

Practices of Employee Relations in Tanzania: A Thematic Review of Workplace Relations, Trade Union, Labour Law, and Organisational Performance

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Abstract

In the Tanzanian context, communication, employee engagement, conflict management, supportive leadership, working conditions, and job security are most consistently associated with employee-relations practices through organisational performance. At Posts Corporation Headquarters, servant leadership was found to be positively related to job satisfaction ($B=0.694$, $t=6.722$, $p=0.000$) and the correlation ranging from $r=0.62$ to $r=0.69$ ($p=0.001$) between the characteristics of servant leadership and job satisfaction. Communication, engagement, supportive employment practices, working conditions and job security also contributed to more favourable organisational outcomes in Tanzanian vocational, rural, private and small- and medium-sized organisations. Conflict and turnover among employees; inequality in workplaces; political interference in union activities; institutional weaknesses in the mediation of workplace conflict; and variable application of labour law still limit employee-relations practices. Organisational ($\beta=0.206$, $p=0.003$), personal ($\beta=0.184$, $p=0.003$) and environmental ($\beta=0.119$, $p=0.020$) factors all had a significant impact on workplace conflict in financial institutions; the highest coefficient was for spatial quality ($\beta=0.301$, $p=0.012$). The effects of workplace inequality on morale and motivation were reported by 62% of the employees in public organisations, and the effects on teamwork and collaboration were reported by 56% of employees. The evidence suggests that employee relations in Tanzania function on two interwoven tiers: workplace management practices and broader institutional settings, including the labour law, trade unions, political power and dispute resolution mechanisms. Evidence of communication, support, engagement, and conflict prevention is stronger in converging quantitative and qualitative results, while evidence of union autonomy, legal implementation, and national generalizability is more limited. Practical focuses are transparent communication, participatory decision-making, fair access to promotion and benefits, effective mediation, retention incentives, democratic union governance and enforcement of labour protections. Taking into account organisational, legal and sectoral dimensions in longitudinal and comparative designs would be relevant for future research.

Keywords: Employee Relations, Tanzania, Trade Union, Labour Law, Organisational Performance.

1.0. Introduction

Employee relations involve the formal and informal processes by which these relationships are organised, expectations are communicated, conflict is resolved, rights are exercised and interests are pursued by both employees and employers, either jointly or separately. Such relationships in Tanzania go beyond the actual workplace to the labour unions, labour laws, public institutions, political actors and economic changes at the national level. Labour law outlines contractual rights and duties, conditions for termination, benefits and enforcement mechanisms, while organisational practices shape how these formal principles are lived in a day-to-day employment relationship (Magalla, 2018). Another institutional means for the worker to claim his rights and engage in collective action is through the trade union, but the influence of the union depends on political and economic conditions, government regulation, and employer opposition (Tordoff, 1966).

When we consider the relationships that employees report between employee relations and organisational performance, job satisfaction, employee engagement, service delivery, and stability in the workplace, it's clear how important employee relations are. Both communication and organisational support are seen to have a positive effect on job and organisational engagement in Tanzanian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Msangi et al., 2020), while working conditions and job security are positively related to performance in rural organisations (Mhagama, 2024). On the other hand, there is a risk of low employee morale, reduced teamwork, poor delivery of services, and a decline in the productivity of the organisation due to poor communication, recurring misconduct, failure to have equal access to benefits and promotion, failure to resolve issues and employee turnover (Chanai, 2024; Sanga, 2026; Shokia & Payowela, 2024).

The literature also shows a change in the institutional setting. With the transition of Tanzania from socialism, the ways in which trade unions work have changed and unionists are integrating existing structures with new patterns of collective action (Fischer, 2011). Labour-law reforms aimed to balance employer and employee interests, but

subsequent studies reveal remaining challenges in enforcement, coverage of informal sector, and legal awareness and compliance with social security laws (Mtaki, 2005; Saro, 2026). At the organisational level, globalisation adds a new layer of complexity when multinational companies bring employment practices with them to their Tanzanian subsidiaries and try to adjust to the industrial-relations environments (Newenham-Kahindi, 2008).

