

*Leadership, Fairness and Communal Values: A Quantitative Survey of Institutional and Socio-Cultural Drivers of Performance in Zanzibar's Public Sector....*<sup>1</sup>Said Hamad Shehe, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Jesper G. Katomero & <sup>3</sup>Dr. Adilu M. Salim

## **Leadership, Fairness and Communal Values: A Quantitative Survey of Institutional and Socio-Cultural Drivers of Performance in Zanzibar's Public Sector**

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.57233/gijmss.v8i2.18>

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### **Abstract:**

*This study examines the influence of leadership, fairness and communal values as key institutional and socio-cultural drivers of employee performance in Zanzibar's public sector. Specifically, it investigates how leadership practices, perceived fairness in organizational processes, legal institutional frameworks and prevailing communal norms shape employee motivation, productivity and compliance with performance standards. A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed, involving a sample of 126 respondents drawn from a target population of 246 employees at the Ministry of the President's Office, Constitution, Legal Affairs and Public Services. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to assess employees' perceptions of institutional and socio-cultural factors affecting performance. The findings indicate that leadership practices and perceptions of fairness play a central role in influencing employee motivation and adherence to performance expectations, while communal values significantly shape workplace relationships and collective responsibility. However, gaps were identified in the consistent application of fair procedures and in aligning leadership practices with formal performance management frameworks. The study concludes that strengthening fair leadership practices and integrating communal values into institutional performance systems can enhance employee performance. The findings imply that public sector performance reforms in Zanzibar should prioritize leadership development and fairness-oriented policies that are sensitive to the prevailing socio-cultural context.*

**Keywords:** Institutional Factors; Socio-Cultural Values; Employee Performance; Organizational Culture; Zanzibar Public Sector

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### **1. Introduction**

Public sector performance is a pressing concern in many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where institutional capacity and socio-cultural dynamics strongly influence service delivery. In Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous region of Tanzania, the public sector plays a central role in governance, policy implementation and socio-economic development. Despite its unique cultural identity and strong national ethic, a significant portion of Tanzania's public sector particularly Zanzibar, continues to rely on traditional management approaches characterized by autocratic leadership, hierarchical decision-making, and outdated administrative practices. Issn amd Res(2025) argues that such approaches are increasingly unsustainable given evolving workplace dynamics, rising employee expectations and the growing demand for performance-oriented service delivery. Challenges such as limited workplace adaptability, weak supervisory subordinate relationships, inadequate job support, ineffective performance evaluation mechanisms and insufficient incentives continue to undermine employee motivation and productivity.

In response, Zanzibar has introduced several public service reforms aimed at enhancing institutional performance, boosting employee morale and creating a more efficient public sector. The RGZ (2007) emphasizes the need for a competent, dynamic and results-driven workforce capable of meeting emerging national and global challenges. These reforms seek to establish enabling work environments, strengthen accountability structures and embed practices that substitute high performance across government institutions. This is similar to Tanzania's mainland; persistent performance gaps remain. Nyaronga(2025) notes that public sector employees in Zanzibar often perform below the expectations outlined in national reform frameworks, suggesting that technical and structural reforms alone cannot fully explain or resolve the complex factors influencing employee performance. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific institutional mechanisms, such as performance evaluation fairness, interact with deep-seated socio-cultural values, like respect for authority, to collectively shape employee behavior in Zanzibar.

Against this backdrop, institutional and socio-cultural factors emerge as critical considerations. Zanzibar's socio-cultural environment deeply rooted in communalism, respect for authority, religious values and traditional leadership structures plays a significant role in shaping workplace behavior and institutional effectiveness. These cultural dimensions influence how employees perceive authority, respond to managerial directives, balance collective versus individual achievement and interpret concepts such as accountability, responsibility and performance. At the same time, institutional factors such as leadership practices,

organizational culture and performance evaluation mechanisms directly affect motivation, productivity and compliance with standards.

This study therefore, examines the influence of institutional and socio-cultural factors on employees' performance in Zanzibar's public sector. Specifically, it assesses how institutional structures and legal frameworks influence workers' performance and examine social norms, values and practices effects on public sector workers' performance. Thus, the study aims to contribute into deeper understanding of performance-related challenges in Zanzibar and offers clear visions for designing reforms that are both technically sound and culturally responsive.

