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Influence of Motives to join Trade Union on Relations to Worker's performance. A Case study of trade unions in Mwanza City Council

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Abstract

*This study examined the effect of employment relations on the work performance of trade unions in Mwanza City Council. It explored the influence of motives for joining trade unions on job expectations, the impact of employee contributions on job responsibilities, and the relationship between trade union benefits and job objectives. Guided by **Social Exchange Theory**, which emphasizes reciprocity and mutual benefit in relationships, the study investigated how employment relations foster trust and collaboration to enhance employee performance.*

*A quantitative research design was adopted, with data collected from a randomly selected sample of 278 respondents using structured questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyze the data. The findings revealed that motives for joining trade unions accounted for **8%** of work performance, while employee contributions explained **7%**. Trade union benefits emerged as the strongest predictor, contributing **45.7%** to work performance. Overall, employment relations collectively predicted **28.6%** of work performance ($F = 107.964$, $p = 0.000$) with a standardized coefficient of **0.956**. Motives on job expectations ($t = 1.700$, $p = 0.09$) and employee contributions ($t = 1.235$, $p = 0.218$) did not significantly influence work performance, while trade union benefits showed a significant positive impact ($t = 13.420$, $p = 0.000$).*

*The results underscore the importance of employment relations, particularly trade union benefits, in improving work performance. Aligned with **Social Exchange Theory**, the findings highlight the role of reciprocal relationships in fostering trust, motivation, and productivity. The study recommends that employers strengthen employee-employer relationships by ensuring job security, supporting collective bargaining efforts, and enhancing trade union benefits to foster organizational growth and sustainability.*

Keywords: *Employment relations, trade unions, work performance, and Social Exchange Theory*

Introduction

Employment relations are a cornerstone of organizational success and societal well-being, as they form the foundation for productive and harmonious interactions between employers and employees. Globally, the concept of "building harmonious states" has gained significant attention, particularly in countries such as China, the United States, and African nations, including Tanzania (Alnouimat, 2022). These relations are widely regarded as the most fundamental type of social and productive interaction, with experts emphasizing their critical role in fostering healthy societies. However, employment relations are undergoing dynamic changes, driven by evolving management practices and socio-economic factors.

Employment relations vary widely across regions due to diverse legal frameworks, cultural norms, and economic

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systems. In Europe, strong collective bargaining mechanisms, robust labour protections, and a focus on work-life balance promote stability, employee satisfaction, and long-term performance (Boselie & van der Heijden, 2024). In contrast, the United States emphasizes flexibility and performance-based incentives, though often at the cost of job security. Meanwhile, African countries exhibit significant variation in employment relations due to differing socio-political contexts, the prevalence of informal employment, and challenges in enforcing labour protections (Hossain et al., 2024). In Tanzania, these dynamics are further complicated by the dominance of the informal sector and varying levels of regulatory enforcement, which influence job satisfaction, employee motivation, and productivity (Nhende et al., 2024).

The relationship between employment relations and employee performance is particularly pertinent in the public sector, where the role of trade unions is vital in mediating labour relations. However, studies indicate that trade unions in Tanzania, as in other African countries, face significant challenges, including limited autonomy and insufficient influence to address employee grievances effectively (Mwanyenza, 2015; Mboma, 2019). These issues have led to deteriorating employer-employee relationships, adversely affecting employee morale and organizational performance.

This study focuses on Mwanza City Council in Tanzania, where employment relations have not been extensively studied despite their critical impact on organizational effectiveness. Trade unions such as TALGWU, CWT, and TUGHE play an essential role in regulating labour relations within this context, but their effectiveness remains under scrutiny. By assessing the effect of employment relations on employee work performance in Mwanza City Council, this research seeks to address gaps in the literature and provide actionable insights into fostering harmonious workplace relationships and enhancing organizational productivity.

Given the increasing importance of human resource systems in driving organizational success, this study aims to explore how employment relations can be optimized to improve employee performance. Specifically, it examines the role of labour laws, workplace culture, and socio-economic conditions in shaping these relationships. Understanding these dynamics is critical for developing policies and practices that promote positive employment relations, thereby contributing to sustainable business growth and socio-economic development.