Even with this body of work, evidence is scattered throughout organisational studies, legal studies, trade-union studies as well as conflict and engagement studies. There is a need, then, for a synthesised account that will help to shed light on the organisation of employee-relations practices, on which practices seem to be beneficial, on conditions that produce conflict, and on the interaction between workplace experiences and labour institutions. This review explores practices of employee relations in the Tanzanian organisations and institutions at these two levels.

2.0. Methods

2.1. Search Strategy

A thorough search was conducted in the Semantic Scholar and OpenAlex databases of academic papers spanning over 220 million. A hybrid search approach was used that combined semantic search and keyword search to achieve maximum coverage.

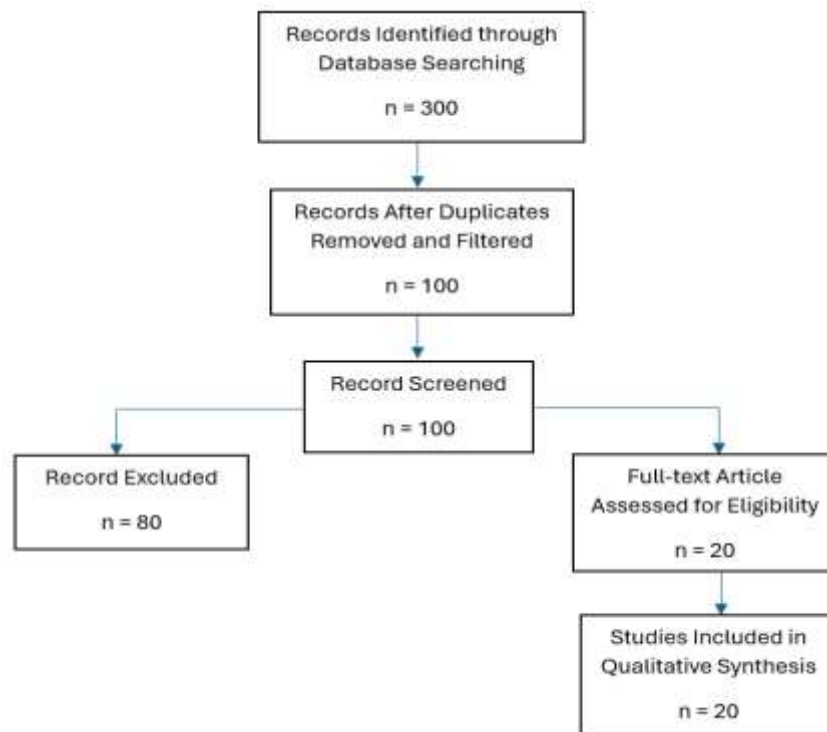
Search queries included:

- "employee relations practices in Tanzanian organisations"
- "industrial relations and trade unions in Tanzania"
- "human resource management practices and employee relations in Tanzania"
- "collective bargaining and labour disputes in Tanzania workplace"
- "employee engagement and workplace conflict resolution in Tanzania"
- "labour law and employment relations reform in Tanzania"

2.2. Study Selection

First database search resulted in 300 records. 100 records were screened for eligibility after the duplicate removal and relevance-based filtering. 80 papers were excluded, and 20 papers were included in the final synthesis.

PRISMA Flow Diagram



Eligibility criteria included:

1. Tanzania Focus: Is it focussed on Tanzania and Tanzanian organisations, or on Tanzanian labour and employment institutions themselves, or on another country or a cross-national study without any Tanzanian implications?
2. Employee Relations Relevance: Is it a paper on employee relations/industrial relations/labour relations/employment relations practice?
3. Study Type: Is the paper an empirical study, review or analysis of workplace relations or related labour and employment matters, which meet the eligibility criteria?
4. Workplace Relations: Does the paper discuss the workplace relations in Tanzanian organisations?
5. Trade Union: Is there any mention of trade unions in Tanzania in the paper?
6. Collective Bargaining: Does the paper discuss collective bargaining in Tanzania?
7. Labour Law: Is there any discussion on labour law in Tanzania?
8. Engagement or Conflict: Is it about employee engagement or conflict resolution in Tanzanian organisations?

