

Assessment of Various Challenges Facing Zanzibar Revenue Board and its Effect on Employee Engagement

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Abstract

The study assessed the challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board and its effect on employee engagement. The study attempted to explore the challenges facing the Zanzibar revenue board and how it affects the employees' engagement.

The study employed a survey design by questionnaire and interview to collect data from 50 employees of Zanzibar revenue board sampled from 138 workers as per Zanzibar revenue board employee register book by 2022. Non probability sampling method by convenient technique was used to prepare the sample of 50 respondents because the nature of the respondents' work does not allow them to stay in office thus to save time the respondent interviewed workers who fitted within the convenience of the researchers schedule as advised by Glaswell, (2017) Data used in this study were collected through questionnaires and interview methods aimed at cross validating data sets from the two instruments so as to increase its accuracy as proposed by Glaswell,(2017). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and its finding presented in the form of figures and descriptive. The analysis simultaneously focused on the data collected by questionnaires and interviews. The study findings indicated that, the challenges facing the Zanzibar revenue board includes Lack clarity on job related goals, inability in translating feedback into actionable insights, inability to **measure relevant feedback**, **Lack of** creation of an effective mix of data based strategies, and terrible Work Life Balance. The study also found that the challenges have notable effects on employees' engagement however the nature of the effect varies from one challenge to the other.

Keywords: Zanzibar revenue board • Challenges and employee engagement

Introduction

Engagement referred to a situation where employees have such state that of understanding the goals of the organizations, perceiving of being important to them and within the reach and finally be willing to put extra effort and expertise in adding significant value to the achievement of organization goals. Employee engagement is the function of head, heart and hands; that is employee understands what is supposed to be done, his/her heart is ready such willingness and his hands is ready to do the actual job (Melcrum, 2015). Engaged employees are inspired to go above and beyond the call of duty to help meet business goals. An engaged employee understands what he or she must do to add value to the organization, has a sense of pride, feels connected to the company mission and is willing to put those thoughts and feelings-discretionary effort into action. 21st Century is the peak of great revolution that has ever been experienced by human being since the creation of the world. Advancement of ICT has changed the world, nations, organizations and people at large. The world has become small village such that factors of production are very mobile; employees know their rights than ever, employees reason how their contributions to their organization define their existence and destiny.

Current organizations need employees, who are psychologically connected

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to their work; who are willing and able to invest themselves fully in their roles; who are proactive and committed to high quality performance standards. They need employees who are engaged with their work (Bakker & Leiter, 2014). At workplaces, the situation is even more challenging as it is very time where there is coexistence of three generations at workplaces; baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Y or Millennial (born between 1980 and 2000). Besides, it is the era where organizations experience a considerable demographic shift of great number of baby Boomers who are statutorily exiting the organization (Smola and Sutton, 2012). Generation Y is predicted to be larger at the workplace than its Boomer parents (Robins & Coulter, 2015). Stirred by the advancement of ICT, the generation Y is likely to greatly impact organizations and managers.

These three generations have different needs, attitude towards organizations, jobs and themselves. Hence, to get the best out of the mixture organizations should strive to provide the atmosphere where each individual employee understands the mission and vision of the organizations, his or her role towards achieving such goals, and how their contribution is recognized and appreciated. To get the best out of the working population mix, organizations have to consciously strive to engage their employees. Engaged employees are fully involved, committed and passionate about their work and success of their organizations. In an organization where there is no discretionary effort to creating an environment where employees are fully engaged there is a danger of lowering productivity caused by not engaged and disengaged employees and those who have intention to leave. An intention to leave an organization is very costly in two ways; first cost for payment of salaries and benefits to employees who are not performing, but dreaming and utilizing organizational resources in searching for alternative employer; second, cost of recruitment when such employee leaves the organizations. For the purpose of the study, the researcher is going to establish the impact of employees engagement on business performance in Zanzibar; a case of Zanzibar revenue board.

