 67 (2005) observed that employee relations is to manage the relationship between employer and employees with the 68 ultimate objectivity of achieving the optimum level of productivity in terms of goods and services, employee 69 motivation taking preventive measures to resolve problems that adversely affect the working environment. 70 ??alton (1985) narrated that the unitary viewpoint of employee relations is the belief that management and employees share the same concerns and it is therefore in both their interests to cooperate. Perkins and Shortland 71 (2006) advocated that employee relations is concerned with the social economic relationship that forms and 72 revolves around a contract between the parties to perform work in return for employment benefits such as 73 remuneration. Clarke (2001) commented that effective employee relationship management requires cooperation 74 between managers representatives and employees, that good relationship between employer and employee do 75 76 not just happen but they are the result of a strategy and activities that employee relations managers design to improve communication between employees and management (Mayhew, 1985). George and Jones (2008) said 77 that employee relations involve the communication and relationships that in the end contribute to satisfactory 78 productivity, job satisfaction, motivation and morale of the employees. Consequently, Foot and Hook (2008) 79 highlighted that the right of employer on employer and employee relationship is to control work performance, 80 81 integrate employee in the organization's structure and management system and create a mutual trust environment, 82 confidence and supply of enough and reasonable work while employees obey lawful and reasonable orders, maintain fidelity and work with due diligence and care. 83

# $_{^{84}}$ 5 b) Factors leading to effective employee relations in the $_{^{85}}$ organization

Gomez-Mejia et al ??2001) argued that for organizational members to perceive employee relations management 86 practices positively, the organizational leadership needs to put emphasis on gaining support from employees, 87 having mutual trust and confidence building, allowing freedom of association, improving career and salary 88 tracks, retirement benefits, and retaining measures. Pearce and Robinson (2009) observed that organizations 89 90 should strive to satisfy their employees with good pay, good supervision and good stimulating work. Mayhew 91 (1985) inferred that best employee relationship management practices incorporate labour and employment laws, 92 resourcefulness and human resource expertise in developing practices that improve working relationships. Purcell 93 and Ahlstrand (1994) insisted on the need of the existence of a distinctive set of written guiding principles which set parameters to and signposts for management action regarding the way employees are treated and how 94 particular events are handled. Lewis et al (2003) contended that it is good to involve employees direct in decisions 95 that go beyond their immediate work tasks and given opportunity to control their work situation in a manner 96 that benefits the organization also to have a managerial policy where employees and employers share goals and 97 agree on the means to achieve them, their involvement is very important because participation in goal setting has 98

been found relating to acceptance and subsequent commitment to the established goals which leads to favourable outcomes in terms of performance and attitudes (Harzing & Ruysseveldt, 2004).

According to Shweitzer and Lyons (2008) factors that lead to good employee relations in the organization 101 include employee empowerment and involvement, initiating employee suggestions, conflict management and 102 grievance redress measures, facilitating collective bargaining, expertize training and development, encouraging 103 teamwork and transparency in communicating. Ivancevich (2001) supported that employee empowerment 104 improves employee relations because it contributes directly to organizational objectives by increasing skill sets 105 and granting authority to the employees to make a decision that would traditionally be made by managers. 106 Kovach (1995) focused on the need of effective communication that it is one of the most important factors which 107 either improves or spoils the relationship among employees, employees with open lines of communication with 108 managers are more likely to build effective work relationships with those managers, increase their organizational 109 identification and enhance their performance which at last contributes to organization productivity (Tsai, Chuang 110 & Hsieh, 2009). 111

