

**THE ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES HANDLING IN  
PUBLIC HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN TANZANI:THE CASE  
OF UNIVERSITY OF DAR-ES-SALAAM AND MUHIMBILI UNIVERSITY  
OF ALLIED SCIENCES**

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**2013**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certify that I have read and hereby recommend for examination by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation titled: *The Assessment of Employee Grievances Handling in Tanzania: the Case of Udsm and Muhas*, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Business Administration (MBA) of the Open University of Tanzania.

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Date:.....

**DECLARATION**

I, **Mubezi Jane**, declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

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**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely husband Mr. Marko Muya Joseph.

## ABSTRACT

This study assessed employee grievance handling in Tanzania with a specific focus on two higher learning institutions namely, the University of Dar es Salaam and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences. To achieve this objective, the study identified the styles used at the higher learning institutions to in handling employee grievances, explored employees' perceptions about the way their grievances are handled, discovered factors which hinder effective management of employees' grievances, and found out what should be done to effectively manage employees' grievances. In terms of research design and methodology, this study used an exploratory research design whereby interviews, questionnaires and documentary review were used as data collection techniques. The population of the study included 68 staff out of which 22 were administrative, while 46 were teaching staff. Among these 10 administrative staff were from the UDSM, while 12 administrative staff were from MUHAS. Also, 27 teaching staff were from MUHAS, whereas 19 were from the UDSM. Data were collected from were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) computer software. The study found that majority of supervisors used integrating approach in trying to solve their employees' grievances, whereas few supervisors used intimidating style of managing employee grievances. This study found that lack of human resources management skills, bureaucratic procedures, selfishness, and unequal relationship between supervisors and employees were the major hindrances to effective management of employee grievance at the UDSM and MUHAS., The study concluded that majority of supervisors at both the UDSM and MUHAS use integrating style in handling employee's grievances, whereas few use dominating style.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CERTIFICATION.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>COPYRIGHT .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLE .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURE .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3General Objective .....	3
1.4pecific Objectives.....	4
1.5Research Questions .....	4
1.6Significance of the Study .....	4
<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	6
2.1 Definition of Key Concepts .....	6
2.1.1 Grievance .....	6
2.1.2 Management.....	6
2.2 Critical Theoretical Review .....	7
2.2.1 Scientific Management Theory.....	8
2.2.2 Systems Theory.....	9

2.2.3 Behavioral Theory .....	10
2.3 General Discussion Of the Topic .....	11
2.4 Empirical Study .....	14
2.5 Research Gap .....	18
2.6 Conceptual Framework .....	19
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	21
3.1 Research Paradigm.....	21
3.2 Research Design.....	22
3.2.1 Study Area .....	22
3.2.2 Population Profile .....	23
3.2.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques .....	23
3.3. Data Collection .....	25
3.3.1 Types of Data.....	25
3.3.1.1 Primary Data .....	25
3.3.1.2 Secondary Data .....	25
3.3.2 Data Collection Methods .....	26
3.3.2.1 Interviews.....	26
3.3.2.2 Questionnaires.....	27
3.4 Data Analysis .....	27
3.5 Validity of Data.....	28
3.6 Reliability of Data.....	28
3.7 Ethical Issues .....	29
3.8 Establishing Rapport.....	29
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	<b>30</b>

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....	30
4.1 Introduction.....	30
4.2 Characteristics of Respondents .....	30
4.2.1 Gender of Respondents .....	31
4.2.2 Education Levels of the Respondents .....	31
4.2.3 Work Experience of the Respondents.....	32
4.3 Presentation and Discussion of Findings .....	33
4.3.1 Styles Used in Handling Employee Grievance .....	33
4.3.3 Respondents' Perceptions .....	35
4.3.4 Problems which Hinder Effective Management of Employee Grievance .....	37
4.3.5 Respondents Views Over what Should be Done .....	40
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>43</b>
5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	43
5.1 Introduction.....	43
5.2 Summary of Findings.....	43
5.3 Conclusion .....	46
5.4 Recommendations.....	47
5.5 Limitations of the Study.....	47
5.6 Areas for Further Studies .....	48
REFERENCES .....	49
APPENDICES: RESEARCH TOOLS .....	53

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents per Institution .....	31
Table 4.2: Education Level of Respondents at the UDSM and MUHAS.....	32
Table 4.3: Work Experience of the Respondents.....	32
Table 4.4: Styles used in Handling Employees' Grievances at UDSM and MUHAS .....	34
Table 4.5: Respondents' Perceptions .....	35
Table 4.6: Factors which Hinder Effective Management of Employees' Grievances.....	38
Table 4.7: Respondents Views Over What Should be Done .....	40

**LIST OF FIGURE**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing Independent and Dependent Variables of  
Employee Grievance ..... 19

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The prevailing diversity at many workplaces around the world in terms of age, gender, nationality, ethnic and religious background among employees requires an organized way of managing or solving employees' problems. This is particularly because when there is dissatisfaction on the part of the employee, communication becomes poor and misunderstanding is more likely to occur, which is likely to result into loss of morale and productivity of an employee, and in the end, that of the organization as a whole. According to Bemmels and Reshef (1991), in a specific group of employees grievances are in response to specific behaviours by the supervisors.