The studies included in the review were all eligible for the stated inclusion criteria. All included studies met the stated eligibility criteria.

2.3. Data Extraction and Synthesis

The following was the focus of data extraction:

- Study focus: Identify the main employee relations issue studied, for example, trade union or collective bargaining, labour law, employee engagement, conflict resolution, or more general employee relations practice.
- Study Setting: Identify the Tanzanian-specific organisational, sectoral, institutional or geographic context in which the study was conducted or analysed.
- Study Design: Indicate if the paper falls under an empirical study, review, legal/policy analysis, conceptual analysis, or other study design, and if an empirical study, specify the method.
- Sample or Sources: Identify and describe the sources of information or data: participants, organisations, documents, legal instruments, etc. (If sample size is provided).
- Key Findings: Give a summary of the key findings related to employee, industrial, labour and/or employment relations practices in Tanzania.
- Implications: Identify the paper's stated implications or recommendations for employers/employees, trade unions/policymakers, labour institutions, or workplace relations.

Thematic analysis was used to find patterns and synthesise results from studies. Evidence strength was determined by the consistency of findings and the number of studies supporting the finding.

3.0. Results

3.1. Characteristics of Included Studies

Author and year	Study type and method	Sample or sources	Population/setting	Key focus
Fischer, 2011	Empirical anthropological study; interviews	Union leaders and development partners; size not reported	Tanzanian trade unions	Union transformation and collective-action repertoires
Freddy, 2025	Quantitative explanatory study; questionnaires	186 of 372	VETA, Mara	Communication, engagement, conflict resolution, performance
Mwapachu, 1973	Empirical qualitative analysis	Labour-protest cases; size not reported	Tanzanian industrial workplaces	Strikes, petitions, and labour unrest
Bienefeld, 1979	Conceptual analysis	Not reported	Tanzanian state and labour process	Capital–labour conflict and unions

Shokia and Payowela, 2024	Mixed-method case study	35 employees and departmental heads	TAFIRI, Dar es Salaam	Turnover, workload, service delivery, retention
Tordofj, 1966	Conceptual analysis	Legal and institutional discussion; not reported	Tanzanian labour market	Trade unionism and worker rights
Magalla, 2018	Legal/policy analysis	Labour statutes and regulations	Tanzanian labour institutions	Rights, duties, contracts, termination, enforcement
Telacky and Kabobe, 2025	Qualitative study; thematic analysis	Union members, leaders, officials; size not reported	Tanzania Teachers' Union	Political interference and union autonomy
Saro, 2026	Doctrinal legal analysis	Statutes and secondary legal sources	Mainland Tanzania	2025 labour-law amendments and implementation
Chanai and Chanai, 2024	Quantitative case study; questionnaires	122 of 488	Jordan University College, Morogoro	Communication, safety, conflict, performance
Mhagama, 2024	Descriptive quantitative study; questionnaires	154 employees	Rural organizations, Nanyumbu	Job security, communication, conditions, motivation
Tibesigwa et al., 2025	Mixed-method cross-sectional study	185 employees and 6 key informants	Financial institutions, Mbeya	Workplace-conflict drivers
Nkobogo, 2021	Legal/policy analysis	Stakeholder and institutional evidence	Commission for Mediation and Arbitration	Mediation barriers and institutional capacity
Newenham-Kahindi, 2008	Qualitative comparative case study	Two multinational banks	Foreign-owned banks in Tanzania	Transferred employment practices and local adaptation
Msangi et al., 2020	Quantitative survey; SEM	483 SMEs	Tanzanian SMEs	HRM practices and engagement
Mtaki, 2005	Legal/policy analysis	Labour laws and reform policies	Tanzanian labour market	Legal reform and workplace relations
Sanga, 2026	Quantitative descriptive survey	370 of 5,000	Public organizations, Kinondoni	Inequality, morale, teamwork, productivity
Msangi, 2019	Quantitative survey; SEM	483 respondents	Tanzanian SMEs	Organizational support, communication, engagement
Limo et al., 2024	Descriptive survey and correlational study	150 employees	Posts Corporation Headquarters	Servant leadership and job satisfaction
Freddy et al., 2025	Quantitative explanatory study; questionnaires	186 of 372	VETA, Mara	Communication, engagement, conflict resolution

