



Career Development Initiatives and Employee Performance in Local Government Authorities in Urban West Region of Zanzibar, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Background: Career development is an important tool for enhancing employee abilities, motivation, and commitment necessary for quality service delivery. In Zanzibar Local Government Authorities' context, various career development initiatives are offered to increase performance of the employees and better service delivery. Despite these efforts, employees are still underperforming, raising a concern on the effectiveness of career development programmes offered. Also, whereas numerous studies exist on the influence of career development on employee performance, there remains a gap on how career development initiatives carried out in the unique administrative system of Zanzibar local government authorities.

Objective: The current study examined how career development practices influence employee performance in Zanzibar Local Government Authorities, focusing on West B Council and Zanzibar Municipal Council.

Method: The study adopted mixed research, gathering quantitative data from 242 respondents using questionnaire, and interview was employed to collect qualitative information from key informants. PLS-SEM and content analysis were used to analyse the data.

Result: The finding indicates that career development significantly influences employee performance ($\beta = 0.222$, $p = 0.001$).

Conclusion: Effective practices of career development increase employees' abilities, motivation, and commitment, leading to employee performance and organisational productivity.

Unique Contribution: The study result offers a nuanced understanding on the need for effective career development initiatives to increase performance of the employees and overall organisational success.

Key Recommendations: It is recommended that Zanzibar Local Governments should institutionalize and effectively implement comprehensive career development initiatives that are explicitly aligned with competency requirements, performance standards, and organisational goals.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Local Government Authorities, Career Development, Zanzibar.



INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive work environment, employee performance remains a critical determinant of organizational success (Tessema et al., 2025; Oginyi et al., 2023). This is particularly evident in public sector institutions, where effective service delivery depends largely on the competence and accountability of the workforce (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). In the context of local government authorities (LGAs), employee performance is highly needed, as these institutions provides essential services to the people (Nwafor et al., 2022; Salum et al., 2021). Despite the LGAs role in public services delivery, the performance of their workforce remain a global challenge (Sofyan et al., 2020; Onyekwelu & Nwoke, 2021). Likewise, literature sources show that LGAs' employees in Zanzibar are far from meeting performance standard (Natepe et al., 2020; Salum et al., 2021).

In addressing this performance challenge, various human resource development (HRD) strategies have been implemented aiming to improve both employees' efficiency and the overall effectiveness of the LGAs (Hamad & Mohammed, 2023). Among the notable strategy was the institutionalization of career development programs through professional plans for advancement and a well-structured training within LGAs. Career development as a strategic function for human resource, involves career planning, training programs, career guidance, and promotions which are designed to increase employees' abilities, motivation and commitment to personal aspirations and organizational goals (Noe et al., 2017). However, these interventions are still questioned as they produce unexpected outcomes among the employees where most of them perform poorly (ZPSRP, 2021; CAG, 2021).

It is acknowledged that career development practices increase performance, as it enhances knowledge, expertise, and abilities of the workforce, which in turn leads to successful implementation of assigned duties (Hosen et al., 2024). As a result, empirical literatures have established a strong connection between career development and employee performance (Nyoni, 2024; Qodariyah, 2023; Kathukya & Idoki, 2023). They collectively suggest that effective practices of career development programs enhance the performance of employees.

Although a positive relationship between career development and employee performance have been established by literatures (Nyoni, 2024; Qodariyah, 2023), the reviewed studies offer insufficient analytical concern on contextual institutional aspects. Thus, there still a gap on how career development initiatives carried out in the unique administrative system of Zanzibar local government authorities. Likewise, the reviewed papers, have been conducted outside Zanzibar, from which generalisation of their findings would not capture the reality of Zanzibar decentralised governance system.

From the mentioned research gaps, this paper examines how career development influences the performance of employee in Zanzibar LGAs. Concentrating on both geographical contexts as well as understudied institutional settings, the current study contributes a lot to the body of knowledge by widening theoretical insights, informing HR policies and practices in Zanzibar LGAs.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To examine the influence of career development on employee performance in Local Government Authorities in Urban West Region, Zanziba, Tanzania.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Career development practices have been continuously linked to improved performance of employees across different public sector organizations. Okafor & Malizu (2022) highlighted that well-structured career development programs increase motivation and productivity in Nigeria, while Kathukya & Idoki (2023) reported the same in Kenya, indicating direct influence of career development to organizational efficiency. Extending this, Nyoni (2024) showed that career development initiatives improve skill acquisition and service delivery, strengthening the regional relevance of career development practices. Beyond direct influence on performance and productivity, Qodariyah (2023) found that organizational leadership and career development initiatives enhances loyalty among the workers, which consequently leads to improved performance. Hosen et al. (2024) complemented these results by reporting that training and career development are the predictor of organizational commitment, which in turn leads to work performance.

