



Strategies for improving employee job satisfaction in the public sector: A case of Kasulu Town Council, Tanzania

Kipara Japhert Kipara¹

¹kkipara992@gmail.com

¹Institute of Accountancy Arusha, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated possible strategies for improving employee job satisfaction in Kasulu Town Council. The study was guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The study used 327 sample size out of 1800 target population, which included top management members, HR staff, and other employees, was selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The study adopted a descriptive research design where the data were collected using questionnaires and analysed with the help of SPSS version 26.0. The findings revealed that employee job satisfaction is shaped by multiple organizational strategies, including provision of good working conditions, recognition and rewards, career development, leadership and supervision, employee engagement, support from the organization, effective communication, and work-life balance. To enhance job satisfaction, the council should strengthen health and safety measures by investing in occupational health programs, modern facilities, and welfare initiatives. In addition, it should institutionalize recognition and reward systems through the establishment of formal, merit-based mechanisms, as well as formalize flexible work arrangements.

Keywords: Employee Job Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Motivation, Public Sector, Tanzania

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee job satisfaction is widely acknowledged as a critical factor influencing organizational performance, employee retention, and service delivery outcomes, particularly in the public sector (Dziuba et al., 2020; Herzberg, 1968). In the public sector, where services directly impact societal welfare and citizen well-being, the importance of a satisfied workforce becomes even more pronounced. Satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of motivation, commitment, and accountability, which are essential for achieving institutional goals and maintaining public trust. Governments around the world are increasingly recognizing that a satisfied workforce contributes to higher levels of productivity, accountability, and citizen satisfaction. However, public sector organizations often struggle with structural challenges, limited incentives, and rigid hierarchies that can adversely affect employees' job satisfaction compared to the private sector (Caoagdan et al., 2023).

In many developing countries, including those in Sub-Saharan Africa, public sector employees frequently face issues such as inadequate compensation, limited career progression, poor working conditions, and weak managerial support (Wale-Oshinowo & Majekodunmi, 2024). In Ghana, public servants have expressed issues over delayed promotions, poor supervision, and lack of recognition, leading to low levels of morale and productivity (Mickson & Anlesinya, 2020). In Kenya, studies have revealed issues such as salary disparities, lack of performance-based incentives, and political interference in public service appointments, which contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Bula & Makhamara, 2022). Similarly, in Nigeria, the public sector has been criticized for its non-transparent the human resource practices, weak training systems, and failure to implement merit-based rewards, all of which have negatively impacted motivation and service delivery (Alliu & Akinlabi, 2023). In Uganda, limited investment in employee welfare and outdated administrative procedures have been cited as key factors causing disillusionment among civil servants (Kansiime et al., 2024). These conditions tend to lower morale and hinder effective service delivery.

In Tanzania, the situation mirrors broader regional trends, as public sector employees continue to face significant challenges that affect their job satisfaction. Despite the government's efforts to implement public service reforms such as the Public Service Reform Program (PSRP) and Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), which aimed to improve efficiency, accountability, and employee motivation, the outcomes have been mixed. Studies and government reports reveal that employee satisfaction in public organizations remains considerably low (Kimaro et al., 2018).

Despite ongoing efforts by the Tanzanian government to implement reforms within the public service sector, through initiatives such as the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) and the Local Government Reform

Programme (LGRP), employee job satisfaction in local government authorities remains low. More than 40% of public sector employees expressed dissatisfaction with their working conditions, citing factors such as limited career development opportunities, inadequate remuneration, poor communication, and lack of recognition. This problem is particularly critical at the local government level, where resource constraints, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inadequate human resource systems prevail (Mateng'e, 2022).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Employee job satisfaction is crucial for performance, retention, and effective service delivery, yet employees in Tanzanian local government authorities, including Kasulu Town Council, remain largely dissatisfied. In Tanzania, the government has introduced several reform initiatives, such as the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) and the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), to enhance efficiency, accountability, and employee motivation. However, despite these efforts, satisfaction levels in local government authorities remain low. National reports indicate that over 40% of public servants are unhappy with working conditions, career opportunities, and recognition (Mateng'e, 2022). These contribute to absenteeism, reduced morale, and low productivity (Mabindisa & Legoabe, 2021). Despite the reform initiatives, there is limited context-based evidence on effective strategies for improving job satisfaction, emphasizing the need for this study.