Literature Review

Perspectives of employee engagement

Recently, employee engagement has emerged as a new phenomenon in performance the performance world. Organizations are very eager to have employees who not only that they comply and fulfill their daily schedules and assignments, but also who are creative, attached to the organizations, and who can walk extra mile- contributing significantly to the organization success. The fact here is, engaged employees are more productive, contented with their jobs, portray and protect company reputation, likely to stay more in the organization, just to mention a few.

There is no universally agreed definition of employee engagement to academicians and Management and Human Resource consultants and psychologists/human behaviorists. The reasons are, as it stands, employee engagement is the combination of a number of strategies of organization to ensure that employees are committed to the organization corporate goals and values and are willing to positively contribute to the organization success while fulfilling their personal goals. When speaking of employee engagement, you can never omit to cite the work of William Kahn. Kahn (1990) uses the term "personal engagement and "personal disengagement" to produce a concept of employee engagement at work places. That is, while the former defines attitudes and effort by employees towards their roles in the organizations, the latter explain the extent of disconnection of employees towards their roles and their organizations. Kahn (1990) explains that, if employees identify with the work they do, they will be engaged; but if they do not they will disengage.

Impacts of employee engagement

Engaged employees care about the wellbeing and success of the organization and are willing to discretionary contribute significantly to its success. Such strong passion and connection lead to higher levels of retention, higher productivity levels and low absenteeism. Benefits of employee engagement include the following: Employees who feel more engaged are likely to become more productive than their counterpart (Bates, 2004). They are not only likely to "work smarter" as in looking for areas of improvement with little supervision, but also they are more likely to be compatible with colleagues in teams and management for the overall benefit of the organization. And hence increased operational performance and higher profit Also, engaged employees are more likely to stay with an organization on a long term basis, hence, saving the business of the large costs associated to frequent recruitment, development and replacement (Towers Perrin, 2002). Though, employee retention should not be relied as the sole indicator for employee engagement since some people stay in jobs they dislike or feel unengaged by simple as a lack of other options. In addition, engaged employees strive to improve customer service and customer satisfaction (Fleming, F., Coffman, C, & Harter, J, 2005). Happy employees are understandable, like their job and hence impact their customers immediately and significantly. On top of that, engaged employees are the reasons for the organization's survival. They are creative; produce quality products and hence creating an appealing organization's reputation (Baumruk 2004). They generally tend to make better atmosphere which is a paramount for achieving organizational goals and meet strategic objectives.

Other benefits (KPMG, 2011) of employee engagement include; Engaged employees are tougher ambassadors who recommend the organization products and services; Low recruitment costs due to the higher retention rate; Make the organization to have strong people brand which attracts superior quality candidates and reduce recruitment costs; Engaged employees are very committed and often go extra mile to deliver outstanding services and products for the benefit of the organization.

Empirical literature

The study conducted by May, Gilson, & Harter (2004) concluded that drivers of employee engagement were rewarding co-worker and supporting line manager relationship, job enrichment and fit, and availability of tools and financial resources. To be engaged, employees should have a feeling of being secured from all kinds of employment threats like harsh supervisor, leadership

should be that of supportive and visionary as well job content should be enriched one, challenging with connection to the organization success.

Again, Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter (2001) found that significant driver of employee engagement was a workplace surrounded with social and emotional support from line managers and top leaders. Lack of such of support of immediate supervisors, top management, rewards and recognition, fairness and justice were directly linked to employee burnout which is a sign of disengaged employees (Saks, 2006). Other revealed factors for employee engagement were work distribution and autonomy, job content and rewarding system.

On their Talent Report, Towers Perrin (2004) discovered that feelings of employees that their organizations care and support them were top drivers of employee engagement. They affirm that an emotion that an employee is engaged has great influence on employee retention. According to Bates (2004), it is not how much employees receive extrinsic rewards such as pay and incentive that matter their engagement but how much they feel. On the research on the Impact of Leadership on Employee Engagement, Rossato (2008) found leadership to be the key driver of employee engagement. Relationship between employees and their leader has significant value in creating level of engagement. Therefore, there is close relationship between leadership behavior and employee engagement.