Meyer (1994), an employee grievance signifies that a manager's behaviour was inappropriate or the manager has failed to abide by the worker's right. Bemmels and Reshef (1991) indicated that in a specific group of employees, many grievances are in response to specific behaviours shown by their supervisors. Moreover, Katz *et al* (1993) argued that how employee grievances are identified and worked out, determined the possibility of reducing the productivity and displacement costs often associated with grievance processing, thereby enhancing the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the organization as a whole.

Studies show that a number of styles are applied in managing employee grievances. For instance, Daud (2011) shows that the most applied styles in managing employee grievances include integrating, compromising and dominating. Besides, Rahim and Magner (1995) argue that another style applied in handling employee grievance is the obliging style. To

them, the style involves low concern for self. In addition, they show that another style used in managing an employee's grievance is avoiding style. In the same vein, studies have further shown that if styles used in managing employee grievance, are well applied, they are significant remedy to the dissatisfactions shown by employees at their respective work places.

In this regard, Daud (2011) points out that the use of an effective approach in managing an employee grievance is essential to resolving employees' dissatisfaction fairly. The author adds that managing grievances just after it has occurred is important in order to deny the further construction of disputes. Mante-Meija & Enid (1991) argue that the choice of an effective way of managing an employee's grievance ensures justice in the management of employee grievance and helps managers to base their decisions on ethical codes of conduct. More importantly, Schakowsky and Slotsve (1992) and Tan (1994) argue that depends largely on the ability of managers and supervisors to recognize, diagnose, constructive use of approaches used in managing employee grievance and correct the causes of potential employee dissatisfaction before they become formal grievances.

To Ivancevich (2001), the use of appropriate style in managing employee grievance enables the supervisor to take every grievance seriously, gather all information available on the grievance, after weighing all the facts, and provide an answer to the employee who is voicing the grievance. Effective management of employee's grievance will enable the supervisor to resolve the grievance on a mutual understanding and move on to other matters. This study therefore assumes that there is need to investigate the styles applied in handling employee grievance in higher learning institutions in order to determine their influence on minimizing or fuelling employee grievances once applied.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Despite the University of Dar- Es- Salaam and Muhimbili university of health and allied Sciences being the oldest higher learning institutions in the country charged with responsible of developing competent human resource which would better. Manage what has been poorly managed by non Africans in our country.

The management of employee Grievance in the two institutions has remain a Challenge (Mkude, 2003).

This challenge has been evidenced by the fact that some employees have threatened to break their employment contract with public institutions in order to work with private institutions while others have decided to leave the teaching career to start a small business .by all accounts this situation have been caused by employee dissatisfactions over how the supervisors manage their grievances. in support of this observation ,Kamoche(1997) found that the unsatisfactory performance of most African public Organizations is due to inappropriateness of management practice and weak inefficient decision making, it is against this background that this study is focused on assessing how supervisors manage employee grievances at the UDSM and MUHAS,and its implications on employee performance.

## **1.3General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to examine how employee grievances are being handled in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania using the University of Dar es Salaam (Main Campus) and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) as case studies.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

The following specific objectives have been drawn from the general objective:

- (i) To identify style used at government higher learning institutions in handling employee grievance
- (ii) To explore employee perceptions about the way grievances is being handled
- (iii) To discover the factors which hinder effective handling of employees grievances
- (iv) To find out what should be done to effectively manage employees' grievance

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- 1) What are the styles used at higher learning institutions to handle employees' grievances?
- 2) What are your perceptions about the way the management handle your grievances?
- 3) What do you think are factors that hinder effective management of employees' grievance?
- 4) What should be done to effectively manage employees' grievances?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

A number of stakeholders will benefit from this study. In the first place, findings from this study will enable managers at all levels of decision-making in higher learning institutions to recognize the major factors for employee grievances in their respective institutions. Further, findings from this study will enable them to find out if the efforts they make in dealing with their employee grievances yield intended results or not and hence, take appropriate measures on the same.

In addition, the study will also unveil employees' perceptions about how their managers at all levels of decision-making manage their grievances. In the same vein, the study will

unveil the factors which hinder effective management of employee grievances in higher learning institutions. Last but not least, it is also expected that training institutions like universities will use the findings from this study as reference in understating the how higher learning institutions manage their employee's grievances.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Definition of Key Concepts**

##### **2.1.1 Grievance**

Rose (2004) defines grievance as any dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace expressed by employee in a formal way to his immediate supervisor. In the same vein, D'Cruz (1999) argues that grievance is a matter raised by employee to show dissatisfaction with management behaviour and is an attempt to effect changes. In addition, the author adds that employee grievance can be viewed as the process which involves an employee's attempt to show that she or he has suffered or been wronged, sometimes due to actions or decisions made by the manager acting on behalf of the organization.

