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Influence of Employee Voice Mechanisms on Labour Turnover in Manufacturing Industries in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

For many years, labour turnover has significantly affected manufacturing industries, resulting in reduced productivity, higher hiring costs, and lower operational effectiveness. Despite the implementation of various strategies to mitigate labour turnover, researchers rarely scrutinise the assertion that employee voice mechanisms contribute to this reduction. This study examines how employees' voice mechanisms influence labour turnover in Tanzania's manufacturing industries in Dar es Salaam. Using a cross-sectional design, the study employed structured questionnaires to gather data from 126 manufacturing industries. Human resource managers were the unit of observation, and manufacturing industries were the unit of analysis. Descriptive statistics and the fractional logarithm model were used to analyse the data. The results indicate that employee voice mechanisms, such as collective bargaining and email usage, have a negative and significant influence on labour turnover. Furthermore, an employee survey has a positive and significant influence on labour turnover. These findings indicate that various employee voice mechanisms have distinct effects on labour turnover. Therefore, to effectively retain employees, manufacturing industries should use email more, engage in collective bargaining, and review and improve employee surveys, general meetings, newsletters, joint consultative committee meetings, suggestion boxes, and intranet-shared information.

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1.0 Introduction

Labour turnover represents a significant and long-term problem in manufacturing industries (Singh & Jyoti, 2020). Its adverse effects have cost manufacturing industries thousands of dollars worldwide (Moon *et al.,* 2023). When a high-performing employee leaves the organisation (Azeez, 2017), it causes serious problems for the company (Mangubane & Ngwenya, 2024). It represents a significant loss of firm-specific human capital, a decrease in revenue and an increase in organisational costs (Helen *et al.,* 2024). Some companies may lose their business strategy and tactic secrets after staff move to rival companies (Can & Nguyen, 2022). In this sense, labour turnover is considered a problem that every employer needs to address.

In the USA, higher labour turnover has led companies to spend up to 60% of an employee's annual salary to replace departing workers (Carr, 2025). Malaysia's manufacturing industrial productivity fell at a 1.0% annual rate in 2015, after 3.5% growth in 2014 due to labour turnover (Chin, 2018). In Ethiopia, high turnover rates of up to 90% have caused high labour costs and poor performance in the textiles and leather industries (Halvorsen, 2021). Likewise, in Tanzania, a high labour turnover rate has negatively affected several organisations (Bangi & Mgeni, 2022), with some manufacturing industries reporting turnover rates of up to 58.9% within a year (Mitimingi, 2013). Such turnover has resulted in higher recruitment and training expenses as well as lower productivity, which impedes the accomplishment of several industries' goals (Msangi, 2025).

The existing literature has suggested various strategies to reduce labour turnover, including improved worker training and supportive leadership (Kim *et al.,* 2023), adequate compensation (Mutiso *et al.,* 2022), and an improved working environment (Carr, 2025). However, what is largely understudied is how employee voice (EV) can reduce labour turnover (Mowbray *et al.,* 2015). Except for a few western studies, such as Doucouliagos *et al.* (2017), Chaudhry *et al.* (2022) and Van Gramberg *et al.* (2020). Therefore, this study extends research on the relationship between employee voice mechanisms and labour turnover in Tanzanian manufacturing industries, which are characterised by vulnerable working conditions and high turnover rates (LHRC 2017; Martorano *et al.* 2017). However, the sub-sector also plays a major role in Tanzania's and Africa's economic growth (Andreoni, 2017). Certainly, the study adds to Tanzania's current labour turnover research, which focuses primarily on the public sector, insurance companies, tourism, and higher education institutions (Mmari & Mwangela, 2025; Payowela & Mrema, 2024).

1.2 Theory Underpinning and Hypotheses

1.2.1 The Exit-Voice-Loyalty Theory (EVL)

The EVL theory (Hirschman, 1970) guided this study. EVL explains how employees react to disappointing situations within the organisation (Holland e*t al.,* 2017). Employees may decide to leave the organisation (labour turnover) or voice their concerns as an alternative (Della Torre *et al.,* 2022). Workers who have the opportunity to express their views at work stay longer in the organisation than those who do not (Nechanska *et al.,* 2020). Labour turnover decreases when employees have opportunities to speak out through various mechanisms (directly or indirectly) within the organisation (Mukiira, 2020). Conversely, when voices are absent, labour turnover increases within the organisation (Chaudhry *et al.,* 2022). Therefore, this study posits that employees' voice mechanisms influence labour turnover.

