



The Influence of Industrial and Organizational Psychology Practices on Organizational Performance in Tanzanian Public Sector Workplaces: A Case of Higher Learning Institutions in Dodoma, Tanzania

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Abstract: *Despite the evidence-based nature of solutions in industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology, its application in the context of Tanzanian public sector higher learning institutions (HLIs) has not been explored extensively. Content analysis, a qualitative method was used for this study to analyse the impact of I-O psychology practices on the performance of organizations in the higher learning institutions in Dodoma, Tanzania. Strategic plans, human resource policies, staff development guidelines, quality assurance reports, annual reports, public sector reform documents have all been systematically analyzed in official documents. Seven themes were identified in the analysis: employee assessment and placement, training and staff development, well-being and counselling in the workplace, employee engagement and motivation, leadership development and organisational culture, performance management and organisational change management. The findings show that there are inconsistent responses in institutional documents regarding the practice of I-O psychology and administration compliance is highly emphasised, while other psychological aspects, like psychometric assessment, employee assistance programmes, engagement surveys and change readiness are not as emphasised. Documented practices are seen to have positive impacts on performance through increased staff competency, decreased turnover, increased motivation, and effective change implementation; however, there are debates about cultural appropriateness of tools that have been imported, ethical issues around confidentiality, and lack of professional recognition of I-O psychologists. There are opportunities to institutionalizing the workplace psychology as a strategic performance function. The study offers practical suggestions for policy makers, institutional leaders and human resource practitioners interested in enhancing the performance of public sector higher education institutions using evidence-based psychological practices.*

Keywords: *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, organizational performance, public sector workplaces, higher learning institutions*

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1. Introduction

Industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology is a scientific field that examines human behavior within the context of work and utilizes psychological principles to enhance employee performance, well-being and

organizational effectiveness (Rogelberg, 2022; Spector, 2021). In the past 100 years, I-O psychology has made significant contributions to aspects of workplace practice such as job analysis, competency-based selection, psychometric testing, training needs assessment, performance appraisal systems, leadership development, employee counselling, occupational stress management,

engagement surveys, team building and organisational change management. The nature, motivation, communication, conflict, and adaptation to change in modern workplaces, be it in private or public organizations, requires more than just administrative human resource procedures; it requires psychological understanding of human behavior and how organizational systems can be designed to promote productivity, health and commitment (Landis et al., 2022; Warr & Nielsen, 2020).

The public sector workplaces are especially challenged. They work in bureaucratic systems, to political oversight, limited budgets, high expectations of the public, and sometimes inflexible staff policies. Unfairness in pay, not enough prospects for advancement, and too much work can demoralize employees. A hierarchical decision making process might hinder leadership. Resistance is often encountered when there are changes in the organization, whether it is digital transformation or performance-based budgeting. In this context, I-O psychology provides diagnostic tools to identify work problems, evidence-based tools to design interventions and assessment tools to measure outcomes (Bolden et al., 2020; Pinheiro et al., 2021).

This is the case with the higher education institutions in the public sector in Tanzania. These are knowledge driven organizations, whose operations are heavily reliant on the quality, motivation, wellness and commitment of academic, administrative, technical and managerial personnel. They are not simply schools, but multi-functional work environments that require a balance between the functions of teaching, research, community service and administrative efficiency. The Government's political capital, city of Dodoma, has experienced a rapid growth of several public universities, colleges, and institutes, while simultaneously expecting higher outputs of research, employability of graduates, quality assurance compliance, and institutional reputation (Ishengoma, 2022; Mushi & Luvara, 2021).

In spite of these pressures, however, Tanzanian public sector higher learning institutions are not thoroughly studied in terms of the strategic research applications of I-O psychology. Traditional HR practices are more focused on regulatory compliance than on psychological practices, like person job fit, employee engagement, psychological safety, and so on, change readiness. This paper, therefore, investigates the impact of I-O psychology practice on performance in the public sector in Tanzania with a specific focus on the higher learning institutions in the town of Dodoma, using a qualitative content analysis of the relevant institutional and policy documents.