Together, the reviewed literatures maintain that career development practices not only enhance employees' skills and motivation but also improves loyalty, commitment and overall organizational performance as evidenced through direct and indirect ways. The reviewed studies collectively argue that career development practices are important toward employee performance. However, their importance is rarely observed in Zanzibar LGAs settings due to scanty of empirical studies on the influence of career development on employee performance, hence necessitating the need to undertake the current paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career development is a critical aspect for human resource management as it increases knowledge, skills, and productivities of the employees. Career development according to Dessler (2020), encompasses the activities such as career coaching, mentoring, career promotion, and training aimed at enhancing both employee growth and productivity. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) maintain that investment in employees' development enhances their performance and organisational effectiveness in service delivery.

Existing body of literature reveals a positive result of career development on employee performance. Noe (2020) and Nwosu (2018) show that career development initiatives increase employee competence, commitment, and productivity. Jaffu (2023) reported that training and career development enhances public procurement professionals' performance, while Mushi (2024) found that training initiatives increased efficiency and productivity of the employee in Tanzania public sector organisations.

Additionally, the literature pinpoints career coaching, mentorship, and career promotion as important career development aspects. Kisokola et al. (2024) report that mentoring and coaching enhance employee confidence and performance in workplace. Similarly, Salim (2020) found a positive influence of fair promotion practices on moral and productivity in Zanzibar. However,



Khamis (2020) argued many public institutions in Zanzibar faces career development challenges such as poor career planning, ineffective promotion, and limited succession planning.

Despite the contribution of the existing literature, there remains a gap as most of the studies concentrated on private institutions and mainland Tanzania, with little focus on Local Government Authorities in Zanzibar. Likewise, some studies focused more on training and promotion while paying less attention to other aspects of career development such as career counselling and mentorship. This study therefore, examined the influence of career development on the performance of employees in Local Government Authorities in Zanzibar.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory by Becker (1962) to determine the influence of career development on the performance of Zanzibar LGAs' employees. Human Capital Theory suggests that investment in career development programs such as training and promotion practices increases knowledge, expertise, and competencies of the employee, thereby directly enhancing job performance. In the context of Zanzibar local governments, career development provides both technical and administrative competencies (human capital) to the workforce, which leads to perform effectively their job responsibilities (Brass et al., 2023; Muttaqin et al., 2023). Thus, career development practices directly enhance performance by improving human capital (Becker, 1962).

This theory is applicable in Zanzibar LGAs context because, when employees constantly enjoy career development services, they will enhance their motivation, capabilities, and commitment, which consequently leads to improved performance.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

This study was undertaken in Zanzibar Municipal Council and West B Council located in Urban West Region of Unguja, Zanzibar. The region was selected based on its metropolitan nature comprising enough population of around 47.3%, demonstrating that, many services are offered compared to other regions. Likewise, the LGAs were considered based on ongoing reports indicating poor performance of employees while implementing their daily responsibilities (CAG, 2021: Hamad & Mohammed, 2023).

Research Design

Cross-sectional design was used to examine the influence of career development on the performance of employees in ZMC and WBC. This design was relevant because it simplified the collection of large amount of data from large population at once without repetition (Kothari, 2004). Thus cross-sectional design enabled to capture opinions of the respondents about the topic under the study.

Study Population, Sampling and Sample Size

The current study involved all permanent employees available in West B Council and Zanzibar Municipal Council. Krejcie and Morgan table which is often used when the population is known, was used to determine the sample size of the study (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Through



simple random sampling, 242 employees were randomly selected out of 650. Similarly, purposive sampling was used to select key informants for generating qualitative information. Executive Directors (2), Heads of Departments (4), Human Resource Officers (6), and general employees (9) were chosen based on their knowledge and experience about the studied topic.

Data Collection

A questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data. Out of the 242 questionnaires distributed, 230 were returned and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 95%. This response rate was considered adequate for the study. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies (Jaffu, 2023; Kisumbe, 2019; Otoo et al., 2019). However, the questionnaire items were revised to ensure their relevance to the local government context in Zanzibar. In addition, interviews were conducted with key informants who held both strategic and operational responsibilities and possessed substantial experience in human resource management practices.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), whereby both the measurement model and the structural model were assessed. Qualitative data obtained from the key informants were analysed using content analysis.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The gender distribution of the respondents showed that, out of the 230 participants, 151 (65.7%) were female and 79 (34.3%) were male. This distribution reflects the composition of the study population, where female employees constitute the majority of the workforce.