There is empirical, conceptual and legal-policy based literature. The empirical studies focus on particular organizations or sectors such as SMEs, public institutions, financial institutions, vocational education, research institutes and trade unions. The questionnaires and the cross-sectional or descriptive analysis are usually employed in quantitative designs, while union governance, political influence, multinational employment practices and labour unrest are the focus of qualitative designs. It can be defined by a range of different outcome measures that vary significantly across different categories such as organisational performance, engagement, job satisfaction, service delivery, conflict, productivity and institutional effectiveness.

3.2. Thematic Findings

3.2.1. Communication, Support, Participation, and Leadership as Constructive Employee-relations Practices

The most consistent organisational pattern is the one in which employee relations is a productive process that is facilitated by open communication and organisational support. In Tanzanian SMEs, communication had a positive influence on job engagement and organisational engagement; organisational support had a significant influence on both job and organisational engagement (Msangi et al., 2020). A similar SEM analysis revealed that the relationship between support and communication and job engagement was partially mediated by organisational view while the relationship between communication and organisational engagement was fully mediated by organisational view (Msangi et al., 2020). These findings indicate that communication functions not only as a conveying of information, but also as a category of information based on employees' perception of the organisation's value and support of them.

The pattern also extends to larger, and more formal, organisations. In VETA-Mara, communication, employee engagement and conflict resolution each showed positive and significant relationship with organisational performance (Freddy, 2025; Freddy et al., 2025), but the values of the correlation coefficients were not provided. In Nanyumbu District, it was suggested that there is a need for good communication, good management practices, support of subordinates, job security, and working conditions (Mhagama, 2024). In contrast, communication was reported as not being transparent and accurate enough at Jordan University College, which also led to conflict and lower performance (Chanai, 2024).

Leadership is a supplemental relational process. The results showed that the practice of servant leadership at the Headquarters of Posts Corporation was 3.63 ± 0.943 , and the characteristics of servant leadership had a positive correlation with job satisfaction in the Headquarters of Posts Corporation with r values ranging from 0.62 to 0.69 and $p=0.001$, while the regression results showed that $B=0.694$, $t=6.722$, and $p=0.000$ (Limo et al., 2024). Relevant practices were listening, affirming employees, sharing organisational objectives, prioritising employee needs, and using authority for subordinates' benefit.

There is strong confidence, as noted in the findings across organisational contexts and methods, though mostly cross-sectional and organisationally specific.

3.2.2. Working Conditions, Security, Fairness, and Retention as Material Foundations of Employee Relations

Material conditions of employment also influence employee relations, in addition to communication and leadership. Working conditions in Nanyumbu District had a significant positive impact on organisational performance and job security was significantly positively related to performance (Mhagama, 2024). The Jordan University College employees showed some level of understanding regarding the knowledge of firefighting and health and safety training; the study was arguing for the need to have health and safety programs as genuine workplace practices and not just to meet government requirements (Chanai, 2024).

Weak retention practices are illustrated by the TAFIRI case and the negative consequences. The turnover in staff led to an increase in workload for the remaining staff, poor service delivery, loss of experienced and talented staff, recruitment and replacement costs, and training costs (Shokia & Payowela, 2024). Better incentive provision and wider retention strategies were recommended as a response. These findings relate to institutional knowledge continuity and service quality with employment security and organisational support.

Another important aspect is fairness. Inequality in access to training, benefits and allowances, and promotion, was reported in public organisations in Kinondoni Municipality. 62% of employees said they saw a decrease in morale and motivation, while 56% reported a decrease in teamwork and collaboration (Sanga, 2026). The suggested solution was an open, merit-based human-resource management.

Moderate confidence noted as evidence is consistent in direction, but there is a range in levels of measurement from perception to organisation and the studies are not temporally causal.

