

# The Impact of Leave Practices on Employees' Well-being and Organizational Performance: The Case of Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania

Anna Kitwange<sup>1</sup>

MBA Student,

Department of Business Studies,

Jordan University College,

P. O. Box 1878, Morogoro, Tanzania

Raphael Habi<sup>2</sup>

Lecturer,

Department of Business Studies,

Jordan University College,

P. O. Box 1878, Morogoro, Tanzania

**Abstract:-** Effective leave management encompasses integrated processes that involve employees, supervisors and human resource managers. The study aimed to determine the impact of leave practices on employees' well-being and organizational performance in Morogoro Municipality. The study used a mixed approach (triangulation) qualitative and quantitative approach based on an exploratory sequential design. The study involved 200 respondents including 87(43.5%) from the Department of Education, 62(31%) from the Department of Health, and 51(25.5%) were headquarter employees. The study used multi-stage, purposive, stratified and convenience sampling techniques to select the respondents. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The study found that supportive leave policies and practices significantly enhance employee well-being by reducing stress, preventing burnout, and promoting a healthier work-life balance. Conversely, inadequate or poorly implemented leave policies contribute to high levels of presenteeism, decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover rates that negatively affect organizational performance. Recommendations for action include promoting work-life balance, fostering a supportive organizational culture, addressing financial constraints, streamlining leave processes, monitoring and evaluating leave practices, mitigating presenteeism, tailoring policies to local needs, and engaging with stakeholders. Implementing these measures will improve employee well-being and enhance organizational performance, resulting in a more productive and motivated workforce in Morogoro Municipality and other areas.

**Keywords:-** Leave Practice; Employee; Organization Performance; Wellbeing.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### ➤ Background to the Study

Leave is the time that employees take off work during normal working hours, which they are entitled to either by law or by contract [1]. It is an essential component of employment rights, ensuring that employees have the opportunity to rest,

recover, and attend to personal matters without jeopardizing their job security. The idea of taking time off has many aspects, including different types and levels of rights that vary depending on laws, company rules, and personal agreements. Leave can be classified in different ways, including paid and unpaid categories. Paid leave provides financial compensation while on break, whereas unpaid leave does not [2]. Moreover, leave could be required by the government, like maternity or sick leave, or chosen by individuals, with employers providing extra leave choices beyond what is mandated by law [3]. Furthermore, the reasons for requesting time off are wide-ranging, including personal health, family obligations, education goals, and leisure trips, showcasing the different needs of workers throughout their professional lives.

The Employment and Labour Relations Act (ELRA) of 2004 recognizes five types of leave in Tanzania. The first type is annual leave [4]. Any employee entitled to this type is a form of paid time off given to an employee where they will continue to receive their full salary. In Tanzania, as per ELRA Section 31(1), a worker must receive a maximum of 28 consecutive days off during each leave cycle, which includes any public holidays that occur during that time [4]. This leave is not available to employees who have been working for the employer for less than six months. Workers who have the right to annual leave can choose to take their leave for any purpose, such as going on vacations or simply unwinding at home.

The second is sick leave. Sick leave can be entitled when an employee is ill or injured. Unlike annual leave, sick leave is based on a leave cycle of 36 months of consecutive employment with an employer [5]. Thus, within this period, employees will be entitled to 126 days of sick leave, the first 63 days shall be fully paid and the remaining 63 days shall be on half-pay. This leave highlights the importance of supporting workers with long-term health issues and managing the financial impact on the organization.

The third is maternity leave. This provides job-protected leave for pregnant employees before and after childbirth [6]. This form of leave supports the health and welfare of both the mother and child, while also creating a work environment that values family responsibilities. Apart from maternity leave,

there is also paternity leave, making it the fourth leave option for employees. With this leave, male employees shall be entitled to a paid paternity leave of at least 3 days in a leave cycle of three years. This is taken within seven days of the birth of the child provided that he is the father of the child. The three days are irrespective of how many of the children are born within the cycle.

Furthermore, an employee shall be entitled to at least four days paid leave in any of the following: sickness or death of the employee's child, death of the employee's spouse, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling [4]. This form of leave is essential for enabling workers to deal with important life events that can greatly affect their emotional and mental health. If an employee's child becomes seriously ill or dies, the parent is allowed to take time off to care for that child or grieve [7]. This leave is offered when a close family member, such as the employee's spouse, parent, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling, passes away. This leave promotes a more compassionate work environment, where employees are appreciated for both their work and their obligations beyond the workplace.