Regarding age, 51 (22.2%) respondents were between 20 and 25 years, 54 (23.5%) were between 26 and 30 years, 45 (19.6%) were between 31 and 35 years, 38 (16.5%) were between 36 and 40 years, 18 (7.8%) were between 41 and 45 years, 12 (5.2%) were between 46 and 50 years, 11 (4.8%) were between 51 and 55 years, and 1 (0.4%) respondent was between 56 and 60 years. These findings indicate that respondents from all age groups were represented in the study. The results further suggest that a substantial proportion of employees in the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) are relatively young and are therefore likely to benefit from career development opportunities.

With regard to educational attainment, 43 (18.7%) respondents had education below Form Four level, 45 (19.6%) had completed Form Four, 33 (14.3%) held certificate qualifications, 65 (28.3%) possessed diploma qualifications, 40 (17.4%) held bachelor's degrees, and 4 (1.7%) had master's degrees. These findings indicate that a considerable proportion of employees possess



relatively low levels of formal education, underscoring the importance of career development initiatives, particularly training and capacity-building programmes, to enhance their competencies and career advancement.

Regarding work experience, 2 (0.9%) respondents had less than one year of experience, 139 (60.4%) had between 1 and 5 years, 32 (13.9%) had between 6 and 10 years, 30 (13.0%) had between 11 and 15 years, 7 (3.0%) had between 16 and 20 years, and 20 (8.7%) had more than 21 years of work experience. These findings indicate that the majority of employees in Zanzibar LGAs have relatively limited work experience. Consequently, career development opportunities are essential for enhancing their knowledge, skills, and competencies, which are expected to improve employee performance.

Measurement Model Evaluation

In order to assess the reliability of each individual indicator using the PLS-SEM approach, it is advised to evaluate the outer loadings of all variables. The items attaining the loadings of 0.4 and 0.70 should be satisfactory and they can be removed only when their removal will increase convergent validity or reliability of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2016). For this reason, out of 14 items, 7 items were maintained and used in this study as they had enough loadings as seen in both Figure 1 and Table 1 respectively. 7 items (CDV2, CDV3, CDV4, CDV8, EPF4, EPF5, and EPF6) were deleted as they have weak loadings or and their removal increased reliability of internal consistency and convergent validity. Other remaining 7 items recorded sufficient loadings of between 0.746 and 0.874. In maintaining reliability of the internal consistency, as seen in Table 1, the all composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are above 0.7 recommended threshold values (Hair et al., 2021; Ntangeki et al., 2023). Table 1 shows convergent validity by indicating that all values of average variance extracted (AVE) are above 0.5 recommended threshold (Hair et al., 2021)

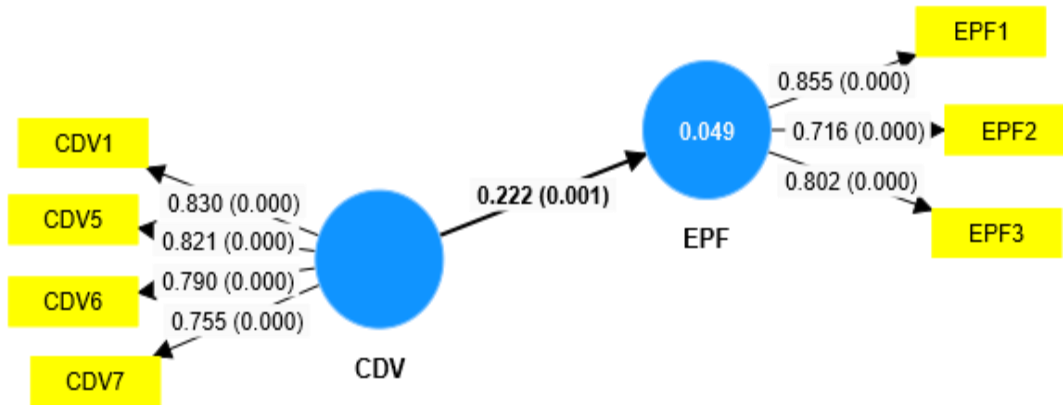


Figure 1
Measurement Model

Table 1.
Items, loadings, CR and AVE

Variables/Items	Factor loadings	Composite reliability	AVE
Career Development		0.837	0.639
CDV1	0.830		
CDV2	Deleted		
CDV3	Deleted		
CDV4	Deleted		
CDV5	0.821		
CDV6	0.790		
CDV7	0.755		
CDV8	Deleted		
Employee performance		0.700	0.629
EPF1	0.855		
EPF2	0.716		
EPF3	0.802		
EPF4	Deleted		
EPF5	Deleted		
EPF6	Deleted		

Source: Field Data, 2023



Discriminant Validity

In the current study, discriminant validity was ensured through Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. The findings reveal that all HTMT values are below conservative threshold of 0.85, as shown in Table 2. This indicates that each study variable is empirically distinct from the other, thus revealing adequate discriminant validity.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity-HTMT

Variables	CDV	EPF
CDV		
EPF	0.213	

Source: Field Data, 2023

Structural Model Evaluation

In structural model assessment, the study used SmartPLS 4.0 to test research hypothesis and the model proposed applied a 5000 retest bootstrapping procedure to calculate path coefficients, t-statistics and p-values significances. Based on study findings, career development positively influences employee performance ($\beta= 0.222, p < 0.001$), as seen in Table 3. The results indicate that effective practices of career development enhance knowledge and ability of the employees, which consequently leads to increase performance. This result signifies the need for proper career development initiatives to improve employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness.