Heikkeri (2010) findings revealed that employee disengagement is contributed by poor management and leadership, lack of psychological meaningfulness of work, lack of psychological safety at work. It was also found that level of engagement influences employee behavior in the workplaces and the success of the business. She revealed a distortion of health, low morale, poor performance, poor customer care, diminishing creativity and innovation, and intention to quit being the uppermost signs of employee disengagement.

On his research, Knight (2011) found the main three drivers of employee engagement to be better rewards, job rotation and enrichment, opportunity for growth and upward mobility within the organization. He concluded that, when organization addresses the mentioned factors, it will reduce the intention to quit of its potential employees.

In a survey of over 7500 individuals and interview with line managers, BlessingWhite (2008) found that quarter of Generation Y employees are worldwide disengaged with excluding India, where the lever of engagement across the generations is higher than other regions. This implies that the older the employee the higher they are engaged (Blessing White, 2008) Employees who were born from 1980 were least engaged, while baby boomers are more likely to feel engaged as a result of expectation to hold power and positions.

Joseph, et al (2014), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Tanzania, studied Health Worker engagement by exploring the relationship between engagement and performance. The study revealed that more engaged workers perform better and are more productive in health and other sectors.

Conceptual framework analysis

Conceptual framework can be defined as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant field of inquiry and used to guide subsequent presentation (Smyth 2004). Furthermore, conceptual framework is about research tools intended to assist a researcher to develop understanding of the situation under study and to communicate it. When evidently set, it has potential usefulness as a tool to assist a researcher to make meaning of research phenomenon (Bergh, 2009). thus, the study is governed by the following conceptual framework (Figure 1)

Research question

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the challenges affecting Zanzibar Revenue Board performance?
- ii. What is the effect of various challenges facing the performance of Zanzibar revenue board affect employee's engagement?

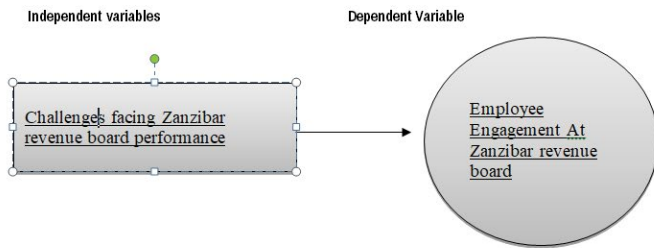


Figure 1. Conceptual framework (Source: Developed by researcher (2020)).

Methodology

The study employed a survey design by questionnaire and interview to collect data from 50 employees of Zanzibar revenue board sampled from 138 workers as per Zanzibar revenue board employee register book by 2022. Non probability sampling method by convenient technique was used to prepare the sample of 50 respondents because the nature of the respondents' work does not allow them to stay in office thus to save time the respondent interviewed workers who fitted within the convenience of the researchers schedule as advised by Glaswell, (2017) Data used in this study were collected through questionnaires and interview methods aimed at cross validating data sets from the two instruments so as to increase its accuracy as proposed by Glaswell,(2017). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and its finding presented in the form of figures and descriptive. The analysis simultaneously focused on the data collected by questionnaires and interviews.

Facts findings, analysis and discussion

Challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board towards employee engagement: This was the research objective of the study; the goal was to find out challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board and how it affects employee engagement. To achieve this, relevant data were collected all the way through interview and questionnaires from the sampled population. The task was to two questions which are (1) answers to the following research inquiry "What are the challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board performance? And (2) What is the effect of challenges facing the Zanzibar revenue board performance affect employees' engagement? towards employee engagement? Respondents were requested to indicate on questionnaires challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board towards employee engagement their responses are summarized in Figure below (Figure 2)

Data in the figure above shows that, 10% of the total respondents mentioned employees Lack Clarity about SMART Objectives as one of the challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board towards employee engagement, 8% mentioned translating feedback into actionable insights, 8% again mentioned **measure relevant feedback**, 25% mentioned creating an effective mix of data based strategies, 25% mentioned powering up the on boarding process with engagement and people analytics. But again 25% of the total respondents mentioned terrible Work Life Balance as the challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board towards employee engagement. In the same way, during interview the following were reported.