1.2.2 Employee Voice Mechanisms and Labour Turnover

"Employee voice" refers to all mechanisms an organisation uses to solicit and respond to employees' concerns in order to achieve organisational goals (Wilkinson *et al.,* 2020). It involves both direct and indirect mechanisms of voice that enable employees to contribute to the organisation's activities (Della *et al.,* 2021). Direct employee voice mechanisms, which allow employees to have the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions directly to managers (Holland *et al.,* 2017) without the mediation of representatives (Zhou *et al.,* 2019), include regular meetings, open-door policy, newsletters, notice boards, the intranet, email, attitude

surveys, and suggestion schemes (Emelifeonwu & Valk, 2019; Srivastava *et al.,* 2018). Indirect mechanisms involve the indirect expression of employees' views and input through collective representation, such as collective bargaining and work councils (Wilkinson *et al.,* 2018).

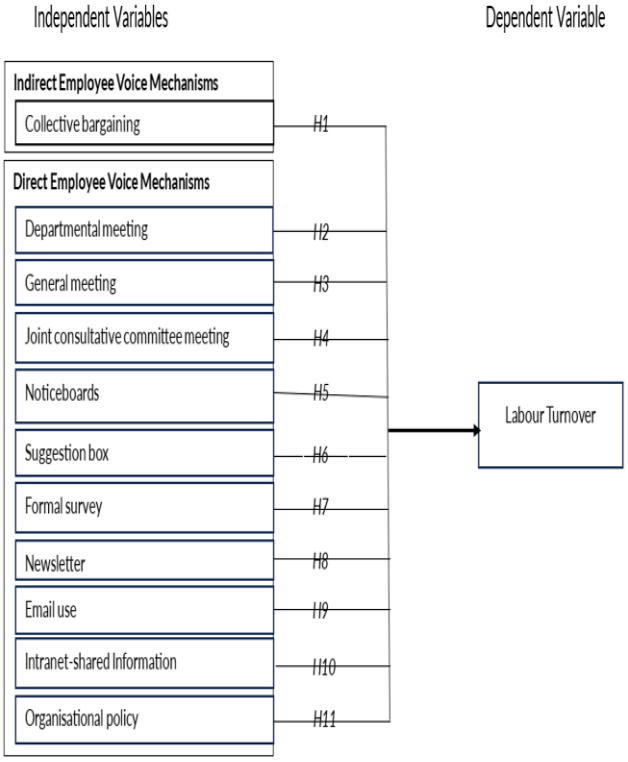
Empirically, several studies support a negative relationship between employee voice mechanisms and labour turnover (i.e., Kim *et al.,* 2023; Van Gramberg *et al.,* 2020). However, according to Okpu & Kpakol (2018), the effects of these mechanisms depend on the type of employee voice mechanism through which voice is expressed. This phenomenon is particularly the case when employee voice mechanisms are individually measured (Okpu & Kpakol, 2018), rather than as a single composite construct (Della *et al.,* 2021). For instance, in Britain and France, studies (Addison & Teixeira, 2022) found that the presence of indirect voice mechanisms negatively affected labour turnover rates. Direct voice mechanisms, on the other hand, were positively correlated with labour turnover (Cazes *et al.,* 2019). Thus, direct employee voice mechanisms, which mostly adopt a top-down approach, may sometimes hinder the promotion of inclusive decision-making processes and, in turn, increase labour turnover rather than decrease it (Barry *et al.,* 2018). However, several organisations now predominantly use these direct voice mechanisms, despite the decline of labour unions (Begum, 2017; Emelifeonwu & Valk, 2019). The role of the union in the presence of an effective human resources department becomes quite ambiguous and redundant, as the HR department supports more direct mechanisms for employee voice and participation (Begum, 2017).

Therefore, because indirect voice mechanisms (i.e., collective bargaining) have weakened and direct voice mechanisms—such as regular meetings, open-door policies, newsletters, notice boards, intranets, emails, attitude surveys, and suggestion schemes—are not sufficient on their own to reduce labour turnover in the workplace (Cazes *et al.,* 2019), the present study incorporates multiple voice mechanisms (both direct and indirect) and tests the following hypotheses: H1: collective bargaining has a negative influence on labour turnover; H2: A departmental meeting has a negative effect on labour turnover. H3: A general meeting has a negative effect on labour turnover. H4: A joint consultative committee meeting has a negative effect on labour turnover. H5: Noticeboards have a negative influence on labour turnover. H6: The suggestion box has a negative effect on labour turnover. H7: The formal survey has a negative influence on labour turnover. H8: A regular newsletter has a negative effect on labour turnover. H9: regular use of email has a negative influence on labour turnover; H10: intranet-shared information has a negative influence on labour turnover; H11: organisational policy has a negative influence on labour turnover.