The positive side of the above definitions of grievance is that they clearly state what grievance is. Also, some even provide factors which might lead to employee grievance at work places. However, they all fail to provide the extent to which employee grievance can affect employee's performance. As for this study, therefore, grievance can be viewed as a situation through which a particular employee shows his or her dissatisfaction concerning how he or she is being treated to his or her immediate supervisor for further action.

##### **2.1.2 Management**

Harold and Heinz (1990) define management as the art, or science which aims at achieving goals through people. They further show that because sometimes managers also supervise, therefore management can also be associated with making sure that employees do what they are supposed to do. According to the definition, management should be viewed as the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in groups, efficiently accomplish selected aims.

Generally, management should be associated with acquisition of competence as well as effectiveness in such areas as problem solving, administration, human resource management, and organizational leadership. As for this study, management should be viewed as the process through which managers achieve their entrusted duties and responsibilities through their subordinates in terms of managing employee problems, ensuring effective relations between the administration and employees; and ensuring that the organization aims at achieving intended objectives in either their respective departments or units.

The positive side of the definition is that it shows what management really is and what management is not by unveiling some of the areas covered by the process. The manager is, therefore, the dynamic, life-giving element in every business. Without the leadership of the manager, resources of production remain mere resources and never become production. In a competitive economy, the quality and performance of the managers determine the success of a business; indeed, they determine its survival.

## **2.2 Critical Theoretical Review**

According to Fisher (2010), a critical literature review is a review of literature that demands researchers to be skeptical of the literature she is reviewing and challenging his or her use of the literature he or she is reviewing. Fisher adds that literature review enables the researcher to build upon the work that has already been done in the field she or he is researching. Also, literature review enables the researcher to identify the useful material for the study. Saunders et al (2009) argues that critical review of the literature enables the researcher to develop a good understanding and insight into relevant previous research and the trends that have emerged. Therefore, through critical review of literature the researcher

will be able to critically define and discuss concepts, define theories by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and identify the inappropriateness to the study.

Stoner *et al* (1995) define a theory as the perspective with which people make sense of their world experiences. They add that a theory is a systematic grouping of concepts that are interdependent (mental images of anything formed by generalization from particulars) and principles (are generalizations or hypotheses that are tested for accuracy and appear to be true to reflect or explain reality) that give a framework to, or tie together, a significant area of knowledge.

Generally, there are a number of reasons why we should review management theory. First and foremost, management theories provide researchers with a stable direction for understanding what they experience and being able to identify what is relevant. Second, theories enable researchers to communicate efficiently and thus move into more and more complex relationships with other people. Third, theories challenge researchers to keep learning the environment which surrounds them.

### **2.2.1 Scientific Management Theory**

Olum (2004) argues that first management theory is what is popularly known as Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management. Frederick Taylor started the era of modern management in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; he was decrying the "awkward, inefficient, or ill-directed movements of men" as national loss. Taylor consistently sought to overthrow management "by rule of thumb" and replace it with actual timed observations leading to "the one best" practice. He also advocated the systematic training of workers in "the one best practice" rather than allowing them personal discretion in their tasks. He further believed that the workload would be evenly shared between the workers and management with management performing the science and instruction and the workers performing the labor, each group doing the work for which it was best suited. The strength

of the theory is its need to break down complex tasks into a many little tasks, and optimize the performance of the little tasks; hence, its stop-watch measured time trials. However, the theory has been criticized for its tendency to dehumanize the workers.

### **2.2.2 Systems Theory**

Olum (2004) argues that the systems theory has had a significant effect on management science and understanding organizations. He defines a system as a collection of unified part to accomplish an overall objective. The theory argues that if one part of the system is removed, the nature of the system is changed as well. A system should be looked at as having the following components. First, inputs which include resources such as raw materials, money, technologies, and people). Second, processes which include planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling. Third, outputs include products or services. Lastly, outcomes include enhanced quality of life or productivity for customers, and productivity. Therefore, systems share feedback among each of these four aspects of the system.

Despite the fact the systems theory seem quite essential, decades of management training and practices in the workplace have not followed this theory. It was only recently due to on-going changes facing organizations and how they operate, have educators and managers come to face this new way of looking at things. The strength of the systems theory in management is that it enables managers to look at the organization in a broader way. It also enables managers to interpret patterns and events in the workplace such as being able to recognize the various parts of the organization, and, in particular, the interrelations of the parts. The theory is linked to this study because it advises managers to appreciate the various parts which form part of their organizations such as human resources, motivation, processes which enable them to effectively achieve their intended objectives.