3.2.3. Conflict, Grievance Handling, and Dispute-resolution Practices

Weak employee relations can result in conflict, and conflict can become an area that demands formal institutional response. The findings at VETA-Mara revealed that conflict resolution had a positive significant relationship with the organisational performance; the findings also suggested that there should be employee participation in decision-making and disciplinary action. (Freddy, 2025). The Jordan University College study, on the other hand, showed that a lack of transparency in communication and repeated wrongdoings are associated with conflict and a decline in performance (Chanai, 2024). These findings suggest that formal procedures are most likely to be positive if they are coupled with a sense of everyday fairness and credible communication.

Financial institutions' evidence extends the definition of workplace conflict to include more than interpersonal behaviour. The highest reported determinant was workspace layout, noise, and privacy, with organisational drivers having a β of 0.241 and p of 0.023, personal drivers having a β of 0.278 and p of 0.028, environmental drivers having a β of 0.195 and p of 0.026, and spatial quality having a β of 0.301 and p of 0.012 (Tibesigwa et al., 2025). Management response should therefore involve physical workspace design, communication, fairness and respect, as well as disciplinary control.

On the institutional level, the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration faces challenges in the form of non-attendance, uncertainty of procedures, unclear roles of the representatives, poor offices, lack of skilled mediators, poor professionalism and overload of work (Nkobogo, 2021). Previous accounts of industrial unrest also reference strikes, petitions for the dismissal of management, and other protesting techniques, especially against the personnel officers (Mwapachu, 1973). Taken together, the historical evidence and contemporary mediation analysis both indicate that when internal and external expressions of work conflict fail to be seen as legitimate and viable, the conflict can escalate.

Strong confidence in the importance of communication, fairness and conflict management; Moderate in the relative contribution of the physical workspace conditions, as the evidence for this is from one regional sectoral study.

3.2.4. Trade Unions, Political Influence and Changing Collective Action

Trade unions can be described as a unique employee-relations practice, as they are able to link workplace grievances to collective representation and public institutions. Previous studies have pointed to the role of unions as significant defenders of working people's rights and also to the impact of governmental regulation, employer opposition and political-economic factors on the effectiveness of the unions (Tordofj, 1966). This connection between capital and labour is defined as a relationship which is an ongoing potential conflict area and which can be interpreted in different ways by different actors (Bienefeld, 1979).

Liberalisation ended up changing union strategies. Unionists adapted their collective-action repertoire, but kept existing structures intact and found novel opportunities and limitations in bolstering their side (Fischer, 2011). Newer evidence from the Tanzania Teachers' Union shows that political actors have a bearing in leadership recruitment, decision making and service delivery. Political allegiance of leaders was related to decreased trust and member engagement, and to a change from advocacy to appeasement (Telacky & Kabobe, 2025). The recommended practices include democratic governance, transparency and union independence.

The evidence thus paints a picture of effectiveness of unions that requires not only union recognition but also internal democracy and autonomy from the outside.

Moderate confidence as findings are conceptually streamlined with some qualitative evidence in historical and contemporary contexts, although samples and methods are underdeveloped and there is restricted use of direct measurements of collective bargaining outcomes.

3.2.5. Labour Law, Globalisation, and the Implementation Gap

The formal structure of employee relations is determined by labour law. Key standards include substantive provisions for contracts, termination and benefits in the Employment and Labour Relations Act and procedural implementation and enforcement in the Labour Institutions Act and its regulations (Magalla, 2018). The following reforms were analysed as being intended to equalise between the rights of employers and employees (Mtaki, 2005), and were relevant to collective bargaining, trade unions, employee engagement and conflict resolution.

The changes for 2025 are said to bolster workers' rights, clarify contractual responsibilities and enhance mechanisms for settling disputes. The same analysis, however, reveals that there are weaknesses in enforcement, coverage of the informal sector, compliance of the social-security system, legal awareness, and a disconnect between the legal framework and the realities of the workplace (Saro, 2026). Therefore, legal reform seems essential and necessary,

but not sufficient: employee relations rely on institutional capacity, monitoring and legal literacy, and the real availability of dispute resolution.

Globalisation is another dimension. In two multinational banks, foreign-owned companies brought employment practices with them to the Tanzanian subsidiaries, and Tanzania tried to reconcile these practices with employment conditions in the country and the desire to keep jobs (Newenham-Kahindi, 2008). This indicates that employee relations are determined by a relationship between imported models of the organisation and host country institutional, social, and economic priorities.