1.2.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between direct and indirect employee voice mechanisms (independent variables) and labour turnovers (dependent variables) in Tanzanian manufacturing industries.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Source: Authors(2025)

2.0 Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design and Study Area

The research utilised a cross-sectional research design to examine the influence of employee voice mechanisms on labour turnover. The survey was conducted between August 2022 and April 2023 in the Dar es Salaam region, which ranks first among Tanzania's top manufacturing hubs (29.4% of its manufacturing industries), followed by Manyara (12.6%), Arusha (6.7%), Kagera (5.8%), Mbeya (5.4%), and Mwanza (4.2%) (Andreoni, 2017).

2.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The target population was 629 manufacturing industries, obtained from BRELA in 2021/2022. Simple random sampling was employed to select 245 industries using a sampling fraction of 245/629 = 0.3895 (see Table 1). The sample size was calculated through Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967, cited by Israel, 2013):

$n = N / [1 + N(e^2)]$ ..... *(1)* Where: N = population size, n = sample size, e = 0.05

$n = 629 / [1 + 629(0.05)^2] = 245$

Table 1
Sampling Distribution

Manufactured Products	Industries per products	Sampling Fraction	Sub-Sample
1. Food products	68	0.3895	26
2. Beverage products	37	0.3895	14
3. Tobacco products	4	0.3895	2
4. Machinery and transport equipment	49	0.3895	19
5. Wood products	29	0.3895	11
6. Textile products	27	0.3895	11
7. Leather products	18	0.3895	7
8. Basic and Fabricated metal products	53	0.3895	20
9. Electrical, electronic and optical products	27	0.3895	11
10. Printings and paper products	27	0.3895	11
11. Refined petroleum products and Gas	6	0.3895	3
12. Chemical products, soap and detergents	48	0.3895	18
13. Medicinal, pharmaceutical, and botanical products	14	0.3895	5
14. Plastic and rubber	148	0.3895	58
15. Non-metallic mineral products	74	0.3895	29
Total	**629**		**245**

2.3 Data Collection Methods

Survey questionnaires were employed to collect data from human resource managers in the selected manufacturing industries. Human resource managers were chosen because they are more informed and responsible for employee voice practices (Della Torre *et al.,* 2021). The study also relies on the management survey to capture as many workplaces as possible in the analysis and, thereby, contribute to the literature by incorporating several manufacturing industries. Mixed-mode survey designs (paper mail, online, and telephone) were used to minimise coverage and non-response errors (Saksvik *et al.,* 2017). The study distributed 245 questionnaires and collected 126 (response rate of 51.4%). The percentage of respondents based on category of industries were food products (10.3%), beverage products (7.9%), textile products (3.2%), machinery and equipment (2.4%), wood products (6.3%), fabricated metal (6.3%), computer, electronic and optical products (4.8%), printing and reproduction of recorded media (6.3%), chemicals, cosmetics, fibres, soap and detergents (3.2%), rubber and plastic

products (18.3%), basic metal and non-metallic materials (10.3%), and other materials (20.6%).

2.4 Measurement of Study Variables

Employee voice was measured using items adapted from Wanrooy *et al.* (2011) and Holland *et al.* (2017) that were operationalised to capture the presence of collective bargaining, departmental meetings, general meetings, regular newsletters, joint consultative committee meetings, notice boards, emails, suggestion boxes, formal surveys, organisational policy, and intranet-shared information (coded 1 = "present," 0 = "absent"). Labour turnover was estimated similarly to that reported by Molefi *et al.* (2014) and Tregaskis *et al.* (2007). In this context, "labour turnover" is defined as the number of employees who leave the organisation at will over a predetermined period (voluntary turnover), typically one calendar year. It is divided by the average total number of employees and multiplied by 100 to yield a percentage. Table 2 describes variables in detail.

2.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and the Fractional Logit Regression Model (FLM) aided data analysis. An FLM was employed because labour turnover has value in the interval [0, 1] (Stević *et al.,* 2021). The model is estimated as follows:

$$E(y/x) = \exp(x\beta) / [1 + \exp(x\beta)] \quad \text{..... (2)}$$

Where E(y/x) is the expected value of y given predictors x, exp( ) is the exponential function, x is the vector of predictor variables, β is the vector of regression coefficients, and xβ is the linear combination of independent variables with their regression coefficients.