Through a case study approach, this research will provide localized insights into the broader challenges of employment relations, offering valuable recommendations for policymakers, trade unions, and organizational leaders. Ultimately, this study seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that employment relations serve as a catalyst for employee well-being and organizational success in Tanzania and beyond.

Literature Review

Concepts

Employee Relations

Employee relations refer to the interactions and relationships between employers and employees, encompassing efforts to address and manage workplace issues collaboratively. This domain includes negotiations, collective bargaining, labour unions, grievance mechanisms, and the overall dynamics of workplace interactions (John, 2022). In the context of Mwanza City Council, employee relations are largely influenced by trade unions such as TALGWU, CWT, and TUGHE, which play a regulatory role in fostering these relationships.

At its core, employee relations involve the holistic management of employer-employee relationships within an organization. This includes the implementation of communication strategies, conflict resolution mechanisms, and workplace policies designed to create a positive and supportive work environment. Effective employee relations aim to ensure that employees feel valued, respected, and fairly treated, while aligning their interests with those of the organization. Open and transparent communication channels, prompt resolution of concerns, and the protection of employee rights are central to achieving these objectives.

Strong employee relations contribute to a culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect, which enhances employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. Furthermore, they play a critical role in mitigating workplace conflicts by implementing clear conflict resolution policies and equipping managers and employees with communication and conflict management skills. Employee relations also foster inclusivity and diversity, empowering employees to contribute their unique perspectives and talents. By investing in employee relations practices, organizations can enhance morale, reduce turnover rates, and achieve sustained organizational success.

Employee Work Performance

Employee work performance refers to the degree to which individuals effectively execute their job responsibilities and contribute to the success of their organization. It encompasses factors such as productivity, efficiency, accuracy, creativity, teamwork, and adherence to organizational standards and objectives (Armstrong, 2014). Work performance is often assessed through criteria such as task completion, problem-solving abilities, timeliness, and communication skills, reflecting an employee's overall contribution to organizational goals.

In this context, employee work performance represents the quality and effectiveness of job-related activities and outputs within an organization. Assessing performance involves evaluating how well employees meet expectations, achieve targets, and align their efforts with predetermined organizational objectives. Effective performance management systems, including regular feedback, performance reviews, goal-setting, and recognition programs, are essential for fostering continuous improvement and unlocking employees' full potential.

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Ultimately, employee work performance significantly influences an organization's success and competitiveness. Organizations that prioritize performance evaluation and support mechanisms are better positioned to optimize workforce contributions, achieve strategic objectives, and maintain a competitive edge.

Trade Unions

A trade union is a collective organization formed by workers within a specific industry, sector, or occupation to safeguard and promote their shared interests, including wages, benefits, and working conditions (Mundlak, 2020). Trade unions negotiate with employers on behalf of their members to secure better employment terms and provide additional services, such as legal representation, training, and support during labour disputes.

In the context of Mwanza City Council, trade unions such as TALGWU, CWT, and TUGHE play a pivotal role in regulating labour relations and addressing workplace issues. These unions advocate for the fair treatment of employees by engaging in collective bargaining and representing members in resolving disputes. Trade unions also act as mechanisms to address issues of inequality, exploitation, and discrimination, thereby promoting workplace equity and improved standards for workers.

By providing a unified voice for employees, trade unions empower workers to advocate for their rights and welfare. They also foster dialogue between employers and employees, ensuring that labour relations are guided by principles of fairness and mutual respect. As such, trade unions are integral to creating equitable and sustainable workplace environments that prioritize the well-being of employees while balancing organizational goals.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in **Social Exchange Theory**, developed by George Homans and Peter Blau (Homans, 1958), which provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamics of workplace relationships. The theory posits that fair labor relations—characterized by support, fairness, and open communication—create an environment of social exchange in which employees feel valued. At its core, Social Exchange Theory emphasizes reciprocity, highlighting the mutual exchange of resources, trust, and respect between employers and employees as fundamental to fostering positive workplace interactions.