## 112 6 III. Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and used a stratified random sampling technique 113 to select a sample size of 387 respondents from the target population of the study. The data was collected 114 using questionnaires and interviews and analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis with the 115 help of SPSS software version 22.0. The study wanted to know the causes of poor employee relations in small 116 organizations. The results in table 4.1 depict that 8.3 % of the respondents mentioned low and inbalance salary 117 as a cause of poor employee relations in the small organization, 7.5% mentioned poor working conditions, 9.8% 118 mentioned lack of attractive work incentives, 10.9% mentioned unfair labour practices while 6.5% mentioned 119 ineffective communication between management and employees. Consequently, 7% of the respondents mentioned 120 lack of supervision and management skills among supervisors and managers as a cause of poor employee relations 121 in the organization, 6.2% mentioned indiscipline among employees, 7.8% mentioned unfair treatment of employees 122 by the management and 7.2% mentioned failure by the management to pay attention to employees' personal 123 problems. Moreover, 6.2% of the respondents mentioned ineffective of delegation of authority to employees 124 by the management as a cause of poor labour relations in the organization, 7% mentioned unfair redressal of 125 employee grievances by the management, 7.8% mentioned poor conflict management while 8% mentioned lack 126 of transparency in communication as a cause of poor employee relations in small organizations. Brookins and 127 Media (2002) were of the view that employee conflict in the workplace is a common occurrence, resulting from 128 the differences in employees' personalities and values. Havenga (2002) contended that causes of conflict at the 129 level of the organization could also include resource availability, affirmative action programmes, the scope of the 130 content of workload, the introduction of new management techniques and differences of a cultural and racial 131 nature. Consequently, Nelson and Quick (2001) indicated that there are conflicts that develop from within the 132 133 organization and those that emerge as a result of individual differences among employees. Vecchio (2000) was of 134 the same view that communication is infrequently considered as a source of conflict. in the small organization. In line with the study results, Sweney and Mc Farlin (2005) were of the view that effective approaches adopted 135 in conflict management within the organization like coaching, training, mediation and facilitation will enhance 136 employee and employer relations thus improved job satisfaction. 137

# <sup>138</sup> 7 IV. Results and Discussions a) Causes of poor employee <sup>139</sup> relations in the organization

<sup>140</sup> 8 b) Remedial actions used to minimize poor employee relations
 <sup>141</sup> in the organization

#### <sup>142</sup> 9 c) Effect of employee relations on employee performance

The study wanted to know the effect of employee relations on the performance of employee in small organizations 143 and the results are shown in the tables below; The results in table 4.3 reveal that 50.4% of the respondents 144 strongly agree that good employee relations increase employees' morale at work, 39% agree, 3.6% were neutral, 145 3.6% disagree with the statement while 3.4% strongly disagree that good employee relations increase employees' 146 morale. Based on the cumulative percentage which shows that majority of the respondents agreeing to the 147 statement, this implies that employee relations has a great effect on employees' working morale. Grant (2007) 148 supported that improvement in the management of employee relationships in organizations brings more positive 149 aspects to the firm than just to increase employee motivation. The results of a study done by Delaney and 150 151 Huselid (1996) proved that a set of fit employee relations practices which stimulate various attributes of employees 152 including personal and professional skills, motivation and work structure are significantly positively related to 153 their performance that leads to ultimate organizational performance. The study wanted to know whether good employee relations in small organizations improve discipline to workers or not, it was observed that 43.7% of 154 the respondents strongly agree that good employee relations improve workers' discipline, 44.7% agree, 4.1% were 155 neutral while 4.1% disagree and 3.4% strongly disagree that good employees improve discipline to workers. The 156