### **2.2.3 Behavioral Theory**

The key scholar under this category is Elton Mayo. The origin of behavioralism is the human relations movement that was a result of the Hawthorne Works Experiment carried out at the Western Electric Company in the United States of America that started in the early 1920s (1927-32). Experiments conducted by Elton Mayo and his associates disproved Taylor's beliefs that science dictated that the highest productivity was found in 'the one best way' and that way could be obtained by controlled experiment. The Hawthorne studies attempted to determine the effects of lighting on worker productivity. When these experiments showed no clear correlation between light level and productivity the experiments then started looking at other factors. These factors that were considered when Mayo was working with a group of women included rest breaks, no rest breaks, no free meals, more hours in the work-day/work-week or fewer hours in the workday/ work-week. With each of these changes, productivity went up. When the women were put back to their original hours and conditions, they set a productivity record.

The theory is based on the following assumptions. First, work satisfaction and hence performance does not only depend on monetary rewards, but it also depends on other factors such as working conditions and attitudes, communications, positive management response to employee problems and encouragement, working environment. Second, monetary reward is not the only condition for effective relations as well as employee performance. Third, highly positive responses to, for example, improvements in working environments (e.g. improved lighting, new welfare/rest facilities), and expressions of thanks and encouragement as opposed to the use of coercive strategies by managers and supervisors.

Last but not least, the influence of the peer group is very high, hence, the importance of informal groups within the workplace. The theory is linked to this study as it describes factors that may influence the existence or absence of dissatisfaction on the part of

employees as they are shown above. Systems theory and behavioural theories were used in this study to show the importance of both supervisors and employees for effective performance of any organization. The classical management theory was not used in this study because it does not recognize the role of employees in the survival of organizations or institutions. In the case of our study, the two theories were used to promote the role of employees and supervisors in the survival of both the UDSM and MUHAS.

### **2.3 General Discussion of the Topic**

Employee grievance has been defined as a way of expressing an employee's dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace shown by the employee to his or her immediate supervisor. In addition, employee grievance has been defined as the process which involves an employee's attempt to show that she or he has been mistreated based on actions or decisions made by the manager.

A grievance is also referred to as any discontent or feeling of unfairness and in the workplace, it should be pertaining to work. The roots of a grievance can be real or imaginary. For instance, grievances based on real or actual activities and events may include receiving information and data that are inaccurate or when employees are unhappy when there is a wage cut. The roots of grievances can also be imaginary, for example, a supervisor may feel the need to closely monitor an employee with weak work performance. If the supervisor fails to communicate his intention, the employee may perceive the supervisor's conduct as intrusive and overbearing. On the other hand, the other colleagues may perceive that the supervisor is exercising favouritism and being unfair. Such grievances are based on false perceptions and assumptions. In this study therefore, employee grievance meant the dissatisfaction regarding work and work place shown by employees and the UDSM and MUHAS. Scholars argue that in the workplace, there are two types of grievances: the general grievance and the individual grievance. On the one

hand, a general grievance is a grievance that affects a group of employees. They argue that examples of general grievances would be a wage cut or a retrenchment exercise that involves several employees or the entire workforce. The individual grievance, on the other hand, is a grievance that affects one employee and requires a one-to-one approach and requires the supervisor and employee to sit down and settle the problem. They also state that examples of individual grievances can be seen when an employee who feels discriminated in a promotion exercise or a case of sexual harassment. Scholars further argue that grievance can be caused by a number of factors. These include for instance low salaries, poor work conditions, poor relationships at the work place, unequal treatment, selfishness among employees, failure to involve employees in decision-making, lack of human resources management skills; to name just a few of them.

The management of employee grievances is not as simple as people could imagine because they need effective and constructive approaches. If not well managed, employee grievance can lead to loss of job morale among employees, poor performance, absenteeism, tardiness, loss of productivity and staff turnover. For example, cementing on this observation, Holt and Devore (2005) argued that approaches or styles used in managing employee's grievances greatly impact on the way they relate to one another in a particular organization.

Styles in handling employee's conflicts may give an impact in industrial relation culture (Holt & Devore, 2005). Avoidance and dominating styles are utilized by more centralized organizations in resolving grievances (Green, 1987). On the other hand, compromising, integrating or obliging styles are always used by more decentralizing in resolving grievances (Rose, 2004; Rahim, 1983). Scholars have constructed independent scales to measure five styles used in handling employees' grievances and have found that integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding are the commonly used styles in handling employee grievances.

An integrating style involves high concern for self as well as the other party involved in conflict. The style involves collaboration between an employee and his or her supervisor, which may involve, for instance openness, exchange of information and examination of differences, in order to reach an acceptable solution to both parties (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Thomas and Kilmann (1974) labeled this style as collaborating mode, which he referred to as involving the ability of supervisor to work with his or her subordinate to find a solution that should fully satisfy the concerns of both. This collaboration between two persons might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insight, with the goal of resolving some condition that would otherwise have them competing for resources, or confronting and trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

An obliging style involves low concern for self. This involves an obliging person attempts to emphasize commonalities which aim at satisfying the concern of the other party (Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style was named by Thomas and Kilmann (1974) as accommodating mode by describing it as a style that neglects one's concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. In accommodating style, managers might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's needs and prefer to yield another's point of view.