In this regard, employee disengagement is contributed by poor management and leadership, lack of psychological meaningfulness of work, lack of psychological safety at work. In due regard, disengagement de motivate employee behavior in the workplaces and the success of the business.

Therefore, the challenges noted by the respondents includes Lack Clarity about SMART Objectives, translating feedback into actionable insights, **measure relevant feedback**, creating an effective mix of data based strategies, powering up the on boarding process with engagement and people analytics and terrible Work Life Balance the study findings are supported by Rossato (2008) who found leadership to be the key driver of employee engagement. Relationship between employees and their leader has significant value in creating level of engagement. Therefore, there is close relationship between leadership behavior and employee engagement.

Employee engagement level

According to Carnegie (2012), a fully engaged employee is enthusiastic about his or her work and feels completely involved. He or she will go the extra mile to ensure customer satisfaction, spread enthusiasm and ensure that his team is successful. On the other hand, the partially engaged employee does the minimum to get by, concentrates on the job at hand and adds little extra value. The disengaged employee demonstrates negativity at work and undermines the accomplishments of others, potentially creating a toxic atmosphere in the workplace. Because engaged employees feel personally connected to the organization, they are more productive and less likely to leave their job. Fully engaged employees are a top priority.

Pech and Slade (2006) argued that disengaged employees are those who have mentally quit the organization but stay on while their energies are unavailable to the organization, while engaged employees are fully committed to the organization and work to the best of their ability. Disengaged employees can show up for work each day and use minimum effort just to get by. This means that they are physically present but not engaged cognitively. A person who fails to fully engage and is disconnecting from his/her role is displaying personal disengagement, something which Kahn (1990) describes as the unemployment of the self. When this occurs, it can be a source of concern for employers as symptoms of disengagement and can be very damaging for the performance of the organization such as increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, less commitment towards the organization and reduced customer focus. Simon (2012) in essence says that employee disengagement is the polar opposite to employee engagement and is something which can have a damaging effect on the business.

It ultimately means that an organization's most valuable resource is its employees are not performing to their full potential, with disengagement being the central problem of the worker's lack of commitment and motivation. The ultimate act of disengagement is for an employee to quit the organization, something which leads to the key talents being lost and is both costly and time consuming to replace. Therefore, data obtained through questionnaires are summarized in the figure below (Figure 3)

The study found that 4(10%) of respondent respond that the engagement level of employees in the study area fell under "medium" level, 4(10%) reported that the engagement level was "high", 20(50%) reported the engagement level was "low", 2(5%) reported engagement level was "very high" and 10(25%) reported engagement level to be "very low", as shown in the figure above. During data collection in the field, the researcher observed that many employees were not in their workplaces and some of them were just sitting idle outside their work stations. When the researcher held an interview with one of the respondent said that:

You cannot find all the employees here because if someone stays here from morning to evening what shall we eat? We are doing a very tough work but the salary is too small to fulfill our needs. Therefore if you get a chance, you go out to find other means of earning income.

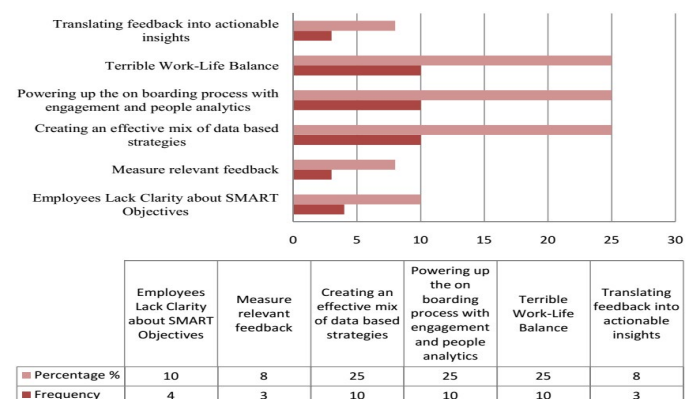


Figure 2. Challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board towards employee engagement (Source: Field data (2020)).

