



## **Relationship between Working Environments and Employees Performance in Local Government Authorities: A Case of Bahi District Council, Tanzania**

**Lina A. Swai\***

**Orcid:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0478-1011>

Department of Business Management, Institute of Accountancy Arusha, Tanzania

**Email:** [lina.swai@tamisemi.go.tz](mailto:lina.swai@tamisemi.go.tz)

**Prof. William Tieng'o, PhD**

**Orcid:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9003-0550>

Department of Business Management, Institute of Accountancy Arusha, Tanzania

**Email:** [williamtiengo33@gmail.com](mailto:williamtiengo33@gmail.com)

**\*Corresponding Author:** [lina.swai@tamisemi.go.tz](mailto:lina.swai@tamisemi.go.tz)

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**Abstract:** The study examined the Relationship between Working Environment and performance at Local Government Authorities in Bahi District Council, Tanzania. The study adopted the descriptive study design and quantitative research approach using the sample of 68 employees and six heads of departments. A self-administered questionnaire was employed as a tool for data collection where by both groups filled the questionnaire. The study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse data whereby descriptive and inferential statistic were employed to process findings. The study establishes that employee performance was moderate as majority agreed on high revenue growth and customer satisfaction while the majority were not sure on customer retention effectiveness and profit margin. Current working environment was moderate as majority agreed on transport, communication and safe working environment while some disagreed on ventilation and office space. Ventilation and safe working environment had a significant positive effect on performance. Based on findings, it is recommended the government should allocate sufficient funds to maintain and potentially improve working conditions at Bahi District Council. Secondly, the PO-RALG should adopt the application of transformational leadership style in all Local Government Authorities in Tanzania, which will help to provide proper direction for enhancement of working environment that in turn will improve the performance. Finally, the PO-RALG should look for and allocate sufficient funds for building proper offices in Bahi District Council so as to provide good ventilation and safe working environment for employees.

**Keywords:** Working Environment; Physical Environment; performance; Local Government Authorities.

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### **Introduction**

Employees are the company's most valuable resource. A good company is one that cares about its people and this is often accomplished by focusing on work environment (Donald 2015). Taheri, Miah & Kamaruzzaman, 2020; De Clercq, Haq & Azeem

(2018) argued that since employees spend most of their life at work doing their jobs, they need to have conducive working environments for better performance. Employee's cognitive and emotional state, approach, behavior, actions and talents are all influenced by the work environments which have a

profound effect on their engagement as well as productivity. In fact, the work environment plays a key role in the organization's ability to maintain high levels of employee productivity and thus organizational productivity.

According to Chandrasekar (2011), working environment refers to everything that happens around people when they are at work and has an impact on the way they do their jobs. It is made up of external and internal factors that can affect a person's spirit of work and, consequently, their performance at work. Employee performance and the physical work environment are closely related. Employee performance, satisfaction, social relationships and health are affected by their work environment. Furthermore, work environments have a profound effect on employees' morale, job satisfaction and consequently, performance (Mathews and Khann 2016).

Employee's performance is defined as a person consequent conduct on a job that can be witnessed and assessed (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou 2018). Furthermore, employee performance refers to an employee's financial or non-financial result that is directly related to the organization's performance and success. Studies have revealed that high levels of employee engagement improves job performance, task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, productivity, discretionary effort, affective commitment, continuance commitment, psychological climate, and customer service (Al-dalahmeh, Khalaf & Obeidat, 2018; Mone & London 2018; Pandita % Ray 2018; Verčič 2021)

Moreover, studies has reported a number of working environment factors such as good ventilation, good transport facilities, effective communication networks, adequate office space and safe working environment that play a potential role towards employees performance. Janssen & Van Yperen (2017) argued that working environmental factors such as adequate facilities and safe working environment increase employees' creativity and performance. Similarly, Roskams and Haynes (2021) argued that the behavioral and physical aspects of the work environment such as layout, space, good ventilation and comfort of the office are major working environmental factors for enhancing employees' performance in contemporary organizations.