Key components of the theory include the **rules of reciprocity**, which govern the give-and-take dynamics in relationships, the **folk belief in reciprocity**, which reflects societal expectations of fairness, and the **moral norms of reciprocity**, which underscore ethical obligations to reciprocate. These principles form the basis of social exchanges that influence employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Social Exchange Theory thus provides valuable insights into how human behavior in relationships is shaped by mutual obligations, trust, and the exchange of tangible and intangible resources.

While Social Exchange Theory offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing social interactions, it is not without limitations. Critics have pointed out issues such as its **unclear scope**, the **overemphasis on rational decision-making**, and the exclusion of contextual and emotional factors that influence human behavior (Bajaba et al., 2024; Hollander & Howard, 2000). Moreover, the theory often assumes that all parties have equal power in decision-making, which may not align with real-world workplace dynamics (Whitham & Savage, 2024).

Despite these limitations, Social Exchange Theory remains highly applicable in this study, as it provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay between fair labor relations and employee performance. By emphasizing mutual benefits and trust, the theory aligns well with the objective of exploring how employment relations impact employee work performance. Furthermore, its relevance extends to practical applications, offering insights for organizations to design policies and incentive structures that promote employee motivation, engagement, and productivity (Igwe & Durrheim, 2024).

Thus, Social Exchange Theory serves as a foundational lens through which this study examines the dynamics of labor relations and their effect on employee work performance within Mwanza City Council. It underscores the importance of fostering reciprocal relationships in the workplace to create a culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual benefit, which are essential for enhancing both individual and organizational outcomes

Research Methodology

This study adopted a **quantitative research design**, guided by a **positivist research philosophy**. This approach was chosen for its ability to collect standardized data systematically, enabling the derivation of reliable and well-founded conclusions (Ahmadi, 2024).

Data Collection

The study was conducted in Mwanza City Council, with data drawn from the records of trade union members. From a total population of **2,225**, a sample of **278** respondents was determined using the **Yamane formula** (1967). A **stratified sampling procedure** was employed to ensure the sample represented different strata within the population.

Primary data were collected through **structured questionnaires**, targeting managerial staff and other subordinate employees. Secondary data were obtained from a review of published documents and literature relevant to employment relations and work performance. This combination of data sources provided a robust foundation for analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using **descriptive and inferential statistics**, with computations performed using **SPSS software**. This enabled the presentation of findings in a clear and standardized format. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis, a **generalization model** was

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applied, allowing for the synthesis of study results and their relationship to one another.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of the research instruments were assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha** (George & Mallery, 2006). This test measured the internal consistency of the data, ensuring that the instruments used were both reliable and valid for capturing the intended information. By incorporating these measures, the study established the credibility of its findings and the robustness of its methodological framework.

Overall, the quantitative research design, combined with structured data collection and rigorous analytical techniques, provided a reliable basis for examining the relationship between employment relations and employee work performance within Mwanza City Council.

Findings

Reliability Test

Table 1 Reliability Test

Category	Cronbach's Alpha	Respondents	Items	Comment
MO	0.88	273	2	Reliable
WP	0.81	273	2	Reliable
Overall reliability	0.85	273	2	reliable

Source: Field Data (2024)

The **Cronbach's Alpha test** was employed to validate the reliability of the research instruments utilized in this study. The test produced an overall reliability coefficient of **0.85**, signifying an excellent level of internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2006). This result underscores the reliability of the instruments in capturing accurate and consistent data. The high reliability value ensured the integrity of the data collected, providing a robust foundation for the conclusions and recommendations derived from the study.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 2 Demographic Data

Category	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 25 Years	86	30.9
	25 - 35 Years	147	52.9
	36 - 45 Years	43	15.5
	Above 45 years	2	.7
Gender	Male	103	37.1
	Female	175	62.9
Marital Status	Single	106	38.1
	Married	171	61.5
Education	Certificate	47	16.9
	Diploma	101	36.3
	Bachelor	112	40.3
	Masters	18	6.5

Source: Field Data (2024)

The demographic characteristics of the study respondents are summarized in Table 2. The age distribution revealed that **30.9%** of the respondents were aged below 25 years, the majority (**52.9%**) were between 25 and 35 years, **15.5%** were aged between 36 and 45 years, and only **0.7%** were above 45 years.