Table 3. Path Coefficient Hypothesis Relationships

Hypothesis	Beta	t	p	Status
H1 CDV→EPF	0.222	3.364	0.001	Accepted

Source: Field Data, 2023

DISCUSSION

The study intended to determine the influence of career development on employee performance. The study results clearly indicate that career development positively influence employee performance, clarifying that when career development is properly implemented in Zanzibar local governments, the employees will significantly enhance their ability to effectively accomplish their given tasks. Career development practices such as training opportunities, mentoring, and promotion enhance knowledge and competencies of the employees, which consequently improve their working ability. This finding shows the critical role of career development initiatives in enhancing both employees as well as organizational overall performance.

This finding is consistent with Human Capital Theory that, career development programs such as promotion, career guidance, and training opportunities increase knowledge, skills, and ability of the employees, which in turn leads to increase their ability and performance in the implementation of their daily responsibilities. The study results also supported by previous studies such as Hosen et al. (2024) and Kathukya & Idoki (2023) who reported the positive



influence of career development to employee performance. These empirical literatures argue that effective practices of career development programs increase employee's competencies and adaptability, thereby enhancing efficiency in the execution of the assigned duties. In the context of Zanzibar LGAs, relevant career development initiatives are crucial as the employees are expected to perform effectively in both administrative and service delivery responsibilities. The finding was further supported by a senior supervisor who maintained that:

“Employees who often participate in career development initiatives, they effectively perform their job duties. I have noticed tremendous improvements in their creative ability, quality of work, and productivity after taking part in various career development programs.”

This qualitative result also supports the influence of career development on employee performance, revealing that effective practices of career development programs leads to employees' creativity and efficiency of work. Tremendous improvement of work shows how career development positively influence performance results. This suggests that career development not only enhances employees' ability but also increase organizational processes and accountability, which are very important for effective performance in public sector.

In addition, effective practices of career development programs ensure work motivation and satisfaction of the employees. When staff feel more valued and satisfied with career development opportunities, they become creative, dedicated, and committed to their assigned duties. Self-motivated employee, reduce mistakes and overreliance to supervisors, which consequently leads to demonstrate professionalism and performance improvement in LGAs, leading to attractive service delivery.

Theoretically, the findings align with Human Capital Theory that proper investment in career development initiatives enhances employee performance and overall organizational productivity. By strengthening employees' ability and confidence, Zanzibar local governments may continuously enhance employee efficiency and organizational productivity. Career development therefore, should be considered as a continuous strategic aspect aligned with organizational goals and demands in service delivery rather that a one-day activity.

Generally, the study result addresses the necessity of a well-planned as well as continuous career development initiatives in Zanzibar LGAs. These programs are crucial for increasing employee performance, organizational productivity, and attractive service delivery. Hence, investment in career development practices is not only fruitful to individual employee but also essential for successful governance as well as development outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Career development to employees is widely documented in human resource development literatures where various studies have linked career development to employee performance and organizational productivity. However, there is scanty of empirical literatures on the influence of training on employee performance, specifically in Zanzibar LGAs. Therefore, the current study intended to examine the influence of career development on Zanzibar LGAs employee



performance. The results conclude that career development practices positively influence employee performance in Zanzibar LGAs.

Therefore, local government workforce in Zanzibar like any other employees need effective practices of career development so as to enhance their working morale and performance. This conclusion supported by several studies undertaken into different settings. Hence, this study establishes a positive influence of career development on employee performance in Zanzibar local government context. Thus, Zanzibar LGAs performance can be enhanced with the enhancement of organizational career development initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the results from the current study, it is recommended that, local government employees should willingly engage themselves into various career development initiatives to increase their ability in the implementation of career responsibilities. Likewise, management in the respective LGAs should ensure effective practices of career development so as to enhance efficiency and productivity of their workforce. Hence, management of the local governments should utilize employees' willingness to participate in various programs of career development practices to increase their capabilities in working. Additionally, LGAs and other public service institutions should support employees by giving them both moral and material support in their career development strategies.

Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was ensured from the study participants. They were informed that the study was for academic purposes only, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Data availability statement

The datasets on which conclusions were made for the current study are available on reasonable request.

Citation

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