The government of Tanzania provides various policies and directives relating to the ideal working

environment that enhances employee performance. For instance, the pay and incentive policy provides a harmonized and unified framework for determining pay while eradicating pay disparities across the entire public services as stipulated in the Public Service Management and Employment Policy (URT 1999). Also, the National Employment Policy of 2008 stipulates the working hours for employees to avoid excessive workloads. The policy states that, the maximum ordinary working hours that an employee is allowed under the law is forty five (45) hours per week (nine hours a day) (URT 2008).

Despite the presence of government policies regarding to working environment in Tanzania, the working environment in Local Government Authorities is poor and uncondusive (Machui 2018). Leaders do not provide incentives and do not involve employees in decision making proceses. Moreover, employees are working in unsafe working conditions with excessive workloads, which in turn lead to poor employee pefomance in LGAs in Tanzania (Bushiri 2014). Moreover, there are limited studies (Bushiri 2014, Machui 2018; Donald, 2015) conducted in Tanzania to examine the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance in the local government authorities. Very little attention has been paid to establish the multifaceted relationships existing between employee working environment and employee performance in Tanzanian LGAs.. Therefore, this study aimed to fill the gap by examining the relationship between the working environment and the employee performance at the local government authorities in Tanzania, particulalry at Bahi District Council. The information provided by this study will help the government and other relevant stakeholders to formulate effective policies to improve working environment and consequently the employee performance.

## Literature Review

Nderitu and Ndeto (2019) aimed at identifying the influence of the work environment on employee performance in Nairobi Kenya. Findings of this study reported that the variables such as workplace incentives, training and development, supervisor support and the physical working environment affected employee performance. As a result, the county government determined that it needed to establish a more comprehensive employee incentive system, better supervisor feedback and enhance and integrate workers in decision-making.

Similarly, Machui (2018) investigated on influence of workplace environment factors on employee's performance in Arusha Municipal, Tanzania. Findings of this study reported the variables positively affecting employee performance such as appropriate physical circumstances such as temperature control, air circulation, lighting, office building design and sanitary conditions, as well as the availability of tools and effective communication practices among coworkers, favorably enhanced the employees' performance. Furthermore, the study revealed that, poor interactions and interrelationships between workers and supervisors/managers, as well as inadequate supervisor support, severely affected the employee performance.

Lasly, Kitila (2018) conducted a study in Dar es salaam, Tanzania. Findings of this study indicated that, the variables such as physical office surroundings, like furniture and work facilities/tools affected the employees' performance and productivity. In addition, the study reported that the layout and size of the office, as well as the quality of the air ventilation and the lighting, all contributed to the performance and productivity of employees. It was also discovered that good organizational communication and supervisor assistance boost employees' performance and productivity.

## Methodology

This study was done at Bahi District Council in Dodoma Region. A descriptive design was used to collect data from the sample of 74 out of the population of 100 individuals (74%). The sample included 68 employees and six heads of departments. A self-administered questionnaire

was employed as a tool for data collection where by both groups filled the questionnaire.

Validity was ensured by pre-testing of the questionnaire (to make sure questions are clear and the flow is acceptable). Proper literatures were reviewed and internal citations were made. Moreover, a Cronbach alpha test at a significance level of more than 0.6 was applied to establish reliability. The study used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to analyze the data collected where by descriptive and inferential statistic were used to process the findings.

In this study, ethical issues were considered by obtaining permission from the relevant authorities. Each respondent was informed about the purpose, significance and benefit of the study. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, respondents did not write their names on the questionnaires. In line with this, the researcher respected the principle of self-determination which meant that each respondent had the right to decide voluntarily whether or not to participate in the research.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents findings of the study in relation to research questions. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the working environment and the employee performance at Bahi District Council.

**Research Question 1:** What is the Working Environment Status at Bahi DC as perceived by employees?

Study participants were asked to indicate their perceptions pertaining to the current working environment conditions at Bahi District Council.

**Table 1: Current Working Environment at Bahi District Council**

Variable	Strongly Agree/Agree		Not Sure		Strongly Disagree/Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Good ventilation	28	37.8	10	13.5	36	48.6
Good transport facilities	38	51.4	9	12.2	27	36.5
Effective communication networks	35	47.3	8	10.8	31	41.9
Adequate office space	8	10.8	12	16.2	54	72.9
Safe working environment	45	60.8	11	14.9	18	24.3

The variables measured included good ventilation, good transport facilities, effective communication networks, adequate office space and safe working environment.