A thorough review of the literature has identified several gaps in the literature that are filled by this study. There is a conceptual gap as previous researches focus on human resource management, organizational performance, employee motivation, employee's well-being at work,

leadership separately. Relative few studies bring these issues together and directly connect them to organizational performance in higher education settings within the context of I-O psychology practices. Second, there is a contextual gap to be noticed: The bulk of the I-O psychology literature comes from developed economies, corporate organizations, or private sector workplaces. Empirical work on the public sector in Tanzania is lacking and more so in higher learning institutions in the city of Dodoma. This is a challenge since public sector institutions in developing countries have different resource constraints, governance systems and cultural expectations.

Thirdly, there is a methodological deficiency: a lot of existing studies rely on quantitative methods based on surveys for testing hypotheses related to I-O psychology practices. Qualitative content analysis of institutional and policy documents has received little attention in the literature to elucidate the documentation, framing, implementation and relationship of workplace psychology practice to organisational performance. Content analysis can not only highlight practices but also the extent to which practices are prioritized, what contradictions emerge, and how there may be any gaps between policy and practice. Fourth, there is a policy practice gap: while policies for staff development, performance appraisal, quality assurance, counselling, and welfare may exist in higher education institutions, it is unknown how much these policies reflect the principles of I-O psychology such as, evidence-based assessment, psychological safety, engagement drivers, and change readiness. Fifth, a practical gap exists: there is limited evidence regarding the actual application of the practices of I-O psychology in a practical manner that can provide real life solutions that improve staff productivity, staff well-being, staff leadership, institutional culture, service quality and organizational performance in higher learning institutions.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Higher learning institutions in the public sector in Tanzania are under mounting pressure to deliver quality education and teaching, research impact, efficient administration, services to students, improved staff performance, better institutional ranking, innovation and public accountability. There is a need for continued quality assurance by regulatory bodies like the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) and the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) and value for public investment from the stakeholders. However, and despite the above expectations, many institutions still focus on employee performance and organizational effectiveness largely through administrative human resource processes: generic recruitment, episodic training, annual appraisals which are not followed up with development, and reactive welfare responses, rather than on evidence-based psychological and behavioural interventions.

I-O psychology can be very useful in resolving some of the longstanding problems that have been plaguing the workplace such as the lack of effective recruitment and placement, low employee engagement, poor employee motivation systems, employee stress and burnout, inadequate communication, reluctance to change, ineffective performance measurement systems, lack of leadership development and training, unaddressed workplace conflict, and the underutilization of psychological assessment for staff development (Jakobsen, Løkke, & Keppeler (2023); Zahari & Kaliannan (2023); Sumaryono et al. (2025). But these are not widely recognised, consolidated or well institutionalised in public sector higher learning institutions. There are few institutions that have I-O psychologists, and even fewer that have psychology given a place in HR policies, staff development programmes or quality assurance programmes.

In addition, there is evidence of workplace psychology related practices in existing institutional documents (strategic plans, human resource policies, staff development guidelines, annual reports, etc.) but the practices are not studied systematically to understand their contribution to the organisation's performance. The problem is twofold: first, I-O psychology practices are not widely used; second, when they are documented, the effects on performance are not systematically analysed. This study aims at filling in these gaps by using a qualitative content analysis of official documents to investigate the framing, implementation and relationship between I-O psychology practices and organizational performance in higher learning institutions in Dodoma.

1.2 Research Objectives

To investigate the impact of industrial and organizational psychology practices on organizational performance in the public sector workplaces in Tanzania with focus on higher learning institutions in Dodoma, Tanzania. Specific objectives are: (i) to investigate the presence of I-O psychology in institutional documents; (ii) to examine how I-O psychology is manifested in institutional documents; (iii) to analyse how these practices affect organizational performance; (iv) to identify major themes, patterns and policy practice gaps; (v) to uncover controversies and open debates about how I O psychology is applied in the public sector higher education domain; and (vi) to identify opportunities to enhance the application of workplace psychology to improve institutional performance.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study. What can be observed about the industrial and organizational psychology practice in policy and institutional documents of the higher learning institutions in Dodoma? Second, what is the effect of these practices on the performance of organizations as reflected in the

documents in Tanzanian public sector workplaces? Third, what are the key themes in relation to the assessment of employees, training, employee wellbeing, employee motivation, leadership, performance management and change management? Fourth, what controversies, debates and gaps in policy practice are there in using I-O psychology practices? Fifth, what are the opportunities for the application of workplace psychology to enhance the performance of institutions in the real world and the effectiveness of public sector institutions?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Definition and Scope