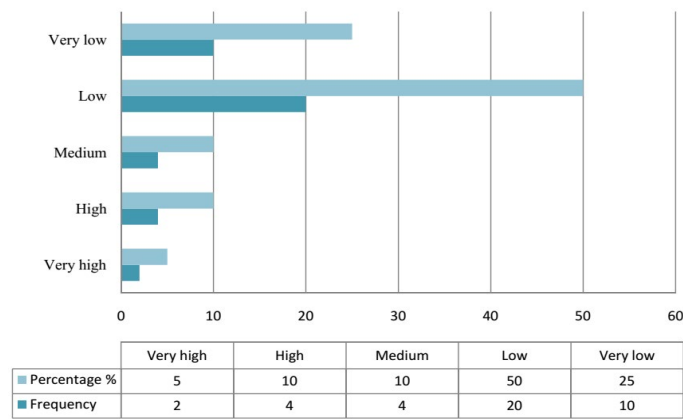


Figure 3. Employee engagement level (Source: Field data (2020)).

In conclusion the study revealed that some of the employees in the study area are not highly engaged. They are moderately engaged and this level of engagement has been caused by different factors which have been revealed on how the organization practices the dimensions of the employee engagement which cause the employees not performing to their full potential.

Provision of feedback to employee about their work progress

Ashford and Cummings (1983) define feedback as information about one’s task performance or behavior as perceived and evaluated by others or oneself. Feedback is a critical management practice that supports empowerment. It is used by management for the following purposes. Aids employees in improving weak performance, helps to highlight employees’ weaknesses, highlights employees’ strengths and abilities and provides an encouragement tool. It is also important for managers to collect their employees’ feedback, because a two way communications will increase the opportunity for employees’ involvement. Williams (2008) suggest that, although numerous studies cite communication as a critical component of employee engagement, the fact is that literature on the effects of feedback delivery on employee engagement is limited.

Feedback research has been historically connected to the Goal Setting Theory, in which positive behaviors are attained by developing goals and improved through the use of feedback. In due regard, data obtained through questionnaires are summarized in the figure below (Figure 4)

The results on the figure above show that (25%) of respondents “Disagreed,” (5%) “Agreed,” (10%) were “Neutral” they did not say if they are given feedback or not, (50%) “Strongly Disagreed”, (10%) “Strongly Agree”. During an interview held with one of the respondents concerning the feedback mechanism in their working place, she said that:

Feedback is the information we all need to be truly effective in the workplace, whether positive or negative feedback. But I see that things are going differently because most of the employees lack feedback, especially those who are in the lower cadre. We can stay even a year without meeting with our supervisors something which causes the employee to become unaware of how things are going on in the organization; we cannot even know how we perform our work.

The interpretation of these data shows that feedback is not given to the employees to a large extent and this may lead to employee disengagement. Due to the importance of feedback, the study concludes that if employees continue to work without any feedback, concerned their work it will decrease the employees morale. The management therefore should take initiatives in providing employees with feedback. This view is in line with Holzer, *et al.* (2001) who suggest that feedback information influences employees satisfaction at the place of work, thereby motivating them to continue working, thus becoming engaged.

Employee clarity about the organization objectives to be achieved

Powell (2015) is of the view that one of the biggest challenges to employee engagement is the lack of clarity from company leaders about an organization’s goals and purposes. Without that clarity, employees at all levels will find it difficult to align their goals and vision, with that of the organization. Employees then get frustrated, their engagement drops, and they do not know how to work effectively and re-engage. Moreover, Weber and Weber (2001) explain that goal clarity is the degree to which employees understand an organization’s goals and the means for achieving those goals precisely, because people are goal-oriented and they are driven by their sense of purpose, desire, and value. Data obtained through questionnaires are summarized in the figure below (Figure 5)

Research on the figure above revealed that, (25%) of respondents “Strongly Disagreed” followed by (50%) who “Disagreed,” (5%) were “Neutral” (10%) “Strongly Agreed” and (10%) “Agreed” During an interview with one of the respondents concerning their participation in setting the organization objectives and his awareness about the objectives of the organization, mission and vision, this is how he responded:

I am now having 9 years experience in my work. But I have never been participating in setting any organization’s goal or objectives concerning my department. Also I am not aware if there are any other objectives which I am supposed to meet concerned my profession.