Effective leave management encompasses integrated processes that involve employees, supervisors and human resource managers. The Employment and Labour Relations Act No. 6 of 2004, Sections 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 provide for different forms of leave [4]. Unfortunately, some of these leaves are not taken by employees be it the fault of employees themselves, supervisors, or human resource managers, the report from reference [3] indicates a problem that some employees do not take annual, sick, maternity, and paternity leave fully and other leaves due to negative perceptions, lack of awareness, and fear of losing their positions and allowances.

The purpose of the current study is to analyze the impacts of leave practices on employees' well-being and organizational performance, in the case of Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. It highlights the benefits of taking and the disadvantages of not taking different leaves according to the Tanzania Labour Laws and Regulations (TLLR).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Theoretical Framework

The current study was guided by the Two-Factor Theory proposed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. The two-factor theory is a concept that states the factors that affect an individual's satisfaction and motivation level [8]. The theory stresses two dimensions that is hygiene factors and motivation factors. The Two-Factor theory is relevant to this study as it stresses the requirements for employee's well-being and the performance of the organization. Therefore, the theory enabled the researcher to assess whether both the employer and the employees guarantee leave practices as one of the adequacies of the hygiene and motivational factors to utilize the employee's health, social interaction, knowledge, skills, competencies, as well as social, emotional, environment, and physical wellness to the maximum to improve employees' well-being and work quality.

### B. Related Literatures

#### ➤ Annual Leave

Reference [9] explored "Annual leave in Australia," focusing on entitlements, usage, and preferences. The study found that 41% of employees faced difficulties obtaining leave due to work pressures and recommended policymakers ensure better access to entitlements through enhanced information collection from both employers and employees. Reference [2] investigated the right to annual leave in Lithuania, revealing that the right to paid leave is discretionary for employers rather than obligatory. They suggested that greater awareness of duties could improve the implementation of leave as part of safe working conditions. Reference [10] examined "The Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave in the United States," noting that improved leave policies could help workers balance family life and enhance business productivity and retention. Similarly, reference [3] found that California's paid family leave program positively impacted employee morale and did not increase costs for firms, indicating a beneficial effect on workplace dynamics.

#### ➤ Sick Leave

Reference [4] highlighted the critical role of paid sick leave in maintaining workers' health and family well-being, emphasizing its importance amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Reference [11] analyzed the relationship between life satisfaction, personal growth, and sick leave, finding that while life satisfaction was negatively related to sick leave, personal growth had a positive association, suggesting that improving satisfaction could reduce sick leave. Reference [12] examined sick leave management challenges in a New Zealand university, reporting that managers' discretion and empathy significantly impacted sick leave management.

#### ➤ Maternity Leave

Reference [13] investigated the impact of maternity leave expansions in Germany, finding that job loss was common for mothers post-leave, and recommended better job protection and benefits to improve outcomes. Reference [14] studied "Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment, and Child Health and Development in the US," noting that short return-to-work periods negatively affected child health and called for extended job-protected leave. Reference [15] found that insufficient paid maternity leave in the US hindered breastfeeding and recovery. Reference [7] studied the long-term mental health effects of maternity leave benefits in Europe, finding that comprehensive leave policies positively impacted mental health and recommended considering these benefits in policy evaluations.

#### ➤ Paternity Leave

Reference [16] researched "Paternity Leave and Parental Relationships" in the US, revealing that paternity leave significantly affects mothers' relationship satisfaction and conflict more than fathers' perceptions. Reference [18] highlighted the lack of paternity leave in developing countries, noting the need for better work-family balance policies. Reference [17] found that while paternity leave did not significantly reduce maternal postpartum depression,

increased paternal involvement in childcare was beneficial. Reference [19] observed that paternity leave positively influenced employee satisfaction and commitment in Kenya, recommending its broader adoption. Reference [20] examined the New Labour Laws in Tanzania, finding that paternity leave was introduced but often misunderstood and improperly implemented due to a lack of awareness of the new laws.

#### ➤ *Study Leave*

This is a period of time agreed with the employee's line manager when the employee would have paid leave to undertake agreed education, training and development activities [43]. Study leave can be paid or unpaid leave it depend on the organization policy [45]. The leave should support the individual but also the organization strategic aims [46]. Study leave enables workers to dedicate more time to training without losing their jobs and income[47].