I-O psychology is a scientific approach to examining human behavioural in the workplace and the use of psychological principles to enhance employee wellbeing and organizational efficiency (Spector, 2021). On the industrial side, personnel are emphasized such as job analysis, recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal, and productivity measurement. The organizational side focuses on social and motivational aspects: leadership, job satisfaction, employee engagement, organizational culture, teamwork, conflict management, and organizational development (Rogelberg, 2022). Both dimensions are applicable in the context of public sector higher learning institutions. Effective selection, development and appraisal of academic staff, motivation and engagement of administrative staff, and leadership, culture change and adaptation of entire institutions.

2.2 I-O Psychology Practices in Public Sector Workplaces

Public sector organisations pose special challenges to the I-O psychologist. Recruitment and reward structures may be inflexible due to bureaucratic structures. Short term performance pressures may be created by political accountability. Training and well being programmes are restricted by limited resources. However, I-O psychology can be of assistance by creating a valid selection process to minimize mismatch, by implementing stress management interventions for the reduction of burnout, and by supporting change management in the context of a change in the organizational system (Bolden et al., 2020; Pinheiro et al., 2021). The Public Sector Reforms in Tanzania have focused on the aspects of performance management, however, the psychological aspects are generally ignored (Kihamba & Ntegwa, 2022; Mchopa et al., 2024).

2.3 Higher Learning Institutions as Complex Workplaces

Higher education institutions are knowledge intensive professional bureaucracy where output is expected to be

based on academic productivity (teaching, research, consultancy), administrative efficiency, provision of quality student support and capacity to attract and retain competent personnel (Ishengoma, 2022). Staff have high cognitive load, emotional with students, publication pressure, and frequently lack support. The competency-based interviewing, leadership development, wellbeing programmes and engagement surveys are direct applications of I-O psychology. Many institutions, however, consider these as appendages, and not essential (Mushi & Luvara, 2021).

2.4 Employee Assessment and Placement

Valid selection procedures that predict job performance such as job analysis, structured interviews, psychometric tests, and work samples (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Sackett et al., 2022). Assessment can be used in higher education to enhance academic staff recruitment and administrative placement. However, many institutions use unstructured interviews and qualification documents, resulting in a person job mismatch. Document analysis can be used to determine if policies are in place in institutions that are congruent with I-O psychology.

2.5 Training and Staff Development

An assessment of training needs, leadership development, coaching, mentoring, and professional development are activities that fall under the scope of the core functions of I-O psychology (Salas et al., 2022). In higher learning institutions, training may enhance teaching competency, research capacity, digital competency and management capacity. Staff development policies may be recorded and show investment in these areas but there may be a mismatch between policy and practice.

2.6 Activities for Workplace Well-Being and Counselling

It is not uncommon for people in academia to suffer from stress, burnout, or mental health issues (Kinman & Wray, 2022). I-O psychologists are responsible for developing EAP, counselling, stress management and work-life balance interventions. Well-being policies and counselling guidelines are well documented and demonstrate institutional commitment. However, low uptake may be as a result of confidentiality issues and stigma.

2.7 Employee Engagement and Motivation

Emotional, cognitive and behavioural involvement in organizational goals predicts performance (Saks & Gruman, 2022). I-O psychology tools include engagement surveys, recognition systems, feedback mechanisms and participative decision making. Such practices may be mentioned in institutional documents, but their actual implementation is a question of facts.

2.8 Leadership Development and Organizational Culture

The effectiveness of leadership and organizational culture influence performance. The ways in which I-O psychology contributes are through leadership competency models, 360-degree feedback, emotional intelligence training, and culture diagnosis (Oreg et al., 2021). In many higher education institutions, there are leadership programmes but their basis is not always psychological.