In terms of gender, the sample was predominantly female, accounting for **62.9%** of the respondents, while males constituted **37.1%**.

Regarding marital status, **38.5%** of the respondents were unmarried, while the remaining **61.5%** were married.

The educational background of the respondents indicated varying levels of academic achievement: **16.9%** held a certificate, **36.3%** held a diploma, **40.3%** possessed a bachelor's degree, and **6.5%** had attained a master's degree.

This demographic profile provides a comprehensive overview of the respondents, reflecting a diverse sample in terms of age, gender, marital status, and educational qualifications, which enriches the study's findings.

Motivational Factors on Job Expectation

This objective focused on examining the influence of motivation to join trade unions on work performance in Mwanza City Council. Structured questionnaires, using a five-point Likert scale, were developed to gather respondents' opinions on the questions asked. Respondents indicated their choices by ticking (√) the appropriate option (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 3 Motivation

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
Job Security is my Motivational Factor	9(3.2%)	14(5.0%)	16(5.8%)	146(52.5%)	92(33.1%)
Labor Laws Protect my rights	5(1.8%)	17(6.1%)	26(9.4%)	143(51.4%)	87(31.3%)
Social networks foster positive interactions	6(2.2%)	19(6.8%)	27(9.7%)	161(57.9%)	65(23.4%)

Source: Field Data (2024)

The results from the field showed that 85.6% of respondents agreed that job security is a motivational factor behind joining a trade union, and that it significantly and positively influences employees' work performance. Meanwhile, 5.8%

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of respondents were neutral on this matter, and 8.2% disagreed with the statement that job security is a motivational factor that significantly and positively influences employees' work performance.

On the other hand, 81.3% of respondents agreed that "labor laws protect my rights" is a motivational factor behind joining a trade union, and that it significantly and positively influences employees' work performance. Meanwhile, 9.4% of respondents were neutral on this matter, and 7.9% disagreed with the statement that "labor laws protect my rights" is a motivational factor that significantly and positively influences employees' work performance.

Lastly, 81.3% of respondents agreed that "social networks foster positive interactions" is a motivational factor behind joining a trade union, and that it significantly and positively influences employees' work performance. Meanwhile, 9.7% of respondents were neutral on this matter, and 9.0% disagreed with the statement that "social networks foster positive interactions" is a motivational factor that significantly and positively influences employees' work performance.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive information of this study basing on field data computed and presented in terms of mean, standard deviation and number of sample presented.

Table 4 Descriptive Data

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
WP	9.56	3.387	273
MO	8.11	1.587	273

Source: Field Data (2024)

The results from the field indicated that motivation to join a trade union is related to workers' performance. Descriptive data revealed that workers' performance had significant values, such as a mean of 9.56 and a standard deviation of 3.387. Meanwhile, the factors motivating employees to join a trade union showed significant numerical data, with a mean of 8.11 and a standard deviation of 1.587. These findings suggest a significant relationship between the motivation to join a trade union and workers' performance.

Linearity Assumption

The Linearity Test is an important step in assessing the linearity of the data. This procedure aims to determine whether there is a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Since this study intended to perform multiple regression analysis, it was crucial to ensure that the data fit the equation of a straight line. To verify this, a Pearson correlation (r) test was conducted.

Table 5 Pearson Correlation

		WP	MO
WP	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	274	
MO	Pearson Correlation	.249**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	273	277

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

Source: Field Data (2024)

The results presented in Table 5 suggest a correlation between the motives for joining a trade union and workers' performance. The field data showed a significant level of 0.01, indicating a mutual relationship between the variables. Specifically, the motives for joining a trade union had a significant value of ($r(274) = .249$, $p < .000$). This coefficient value of .000 indicates a strong relationship between this factor and workers' performance.

Regression Analysis

Linear regression was conducted to examine and confirm how significantly the motivational factors for joining a trade union affect workers' performance. The framework proposed a relationship between the two variables: motives for joining a trade union and workers' performance. The results obtained through multiple regression analysis were summarized using Autocorrelation and ANOVA.