#### ➤ *Compassionate Leave*

Similar to bereavement leave, this extends support to employees dealing with family crises or traumatic events beyond death. This type of leave recognizes the need for flexibility during challenging personal circumstances, such as the serious illness of a family member. This leave allows employees to navigate unexpected family emergencies while maintaining job security and emotional stability [46]. It also enables an employee to balance caregiving responsibilities with work commitments [47]. The organizational support during this leave not only minimizes absenteeism and turnover but also fosters a resilient workforce capable of managing personal crises effectively [48] By providing compassionate leave, organizations demonstrate their commitment to employee well-being and enhance overall workplace satisfaction.

#### ➤ *Bereavement Leave*

This is a critical aspect of employee welfare policies, offering essential support during circumstances of familial loss. It provides employees with the necessary time off to manage practical arrangements and emotional needs following the death of a close family member. The research underscores the importance of such policies in mitigating the impact of grief on workplace performance and employee well-being. Bereavement can lead to significant emotional distress, affecting an individual's ability to focus and engage at work [49]. further emphasize that employees facing bereavement often require time away from work to attend funerals, console family members, and process their grief. [50] Effective bereavement leave policies not only acknowledge the personal and emotional toll of loss but also contribute to organizational

morale and employee loyalty by demonstrating empathy and support. [51]

Previous studies across various countries have highlighted that annual leave is often deprioritized by both employers and employees, as seen in Australia [9], Lithuania [2], and the United States [10]. Similarly, while paid sick leave is crucial for employee well-being, some workers lack adequate access [11][12]. In terms of maternity leave, practices are inadequate in the US and Europe, with women often receiving insufficient support [7][13][14][15]. Despite the recognized importance of paternity leave, men frequently do not utilize it [16] [17]. These studies collectively indicate that leave practices vary significantly worldwide and suggest a gap in understanding specific challenges and opportunities in Tanzania. This study aims to analyze the impact of leave practices on employee well-being and organizational performance in Morogoro Municipality, assess compliance with Tanzanian Labour Laws, and propose improvements to enhance leave management at the municipal level.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The methodologies that were used for both data collection and data analysis, the study used a mixed research approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied. the quantitative approach enabled the researcher to obtain and handle the numerical data that the qualitative approach did not yield. Therefore, the quantitative approach involved statistical procedures related to the objectives of the study. A self-administered questionnaire and Interview guide questions were used to collect primary data. Secondary data was obtained through document review as Standing Order, Leave Rosters and ELRA. Then, the data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the benefits of taking and the disadvantages of not taking different leaves according to the TLLR as follows.

#### A. *The Benefits of taking Different leaves according to the Tanzania Labour Laws and Regulations*

One of the questions required the respondents to identify the benefits of taking leave according to the TLLR. All the respondents responded to the question, and the findings were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 The Benefits of taking Different leaves according to TLLR (n=200)

Responses	Frequency	Percent
It promotes a healthy work-life balance, reducing burnout and stress among employees	190	95
It ensures employees retention through job satisfaction and increase of employee's morale	165	82.5
It allows employees to take time off to boost productivity when they return to work	175	87.5
Leave practices support employees' physical and mental health	184	92
It enhances the organization to avoid potential legal consequences and penalties	148	74
Leave practices fosters a sense of loyalty and commitment among employees as they feel supported by their organization	142	71

It boosts employees financially	138	69
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Source: Field data (2024)

The data from Table 1 highlight the significant benefits of taking leave, as perceived by the majority of respondents. The findings underscore the importance of leave for both employees and the organization. Here is a detailed discussion of the data:

➤ *Promoting a Healthy Work-Life Balance*

Table I indicates that the extreme majority of the respondents (95%) believe that leave promotes a healthy work-life balance, reducing burnout and stress. This implies that employees value leaving work to recharge and spend quality time with family and friends, which is essential for overall well-being. The findings align with reference [21], who advocate for prioritizing leave to help employees balance professional and personal lives. Sick leave is essential for recovery from illness and public health, and it prevents disease spread [22]. Organizational culture plays a crucial role in leave utilization; reference [23] noted that a culture of presenteeism discourages leave-taking, while a supportive culture fosters it. Reference [14] highlights that parental leave supports work-family balance, enhances child development, and promotes gender equality by allowing fathers to engage in child-rearing and facilitating mothers' return to work [24].

➤ *Supporting Physical and Mental Health*

The findings by the extreme majority of the respondents 92% also revealed that taking leave supports their physical and mental health, and how utilizing time off benefits overall well-being by decreasing stress-related illnesses and mental exhaustion. Reference [25] agrees with this perspective, emphasizing that encouraging employees to use their vacation time can lower instances of sickness-related absences and cultivate a more vigorous work atmosphere. Likewise, reference [26] claims that taking time off work is crucial for employees to relax and rejuvenate. Reference [27] also found that individuals who take leaves for vacations have decreased chances of developing heart disease and overall death rates. Thus, introducing policies for mental health leave can also decrease the stigma related to mental.