2.9 Organizational Change Management

In higher education, change is happening everywhere: digital transformation, curriculum change, upgrading of the quality assurance system, restructuring. I-O psychology can aid in change readiness evaluation, communication plans, employee engagement, resistance management, and post change analysis (Oreg et al., 2021). Sophistication is suggested by documented change management protocols.

2.10 Organizational Performance in Higher Learning Institutions

In this study, organizational performance is measured as teaching effectiveness, research productivity, administrative effectiveness, student satisfaction, staff retention, institutional reputation, innovation, and satisfaction of stakeholders. Indicators can be graduation rates, publications of research, accreditation scores, and employee turnover, for example.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

This study is based upon four theories. According to **Human Capital Theory** (Becker, 1964) human resources are assets that increase productivity as a result of the knowledge, skills, competencies, and psychological capacities of the employees. I-O psychology programs and interventions for selection, training, and well-being build human capital, which increases organizational performance. Staff development and competency documentation has a human capital logic.

The Job Demands–Resources Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) suggests that employee well-being and performance are influenced by the interaction between job demands (stressors, workload) and job resources (support, autonomy, feedback, counselling). I-O psychology lowers the harmful demands and enhances the resources. Evidence of this theory is found in documents discussing workload and stress management, and support services.

Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) proposes that if institutions invest in employees, through fair selection, training, employee well-being, and employee recognition of the investments made, then employees will respond with commitment, loyalty, and

discretionary effort. Documents that connect employee support programmes to performance outcomes are based on social exchange principles.

According to Resource Based View (Barney, 1991) Sustained competitive advantage comes from resources that are valuable, rare and hard to imitate. These can be assets when psychological skills, committed workers, good leadership, and a positive working environment are used. This perspective is supported by documents that view I-O as a strategic resource.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The design for this study was qualitative content analysis. Content analysis can be used to systematically analyse written texts for patterns, themes, meanings, policy priorities, institutional practices, controversies, gaps and trends over time (Krippendorff, 2018). It is especially appropriate for the research of documenting, framing, implementing and connecting workplace psychology practices with the outcomes of organizational performance.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in the Higher Learning Institutions in Dodoma, Tanzania. Dodoma is the political capital and there are several public higher education institutions there such as the University of Dodoma (a comprehensive public university), the College of Business Education (Dodoma Campus), the Institute of Rural Development Planning and other public colleges/institutes. This is a rich documentary base given the concentration of the institutions.

3.3 Data Sources

The following types of documents were used as documentary sources: (i) institutional strategic plans (2015-2025); (ii) human resource policies and manuals; (iii) staff development policies and guidelines; (iv) performance appraisal guidelines and forms; (v) quality assurance reports submitted to TCU; (vi) institutional annual reports (2018-2023); (vii) staff welfare and counselling guidelines; (viii) training and leadership development reports; (ix) organizational restructuring documents; (x) public sector reform documents relevant to higher education; and (xi) national higher education policy documents (e.g., Education Sector Development Plan, TCU quality assurance guidelines). Documents were retrieved from institutional websites and from public documents and institutions that allowed for requests.

3.4 Sampling of Documents

Documents were selected using purposive sampling guided by the relevance of the documents to the I-O psychology practices and their relevance to organizational performance. The inclusion criteria were: (a) it was produced by a public higher learning institution in Dodoma or a national regulatory body; (b) it was published during 2015-2024; (c) it mentioned one of the following terms: employee assessment, employee training, employee well-being, employee engagement, employee leadership, employee performance management or employee change management; and (d) it is complete. There were 45 documents in total.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis was carried out based on the steps of qualitative content analysis according to Schreier (2012). Documents were read repeatedly for familiarization for the first time. Second, a coding frame was designed deductively from literature in the field of I-O psychology (coded: employee assessment, training, well-being, engagement, leadership, performance management, change management) and inductively from the documents (emergent codes: “performance-based funding”, “staff counselling confidentiality”, “digital literacy training”). Third, NVivo software was used for coding all the documents. Fourth, codes were sorted into categories and thereafter summarised into key themes. Fifth, themes were discussed in the context of research questions and theory. Sixth, a synthesis was prepared which identified patterns, contradictions and gaps.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Increased credibility was achieved through extended interaction with the documents (three months) and through triangulation of document types (strategic plans, policies, reports). A detailed audit trail of coding decisions was maintained, with this being a factor in strengthening dependability. Confirmability was achieved by the documentation of the development of interpretations from the data. To facilitate transferability, the context of the Tanzanian public sector higher education was described in great detail to allow the reader to evaluate its applicability to other contexts.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As the study was conducted using official and public documents, ethical approval was not considered necessary except for the ethical interpretation and proper citation of the contents. When confidentiality of specific institutional identifiers was desired, as with internal documents, the identifiers were omitted and instead referred to as “a public university in Dodoma”.