A compromising style involves moderate concern for self as well as the other party involved in a conflict. The style is associated with give-and-take or sharing whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. Compromising style also refers to splitting the difference, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground position (Rahim & Magner, 1995; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Dominating style involves high concern for self and low concern for the other party involved in the conflict. It has been identified with a win-lose orientation or with forcing behaviour to win position (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Thomas and Kilmann (1974) portrayed dominating style as power-oriented mode or competing style. A dominating manager always stands up with his or her rights, defending a position that his or her opinion is correct and simply trying to win. Lastly, avoiding style is associated with low concern for self as well as for the other party involved in conflict. The style is associated with withdrawal, passing-the-buck, sidestepping or “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” situations. This style takes the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Employee grievances can be avoided when managers apply constructive use of approaches which call for the ability of managers and supervisors to recognize, diagnose, and correct the causes of potential employee dissatisfaction before they become formal grievances. In addition to that, , the use of appropriate style in managing employee grievance enables the supervisor to take every grievance seriously, gather all information available on the grievance, after weighing all the facts, and provide an answer to the employee who is voicing the grievance (Tan, 1994; Ivancevich, 2001).

## **2.4 Empirical Study**

A study conducted by Hook *et al* (1996) on supervisor and manager styles in managing discipline and grievance. This study was included 91 supervisors and managers who were attending a weekend training course in human resource topics. In terms of methodology, three vignettes in terms of grievance situation were distributed the respondents in order to examine styles used in managing grievances. Situations in each vignette were varied in order to identify different solution styles used by respondents for different cases. The study found that “tell”, “tell and sell”, “tell and listen”, “ask and tell”, “problem solving” and

“ask and listen” were styles used in managing employee discipline and grievance. In this regard, the study discovered that the “telling” style was the style in which all the power was vested in the hands of the supervisors. The “ask and tell” approach was the approach where the subordinates did most of the talking. The “ask and tell” approach was very open and involved the employees having a greater degree of control over the interaction. In the “problem solving” style power and involvement were shared by both parties. In “tell and sell” approach the supervisor informed the employee of the decision that the supervisor has made and would then try to persuade the employee of the correctness of that decision.

Generally, findings of the study revealed that respondents preferred more participative styles when dealing with grievance. However, the study also found that when supervisors and managers perceived a situation that appeared as a direct threat to their authority, they reverted to a much more autocratic style which was first telling their subordinate their decision and then persuading them of its correctness. This study is linked to this study as because it highlights the styles used by supervisors and managers to manage discipline and grievance of their subordinates and their implications to the organizational survival.

A study conducted by Tjosvold and Morishima (1999) on the behavior and perceptions of individuals on grievance resolution outcomes. In terms of methodology the study used exploratory research design in collecting data for the study. Underpinned by theory of conflict resolution constructed by Deutsch (1949), this study has assumed that people believed their goals were positively interrelated (in that they could both be successful) and were able to manage conflict more effectively than those with competitive goals. The study found that managers used competitive and cooperative styles to manage their employees’ grievances. According to the study, competitive approach to managing employees’ grievances involved opposing and intransigent aspirations which aimed to promote a

political agenda. On the other hand, cooperative style in managing grievances generated flexible and open-minded discussion between the managers and employees.

The major reasons for cooperative goals included a shared understanding of the problem and its resolution, and union and management acceptance of each other's goal. Findings of the study revealed that in cooperative style of managing employees' grievances, respondents were confident that they could interact effectively and discuss grievance issues openly and constructively. In addition, cooperative style was correlated with positive effect, efficient resolution and a creative, high-quality solution. In contrast, competitive style diminished expectations of an effective and open-minded interaction. Competitive style was found to be negatively related to feelings, efficiency and quality.

The study recommended that managers should use cooperative style in resolving grievances because the approach yielded positive feelings, satisfaction for both the employee and management, and improved procedures. The study is also linked to the study because it discussed the two styles used in managing employees' grievances by suggesting the one that best suits the whole process of managing employee grievance.

McGrane *et al* (2005) have accomplished a study on one-to-one dispute resolution. The target population for the study included individual employees in the British Isles who worked in small office contexts. A total of 31 male and 57 female employees of managerial and non-managerial levels were recruited as respondents to this study. In terms of methodology the study used exploratory research design in collecting data for the study. In establishing one-to-one dispute resolution, McGrane and his colleagues have found that three methods of dispute management that were often used by managers and their employees. The methods were fight, flight and intervention. According to the study, fighting style focused on identifying a winner and a loser. This often took the form of an

employee invoking an organization's formal grievance procedure in which a dispute was investigated with high costs to all involved.