In Kasulu Town Council, the problem is evident. Over 35% of council employees reported dissatisfaction with their working environment, limited opportunities for training, delayed promotions, and poor supervision (Kimaro et al., 2018). In addition, human resource audit reports indicate a growing trend of absenteeism, low morale, and minimal employee engagement (Mateng'e, 2022; Mahyoro & Kasoga, 2021). Despite the awareness of these matters, there is a lack of empirical, context-specific literature that explores strategies for improving job satisfaction in under-resourced councils like Kasulu. Therefore, this study filled this knowledge gap by investigating strategies to enhance employee job satisfaction in Kasulu Town Council.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study investigated possible strategies to enhance employee job satisfaction in Kasulu Town Council.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

This study is based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. The theory assumes that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by distinct factors rather than existing on a single continuum. While enhancing hygiene factors can alleviate dissatisfaction, true satisfaction and improved performance can only be achieved through the presence of motivators (Herzberg, 1968). This difference provides a critical framework for public sector organizations to accurately assess the needs of employees. By employing this means, organizations can enhance their understanding of workforce requirements and implement targeted strategies to address them effectively. For instance, addressing hygiene issues like poor salary or inadequate supervision may prevent dissatisfaction, while focusing on motivators like recognition and growth can improve employee engagement and performance.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides a practical and insightful framework for understanding employee motivation, making it highly valuable for both human resource management (HRM) and organizational development. Its clear distinction between motivators and hygiene factors allows managers and policymakers to design more targeted and balanced interventions aimed at enhancing job satisfaction and reducing dissatisfaction simultaneously. Moreover, the theory's emphasis on intrinsic motivators makes it relevant in resource-constrained environments, such as public sector institutions in developing countries, where financial incentives may be limited. In such contexts, non-monetary strategies like improved supervision, recognition, clear communication, and career development become even more critical in sustaining employee satisfaction and commitment.

2.2 Empirical Review

Khassim and Costapius (2025) conducted a study that explored adherence to and compliance with occupational health and safety standards in public organizations in Tanzania with reference to regional administration and local government. The social cognitive theory was used as the theoretical framework. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A sample of 120 respondents drawn from the regional administration and local government, Tanzania was used. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were used to obtain respondents from different categories. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic and content analysis. It was revealed that there are inadequate occupational safety and health mechanisms in complying with OSH practices in many Tanzanian local councils.



Sapta et al. (2021) conducted a study on the role of technology, organizational culture, and job satisfaction in improving employee performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study explains that technology, organizational culture, and job satisfaction at rural banks in Bali can serve as motivation for enhancing performance, especially during a pandemic. A questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms to a total of 350 employees; data were collected from a sample of employees from rural banks in Denpasar, Bali. Respondents had to meet the following criteria: a minimum work period of one year and at least a high school education or an equivalent. Using these criteria, 100 samples were obtained. The study employs Structural Equation Modeling with a variance-based or component-based approach using Partial Least Squares. The results show that organizational culture, job satisfaction, and technology provide motivation and have a significant positive effect on employee performance. However, organizational culture does not have a direct or positive impact on employee performance.

Kitsios and Kamariotou (2021) conducted a study on the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation: An empirical study among public health workers. This article aims to investigate the dynamics that may be behind health workers at a public hospital in Northern Greece. Data were collected from 74 employees at the hospital and analyzed using ANOVA. The results show that key motivators for the employees can be considered the relationships with their colleagues and the level of achievement, while the level of rewards and job characteristics play a secondary role. These results make it clear that, for the hospital's management to be able to improve the level of employee performance, it should ensure the establishment of a strong climate among employees, and also acknowledge the efforts made by them.

Bhardwaj et al. (2021) analyzed the job satisfaction of employees in the banking industry. The purpose of this research is to observe employee satisfaction with respect to their position in various commercial banks, including private, public banks in Rajasthan, and to examine how various factors affect employee satisfaction. The research shows that there is a positive correlation and connection among job satisfaction & the award, remuneration, job security, promotion opportunities, and good relations with employees. The survey results also show that the majority of bank employees in the banking sector are satisfied as far as work culture is concerned, but salaries and timings remain the main concern for them.

Thant and Chang (2021) conducted a study on determinants of public employee job satisfaction in Myanmar. This study examines job satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors of government employees in Myanmar. A sample of 226 public employees in the Ministry of Border Affairs was randomly selected and interviewed for the study. The qualitative data collected from the interviews were analyzed by NVivo 12. Applying Herzberg's two-factor theory, the study found that both motivators and hygiene factors influenced job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the public employees. In particular, interpersonal relationships, factors in personal life, work itself, and recognition were major determinants of job satisfaction, and working conditions, interpersonal relations, factors in personal life, supervision-technical, and recognition all influenced job dissatisfaction of public employees in Myanmar.