Moderate confidence in legal and qualitative assessments; the legal framework and implementation gap always appear, and systematic empirical assessments of compliance and of worker outcomes are rare.

3.3. Summary of Evidence

Theme	Key Finding	Population Applicability	Effect Direction	Confidence Level	Supporting Studies
Communication, support, participation, and leadership	Servant leadership predicted job satisfaction at $B=0.694$, $t=6.722$, $p=0.000$; correlations ranged from $r=0.62$ to $r=0.69$, $p=0.001$; communication and support positively influenced engagement	SMEs, VETA, rural organizations, private university, and public corporation; partial match to Tanzanian employee population	Positive	Strong	(Msangi et al., 2020), (Limo et al., 2024)
Working conditions, security, fairness, and retention	Sixty-two percent reported inequality harmed morale and motivation; 56% reported harm to teamwork and collaboration; turnover increased workload and service-delivery problems	Public, private, rural, and public research organizations; informal and unrepresented workers remain uncertain	Mixed, with negative effects from poor conditions and inequality	Moderate	(Sanga, 2026), (Shokia & Payowela, 2024), (Mhagama 2024)
Conflict and dispute resolution	Spatial quality was associated with conflict at $\beta=0.301$, $p=0.012$; organizational, personal, and environmental	Financial institutions, VETA, private university, and CMA; partial match to national employee-	Mixed	Strong	(Tibesigwa et al., 2025), (Freddy et al., 2025), (Nkobogo, 2021)

	coefficients were $\beta=0.241$, $p=0.023$; $\beta=0.278$, $p=0.028$; and $\beta=0.195$, $p=0.026$	relations population			
Trade unions and collective representation	Political interference affected appointments, decisions, trust, engagement, and advocacy; unionists revised collective-action repertoires while retaining established arrangements	Union members, leaders, officials, and development partners; proxy for wider employee population	Mixed/negative under political interference	Moderate	(Fischer, 2011), (Telacky & Kabobe, 2025), (Tordofj, 1966)
Labour law, globalisation, and implementation	Legal reforms enhanced protection and dispute mechanisms but left enforcement, legal awareness, informal-sector coverage, and social-security gaps	Legal institutions, statutes, and multinational banks; institutional rather than population-wide applicability	Mixed	Moderate	(Magalla, 2018), (Saro, 2026), (Newenham-Kahindi, 2008)

4.0. Discussion

4.1. Principal Findings and Interpretation

The main interpretation is the employees' relations in Tanzania are like a chain, where the communication and support lead to their perception of organisational inclusion, which in turn affects their engagement and satisfaction which in turn are linked with performance, collaboration and continuity of services. The findings from the mediations conducted with SMEs are especially valuable as they provide evidence that communication is not exclusively a technical process for the transmission of information. Its impacts are through the employees' organisational perspective, which means that communication is productive when it shows recognition, support, and institutional fairness (Msangi et al., 2020). The findings on servant-leadership support this interpretation: listening, affirmation, shared goals, and focus on employee needs offer some means through which authority can be an engine of satisfaction rather than resistance (Limo et al., 2024).

The second is material embedding of employee relations. Relational practices are credible if they are connected with job security, safety, working conditions, space quality, incentives and a fair access to promotion as advocated by Sanga (2026), Shokia and Payowela (2024), and Mhagama (2024). Hand in hand with communication difficulties, inequality, staff turnover and conflict, this means that employees view organisational relationships in both interpersonal treatment and through the distribution of employment resources. It is partly for this reason that

conflict-management procedures on their own are not likely to be able to settle conflicts when employees' communication is unclear, the benefits are unequal, or they are insecure about their job.

A two-level system is also found in the synthesis according to the perspective of Fischer (2011), Telacky and Kabobe (2025), and Tordofj (1966). Employers can enhance communication, participation, leadership, safety and retention at the workplace level. Unions, labour law, political power and mediation institutions affect the ability of workers to contest poor working conditions and the enforceability of rules at the institutional level. The most compelling findings are in the positive direction of communication, support, engagement and participatory leadership, since they are consistent across organisational contexts and associated quantitatively. The findings about national union autonomy, legal compliance and impact of globalisation are more tentative as they are based primarily on qualitative, conceptual and doctrinal analysis.