Hence, the rest of this paper proceeds with problem statement, conceptual framework research methodology, including the research design, sampling procedures, data collection methods and analytical techniques, findings and discussion of the findings, finally, the paper concludes by summarizing key findings, highlighting policy and practical implications, and suggesting areas for future research.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite ongoing reforms, Zanzibar's public sector continues to face persistent performance challenges. Technical and structural interventions such as the Zanzibar Public Service Policy (2010), have sought to enhance efficiency, accountability and service delivery. However, these reforms have not fully addressed the underlying institutional and socio-cultural factors that shape employee behavior and organizational outcomes. The continued reliance on traditional management approaches characterized by autocratic leadership, hierarchical decision-making and outdated administrative practices limits adaptability and innovation in the workplace (Chandrasekar, 2011).

Recent studies confirm that institutional weaknesses, including ineffective performance evaluation mechanisms, inadequate supervisory support and insufficient incentives, remain significant barriers to employee motivation and productivity (Nyaronga, 2025). Furthermore, socio-cultural expectations rooted in communalism, respect for authority and religious values strongly influence workplace dynamics in Zanzibar. While these values can facilitate cohesion and ethical conduct, they may also reinforce hierarchical structures and reduce employee autonomy, thereby constraining innovation and responsiveness (Luhambati & Mutarubukwa, 2024)

This complex interplay between institutional practices and socio-cultural values creates an environment where reforms may fail to achieve their intended impact. Nyaronga (2025) observed that public sector employees in Zanzibar often perform below expectations outlined in national reform frameworks, highlighting the

limitations of reforms that focus solely on technical and structural dimensions. More recent evidence suggests that employee involvement and participatory decision-making, moderated by educational attainment, significantly improve performance outcomes in Zanzibar's public health sector (Haji et al., 2024). This emphasizes the importance of integrating both institutional and socio-cultural considerations into reform strategies.

Without a deeper understanding of how these dimensions interact to influence employee performance, efforts to improve efficiency, accountability and service delivery risk remaining incomplete and unsustainable. Addressing this gap is therefore, this study focused on two concerns; examining the extent to which institutional structures and legal frameworks influence workers' performance in Zanzibar Public Sector; and examine social norms, values and practices effects on public sector workers' performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

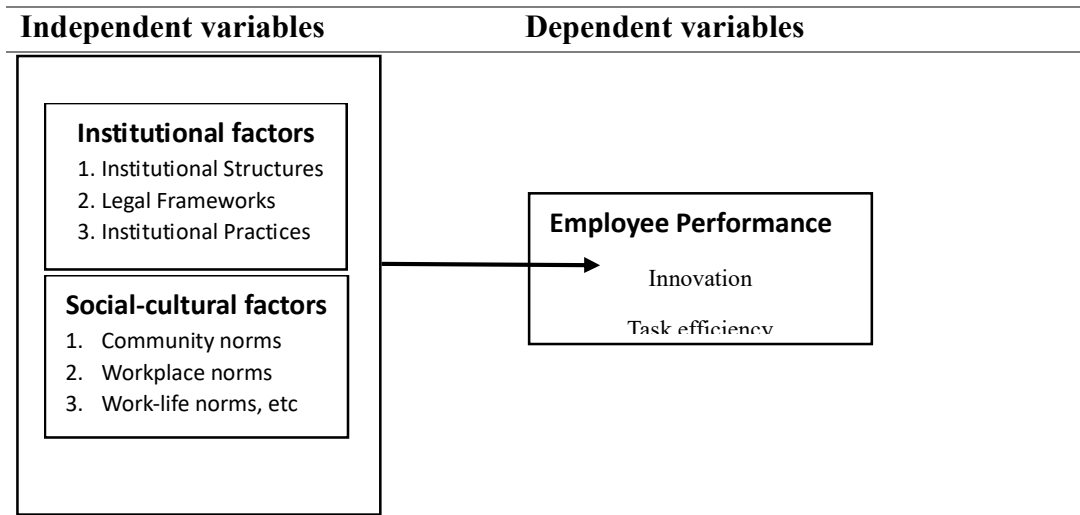
The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in institutional theory and socio-cultural theory which proposing that employee performance in Zanzibar's public sector is directly influenced by both institutional factors and socio-cultural factors. Institutional factors on one side, refers to the formal structures, rules and operational systems that regulate behavior within public organizations. In this study, institutional factors include institutional structures (organizational hierarchy, authority lines and reporting systems); legal frameworks (laws, regulations and formal policies guiding public service conduct); and institutional practices (supervision, monitoring mechanisms and performance management processes).