➤ *Boosting Productivity*

Also, the other extreme majority of the respondents (87.5%) believe that leave boosts productivity when they return to work. This indicates that employers should consider time off as a way to invest in the health and happiness of their workers. Reference [25] agrees with this perspective, emphasizing that encouraging employees to use their vacation time can lower instances of sickness-related absences and cultivate a more vigorous work atmosphere. Likewise, reference [26] claims that taking time off work is crucial for employees to relax and rejuvenate, with studies showing that regular vacations are connected to decreased stress, decreased burnout risk, and enhanced overall organizational productivity.

➤ *Ensuring Employee Retention and Morale*

The other extreme majority (82.5%) also said leaves can ensure employee retention through job satisfaction and

increased morale. This is supported by reference [28] who found that employees who feel their work-life balance is respected are more likely to stay with their employer. This implies that to retain the workforce, organizations should prioritize leave policies that contribute to job satisfaction and morale. High retention rates reduce the costs associated with hiring and training new employees.

➤ *Avoiding Legal Consequences*

The findings by 74% of the respondents also believe that adhering to leave policies helps the organization avoid potential legal consequences and penalties. Reference [20] is also of the view that strict adherence to leave policies and labour laws protects the organization from legal issues. This implies that supervisors should not inhibit their employees from taking leave to prevent their organizations from legal consequences.

➤ *Fostering Loyalty and Commitment*

Table 1 also shows that 71% of the respondents were of the view that leave fosters a sense of loyalty and commitment among employees as they feel supported by their organization. Reference [9] notes that when employees feel their well-being is prioritized, their loyalty increases. Similarly, reference [29] argues that actively supporting employees' leave needs fosters loyalty and commitment, leading to a more dedicated and engaged workforce. Having generous leave policies helps organizations by decreasing turnover and absenteeism [30]. Moreover, providing extensive leave perks improves a company's standing as a preferred employer, drawing in high-quality candidates and cultivating a favourable reputation, benefiting both recruitment and employee retention [31].

➤ *Boosting Employees Financially*

According to the other 69% of the respondents, leave is also perceived to have financial benefits for employees. The findings are in line with the study by reference [3] found that, in California, before and after paid family leave was implemented confirmed that for the average firm, wage costs had not increased and turnover rates had decreased. The study adds that paid leave ensures that employees do not face financial hardship while taking necessary breaks. The findings imply that providing paid leave can alleviate financial stress for employees, making them more likely to take their entitled leave and return to work more motivated.

➤ *The Findings from the Interviews*

Through interviews, the researcher asked the Human Resources Officer and heads of departments to identify the benefits of taking different leaves according to the Tanzania Labour Laws. The findings from the interviews were almost similar to those obtained through questionnaires. All the respondents said that taking different leaves increases the efficiency and effectiveness of their work, promotes teamwork, and increases morale, productivity and good service delivery. Additionally, it helps employees to get along with their family issues (to connect socially); it gives



employees room to engage in various economic activities eg agriculture, business, part-time jobs and small entrepreneurship. It also provides time to relax and rejuvenate energy, and it could boost teachers financially if the leave entitlements could be given priority. These findings concur with reference [32] that in organizations where various forms of leave are provided, satisfaction and improved performance are realized.

#### *B. The Disadvantages of not taking Different leaves according to the Tanzania Labour Laws and Regulations*

The respondents were also required to identify the disadvantages of not taking leave. The findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Employees' Responses on the Disadvantages of not taking leaves (n=200)

Responses	Frequency	Percent
It makes employees feel overworked and overwhelmed and it leads to stress	188	94.0
It decreases morale and commitment within the organization	189	94.5
It may lead to a higher rate of absenteeism because some employees may still need time off for personal or family reasons	166	83.0
It hinders the health and safety of employees as they will lack time to recover from illness	174	87.0
It leads to decreased efficiency, errors, and delays in service provision in the organization	173	86.5
It leads to family problems	50	25

Source: Field data (2024)

The data from Table 2 provide a clear picture of the negative consequences associated with failing to practice leave as per Tanzania Labour Laws and Regulations. The findings from the respondents indicate a strong awareness of these negative impacts, highlighting the importance of adhering to proper leave practices. Here is a detailed discussion of the data:

#### ➤ *Feeling Overworked and Overwhelmed*

The extreme majority (94%) proved that employees feel overworked and overwhelmed when they do not take their entitled leave. This emphasizes the important function of taking time off to sustain a manageable work burden and avoid burnout. The results support reference [33] claim that if employees are overworked and stressed, he or she make more mistakes, lack creativity, and have lower motivation levels. Hence, companies need to make sure that their employees use their allotted time off to prevent feelings of being overwhelmed by work.