4. Results and Discussion

Research Question Analysis

RQ1: How are I-O psychology practices reflected in institutional documents?

There was a discrepancy in the representation of I-O psychology practices in documents. Training needs assessment and professional development were universally mentioned in staff development policies, while few mentioned competency-based training design and training transfer evaluation. Human resource policies used to describe HR recruitment procedures but just two policies referred to psychometric testing or structured behavioural interviews. No guidelines mentioned multi source feedback, calibration or developmental follow up, while annual ratings and meeting timelines were emphasized in performance appraisal. A few counselling guidelines were available in 3 institutions, but they were short and didn't provide any information about confidentiality or counselor qualifications. Mention of employee engagement surveys was only found in one strategic plan. In documents relating to change management, the change process was referred to as top-down communication, and there was little evidence of psychological readiness assessment or resistance management.

RQ2: How do these practices influence organizational performance according to documents?

The relationship between I-O psychology practice and performance was not always clearly documented. Training reports reported better staff competence but fewer reports of measures of the outcomes of teaching quality or research output. In the documents related to performance appraisal, the improvement of the accountability aspect of performance appraisal was mentioned, but no document was found that shows the correlation between the appraisal ratings and the institutional performance indicators. Well-being recommendations have suggested counselling lowers absenteeism, but there was no attainment or impact information. Strategic plans identified engagement and motivation as priorities, but didn't define how it would be assessed or connected to retention or productivity. The strongest documented relationship was between leadership development programmes and succession planning, as several institutions indicated that internal candidates to leadership roles had been trained, thus minimizing leadership gaps.

RQ3: What major themes emerge from the documents?

Seven major themes emerged: (1) employee assessment and placement (focusing on qualifications and experience

rather than psychological fit); (2) training and staff development (with high focus on needs identification, and low focus on evaluation); (3) wellbeing and counselling of employees (acknowledged as part of policy, but not systematically implemented); (4) engagement and motivation (rhetorically valued, but few systematic practices in place); (5) leadership development (highly documented, especially through external programmes); (6) performance management (procedurally documented, psychologically weak); and (7) organisational change management (documented as administrative processes, not psychometrically implemented).

RQ4: What controversies and policy-practice gaps exist?

Some conflicts and uncertainties arose. There is tension between the administrative HR perspectives, which focus on compliance, equity and documentation, and the psychological perspectives, which focus on individual differences and motivation, as well as a focus on behaviour change. Second, psychometric testing is not widely implemented and in some documents concerns are raised about the cultural appropriateness of tests imported from elsewhere. Thirdly, counselling services are underutilized because of the fear of stigma and confidentiality. Fourth, performance appraisal is mostly a compliance exercise, rather than a developmental tool. Fifth, there are no regular engagement surveys within any institution, but there is discussion about employee engagement. Sixth, documents of the change management indicate little evidence of psychological work on the employee resistance. Seventh, I-O psychologists do not have a formal job role; HR officers carry out HR-related tasks but without psychological training.

RQ5: What opportunities exist for real-life impact?