Akinwale and George (2020) investigated the predictors of work environment on job satisfaction among nurses in both federal and state tertiary hospitals in Lagos State. The study used the longitudinal research design to elicit information from the respondents. The simple random sampling strategy was used to administer the research instrument to 364 nurses. The study used hierarchical multiple regression to analyze the data obtained. This study discovered that all the variables collectively determined nurses' job satisfaction; however, the salary was the most fundamental essential predictor that drives nurses' job satisfaction, followed by advancement and promotion. All seven predictors, namely, workload allocation, managerial support, autonomy and responsibility, salary, supervision and working conditions, recognition and achievement, and advancement and promotion, collectively exert a positive relationship with nurses' job satisfaction.

Marta et al. (2021) analyzed job enrichment, empowerment, and organizational commitment and the mediating role of work motivation and job satisfaction. The sample population consists of all the employees in the regional office of DJKN Bali and Nusa Tenggara, who hold executive positions and have served the office for ≥ 4 years. This study adopts the second-order Partial Least Squares (PLS) model and the Smart PLS Version 3.0 program, which is used as the analysis tool. The results revealed that: job enrichment has a significant influence on organizational commitment; employee empowerment has an insignificant influence on organizational commitment; work motivation and job satisfaction partially mediate the influence of job enrichment on organizational commitment; work motivation and job satisfaction fully mediate the influence of employee empowerment on organizational commitment.

Mahmood Aziz et al. (2021) examined the association between employee commitment and job satisfaction at selected private universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. This research was carried out at three different private universities. A quantitative method was used to gather relevant information regarding the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The results revealed that all three independent factors are correlated with job satisfaction. The result can be used as a guiding method for the university's management to increase its employees' commitment. Job satisfaction has a positive relationship with employee commitment. If employees are satisfied, they are organizationally committed, and found that job satisfaction has a positive impact on employee commitment.

Basalamah and As'ad (2021) analyzed the effect of work motivation on the satisfaction of management lecturers and analyzed the effect of the work environment on the satisfaction of management lecturers at a private university in the city of Makassar. This type of research is explanatory research. The sample of this research is management lecturers at private universities in Makassar city. Data were collected using purposive random sampling total of 105 respondents. The method of analysis in this study was multiple regression analysis. The results of this study indicate that motivation has a significant effect on job satisfaction. This study proves that both theoretically and previous empirical studies explain that increasing work motivation will increase the job satisfaction of lecturers at private universities in the city of Makassar.

Despite several studies exploring employee job satisfaction in different contexts, few address the challenges of local government authorities in Tanzania. For instance, Khassim and Costapius (2025) examined occupational health and safety compliance in local councils but did not address satisfaction factors such as recognition, career growth, and leadership. On the other hand, studies conducted in banking, health, and education sectors across countries like Indonesia, Greece, India, Myanmar, and Nigeria (Sapta et al., 2021; Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021; Bhardwaj et al., 2021; Thant and Chang, 2021; Akinwale & George, 2020) provide useful insights but remain contextually different from Tanzania's public sector realities. This indicates a clear knowledge gap on effective strategies for enhancing employee satisfaction in under-resourced councils in Tanzania. To fill this gap, the study investigated possible strategies for improving employee job satisfaction in Kasulu Town Council.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative research approach and descriptive research design to allow a comprehensive understanding of the strategies for improving employee job satisfaction at Kasulu Town Council. Notably, the study area was chosen due to its unique and relevant setting, as it operates under tight budget constraints, with limited autonomy over human resource decisions. Preliminary reports and staff performance reviews have highlighted issues such as inadequate office space, poor information systems, understaffing, and limited professional development opportunities. A sample size of 327 respondents out of 1800 target population was obtained using the Yamane formula as shown below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

n = Sample size,

N = Total number of the accessible population

e = Sampling error (e = 0.05)

$$n = \frac{1800}{1 + 1800(0.05)^2} = 327 \text{ respondents}$$

A sample size of 327 included top management members, HR staff, and other employees. Their diverse perspectives helped to obtain insights into employees' motivation to enhance their satisfaction. Furthermore, the study employed structured questionnaires to collect data, which were distributed to respondents who were selected using a simple random sampling for employees and a purposive sampling technique for top management and HR staff. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, and standard deviations with the help of SPSS version 26.0 on strategies for improving employees' job satisfaction.

To enhance content validity, the study questionnaire was carefully designed based on established HR strategies for improving employee satisfaction. To strengthen internal reliability, a pilot study was conducted involving 50 participants who were not a part of this study sample. This pilot helped to refine and clarify survey items for better comprehension and consistency. To assess internal consistency, the study employed SPSS version 26.0 to compute Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The instrument achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, indicating strong internal reliability and confirming its use (Weyant, 2022).