Regarding good ventilation, respondents had different opinions as follows: 28 (37.8%) strongly

agreed or agreed, 10 (13.5%) were not sure while 36 (48.6%) strongly disagreed or disagreed. Therefore, the majority disagreed on effectiveness of ventilation. These findings are consistent to the study of Machui (2018) who reported the poor air

circulation (ventilation) in Arusha Municipality in Tanzania.

Concerning good transport facilities, responses were as follows; 38 (51.4%) strongly agreed or agreed, 9 (12.2%) of respondents were not sure while 27 (36.5%) strongly disagreed or disagreed. Therefore, the majority of respondents agreed that there are good transportation facilities in the organization under investigation. These findings are contrary to the study of Bushiri (2014) who revealed that, the transport facilities at the institute of finance management in Dar Es Salaam region were poor.

Concerning effective communication networks, the responses were as follows; 35 (47.3%), strongly agreed or agreed, 8 (10.8%) respondents were not sure and 31 (41.9%) strongly disagree/disagree. Therefore, the majority of respondents expressed the view that there is effective communication in the organization under investigation. These findings differ from the findings of Machui (2018) who reported the ineffective communication network and practices among coworkers in Arusha Municipality in Tanzania .

Concerning office space adequacy, the responses were as follows; 8 (10.8%), strongly agreed or agreed, 12 (16.2%) were not sure and 54 (72.9%) strongly disagree/disagree. Therefore, the majority considered the office space to be inappropriate. These findings are similar to the study of Bushiri (2014) who revealed that working environment in

Tanzanian organizations are still poor as manifested by inadequate office space.

Lastly, about safe working environment, the responses were as follows; 45 (60.8%) strongly agreed or agreed, 11 (14.9%) were not sure while 18 (24.3%) strongly disagree or disagree. Therefore, the majority of respondents agreed that there is safe working environment. These findings are contrary to the study of Machui (2018) who reported poor temperature control, low lighting, poor office building design and unsafe sanitary conditions in Arusha Municipality, Tanzania.

Generally, findings indicate that the current working environment at Bahi District Council are moderate as majority agreed on transport, communication and safe working environment while the majority disagreed on ventilation and office space. This implies that, the Bahi district management has emphasized on fewer working environmental factors, while neglecting ventilation and office space, and this might be attributed by insufficient budgets allocated to improve working environment in the respective district.

**Research Question 2:** What is the performance at Bahi DC as perceived by employees?

Respondents were asked to tell the extent to which the performance at the Bahi District Council is. The variables measured included revenue growth, customer satisfaction, customer retention and profit margin. Table 2 summarizes the distribution of respondents' opinions.

**Table 2: Performance at Bahi DC**

Variable	Strongly Agree /Agree		Not sure		Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	
	N	(%)	N	%	N	%
Revenues have grown	51	69.8	15	20.3	8	10.8
Customers are satisfied	50	67.6	20	27.0	4	5.4
Customer retention is high	28	37.8	35	47.3	11	14.9
Profit margin is high	31	41.9	33	44.6	10	13.5

Regarding revenue growth, respondents had different opinions as follows: 51 (69.8%) strongly agree/agree, 15 (20.3%) were not sure while 8 (10.8%) strongly disagree/disagreed. Therefore, the majority agreed on revenue growth at Bahi district council. These findings are contrary to the study done in Tanzania by Mapunda (2020) which reported poor revenue growth in public organizations.

Concerning customer satisfaction, responses were as follows: 50 (67.6%) strongly agreed or agreed, 20 (27.0%) respondents were not sure while 4 (5.4%) strongly disagree or disagreed. Therefore, the majority agreed that customers at Bahi DC are satisfied. These findings are similar to the study done by Khan, Batool, Scholar & Hussain, (2015) in Pakistan which showed that customers are satisfied with all the dimensions of service offered. Similarly, Swallehe (2021) conducted a study in four district

councils of Dar es Salaam region and reported that customer satisfaction was high.

Concerning customer retention, responses were as follows; 28 (37.8%), strongly agreed or agreed, 35 (47.3%) were not sure and 11 (14.9%) strongly disagreed or disagreed. Therefore, the majority were not sure whether customer retention is high or not in Bahi DC. These findings are contrary to the study done in India by Pandey (2012) which reported high customer retention. Likewise, Otiso (2021) reported high customer retention in Kenyan public organizations.