Flight was another method of dispute resolution that was commonly used. This occurred by avoiding an issue or transferring away from a problem. Intervention was the third method of dispute management that is typically used. In this method, employees requested that their line manager intervened directly and managed their dispute for them. However, the involvement of a third person in the management of the dispute could add to the problem. According to Bemmels and Resyef (1991), the intervention of third party in grievance resolution will drag the time period that will effect worker's frustration. Rahul and Deepati (1999) coded that third party normally was not familiar and lack of knowledge on issue raised by aggrieved employee. The study recommended that problems between an employee and his or her supervisor should not involve a third person who does not have a deeper understanding of the major cause of problem raised by the aggrieved employee. This study is linked to the present study because it unveils the differences between the various styles or approaches used in managing employee grievances.

A study carried out Karambayya and Brett (1989) on managing disputes between employees and managers. In terms of methodology, the study used descriptive research design in collecting data for the study. The study discovered that by using the varimax-rotated seven-factor solution, four different roles were determined as manager's behaviors in managing disputes. The first role was named inquisitorial role. Managers who took an inquisitorial role retained both process and outcome control for them. In this role managers imposed their own idea, made final decision and proposed their own idea.

The second role, according to the study, involved the mediational role. Mediational role enabled managers to ask their employee questions concerning conflicts, requested

proposals from employees and tried to incorporate their ideas into their employees' proposals. The third role represented the role known as procedural marshal. Managers taking this role described the dispute-handling procedures to be followed and strictly enforced those rules. The fourth role was the motivational role. In this role, managers always rely on motivational control by using threats and incentives. If the issue of dispute could not be settled at the meeting, managers will predict probable outcomes and exerted pressure to encourage a timely settlement. Despite the fact that the study did not recommend the suitable approach of managing employees' grievances, it is linked to this study because it has clearly discussed an unlimited number of approaches used to manage employee grievances in different circumstances.

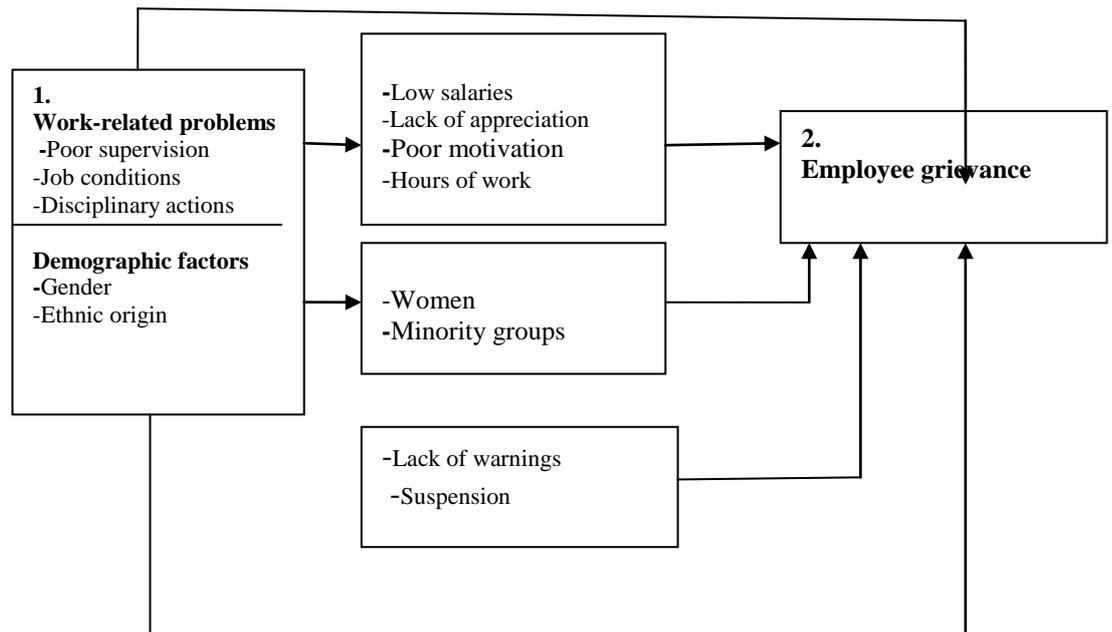
## **2.5 Research Gap**

The above review of the literature has shown a number of studies carried out on employee grievances. It has also shown the various styles or approaches used in managing employee grievances in different organizations. So far, few studies have been conducted in the country to examine styles used by supervisors and managers in managing grievances raised by their subordinates or fellow employees. It was against this background that the researcher intends to carry out this study in order to fill the identified research gap by investigating how employee grievances are being managed in selected government higher learning institutions in Dar- es- Salaam using the University of Dar-Es-Salaam and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Science as case studies.

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

### 1. Independent variables

### 2. Dependent variables



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing Independent and Dependent Variables of Employee Grievance**

Source: Author, 2012

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a conceptual framework explains the relationship among independent and dependent variables. They also state that a conceptual framework explains the possible connection between variables and answers the why questions. This study is guided by the framework (see figure 1) above; the assumption being that, both work-related factors such as poor supervision, job conditions, and disciplinary actions can be the major causes of employee grievance. In otherwords, they are the independent variables in the process of generating an employee's grievance.