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Possible Strategies for Employee Job Satisfaction

This study investigated possible strategies for improving employee job satisfaction at Kasulu Town Council. To achieve the study objective, the researcher employed five assumptions, which were considered the best possible strategies for Kasulu Town Council using five Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Respondents were asked how much they disagree or agree with the statement describing the assumptions as follows;

**Table 1***Possible Strategies for Employee Job Satisfaction (N = 327)*

Section	Questionnaire Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std Dev
Working Conditions	Health, safety, and welfare standards at my workplace are adequately maintained.	21 (6.4%)	183 (56%)	77 (23.5%)	36 (11%)	10 (3.1%)	2.48	0.89
Recognition and Rewards	Good performance is consistently rewarded through incentives, promotions, or acknowledgments.	68 (20.8%)	23 (7%)	182 (55.7%)	3 (0.9%)	51 (15.6%)	3.17	1.23
Career Development	The council provides relevant training and professional development programs that enhance my skills.	40 (12.2%)	82 (25.1%)	12 (3.7%)	181 (55.4%)	12 (3.7%)	3.13	1.19
Leadership and Supervision	My immediate supervisor provides regular feedback and guidance on my performance.	158 (48.3%)	50 (15.3%)	11 (3.4%)	61 (18.7%)	47 (14.4%)	2.35	1.56
Open Communication and Sense of Purpose	Communication within the council is open, clear, and allows employees to express their views.	18 (5.5%)	32 (9.8%)	244 (74.6%)	28 (8.6%)	5 (1.5%)	3.07	0.68
Work-Life Balance and Flexibility	The council offers flexible work arrangements, including flexible schedules and leave arrangements as needed.	160 (48.9%)	34 (10.4%)	67 (20.5%)	7 (2.1%)	59 (18%)	3.7	1.52

Working Conditions: The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (62.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that health, safety, and welfare standards at their workplace are adequately maintained. The mean score of 2.48 (SD = 0.89) reflects a low level of satisfaction with workplace conditions. The result indicates that the council's work environment lacks adequate safety and welfare support. Such conditions can affect morale, productivity, and retention rates in the Council. These findings align with Khassim and Costapius (2025), who reported that inadequate occupational safety and welfare programs are the critical challenge in many Tanzanian local government authorities.

Recognition and Rewards: The findings revealed a small proportion of respondents (16.5%) who agreed or strongly agreed that good performance is consistently rewarded through incentives, promotions, or acknowledgments, with a mean of 3.17 (SD = 1.23) reflecting a moderate satisfaction. This suggests that there is inconsistency in the application of recognition and rewards across departments. This indicates that some employees may occasionally receive incentives, promotions, or acknowledgments, while others do not. The findings align with Thant and Chang (2021) and Akinwale and George (2020), who found that informal recognition without institutional backing led to dissatisfaction.

Career Development: The findings revealed a mixed perception of career growth and training opportunities. While 55.4% of respondents agreed that the council provides relevant training and professional development programs, a notable 37.3% disagreed, producing a moderate mean of 3.13 (SD = 1.19). This indicates that employees recognize efforts to provide training but question its effectiveness in enhancing long-term career advancement. The findings align with Okolie et al. (2020), who argued that many public institutions provide training as a procedural activity without linking it to tangible career progression.

Leadership and Supervision: The findings revealed that 63.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their immediate supervisors provide regular feedback and guidance, leading to a low mean score of 2.35 (SD = 1.56). This indicates that supervisory support and performance feedback mechanisms are inadequate in the council, which may lead to uncertainty, reduced engagement, low performance, and job dissatisfaction. The findings align with Qi et al. (2023), who found that employees who receive frequent feedback from their supervisors are more likely to feel valued and motivated. Similarly, Abd et al. (2023) emphasized that participatory leadership improves satisfaction only when combined with constructive feedback and personal coaching.

Open Communication and Sense of Purpose: The findings revealed that 74.6% of respondents remained neutral on open and clear communication, with a mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.68). This indicates uncertainty and possibly limited trust in the council's internal communication systems, which may result in reduced motivation. The findings align with Akinwale and George (2020), who found that poor communication in public institutions leads to decreased motivation and misalignment with the organizational vision. Similarly, Mahmood Aziz et al. (2021) emphasized that transparent and two-way communication fosters employee trust, engagement, and job satisfaction.