#### 10 D) EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

results in table 4.5 highlights that majority of the respondents of the study that is 56.6% strongly agree that 157 good employee relations promote teamwork in small organizations, also 34.6% agree with the statement. However, 158 6.7% of the respondents were neutral to the statement, 1.0% disagree while again 1.0% strongly disagree that 159 good employee relations promote teamwork in the small organization. This result is supported by the study 160 done by Keith and Newstrom (1989) which found that employee relationship promotes teamwork which achieves 161 organizational goals. Schweitzer and Lyons (2008) also supported that organizations normally engage in various 162 employee relationships management practices such as teamwork to develop healthy relationships and extract the 163 best out of each team member. It was noted that 53% of the total respondents of the study strongly agree that 164 mainting good employee relations improve employees' commitment at work, relatively, 35.7% also agree with the 165 statement. Consequently, in responding to this statement, 9.3% of the total respondents of the study were neutral, 166 1.0% disagree and 1.0% strongly disagree that good employee relations improve employees' commitment at work. 167 Because the results show that 88.7% of the respondents which is the majority agreeing with the statement, this 168 implies that both the management and employees who were the respondents of the study know very well that 169 maintaining good employee relations in the organization helps to improve employees' commitment at work, it 170 is believed that one of the antecedent determinants of workers performance is employee commitment (Ali at 171 al, 2010) and employees with sense of employee commitment are less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviour 172 and more willing to accept change (Lo et al, 2009). The study also wanted to know whether good employee 173 relations has effect on employee turnover and from the results of the study, 57.9% strongly agree and 31.8% agree 174 175 that good employee relations reduce employee turnover in the organization, Unlikely, 1.6% disagree and 2.6% 176 strongly disagree while 6.2% of the total respondents were neutral to the statement. Huselid (1995) supported 177 that employee relations result in organization performance also lower employee turnover.

#### d) Effect of employee relations on organizational perfor-10178

#### mance 179

The sought to know the effect of employee relations on labour turnover in small organizations, the results are 180 shown in the tables below; From the results of the study, 57.4% of the respondents strongly agree while 34.9% 181 agree that good employee relations lead to high productivity in the organization. Contrary, 1.8% disagree, again 182 1.8% strongly disagree that good employee relations lead to high productivity in the organization while 4.1% of 183 the respondents were neutral to the statement. The result of this study is in line with the result of the study done 184 by Huselid (1995) The results in table 4.9 depict that 45.2% of the respondents strongly agree that good employee 185 relations ensure optimum use of scarce resources in the organization, 42.4% agree while 7.8% were neutral, 2.8% 186 disagree and 1.8% strongly disagree. The result of the study in table 4.10 indicate that 59.4% of the total 187 respondents strongly agree that good employee relations result in effective communication in the organization, 188 35.7% agree while 1.0% were neutral to the statement. On the other hand, 2.6% of the total respondents disagree 189 and 1.3% strongly disagree that good employee relations result in effective communication in the organization. 190 The results are in line with the results of Howes (2010) findings who found that better communication and 191 attention to the personal needs of employees improves employee's motivation and performance. Relatively, 192 Kaliski (2007) supported that effective employee relations enhances positive communication and attitude between 193 management and employees, promotes the overall wellbeing of employees during their tenure at the company and 194 helps in preventing and resolving problems involving employees' that affect work situation. Similarly, Amessa and 195 Drakeb (2003) supported that communication is one of the critical that enhance the spirit of teamwork within 196 the organization. The study results reveal that 45% of the total respondents strongly agree that good employee 197 relations facilitate changes in the organization, 42.4% agree, 4.4% were neutral to the statement, while 3.1%198 disagree and 1.8% strongly disagree that good employee relations facilitate changes in the organization. Because 199 the result further indicates that the majority of the total respondents which is 87.4% agreeing to the statement, 200 it implies that maintaining good employee relations has a positive effect on change implementation. The findings 201 are supported by the study by Ahmed et al (1996) which found that employee relations and flexibility are 202 emerging as competitive weapons that allow organizations to counteract market evolution and competitive. The 203 results of correlation between employee relations, employee performance and organizational performance in table 204 4.12 indicate that there is a positive statistical significant relationship between employee relations and employee 205 performance also between employee relations and organizational performance whereby employee relations and 206 employee performance is r(387) = +.329, employee relations and organizational performance is r(387) = +.209. 207 the significance value was observed at .01 level. Since significant value (P-value =.000), the alternative hypothesis 208 is accepted. The findings of the study corresponds with the findings of the study by James and Nickson 209 (2016) on influence of employee relations on organization performance of private universities in Kenya which 210 211 found that employee relations has a positive significant influence on organizational performance with (r=0.532)212 However, these results supersede the results of the study done by Muhammad et al (2013) on the impact of 213 employee relations on employee performance in hospitality industry in Pakistan which indicated medium positive 214 correlation between employee performance and employee relations with R=0.529. Moreover, the study by Kuzu and Derya (2014) on the effect of employee relationship and knowledge sharing on employee performance: An 215 empirical research on service industry revealed that employee relationships have a midlevel positive association 216 with employee performance with (r=0.602). 217