Table 2
Variable Description

Variable	Description	Measures
Dependent Variable		
Labour_Turnover	The percentage rate per year of employees quitting their jobs in the organisation	Rates (%)
Independent Variable (Dummy Variable)		
CBA_Availability	The presence of collective bargaining meetings at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No
Dmeetings_Availability	Presence of departmental meetings at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No
Gmeetings_Availability	Presence of general meetings at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No
Newsletters	Presence of newsletters at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No
Committee_Availability	Presence of a joint consultative committee meeting	1 = yes, 0 = No
Notice_Boards	Presence of a noticeboard	1 = yes, 0 = No
Emails	Use of email at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No
Suggestion_Box	Presence of suggestion schemes at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No
Formal_Survey	The presence of employee surveys at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No
Organisation_Policy	The presence of organisational policy	1 = yes, 0 = No
Intranet	Presence of intranet meetings at the establishment	1 = yes, 0 = No

3.0 Results

Table 3 presents the average labour turnover rate for employee voice mechanisms used in the manufacturing industry. Industries using collective bargaining (CB), general meetings (GM), and email recorded lower mean labour turnover rates of 2.9%, 3.5%, and 1%, respectively, compared to industries that did not use these mechanisms. Departmental meetings (DM) and organisational policies (OP) recorded a mean

labour turnover score of 3.6%. Furthermore, other voice mechanisms, such as newsletters, noticeboards, joint consultative committee meetings (JCCM), suggestion boxes (SB), formal surveys (FS), and intranet-shared information (ISI), had a higher average labour turnover rate of 3.8%, above the overall manufacturing industry's 3.6%. However, on average, manufacturing industries with employee voice mechanisms had lower labour turnover rates than those without them.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics (n = 126)

Employee Voice Mechanisms	Industries With EVM			Industries Without EVM		
	N	%	LT Mean (%)	N	%	LT Mean (%)
Collective Bargaining	38	30.2	.029	88	69.8	.040
Departmental Meetings	126	100	.036	–	–	–
General Meetings	102	81	.035	24	19	.044
Newsletters	2	1.6	.038	124	98.4	.034
Joint Consultative Committee Meetings	74	58.7	.038	52	41.3	.034
Notice Boards	126	100	.036	–	–	–
Email	2	1.6	.010	124	98.4	.037
Suggestion Box	75	59.5	.038	51	40.5	.035
Formal Survey	49	38.9	.044	77	61.1	.031
Organisation Policy	126	100	.036	–	–	–
Intranet Shared Information	1	0.8	.040	125	99.2	.036

Note(s): N = Number of manufacturing industries, Mean = Mean Percentage of Labour Turnover Per Year (%)
LT = Labour Turnover, EVM = Employee Voice Mechanisms

Table 4 presents the fractional logit model results based on a sample of 126 manufacturing industries. Results show a Wald chi^2(8) of 122.01 and p = 0.000, implying the model fits the data well. To reduce the risk of multicollinearity, all employee voice mechanisms were mean-centred, and the variance inflation factors (VIFs) were estimated. All VIF values ranged from 1.38 to 1.72, with a mean VIF of 1.53, suggesting no multicollinearity. Certainly, the model dropped departmental meetings, noticeboards, and organisational policy variables due to their perfect collinearity with the intercept.

Collective bargaining significantly and negatively influenced labour turnover (β = -0.665, p = 0.020; OR = 0.514), supporting H1. Therefore, the odds of labour turnover decrease by 48.6% when collective bargaining is present, compared to its absence. The use of email had a significant negative influence on labour turnover (β = -1.675, p = 0.000; OR = 0.187), supporting H9. The use of emails in manufacturing industries significantly reduces the odds of labour turnover by 81.3% compared to their absence. The presence of formal surveys (β = 0.379, p = 0.041; OR = 1.462) was associated with a 46.2% increase in the odds of labour turnover, supporting H7. Certainly, general meetings (coefficient = -0.348, p > 0.05; OR = 0.705), joint consultative meetings (coefficient = -0.058, p > 0.05; OR = 0.943), suggestion box (coefficient = 0.346, p > 0.05; OR = 1.414), newsletter (coefficient = -0.913, p > 0.05; OR = 0.401), and intranet-shared information (coefficient = -0.372, p > 0.05; OR = 0.689) failed to reach significance (p < 0.05). Therefore, H3, H4, H6, H8, and H10 were not supported. This indicates that general meetings, joint consultative meetings, suggestion boxes, newsletters, and intranet-shared information at the workplace do not, on their own, predict labour turnover in this sample, compared with collective bargaining, email use, and formal surveys.