Furthermore, institutional theory suggests that clearly defined structures and formalized rules shape employee behavior by establishing expectations, ensuring accountability and aligning individual performance with organizational objectives. Therefore, institutional factors are hypothesized to exert a direct positive influence on employee performance by promoting role clarity, efficiency, coordination and fairness in public service delivery.

On the other hand, the framework recognizes socio-cultural factors as informal influences derived from shared social norms, communal values, ethical standards and culturally embedded workplace practices. Drawing on socio-cultural theory, employee behavior is understood to be shaped not only by formal rules but also by collective expectations, interpersonal relationships and culturally informed attitudes toward work. In the context of Zanzibar's public sector, these socio-cultural factors are expected to directly influence employee motivation,

cooperation, commitment, and ethical conduct, thereby contributing to performance outcomes.

The framework therefore, proposes two direct causal pathways which are: institutional factors to employee performance on one side and socio-cultural factors to employee performance on the other side.



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**  
**Source: researcher's own construct 2026**

### 3. Research Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design using a quantitative research approach to examine the influence of institutional and socio-cultural factors on employee performance in Zanzibar's public sector. The cross-sectional design was appropriate because data were collected at a single point in time, allowing for the assessment of relationships among variables without manipulating the study environment. This design enabled the researcher to capture employees' perceptions, experiences, and demographic characteristics while establishing associations between institutional factors, socio-cultural factors, and employee performance.

The study was conducted at the Ministry of the President's Office, Constitution, Legal Affairs, and Public Services. The study population comprised 185 employees, as reported in the official 2023–2024 Ministry Human Resource Report. This ministry was purposively selected due to its central role in governance, policy coordination, and public service management in Zanzibar, making it a relevant and representative institutional setting for examining performance-related factors in the public sector.

The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula (1960) $n=N/(1+N(e)^2)$ . Where  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$  is the population size (185) and ' $e$ ' is the margin of error set at 5%. Based on this formula, a sample size of 126 respondents was obtained. The apparent difference between the population size (185) and the sample size (126) reflects a statistically justified reduction to ensure representativeness while maintaining feasibility and minimizing sampling error. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the 126 respondents, ensuring that each employee had an equal chance of being included in the study and reducing selection bias.

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire developed based on relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical literature on institutional factors, socio-cultural influences, and employee performance. Of the 126 questionnaires distributed, 120 were returned and usable, yielding a response rate of 95%. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections: Demographic Information: Age, gender, education level, work experience, and job category. Institutional Factors: Items measuring perceptions of organizational structures, legal frameworks, leadership practices, and institutional support. Socio-Cultural Factors: Items assessing social norms, values, beliefs, and cultural practices influencing work behavior in the public sector; and Employee Performance: Performance was measured using self-reported indicators, including task completion, work quality, efficiency, adherence to procedures, and service delivery effectiveness.

Furthermore, all construct items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Self-reported performance was used due to accessibility constraints and its suitability for capturing employees' perceptions of their own work outcomes within the institutional context. Completed questionnaires were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied.

Correspondingly, Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and key study variables. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the strength, direction and significance of the relationships between institutional factors, socio-cultural factors (independent variables) and employee performance (dependent variable). Regression analysis was considered appropriate as it allows for the examination of the combined and individual effects of multiple predictors on employee performance.

Additionally, Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Prior to data collection, respondents were provided with clear information regarding the

purpose of the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and participation was entirely voluntary. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and no identifying information was recorded on the questionnaires. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. The collected data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

##### 4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents (n = 126), including sex, age, educational level, work experience and organizational position.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents**

(n=126)			
Item	Category	f	%
Sex	Male	62	49.2
	Female	64	50.8
Age	20-30	30	23.8
	31-40	65	51.6
	41-50	28	22.2
	51-60	3	2.4
Educational level	Below Form Four (IV)	1	0.8
	Form Four (IV)	5	4.0
	Certificate	8	6.3
	Diploma	32	25.4
	Bachelor	47	37.3
	Master	30	23.8
	PhD	3	2.4
Experience	Less than 1 year	13	10.3
	1 – 5 years	35	27.8
	6 – 10 years	20	15.9
	11 – 15years	37	29.4
	16 – 20 years	14	11.1
	Above 21 years	7	5.6

Item	Category	(n=126)	
		f	%
Position	Lower level	31	24.6
	Middle level	71	56.3
	Upper level	30	23.8

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

The results indicate that 50.8% of the respondents were female and 49.2% were male. Majority of the respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years (51.6%), followed by those aged 20–30 years (23.8%) and 41–50 years (22.2%). Most respondents held a bachelor’s degree (37.3%) or diploma (25.4%). In terms of work experience, 29.4% had served for 11–15 years, while 27.8% had 1–5 years of experience. Regarding position, 56.3% occupied middle-level positions, 24.6% lower-level positions and 23.8% upper-level positions.