#### ➤ *Leading to Stress*

The same percentage (94%) indicates that not taking leave increases stress levels. Continuous work without adequate breaks can result in significant mental health issues. Reference [3] supports this suggesting that failure to take leave can severely disrupt personal life, leading to heightened stress. Thus, employers should recognize the importance of leave in reducing stress and promoting mental health. Stress management should be a key component of workplace health programs. This is also supported by reference [34] that employees who do not take vacation leave experience higher stress levels and are more susceptible to burnout.

#### ➤ *Decreasing Morale and Commitment*

A slightly higher percentage (94.5%) reported that failing to take leave decreases morale and commitment among employees. Reference [35] supports this by stressing that when employees do not get their deserved time off, their enthusiasm and dedication to work can diminish. This means

that to maintain high morale and commitment to better performance, organizations must ensure employees are taking their leaves.

#### ➤ *Leading to a Higher Rate of Absenteeism*

Also, a significant proportion (83%) believe that not taking leave can lead to a higher rate of absenteeism. Reference [36] suggests that employees might still need time off for personal or family reasons, which can result in unscheduled absences. They add that granting regular leave can help reduce unexpected absenteeism, allowing for better planning and productivity. This ensures that employees have the necessary time off without resorting to unplanned absences.

#### ➤ *Hindering Health and Safety*

The majority of the respondents (87%) responded that not taking leaves hinders the health and safety of employees as they will lack time to recover from illness. The results support the reference [37] claim that ongoing work without pauses can worsen health issues. This could result in lower productivity, more frequent absences, and increased healthcare expenses [27]. This could result in extended sickness, higher healthcare expenses, and serious long-lasting health problems [38]. Failure to take sick leave can contribute to the transmission of illnesses at work, impacting both the efficiency of the organization and the health of the community [22].

#### ➤ *Decreasing Efficiency, Errors, and Delays*

A substantial percentage (86.5%) also indicated that not taking leave leads to decreased efficiency, more errors, and delays in service provision. Similarly, reference [39] suggests that overworked employees are more prone to mistakes and inefficiency. Thus, a rested employee is more productive and accurate in their work. Reference [40] also explains that not taking vacation leave can result in diminished job performance. Also, employees working in suboptimal conditions are less efficient, less creative, and more prone to

errors. The economic costs associated with presenteeism, such as increased healthcare expenses and decreased productivity, can be substantial [41].

#### ➤ Family Problems

Also, 25% of the respondents revealed that failure to take leave leads to family problems due to lack of care and irresponsibility. For instance, the absence of parental leave can impair child development. Studies have found that parental involvement during early childhood is crucial for emotional, cognitive, and social development [14]. Not taking parental leave can increase work-family conflict, leading to stress and reduced life satisfaction for parents which can affect job performance and overall well-being [42].

### V. CONCLUSION

The findings on the impact of effective leave practices on employee well-being in Morogoro Municipality are consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory [8]. Both hygiene factors, such as adherence to legal leave policies, and motivators, such as the personal and professional benefits of taking leave, significantly contribute to the well-being of employees and the success of organizations within the municipality. Achieving effective leave practices requires the collective effort of employees, employers, supervisors, and policymakers, leading to improved work-life balance, better health, increased productivity, reduced turnover, and minimized legal risks. Neglecting leave can result in low morale, higher absenteeism, and elevated stress levels, making it imperative for organizations to aggressively implement and support comprehensive leave policies. Ultimately, fostering a culture that values and encourages the full utilization of leave entitlements is essential for achieving effective leave practices.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, it is recommended that employers implement adaptable leave policies, such as mental health breaks, caregiver leave, and flexible work schedules, to help employees balance personal obligations and maintain their health and efficiency. Promoting a culture, where taking time off is encouraged, with managers leading by example and emphasizing the importance of rest and recovery, can reduce the stigma around leave and enhance overall well-being and productivity. Additionally, health and wellness initiatives, including stress management workshops, can further support a workplace environment that values employee well-being, empowering employees to prioritize personal care and recovery.

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