Bamberger and Nahum-shami (2008) agreed with this observation when they argued that the need by supervisors to serve less as monitors and more as coaches and mentors; increases the impact on employee grievance behavior. In the same vein, they argued that other work-related factors for employee grievances included an unsafer work environment which exposes employees to occupational hazards as well as excessive work hours.

In the same line of thinking, they argued that excessive work hours is particularly relevant nowadays due to recent changes in the nature of work, whereby many employers recently seek to lower their labour costs by reducing staffing levels while increasing the flexibility of their remaining work force, thus placing increased temporal demands (manifested by increased hours of work) on their employees.

The framework also shows that demographic issues may also be a factor for an employee's grievance. These include such things as gender and ethnicity of the aggrieved employee. For instance, Duffy and Ferrier (2003) argued that employee grievance is common among female and ethnic minority workers relative to their male and ethnic majority peers in unconducive workplace conditions. These authors view such a relationship on two important grounds. First, it might be that certain unconducive work conditions are more common to demographically defined groups of employees. For example, the unconduciveness of temporal job pressures may be more common among women than their men, since family responsibilities tend to place greater restrictions on the flexibility of women to respond to employer demands to work overtime.

In addition, they further argued that another factor that explains the relationship between unconducive work conditions and employee grievances among women and minorities is their level of attachment to and trust for their managers. They argued that confidence in the interest and ability of an employee's manager to successfully pursue a grievance plays a

significant role in employee decision making regarding the utility of taking on grievance among women and ethnic minorities. Lastly, the framework shows that other factors such as warnings or suspension might occur when an employee fails to meet the performance or behavioural standards set by his or her institution or department.

In this case, discipline is viewed as a serious action imposed on an employee and, given the severity of disciplinary actions taken, organizations initiate grievances. Once the process through which employee grievance passes is identified and managed accordingly, organizations are more likely to get away with or decrease extent of employee grievances. Therefore, all the fore mentioned variables are linked to this study because, as revealed in the literature review, they are the major factors which influence the employee grievance in many work organizations.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

Saunders et al (2009) define a research paradigm as a way that a research uses to examine social phenomenon from which particular understandings of these phenomena can be gained and explanations attempted. This study was guided by the functionalist paradigm which uses objectivist and regulatory ways of looking at the world around us. Basing on the paradigm, the study will be concerned with providing explanations about the types of approaches used to manage employee grievances and develop a set of recommendations to

enable the organizational management deal effectively with employees' dissatisfactions. This paradigm has been adopted basing on the understanding that organizations are rational entities, in which rational explanations are needed to provide solutions to rational problems.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Basing on Fisher (2010) who argues that researchers willing to take an exploratory kind of design as a plan that will lead their studies, this study will apply an exploratory research design and semi-structured research tools. This means that, they study was carried out in a manner that should not presume to know the conclusions that were drawn from this study in otherwords what will be discovered by later by the study. The main reason of using an exploratory research design was to gain new insights on the causes of employee grievances, measures taken at all levels of decision-making to address employee grievance, employee perceptions about the way the management address their grievances, the factors which hinder effective management of employee grievance.

However, this research design according to Fisher has been criticised in the first place that it tends to create a patronizing relationship between the researcher and those being studied. Also, it has been criticised that either willingly or unwillingly those being studied may wish to mislead the researcher by telling him or her only the stories they know that the researcher would wish to hear from them. To guard against this, the researcher ensured that the study is carried out as intended and produces the intended results by collecting and analyzing data very carefully.

#### **3.2.1 Study Area**

The study was conducted at the University of Dar es Salaam and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Kinondoni district in Dar es Salaam. UDSM and MUHAS

were chosen because of they were expected to facilitate easier accessibility of the target population needed in this study. Further, the two higher learning institutions were chosen because of their location which was not difficult for the researcher.

### **3.2.2 Population Profile**

Saunders et al (2009) defines a study population as the full set of cases from which a sample is taken or drawn. Basing on that definition, the population of this study therefore included administrative , academic and technical staff of the two higher learning institutions namely, the UDSM and MUHAS. By the time of the study, the UDSM had 1127 academic staff, 1023 administrative staff, and 443 technical staff, making a total of 2593 staff, whereas MUHAS had 1531 academic staff, 724 administrative staff, and 557 technical staff, making a total of 2,812 staff.

### **3.2.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Purposive sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Saunders et al (2009) defines purposive or judgmental sampling as the sampling technique that enables the researcher to use his or her judgment to select the cases that would best enable him or her to answer researcher questions and meet his or her research objectives. Being an exploratory study, this study used purposive sampling technique in order to be able to select the right people who would provide the right information on the way employee grievance are being handled at both the UDSM and MUHAS.