## 4.2 Analysis of the study objectives

### Institutional structures and legal frameworks

The first objective of the study aimed to assess the extent to which institutional structures and legal frameworks influence employee performance within the Zanzibar Public Sector. This objective was explored through nine key indicators as analyzed in table 2 designed to evaluate the extent to which institutional structures and legal frameworks influence workers’ performance in Zanzibar Public Sector. Participants were then asked to measure their levels of agreement using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “strongly disagree,” 2 for “disagree,” 3 representing “neutral” (or “not sure”), 4 denoting “agree,” and 5 indicating “strongly agree.”

**Table 2: Mean Scores for Institutional Structures and Legal Frameworks (n = 126)**

Code	Indicators	(%)					Mean	SD
		SD	D	N	A	SA		
ISL 1	Institutional structures support performance	2.4	12.7	15.9	48.4	20.6	3.72	0.89
ISL 2	Legal frameworks enhance efficiency	1.6	15.9	19.0	45.2	17.5	3.61	0.92
ISL 3	Hierarchy supports communication	2.4	11.1	17.5	46.0	23.0	3.75	0.88
ISL 4	Policies are clear and understandable	0.8	11.1	18.3	52.4	16.7	3.73	0.85
ISL 5	Structures provide resources	4.0	9.5	16.7	47.6	22.2	3.74	0.91

ISL 6	Legal frameworks ensure fairness	2.4	8.7	19.0	50.8	19.0	3.74	0.87
ISL 7	Structures resolve conflicts	1.6	8.7	19.8	41.3	28.6	3.86	0.84
ISL 8	Legal frameworks protect rights	1.6	7.9	15.9	53.2	21.4	3.92	0.81
ISL 9	Structures promote teamwork	2.4	20.6	15.1	42.9	19.0	3.56	0.96
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>Institutional factors</b>					<b>3.74</b>	<b>0.89</b>

*n*= sample size, *SD*=Strongly disagree, *D*=Disagree, *N*=Neutral, *A*=Agree, *SA*= Strongly agree,

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

The findings indicate a generally positive perception of institutional structures and legal frameworks in supporting employee performance within the Zanzibar public sector. Across all nine indicators, mean scores ranged from 3.56 to 3.92 with a composite mean of 3.74 (SD = 0.89), suggesting moderate to high agreement among respondents. This reflects a broadly favorable assessment of the role played by formal organizational arrangements and legal mechanisms in shaping employee performance.

Additionally, indicators related to legal protection and fairness recorded the highest levels of agreement, particularly the perception that legal frameworks protect employees' rights (Mean = 3.92) and ensure fairness (Mean = 3.74). Similarly, institutional structures were perceived to support effective communication (Mean = 3.75), provide necessary resources (Mean = 3.74) and facilitate conflict resolution (Mean = 3.86). These findings suggest that formal structures and legal provisions contribute to performance by enhancing clarity, equity and coordination within public institutions.

However, comparatively lower agreement was observed for the item on institutional structures promoting teamwork (Mean = 3.56) indicating potential gaps in collaborative practices despite the presence of formal structures. Overall, the results affirm the relevance of institutional structures and legal frameworks as key determinants of employee performance, consistent with the assumptions of institutional theory.

Thus, the mean scores for institutional structures and legal frameworks ranged from 3.56 to 3.92. The overall composite mean score for institutional factors was 3.74 (SD = 0.89), indicating generally favorable perceptions among respondents.

**Social Norms, Values and Practices effects on workers' performance**

The second objective of the study aimed to explore how social norms, values, and practices influence workers' performance in the Zanzibar Public Sector. This investigation involved assessing eleven (11) key indicators as revealed in table 3 that measure the impact of these factors. Participants were asked to measure their levels of agreement using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "strongly

disagree,” 2 for “disagree,” 3 representing “neutral” (or “not sure”), 4 denoting “agree,” and 5 indicating “strongly agree.”