Autocorrelation

The researcher conducted this test to understand how the variables correlate and relate to each other. The results are presented below, including the presence of the Durbin-Watson data.

Table 2 Autocorrelation

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.849[a]	.822	.805	3.287	1.496

a. Predictors: (Constant), MO

b. Dependent Variable: WP

Source: Field Data (2024

The results indicate that the value of R was 0.849, or 84.9%, and the R-squared value was 0.822, which was adjusted to 0.805, or 80.5%. This means that the regression model explained 84.9% of the variance, adjusted to 80.5%. The Durbin-Watson value obtained was 1.496, suggesting the presence of autocorrelation among the variables. Since this value is equivalent to 1.5 and falls within the acceptable range, there is no issue with autocorrelation among the variables.

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Coefficients

Table 3 Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.250	1.038		5.059	.000
	MO	.532	.126	.249	4.236	.000

a. Dependent Variable: WP

Source: Field Data (2024)

The results from the field showed a significant level of 0.000. Independently, the motives to join trade unions were found to be significant in influencing workers' performance in an institution. The motives to join trade unions were significant at the level ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < 0.000$). Based on this value, it was concluded that the motives to join trade unions have a significant influence on workers' performance.

ANOVA

Table 4 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	193.834	1	193.834	17.945	.000[b]
	Residual	2927.294	271	10.802		
	Total	3121.128	272			

a. Dependent Variable: WP

b. Predictors: (Constant), MO

Source: field data (2024)

The results presented in the table above indicate the presence of interactions among the variables. It was found that the variables were related with an F-test value of 17.945, which was significant at the level of 0.000.

Discussion

The study revealed that motives for joining trade unions significantly influence employees' work performance. The primary objective was to assess the impact of these motives on workers' performance. According to the field data, a mutual relationship was observed, with **85.6%** of respondents agreeing that **job security** is a key motivational factor behind joining a trade union, which positively and significantly influences their work performance. Additionally, **81.3%** of respondents identified **labor laws** protecting employee rights as a motivational factor that also positively impacts work performance. Similarly, **81.3%** of respondents agreed that **social networks fostering positive workplace interactions** serve as an important motivational factor that enhances employees' work performance.

The statistical analysis demonstrated a significant relationship among these variables, with a significance level of **0.01**. The findings align with previous studies on similar topics, further validating the results. For instance, Al-Maharbi and Ahmed (2023) highlighted a strong correlation between job security and entrepreneurial engagement, emphasizing that stable employment conditions foster a strategic mindset and sustainable growth, which ultimately enhance work performance. Similarly, Angraini and Johannes (2024) argued that government agencies should prioritize leadership improvement and employee motivation to optimize productivity and institutional performance.

The results of this study are also consistent with findings by Prasad (2020), who suggested that job security fosters loyalty and long-term commitment, motivating employees to invest greater effort in their roles and contribute to organizational success. Additionally, Weiss (2023) and Romero-Carazas et al. (2024) underscored the role of **social networks** and **labor laws** as critical motivational factors that positively influence work performance.

These findings suggest that job security, labor laws, and social networks play pivotal roles in enhancing employees' work performance. They also highlight the importance of trade unions in creating a supportive environment that ensures employee motivation and commitment, which are essential for achieving organizational success. The results emphasize the need for organizations and policymakers to address these factors through effective leadership, robust labor protections, and the promotion of positive social interactions within the workplace to sustain high levels of employee performance.

Conclusion

The findings from this study revealed that the motives for joining a trade union in Mwanza City significantly influence workers' performance. The study sought to examine the relationship between these motives and employee performance, and the data collected strongly supported this objective.

The results indicated a statistically significant relationship, with a significance level of **0.01**, confirming that the motives for joining a trade union play a crucial role in enhancing employee performance. This highlights the positive impact trade unions can have on fostering job satisfaction and increasing workplace productivity.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that organizations prioritize the creation of a positive working environment that fosters healthy employee-employer relations. Establishing such an environment is critical for maximizing employee performance, ensuring job satisfaction, and contributing to the overall success and sustainability of the organization.

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