Work-Life Balance: The findings revealed that 48.9% of employees disagreed, while 38.5% agreed, with a mean score of 3.70 (SD = 1.52). This indicates that although employees recognize some efforts of respect for their personal and family commitments, the actual implementation of flexible work mechanisms such as flexible scheduling and

remote work options remains limited. The relatively moderate mean further indicates that the council's efforts toward promoting work-life balance are not yet fully effective in meeting employee expectations. These results are in line with what Huan-Fang and Chang (2022) found: flexible work policies greatly improve employee satisfaction and mental health by giving them more control over their time and workload. Similarly, Guoqiang and Bhaumik (2024) emphasized that organizations providing flexible work arrangements experience improved employee retention, higher commitment, and stronger organizational loyalty.

4.2 Employee Job Satisfaction

The study sought to examine the level of job satisfaction among the respondents. Table 2 presents the findings obtained.

Table 2

Employee Job Satisfaction (N = 327)

Questionnaire Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev
I am satisfied with my job at the council.	53 (16.2%)	98 (30%)	101 (30.9%)	46 (14.1%)	29 (8.9%)	3.3	1.12
I would recommend this council as a good place to work.	50 (15.3%)	99 (30.3%)	83 (25.4%)	58 (17.7%)	37 (11.3%)	3.21	1.16
I intend to continue working with the council in the future.	33 (10.1%)	41 (12.5%)	78 (23.9%)	108 (33%)	67 (20.5%)	3.41	1.2

Satisfaction with Job: Most respondents reported a moderate level of job satisfaction, with 30.9% remaining neutral, 23% agreeing, and 46% disagreeing that they were satisfied with their jobs. The average score of 3.30 (SD = 1.12) indicates that, overall, employees are only moderately satisfied with their work environment and conditions. This suggests that while aspects such as job security and welfare benefits may contribute to satisfaction, other factors like career growth, recognition, and leadership support seem inadequate. The findings align with Demircioglu (2021), who stated that job satisfaction is greatly affected by an employee's perception of fairness, recognition, and autonomy, aspects that are often limited in bureaucratic public organizations.

The Council is perceived as a good place to work: The findings revealed that about 45.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, 25.4% remained neutral, and only 33% agreed, with a mean score of 3.21 (SD = 1.16). This indicates that organizational reputation and employee advocacy remain relatively weak within the council. Limited recognition systems, inefficient communication, or perceived unfairness in administrative procedures may contribute to the low level of recommendation. The findings align with Qi et al. (2023), who noted that a lack of transparent leadership and organizational justice often reduces employees' willingness to speak positively about their workplace. The council should work on improving its image by using fair promotion systems, programs to recognize employees, and programs that keep employees involved all the time.

The results showed that about 53.5% of employees disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea of continuing to work with the Council, while 33% were neutral. The mean was 3.41 (SD = 1.20). This indicates that most employees have a moderate feeling and willingness to remain at Kasulu Town Council. This relatively high percentage of disagreement implies that many employees are uncertain about their long-term attachment to the council, possibly due to factors such as limited career growth opportunities, inadequate motivation, or unsatisfactory working conditions. The findings align with Jepngetich and Omondi (2025), who argued that rigid bureaucratic structures, delayed promotions, and a lack of motivational rewards often contribute to reduced job satisfaction and weaker employee retention.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The findings revealed that employee job satisfaction is shaped by multiple organizational strategies, including provision of good working conditions, recognition and rewards, career development, leadership and supervision, employee engagement, organizational support, communication, and work-life balance. The study recognized that working conditions, recognition and reward systems, and leadership and supervision were among the least satisfactory areas. The findings further revealed that employees experience only moderate satisfaction with career development and communication practices.

Furthermore, while some employees appreciated the council's recognition of work-life balance, the actual mechanisms for ensuring flexibility such as flexible scheduling and remote work options remain limited. This suggests that, despite management's awareness of the need for work-life integration, practical implementation is still weak. Consequently, overall employee job satisfaction and retention remain moderate, as many employees appear uncertain about their long-term commitment to the council.



5.2 Recommendations

To enhance job satisfaction, Kasulu Town Council should strengthen health and safety measures by investing in occupational health programs, modern facilities, and welfare initiatives, while ensuring compliance with national labour safety standards. In addition, the Council should institutionalize recognition and reward systems through the establishment of formal, merit-based mechanisms that consistently reward high-performing employees, both financially and non-financially. Furthermore, the council should focus on enhancing career development opportunities by aligning training programs with employees' career progression and organizational needs. Moreover, the Council should strengthen employee engagement through team-building initiatives and recognition of collaborative achievements. Finally, the Council should formalize flexible work arrangements and wellness programs that promote employee well-being.

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