None of the papers offer biological or physiological mechanisms. The mechanisms are therefore organisational and institutional, not biological, including perceived support, trust, participation, fairness, accessibility of dispute, and continuity of expertise. Longitudinal evidence is not available so causality remains as a possibility.

4.2. Comparison with Existing Literature and Contradictions

The literature reviewed is generally agreed on that employee relations have significant impact on the performance and stability of the workplace; there is an important tension between formal institutional provision and actual workplace experiences. Labour laws establish rights, duties, contractual conditions, procedures and processes (Magalla, 2018), while the changes to the laws in 2025 are said to enhance protections and dispute resolution (Saro, 2026). However, mediation institutions are burdened with limited resources, a shortage of skills, pressure of workloads, lack of procedure clarity, and stakeholders' non-attendance (Nkobogo, 2021). This is not just a contradiction in legal doctrine; it means that formal rights and access to remedies are at different levels.

The same can be said for organisational studies whereas VETA findings have linked communication, engagement and conflict resolution to better performance while Jordan University College has cited non-transparent communication and frequent misbehaviour that leads to conflict and poor performance (Chanai, 2024). The divergence can be due to organisational heterogeneity and not due to incompatible theories. The studies studied various institutions, had varying outcome measures and were cross-sectional in design. VETA focuses on statistical relationships between two or more employee-relations variables and performance, whereas the university case highlights perceived quality of communication, perceptions of safety, and behavioural issues. But neither design can determine if performance differences could be attributed to employee-relations practices, and there is no evidence available that can be used to explain this more definitively.

Continuity and change also characterise the evidence of trade-unions. Liberalisation was linked to new collective-action approaches and the maintenance of older approaches (Fischer, 2011); and political interference in the Teachers' Union was correlated to a decline in autonomy and member involvement (Telacky & Kabobe, 2025). This is a finding that is consistent only if one separates the concepts of union adaptation from union independence: strategic innovation can take place even if external political influence prevents democratic governance. The studies available, however, do not directly measure bargaining outcomes, and thus do not provide an indication of whether the change of repertoires was associated with better material outcomes for workers.

Selective reporting can also occur as positive relationships between communication, support, leadership and organisational outcomes may be more common in the literature than null relationships. On the other hand, legal and union analyses will focus on the institutional gaps because a key aspect of these is the identification of the need for reform. Also, case studies and cross-sectional surveys are dominant, which further weakens generalizability. There is no methodological advances in exposure measurement that are relevant here; the importance is that the methodological evolution, from historical and conceptual to organisation-specific quantitative and mixed-method designs, leads to better measurement of local associations, but the causality remains to be solved at the national level.

4.3. Practical Implications

The findings impact employers in that they support integrated employee-relations systems versus isolated interventions. Communication should be open and bidirectional, and employees should be involved in any decisions that impact work. Managers need to be fair, respectful, and supportive in leadership, while also focusing on workspace conditions besides formal conflict and disciplinary processes. Spatial quality refers to the layout, noise and privacy, which is particularly salient in financial institutions with the highest conflict-related coefficient of $\beta=0.301$, $p=0.012$ (Tibesigwa et al., 2025). The provision of promotion, training, allowances and benefits in public organisations should be based on merit as inequality was linked to poor morale and collaboration (Sanga, 2026).

Democratic internal governance, the transparency of the selection of leadership and the guaranteed participation of members are essential to protect against political influence for employees and unions. The Tanzania Teachers' Union evidence indicates that in addition to being a constitutional or institutional principle, union autonomy is also a prerequisite for member engagement and trust (Telacky & Kabobe, 2025). Legal-literacy initiatives, staffing of mediation services, professional development, monitoring and expanded coverage of the social-security system should accompany legal reform for the benefit of policy makers and labour institutions (Nkobogo, 2021; Saro, 2026). This literature does not apply to a no-threshold dose-response issue. Reviewed studies do not address levels of exposure, hazards, or evidence of effects below the regulatory limit. Thus, there is no information available on safe or unsafe exposure thresholds. In addition, the practical recommendations should be viewed with care as many of the data are from particular organisations and not from a representative national sample of employees. There is a need to study informal workers and small employers (not part of the SMEs surveyed) and employees who are not covered by formal institutions separately.