**Table 3: Mean Scores for Socio-Cultural Factors (n = 126)**

Code	Indicators	SD D N A SA Mean SD						
		(%)						
SVP1	Community norms encourage work ethic	1.6	7.9	15.9	43.7	31.0	3.95	0.84
SVP2	Workplace norms support professionalism	0.8	11.1	22.2	34.9	31.0	3.85	0.88
SVP3	Values promote transparency	1.6	7.9	19.0	50.8	20.6	3.88	0.86
SVP4	Community practices enhance commitment	0.8	5.6	17.5	46.0	29.4	3.92	0.83
SVP5	Culture fosters teamwork	1.6	4.0	11.9	50.8	31.7	4.05	0.79
SVP6	Practices support innovation	1.6	7.1	26.2	42.1	23.0	3.78	0.91
SVP7	Colleagues inspire performance	1.6	7.9	14.3	51.6	24.6	3.97	0.82
SVP8	Ethical standards enhance performance	-	5.6	18.3	46.0	30.2	3.99	0.80
SVP9	Leadership promotes positive environment	1.6	7.9	20.6	43.7	26.2	3.84	0.87
SVP10	Work-life norms support balance	2.4	15.9	22.2	36.5	22.2	3.60	0.95
SVP11	Community work-life balance improves performance	4.8	6.3	26.2	32.5	29.4	3.67	0.93
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>Socio-cultural factors</b>					<b>3.87</b>	<b>0.87</b>

*n= sample size, SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA= Strongly agree.*

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

The results indicate generally strong positive perceptions of socio-cultural factors in shaping employee performance within the Zanzibar public sector. Mean scores ranged from 3.60 to 4.05, with an overall composite mean of 3.87 (SD = 0.87), reflecting moderate to high agreement that workplace norms, communal values and cultural practices support employee effectiveness. High levels of agreement were observed for indicators related to teamwork culture (Mean = 4.05), ethical standards (Mean = 3.99), colleagues’ support for performance (Mean = 3.97) and community norms encouraging work ethic (Mean = 3.95), suggesting that shared values and interpersonal dynamics play a substantial role in motivating employees and fostering professional conduct.

Similarly, respondents acknowledged that socio-cultural practices enhance commitment (Mean = 3.92) and transparency (Mean = 3.88), indicating that informal norms can reinforce positive workplace behavior. However,

comparatively lower mean scores were observed for work-life balance norms (Means = 3.60 and 3.67) and innovation practices (Mean = 3.78), implying potential areas where socio-cultural influences may be less pronounced or inconsistently experienced.

Therefore, the mean scores for socio-cultural factors ranged from 3.60 to 4.05. The composite mean score was 3.87 (SD = 0.87), reflecting generally positive perceptions of socio-cultural influences on employee performance.

### 4.3 Roles on Workers' Performance

The study also assessed the roles of workers' performance as a dependent variable using a five-point scale, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with various statements concerning factors that influence their performance. The study focused on ten (10) key indicators that measure the impact of these factors on performance outcomes. Participants were asked to measure their levels of agreement using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree," 2 for "disagree," 3 representing "neutral" (or "not sure"), 4 denoting "agree," and 5 indicating "strongly agree." The detailed findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Mean Scores for Employee Performance (n = 126)**

Code	Indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
RWP 1	Task efficiency	-	7.9	11.1	38.9	42.1	4.00	0.81
RWP 2	Quality of work	.8	8.7	19.8	45.2	25.4	3.86	0.87
RWP 3	Problem-solving ability	1.6	3.2	16.7	44.4	34.1	3.95	0.82
RWP 4	Innovation	0.8	5.6	16.7	55.6	21.4	3.92	0.85
RWP 5	Engagement	0.8	4.8	16.7	44.4	33.3	3.91	0.84
RWP 6	Manageable workload	2.4	6.3	16.7	41.3	33.3	3.85	0.88
RWP 7	Recognition	4.0	6.3	21.4	36.5	31.7	3.79	0.92
RWP 8	Role clarity	2.4	7.1	19.8	54.8	15.9	3.84	0.89
RWP 9	Access to resources	4.0	10.3	19.0	42.9	23.8	3.71	0.93
RWP 10	Autonomy	9.5	9.5	16.7	30.2	34.1	3.76	0.94
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>Employee performance</b>					<b>3.86</b>	<b>0.88</b>

*n= sample size, SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA= Strongly agree.*

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

The findings show generally high levels of perceived employee performance across the measured indicators, with mean scores ranging from 3.71 to 4.00 and a composite mean of 3.86 (SD = 0.88), indicating moderate to strong agreement among respondents. The highest ratings were observed for task efficiency (Mean = 4.00) and problem-solving ability (Mean = 3.95), suggesting that employees

perceive themselves as capable of performing core duties effectively and responding to work-related challenges.