Table 4
The Fractional Logit Regression Model Results: Links between Employee Voice Mechanisms and Labour Turnover (n = 126)

Variables	Coeff.	Odds Ratio	Robust Std. err.	Z	P>z	[95% conf.	interval]
Indirect Voice Mechanisms							
CBA_Availability	-0.665	0.514	0.286	-2.32	0.020**	-1.226	-0.104
Direct Employee Mechanisms							
Gmeetings_Availability	-0.348	0.705	0.283	-1.23	0.219	-0.903	0.207
Newsletters	-0.913	0.401	0.532	-1.72	0.086	-1.956	0.130
Committee_Availability	-0.058	0.943	0.173	-0.34	0.735	-0.399	0.281
Emails	-1.675	0.187	0.273	-6.12	0.000**	-2.211	-1.136
Suggestion_Box	0.346	1.414	0.216	1.60	0.109	-0.077	0.771
Formal_Survey	0.379	1.462	0.185	2.04	0.041**	0.154	0.744
Intranet	-0.372	0.689	0.237	-1.57	0.117	-0.836	0.092
Constant	-3.125	0.043	0.286	-10.92	0.000	-3.686	-2.564
Pseudo r-squared			0.0134	Number of obs			126
Wald chi2(8)			122.01	Prob > chi2			0.000

*Note(s): OR = Odds Ratio, **p<.05*

4.0 Discussion

By investigating the influence of employee voice mechanisms on labour turnover, this study demonstrates how these mechanisms create conditions for manufacturing industries to reduce labour turnover. The findings revealed that manufacturing industries that use collective bargaining and email have lower labour turnover rates. Generally, the study confirms that manufacturing industries utilising employee voice mechanisms had a lower labour turnover rate than those with limited or no voice mechanisms. This validates that employee voice mechanisms reduce labour turnover when employers solve employee-raised problems (Chaudhry *et al.,* 2022), and it supports the EVL theory (Rasheed *et al.,* 2017).

Collective bargaining has a significant negative influence on labour turnover, as noted by Doucouliagos *et al.* (2017), who found that collective bargaining lowers the quit rate by offering employees greater compensation and improved working conditions. (Madlala & Govender, 2018). That, in their dealings with management, workers with a collective voice, such as through collective bargaining, are more likely to express their dissatisfaction than remain silent (Zvobga, 2019). The use of email had a significant negative influence on labour turnover. Through email, employees can raise issues and concerns directly with managers (Emelifeonwu & Valk, 2019), supporting the argument that direct voice mechanisms encourage workers to remain engaged rather than quit (Wilkinson *et al.,* 2020). Electronic communication increases individual interaction and engagement, thereby motivating employees to work with passion and commitment (Akarika *et al.,* 2021). However, as the frequency of electronic communication outside work hours continues to increase, it prolongs employees' work time and weakens their psychological detachment from work (Wang *et al.,* 2020).

Conversely, the presence of formal surveys has a significant positive influence on labour turnover in the manufacturing industry. Such an effect particularly occurs when the procedural mechanisms are unclear and the results are inadequate (Nechanska *et al.,* 2020). Otherwise, literature shows that a formal survey reduces labour turnover by providing a valuable mechanism for workforce involvement in matters that affect them (Muguna, 2023; Okwuagwu *et al.,* 2017). When the mechanism is absent, job satisfaction declines and the intention to quit increases (Nechanska *et al.,* 2020).

5.0 Conclusion

This study examines the influence of employee voice mechanisms on labour turnover in manufacturing industries in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. A lower labour turnover rate is associated with multiple implementations of employee voice mechanisms. Collective bargaining and email usage negatively influence labour turnover. In contrast, a formal survey positively influences labour turnover. Employee voice mechanisms, including general meetings, newsletters, joint consultative committee meetings, suggestion boxes, and intranet-sharing information, did not influence labour turnover.

6.0 Recommendations

Given the above conclusions, manufacturing industries should implement multiple employee voice mechanisms to reduce labour turnover. However, collective bargaining and the use of emails should be particularly stressed. Manufacturing industries should review and redesign formal surveys, general meetings, newsletters, joint consultative committee meetings, suggestion boxes, and intranet-sharing information to reduce labour turnover. Furthermore, the government of Tanzania should legally enforce the implementation of both direct (non-unionised) and indirect (unionised) employee voice mechanisms in the manufacturing industries to promote employee retention.

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9.0 Declaration of Conflicting Interests

No potential conflict of interest to declare.

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