Opportunities identified are: integrating psychometric assessment into selection of key academic and leadership roles; implementing employee assistance programmes with professional counsellors; implementing regular engagement surveys to diagnose drivers of performance; designing leadership development programmes that include emotional intelligence and change management; developing performance appraisal systems that incorporate multi source feedback and development plans; utilizing change readiness assessment prior to major reform; and implementing formal roles for I-O psychologists within HR or organisational development units.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the content analysis it was revealed that the practices of I-O psychology are not consistently observed in the documents of higher education learning institutions in Dodoma city. Training, performance appraisal and

leadership development are given a lot of attention during training, while often they are described from an administrative compliance point of view and not from a psychological, evidence-based perspective. This discovery is in line with previous criticism that public sector HR places more emphasis on procedure than on performance (Mchopa et al., 2024). There is no documentation of psychometric testing, engagement surveys or structured counselling protocols, indicating a disconnect between what I-O psychology is or offers and what institutions currently record.

The human capital theory viewpoint is encouraging in that the focus is on training, but since there is no evaluation of the training, it is difficult to determine whether human capital has been enhanced. The well-being practices reported (counselling policies, stress management statements) may enhance job resources as predicted by Job Demands–Resources Theory, but may be less effective when poorly implemented. If the engagement and recognition practices are not systematic, then employees might not respond with commitment, according to social exchange theory. The Resource Based View suggests that institutions are neglecting to build distinctive psychologically-oriented HR skills that they might be able to use to outcompete rivals.

Issues raised, such as cultural appropriation of test use, confidentiality of counselling, role boundaries between HR and I-O psychology, are issues common to the profession as a whole. In Tanzania, where I-O psychology is a relatively new profession, there is currently a lack of standards and recognition. The finding of change management as a top down communication instead of a psychological readiness resonates with Oreg et al. (2021) who say many organizations overlook the psychological aspect of change.

There are opportunities for real-life impact to be big. Institutions could initiate engagement surveys in one faculty, implement structured behaviour interviews for senior appointments, or develop a staff counselling pilot and have it evaluated by an external provider. These low cost interventions could generate evidence for scaling.

Opportunities, Controversies, and Open Debates

Opportunities

Several practical opportunities are identified in the study. One way is for higher education institutions to adopt evidence-based selection processes for administrative positions (such as situational judgement tests). Second, training programmes can be systematically assessed with the help of the Kirkpatrick's model and training can be tied to the performance measures. Third, employee assistance programmes can be implemented with confidentiality guidelines and tracking of the utilization. Fourth, annual engagement surveys can assess institutional climate and

inform institutional management. Fifth, emotional intelligence and change management courses can be integrated into leadership development training programs. Sixth, the system of performance appraisal can be restructured as a cyclical feedback and development system. Seventh, psychological readiness assessments and peer support programmes are part of change management.

Controversies

Several controversies remain. There is controversy over the cultural validity of western questionnaires that have been designed for western populations; some argue that we need questionnaires created locally, and others believe that it is necessary to adapt questionnaires with a norming study. The second issue of concern is the confidentiality of the workplace counselling; in hierarchical public institutions, staff members may be concerned that disclosure will impact on their career progression. A third controversy is whether performance management systems should focus on accountability (control) or development (growth); documents are about control, I-O psychology is about development. The fourth controversy is between the professional jurisdiction of I-O psychologists and HR officers, since the latter's professional status is not established in the legal field, I-O psychologists may be unable to define their roles.

Open Debates

Undecided discussions are such as: How to improve performance without employees being more stressed in the public sector through psychological interventions? Are engagement surveys anonymous or not? Should psychometric tests be used for selection in the absence of evidence of test fairness? Are counselling services feasible by people who are not Psychologists? If performance appraisal ratings are tied to pay, do they affect the ratings due to evidence they distort ratings? There is a need for continuing research and discussion between practitioners, policymakers and academics in these debates.

Study Implications

Practical Implications

There is a need for concrete measures to be taken at higher learning institutions to incorporate I-O psychology practices. HR departments might want to hire or lease I-O psychologists to create selection systems, training evaluations, and engagement surveys. Staff welfare should be improved by providing professional counsellors and encourage using them with awareness campaigns. Therefore, psychological well-being and engagement should be part of the internal audits of quality assurance units. Employee behaviour, motivation and well-being are not soft factors but are critical to their performance and should be recognised by institutional leadership – vice chancellor, director, dean and departmental head.