Similarly, innovation (Mean = 3.92), engagement (Mean = 3.91) and quality of work (Mean = 3.86) were rated positively, reflecting strong individual performance attributes and commitment to organizational goals. Indicators related to organizational support showed slightly lower but still positive ratings, including access to resources (Mean = 3.71), autonomy (Mean = 3.76) and recognition (Mean = 3.79), implying potential areas for institutional improvement. Role clarity (Mean = 3.84) and manageable workload (Mean = 3.85) were also moderately endorsed, indicating that employees generally understand their responsibilities but may experience varying levels of support and empowerment.

Generally, the results suggest that employees perceive their performance positively, particularly in task execution and engagement, while highlighting institutional factors such as recognition, autonomy and resource availability as areas that could further enhance performance outcomes.

#### **4.4 Regression Analysis Results**

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of institutional factors and socio-cultural factors on employee performance. Table 5 below indicate the results:

**Table 5: Regression Results Predicting Employee Performance**

<b>Predictor</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Institutional factors	0.42	5.88	<0.001
Socio-cultural factors	0.36	4.97	<0.001
R <sup>2</sup>	0.58		
F-statistic	84.3		<0.001

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

The findings on table 5 above justify that, institutional factors ( $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and socio-cultural factors ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were both significant predictors of employee performance. The model explained 58% of the variance in employee performance ( $R^2 = 0.58$ ).

#### **Discussion of the findings**

The study sought to examine how institutional structures and legal frameworks together with socio-cultural factors influence employee performance within Zanzibar's public sector. In relation to the first objective, the findings showed that institutional structures and legal frameworks were generally perceived positively with Composite Mean of 3.74, particularly regarding fairness, communication support, policy clarity and protection of employee rights. For the second

objective, socio-cultural factors were also rated highly by Composite Mean of 3.87 with strong agreement on teamwork culture, ethical standards, communal work ethic and peer support in enhancing performance. Regarding employee performance outcomes, respondents reported relatively high levels of task efficiency, engagement, innovation and problem-solving having a Composite Mean of 3.86, although lower ratings were observed for collaboration support, recognition, autonomy and access to resources.

The findings from Zanzibar's public sector indicate that institutional structures and legal frameworks are perceived as supportive of employee performance, particularly in relation to fairness, rights protection, communication clarity and conflict resolution. These results are consistent with institutional theory, which posits that formal rules, hierarchies and regulatory systems shape employee behavior by promoting accountability and predictable organizational conduct (Coccia, 2018). Similar conclusions were reported by Al-Baidhani and Alsaqqaf(2022), who found that structured performance systems and fair appraisal mechanisms enhance efficiency and job satisfaction in public organizations. In the Zanzibar context, respondents' strong agreement that legal frameworks protect employee rights (Mean = 3.92) and support conflict resolution (Mean = 3.86) supports the argument that institutional legitimacy strengthens performance-related behaviors. However, comparatively lower scores on collaboration and recognition reflect implementation gaps, echoing findings from Hassan (2021) and Asiedu-boamah(2018)who noted that formal structures alone do not ensure effective day-to-day management practices or employee motivation. The study also revealed strong socio-cultural influences on performance, especially teamwork culture (Mean = 4.05), ethical standards (Mean = 3.99) and communal work ethic (Mean = 3.95). These findings align with socio-cultural theory, which emphasizes the role of shared norms, values and interpersonal relations in shaping employee attitudes and work behaviors(Akpa et al., 2021; Kirwa & Kole, 2025). Research on African public sector contexts similarly highlights the influence of collectivist values and community-oriented work ethics on cooperation and organizational commitment (Akpa et al., 2021).