4.4. Strengths and Limitations

The advantage of this review is its wide thematic range, which includes organisational practices, employee outcomes, trade unions, labour law, employment relations dispute resolution, and multinational employment relations. It also incorporates quantitative, qualitative, conceptual, and legal-policy-based evidence, enabling practices in the workplace to be understood within the context of institutional conditions.

There are significant limitations to the studies included. A large number of these are cross sectional, descriptive or single organisation case studies, and some provide incomplete sampling information. Outcomes are not measured consistently and engagement, satisfaction, productivity, performance, service delivery, conflict and institutional effectiveness are all measured. Most quantitative studies comment on direction and significance and do not provide full effect estimates or confidence intervals. Qualitative or doctrinal studies can offer context, but cannot estimate prevalence or causal effects. Generalisability of the sectoral concentration is constrained and there is limited evidence about informal employment, collective bargaining results, gender and regional variation.

However, there are limitations in the review in terms of search strategy, abstract screening and extraction, underreporting in original papers and no formal assessment of the risk of bias. These evidence-strength judgments are thus based on consistency and design characteristics and not on a validated risk-of-bias instrument.

5.0. Gaps and Future Directions

The most obvious gap is that there is no nationally representative description of employee-relations practices in the formal and informal economies in Tanzania. A collection of existing evidence is focused on specific institutions, specific districts, sectors, SMEs, public organisations, unions and multinationals banks. In the future, there is a need for more national surveys based on stratification, as well as interviews with employees, managers, union representatives, labour officers and informal workers to identify sectoral and regional differences in terms of communication, participation, job security, fairness, conflict resolution and legal awareness.

Longitudinal studies should be conducted to establish if communication, supportive leadership, conditions, and retention efforts lead to subsequent changes in engagement, satisfaction, turnover, productivity, or service delivery. In future quantitative studies, full effect data, confidence intervals, outcome measures that have been validated, and organisational and demographic factors harmonised should be reported. The spatial-quality finding also needs to be replicated in the conflict literature other than financial institutions and Mbeya.

Empirical implementation studies that connect statutory rights and mediation reforms with case completion, time to resolution of cases, worker satisfaction, and compliance are needed in the legal and union literature. Comparisons of unions with different governance arrangements should be part of political-interference research. Lastly, there is a need to directly examine the under-represented groups, such as informal workers, workers in precarious situations, women, workers in rural areas outside of district institutions, and workers without union or mediation access.

6.0. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the evidence that employee relations work best if the communication is transparent, employees are supported by the organisation, leaders listen and involve subordinates, working conditions are safe, employment is reasonably secure and conflict is engaged with a credible procedure that is readily available to employees. This finding is supported by positive relationships between communication, support, engagement, and organisational outcomes; there is also a strong relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction at Posts

Corporation Headquarters, where servant leadership predicted satisfaction at $B=0.694$, $t=6.722$, $p=0.000$, with $r=0.62$ to $r=0.69$ and $p=0.001$ (Limo et al., 2024). Also, there is evidence that workplace inequality impacted on morale (62% of public employees surveyed) and on teamwork and collaboration (56% of public employees surveyed) (Sanga, 2026).

This conclusion is, however, largely an aggregation of organisation-specific and sectoral populations and not a representative national sample. Overall institutional context also influences employee relations: for example, political interference can undermine union autonomy, mediation institutions have limited resources and procedures, and labour-law reforms can only be partially implemented. The key issue yet to be answered is whether good practices found in specific workplaces result in a lasting change in the many formal and informal Tanzanian work contexts. That can only be done by longitudinal, nationally comparative studies that link management practices, legal institutions, union governance, and employee outcomes. Such evidence would facilitate the transition from formally specified rights and general recommendations to transparent, equitable, participatory and enforceable employee-relations systems on the part of employers, unions and policymakers.

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