These findings indicate that the employees are not clear with the organization’s objective. This is caused by management failure to explain the goals or mission and vision of the organization. This may lead to disengagement of employees because a large percent of employees are not clear with what they are supposed to achieve. Locke and Latham, (1994) support this by arguing that Commitment to the goal or goal intensity can be enhanced when people believe that achieving the goal is possible and that achieving the goal is important. Conclusively employee should be made clear with the organization goal or mission and vision to help them know what the organization want from them [1-14].

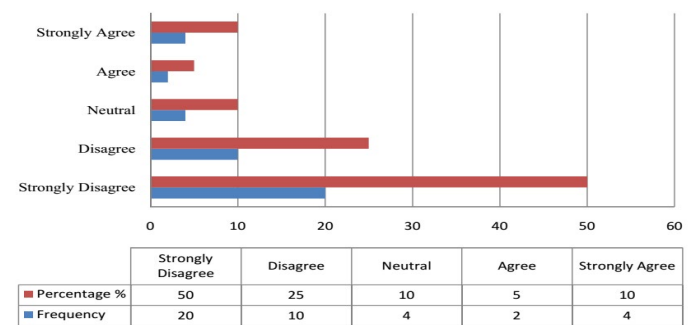


Figure 4. Provisions of feedbacks to employee about their work progress (Source: Field data (2020)).

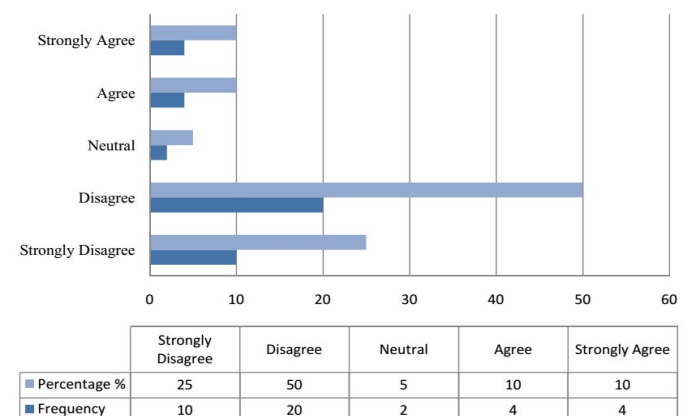


Figure 5. Employee clarity about the organization objectives to be achieved (Source: Field data (2020)).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, two conclusions can be drawn.

First: This study concludes that there are various challenges affecting the Zanzibar revenue board performance ranging from lack of feedback to the employees on their performance appraisal, limited clarity on work related goals, lack of transparency on issues related with employee's welfare, lack of balance between employees life expectation and what is remunerated, unstructured performance appraisals, lack of empowerment to employees' and weak capacity of the employees to translate performance feedbacks into actions.

Second: This study concludes that, challenges facing Zanzibar revenue board performance affect the employees' engagement significantly. However the nature of the effect differs from one challenge to the other. The findings obtained from this study suggests that lack of clarity in work related goals and lack of timely performance appraisal feedbacks have the highest effect on employee's engagement whereas balance between employees expectation and remuneration has the least effect on employees' engagement.

Recommendations

Management should communicate the concept of worker's engagement to all employees to ensure workers work to achieve individual objectives and organizational objectives parallel by illustrating how individual tasks are aligned with organizational goals and make workers feel as part of organization's successes.

The Government, through policy making bodies, should formulate policies and issue circulars which will demand every organization, especially public institution to have an employee engagement strategy and focus more on employee engagement as a key driver of the organization's productivity

The Management should focus on the involvement of staff which will motivate them to develop themselves within the organization and be aware of what is going on in the organization especially in areas that touch them directly this in one way or another, will bring positive effects to employees and the organization as whole and in turn will maintain and improve the engagement levels.

Areas Further Research

The practice of the employee engagement dimensions would be a matter for further research for the purpose of providing deeper understanding into practices of dimension of employee engagement in different organizations both public and private. Moreover, comparative study can be done to private

and public organization in Tanzania and other countries to find out more factors for employee engagement.

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