In Zanzibar's institutional environment, communal norms appear to reinforce formal expectations by encouraging collaboration and peer accountability, supporting studies suggesting that cultural cohesion enhances public service delivery (Benedicto & Caelian, 2021). Nevertheless, lower scores on innovation practices (Mean = 3.78) and work-life balance norms (Means = 3.60–3.67) correspond with literature noting that traditional hierarchical cultures may sometimes limit flexibility and creative performance(Başar et al., 2022; Denison et al., 2007). Importantly, the coexistence of overall positive institutional

perceptions with localized operational challenges does not represent a contradiction but rather reflects a common pattern observed in governance studies. Employees may perceive formal policies as fair and legitimate while simultaneously experiencing inconsistencies in managerial support, recognition or collaborative practices. Similar observations were reported by Aguinis and Burgi-Tian(2021)who argued that procedural systems may be well designed yet unevenly implemented in practice. In the Zanzibar findings, strong perceptions of legal fairness coexist with moderate ratings for recognition (Mean = 3.79) and resource access (Mean = 3.71), suggesting that while institutional frameworks provide structural support, operational practices still require strengthening to translate policy into daily performance experiences.

Despite its contributions, the study has important limitations. First, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias as respondents may overstate positive perceptions of performance and institutional effectiveness (Nathan et al., 2003). Second, the research was conducted within a single ministry, limiting the generalizability of the findings across the broader Zanzibar public sector or other administrative contexts. Third, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference; the results indicate associations between institutional factors, socio-cultural influences and employee performance rather than definitive cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The paper explored the impact of institutional arrangements and legal framework in combination with social and cultural norms on employee performance in Zanzibar's public sector. The results advocate that general, staff believed organizational systems to be fair, protective and supportive, particularly in relation to policy clarity, communication and legal underpinnings. Likewise, socio-cultural factors in the form of teamwork culture and ethical norms, as well as communal work values had a high association with positive work attitudes and performance.

Consequently, employees reported fairly high levels of performance in efficiency, involvement and problem-solving ability. Yet, there were also valuable process gaps, such as in collaboration facilitations, recognition procedures and freedom regarding resource allocation. The positive perceptions of institutions at the macro level have existed in parallel with managerial and micro-level implementation issues, indicating that although formal frameworks are established and legitimate, they are not uniformly implemented on a daily basis. The social-cultural strengths seem to encourage shared responsibilities and co-operation but the hierarchical tendencies may hinder flexibility in innovativeness and work/life balance.

When taken collectively, the results confirm that enhancing employee performance in Zanzibar public sector necessitates not only preserving strong institutional frameworks and cultural consistency but also strengthening managerial techniques, resource support and recognition systems to convert policy intentions into uniform work environments.

The study's conclusion strongly advised taking into account the following factors:

1. Strengthen the implementation of performance management and recognition systems. Ministries should set up structured mechanisms for feedback and recognition that are connected to performance outcomes, given the moderate ratings on autonomy, collaboration, and recognition despite strong views of institutional fairness. Before a wider rollout, a pilot program introducing transparent peer-reviewed performance evaluations and frequent supervisor feedback sessions should be put into place in one department and assessed.
2. Improve the managerial capacity for daily performance support. Public institutions should provide supervisory and leadership training that focuses on resource coordination, employee motivation, collaborative management and communication techniques. This will aid in bridging the gap between the study's findings about inconsistent operational practices and well-designed institutional policies.
3. Strengthen workplace support systems and resource allocation. Given the lower scores in collaboration support and resource access, ministries should regularly evaluate their internal needs in order to pinpoint operational limitations and assign the tools, training materials, and collaborative platforms that are essential for efficient task completion.
4. Encourage innovative and adaptable work practices. Institutions should implement structured innovation forums, cross-departmental teamwork initiatives and flexible work arrangements where practical in order to address moderate innovation and work-life balance ratings. These steps can assist in striking a balance between creativity and adaptability and hierarchical structures.
5. Institutionalize continuous monitoring and policy implementation audits. The Ministry should establish regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess how institutional policies are applied in practice, including audits of appraisal fairness, communication effectiveness and employee engagement levels. Findings should inform ongoing policy refinement and management improvement.

Finally, expand future research for broader evidence. Given the study's reliance on self-reported data, single-ministry scope and cross-sectional design, future research should incorporate multi-institutional samples, longitudinal tracking and mixed-methods approaches to validate findings and better understand causal relationships between institutional systems, socio-cultural dynamics and performance outcomes.

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