Concerning profit, responses were as follows: 31 (41.9%) strongly agree or agreed, 33 (44.6%) were not sure and 10 (13.5%) strongly disagreed or disagreed. Therefore, the majority were not sure whether profit margin is high or not in Bahi DC. Findings of this study are contrary to the finding in Ethiopia by Reda (2017) which reported that the profit margin in Ethiopian organizations was high.

Generally, findings of this study indicated that the employee performance at Bahi DC is moderate as majority agreed on high revenue growth and customer satisfaction, while the majority were not sure on customer retention effectiveness and profit margin. This implies that Bahi District management has somehow played a role in enhancing the performance, though there was some room for further improvement.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between working environment and performance?

The study aimed to find out if there is any relationship between physical environment factors and performance at Bahi DC. The relationship in table 3 to 5 was determined using a correlational regression. The dependent variable was employee performance while independent variables were working environment factor indicators such as good ventilation, good transport facilities, effective communication networks, adequate office space and safe working environment.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

<b>Model Summary</b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.475 <sup>a</sup>	.226	.169	.844

a. Predictors: (Constant), safeworking, ventilation, office, transport, communication

**Table 4: Analysis of variances**

<b>ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.135	5	2.827	3.970	.003 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	48.419	68	.712		
	Total	62.554	73			

a. Dependent Variable: revenues

b. Predictors: (Constant), safeworking, ventilation, office, transport, communication

**Table 5: Regression coefficients**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.851	.591		3.134	.003	.673	3.030
	ventilation	.381	.147	.375	2.583	.012	.087	.675
	transport	.166	.154	.197	1.078	.285	-.141	.474
	communication	-.333	.183	-.350	-1.827	.072	-.698	.031
	office	-.150	.126	-.175	-1.187	.239	-.402	.102
	safeworking	.345	.150	.344	2.291	.025	.044	.645

a. Dependent Variable: revenues

Generally, the observation from this study showed that, ventilation had significant positive effect on performance at Bahi DC. This implies that as ventilation becomes higher, the performance increased and vice versa. The findings are similar to the study done by Taheri et al. (2020) which reported a significant relationship between work environment factors, particularly good ventilation and employee performance. Another study done in Tanzania by Bushiri (2014) revealed that good ventilation had a positive relationship with employee performance.

Moreover, discoveries from this study indicate that safe working environment had a significant positive effect on performance at Bahi DC. This implies that the extent to which performance is better in day-to-day tasks depends on the extent to which the working environments are safe. However, the findings are contrary to those in Kenya by Gitahi (2014) which reported that safe working environment had no significant relationship on performance, but psychological and work-life balance components had a significant relationship.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

It is concluded that employee performance at Bahi DC is moderate as majority agreed on high revenue growth and customer satisfaction while the majority were not sure on customer retention effectiveness and profit margin. Therefore, Bahi District management has somehow played a role in enhancing the performance, though there was some room for further improvement.

Secondly, current working environment at Bahi District Council are moderate as majority agreed on

transport, communication and safe working environment while the majority disagreed on ventilation and office space. Therefore, the Bahi district management has emphasized on fewer working environmental factors while neglecting ventilation and office space which might be attributed by insufficient budgets allocated to improve working environment in the respective district.

Ventilation had a significant positive effect on performance at Bahi DC. This implies that as ventilation becomes higher, the performance increased. Furthermore, safe working environment had a significant positive effect on performance at Bahi DC. This implies that the extent to which performance was better in day-to-day tasks depended on the extent to which the working environments are safe.

### Recommendations

It is recommended the government should allocate sufficient funds to maintain and potentially improve working conditions in Bahi District Council. The improvement should include such variables as transport and communication facilities, good ventilation, adequate office space and safe working conditions.

Secondly, the PO-RALG should adopt the application of transformational leadership style in all Local Government Authorities in Tanzania. This type of leadership will help to provide proper direction for enhancement of working environments which in turn will improve the performance.

Finally, the PO-RALG should look for and allocate sufficient funds for building proper offices in Bahi

District Council so as to provide good ventilation and safe working environment for employees. This will help to improve their performance in the organization.

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