## <sup>218</sup> 11 V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Maintaining harmonious relations is very important for the survival, prosperity and growth of the organization. 219 Good and healthy employee relations leads to better organizational performance. The study found that small 220 organizations are aware of the benefits of maintaining good employee relations and correct remedial actions to 221 minimize poor employee relations in the organization. Similarly, the study found that there is a positive significant 222 relationship between employee relations and employee performance as well as between employee relations and 223 organizational performance. Moreover, the study found that the use unfair labour practices is a major cause 224 of poor employee relations in the small organizations in Tanzania. Therefore the study recommends a need for 225 small organizations to start implementing fair labour practices throughout their operations and do away with 226 unfair labour practices. Furthermore, the study recommends that small organizations in Tanzania should focus 227 more on building effective and sustainable employee relations that will ensure their growth and survival. 228 Year 2018 ( ) A

#### 41

Frequency

Percent

Cumulative Percent

Figure 1: Table  $4 \cdot 1$ :

#### $\mathbf{42}$

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
			Percent
Collective bargaining meetings	144	37.2	37.2
Workers representative committees	114	29.5	66.7
Joint consultation meetings	129	33.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 2: Table  $4 \cdot 2$ :

 $\mathbf{4}$ 

Figure 3: Table 4 .

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## $\mathbf{43}$

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	195	50.4	50.4
Agree	151	39.0	89.4
Neutral	14	3.6	93.0
Disagree	14	3.6	96.6
Strongly Disagree	13	3.4	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 4: Table 4 . 3 :

#### **44**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	169	43.7	43.7
Agree	173	44.7	88.4
Neutral	16	4.1	92.5
Disagree	16	4.1	96.6
Strongly Disagree	13	3.4	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 5: Table 4 . 4 :

#### $\mathbf{45}$

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	219	56.6	56.6
Agree	134	34.6	91.2
Neutral	26	6.7	97.9
Disagree	4	1.0	99.0
Strongly Disagree	4	1.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 6: Table 4 . 5 :

#### **46**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	205	53.0	53.0
Agree	138	35.7	88.6
Neutral	36	9.3	97.9
Disagree	4	1.0	99.0
Strongly Disagree	4	1.0	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 7: Table 4 . 6 :

# $\mathbf{47}$

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	224	57.9	57.9
Agree	123	31.8	89.7
Neutral	24	6.2	95.9
Disagree	6	1.6	97.4
Strongly Disagree	10	2.6	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 8: Table 4 . 7 :

## **48**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	222	57.4	57.4
Agree	135	34.9	92.2
Neutral	16	4.1	96.4
Disagree	7	1.8	98.2
Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 9: Table 4 . 8 :

#### **49**

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(	)	А	

Figure 10: Table 4 . 9 :

#### $\mathbf{4}$

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	230	59.4	59.4
Agree	138	35.7	95.1
Neutral	4	1.0	96.1
Disagree	10	2.6	98.7
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 11: Table 4 .

#### 411

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	174	45.0	45.0
Agree	164	42.4	87.3
Neutral	17	4.4	91.7
Disagree	12	3.1	94.8
Strongly Disagree	20	5.2	100.0
Total	387	100.0	

Figure 12: Table 4 . 11 :

412

	Correlation Matrix			
		Employee	Employee	Organizational
		Relations	Performanc	e Performance
Employee	Pearson Correlation Sig.	1 387	.329 **	.209 ** .000
Relations	(2-tailed) N		$.000 \ 387$	387
Employee	Pearson Correlation Sig.	.329 ** .000 387	$1 \ 387$	080 .115
perfor-	(2-tailed) N			387
mance				
Organization	alPearson Correlation Sig.	.209 ** .000 387	080 .115	$1 \ 387$
Perfor-	(2-tailed) N		387	
mance				

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

Figure 13: Table 4 . 12:

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