Managers have a few simple psychological tools at their disposal, including exit interviews to discover and identify the causes of turnover, stay interviews to find out what is motivating people to stay and climate surveys to gauge the group's morale. Leadership should demonstrate psychological safety by discussing stress, asking for input.

The study adds to the human capital theory by showing that documented training policies are more likely to lead to human capital development if there are mechanisms for evaluation. It builds on the job demands–resources theory for public sector higher education, demonstrating that there are resources such as counselling that are documented, but not always available. It is also consistent with social exchange theory as it shows that engagement practices are valued rhetorically, but not with a systemic intent, likely decreasing the reciprocal commitment. It is an assault on the resource-based view as it demonstrates that much of the potential of psychological resources goes unused. There are evident policy implications on national and institutional levels. The Tanzania Commission for Universities needs to include I-O psychology practices in quality assurance requirements, such as having evidence-based practices of selection, staff well-being programmes, and engagement surveys. I-O psychology could be a professional qualification for certain HR roles in public higher education, which should be recognized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Real life solutions include the following: (a) establish a national framework for workplace counselling in public universities including financial support for training of counsellors; (b) develop psychometric tools validated locally for academic staff selection that include I-O psychology content; (c) make every university to carry out engagement surveys every two years and publish the results; (d) implement a national leadership development programme for managers of HEIs that incorporates I-O psychology elements in the training programme; (e) pilot a performance appraisal reform in one HEI with independent evaluation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study adopted a qualitative content analysis approach to explore the influence of the application of Industrial-Organizational Psychology practices on the organizational performance in the selected higher learning institutions (HLIs) of the public sector in the city of Dodoma, Tanzania. The analysis of 45 documents found that there is uneven prevalence of I-O psychology practices – with training and leadership development well documented, but employee assessment, well-being counselling, engagement and change management weaker. There are often implicit links to performance in the documentation, but there is clearly a scope for enhancing the competence of staff, their motivation, their wellbeing, and the adaptability of the

institution by incorporating I-O psychology. Issues of cultural appropriation, confidentiality, roles, and performance management are all issues of controversy that need to be resolved via policy and research. Overall, the study concludes that strengthening the adoption and institutionalization of comprehensive I-O psychology practices can enhance organizational effectiveness and employee well-being in higher learning institutions and the wider Tanzanian public sector.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Firstly, higher learning institutions and other public sector organizations should widen the application of I-O psychology practices beyond administrative compliance by incorporating psychometric assessments, employee assistance programmes, employee engagement surveys, and structured change management interventions.
2. Secondly, government agencies, higher learning institutions, and professional bodies should cooperate to develop and validate psychometric and organizational assessment tools that reflect the Tanzanian cultural and organizational context, which will in turn improve their reliability, fairness and acceptance.
3. Thirdly, policy makers and public sector employers should formally recognize the strategic role of I-O psychologists in the organizational structures.
4. Lastly, continuous training needs to be provided to managers, human resource practitioners, and institutional leaders on the value and application of I-O psychology practices to improve organizational performance and employee wellbeing.

5.3 Future Research

This documentary analysis should be complemented by qualitative interviews of HR officers, institutional leaders and HR staff to gain insight into the implementation of I-O psychology practices. Mixed methods studies might also include document analysis and surveys of employee perceptions of I-O practices and organizational performance. Comparing higher learning institutions in public and private sectors or comparing them to other regions would uncover differences in context. There could be a follow-up study on changes to documented practices after policy changes. Last but not least, intervention research could examine the impact of implementing specific I-O psychology practices (such as engagement surveys and counselling services) on metrics that can be measured.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

There are a few caveats to be noted. Firstly, it was a study based solely on documentary evidence; documents do not necessarily accurately represent what actually happens in the workplace as policy can vary from practice. Second, some institutions were unable to provide access to internal documents, thus possibly excluding relevant information. Third, the analysis was only based on higher learning institution in Dodoma, which cannot be a representative of all the public sector workplaces in Tanzania. Fourth, the study excluded interviews and surveys, which may have been able to elicit lived experiences and perceptions. Fifth, policy changes are occurring rapidly and some documents may not represent current practices.

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