Fisher (2010) defines sample as specific or limited number of conditions that a researcher wishes to study by defining it in much more precise manner. In this case, this is will be the specific number of higher learning institutions' employees who were studied. In addition, the author argues because the most prominent question raised by researchers while

designing their questionnaires is how many questionnaires should they distributed, the purpose a sample enables researcher to arrive at conclusion that are representative of the entire population being which has been selected in order to avoid involving everyone in the sample. In the same vein, Saunders *et al* (2009) argues that a sample enables the researcher to minimize the cost which could result from studying a large population.

He also states that sampling helps researchers to save time arguing that the process of organizing data becomes easily manageable if only a limited number of people are being studied. Henry (1994, quoted in Saunders *et al*, 2009) argues that using sampling makes the whole process of research accurate. He adds that the smaller number of cases for which a study needs to collect data means that more time will be spent to design and pilot the means or instruments used to collect data. Collecting data from a limited number of cases, the author states, means that the researcher was able to collect information that is more detailed. This study therefore, sampled its population in order to save time and collect detailed kind of information so as to produce an academically relevant work.

The population of this study included sixty-eight (68) staff from both the UDSM and MUHAS. This population included administrative and non-administrative staff. Administrative staff included heads of human resources departments and heads of departments. Non-administrative staff included teaching and non-teaching staff in the two institutions. Teaching staff included assistant lecturers, teaching assistants, and senior lecturers selected from various departments and colleges, while non-teaching staff included secretaries, accountants, and IT specialists. These 68 respondents were selected from as representatives of the two categories of respondents stated above though purposive sampling technique. They included 22 administrative staff and 46 non administrative staff from both the UDSM and MUHAS. Among these 10 administrative staff were from the UDSM, while 12 administrative staff were from MUHAS. Also, 27 teaching staff were

from MUHAS, whereas 19 were from the UDSM. This population was obtained through non-probability sampling technique explained below.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

This section presents the types of data which were used in this study. It also shows the techniques that were used to collect data which resulted into the realization of this work.

#### **3.3.1 Types of Data**

This section presents and discusses the types of data were used in this study as they are separately discussed below.

##### **3.3.1.1 Primary Data**

Saunders *et al* (2009) define primary data as data which results from the need to understand what people do as well as the frequency of their actions. That being the case, the researcher used both observation and interviews to collect primary data. Primary data consisted of the causes of employee grievance, measures taken at all levels of decision making to prevent employee grievance, employees' perceptions about the way their grievances are managed as well as the factors which hinder effective management of employee grievances. The major reason for using primary data was to gain a thorough understanding of how employee grievances are being managed in the selected higher learning institutions.

##### **3.3.1.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data are data that is derived from documentary review, which Fisher (2010) defines as information collected through the review of a number of sources such as texts and documents. Saunders *et al* (2009) define secondary data as data a researcher obtains

from written documents such as administrative and public records, books, journal and magazine articles and newspapers.

This study also used the Open University of Tanzania main library as another source for secondary data. This study used secondary data for the following reasons. First and foremost, to support the critical literature review made prior to data collection. Second, secondary data enabled the researcher to place her findings within a more general context and triangulate her findings.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection Methods**

This section presents and discusses the types of techniques that were used during data collection.

#### **3.3.2.1 Interviews**

Saunders *et al* (2009) defines interviews as a purposeful discussion between two or more people. They argue that interviews enable researchers gather valid and reliable data which are relevant to their research questions and objectives. This study used semi-structured types of interviews as one of the data collection methods. The use of semi-structured interviews is based on the assumption that the researcher would have a list of themes and questions that would be covered during the interviews. Basing on this, questions varied from interview to interview whereby some questions were omitted in certain interviews and additional questions were added depending on the type of questions.

In addition, basing on Fisher (2010) another necessary concern that the researcher dealt with was to identify the areas which were covered during the interview and ensure that they are organized into the order of priority. Because the researcher was well aware that due to uncontrolled reasons she could fail to cover as much ground in an interview as intended, she has identified issues less important issues which might be abandoned because her key

informants were selected through purposive sampling. Therefore, interviews involved those who had answers to the questions the researcher wished to ask. Also, the researcher administered all the interview schedules alone because delegating the task to other people would result into lack of seriousness during data collection process. These interview schedules were administered to all the categories of the respondents stated above.

### **3.3.2.2 Questionnaires**

Saunders et al (2009) defines a questionnaire as all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. They argue that questionnaires are an efficient way through which the researcher collects responses from a large sample prior to quantitative analysis. This study decided to use questionnaire as the secondary data collection method in order to be able to obtain quantitative data which were explained through qualitative method. In that respect, only one type of questionnaire was used for this study.

The questionnaire sought answers from both supervisors and employees on the different styles used to manage employee grievances, employees' perceptions of the way supervisors manage their grievances, problems which hinder effective management of employees' grievances; and what should be done to effectively manage employees' grievances. Further, a questionnaire was used to collect data based on the assumption that respondents would have more time to express their views and opinions regarding the how employees' grievances are handled at government higher learning institutions

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Fisher (2010) defines data analysis as the process through which the researcher puts data he or has collected in order by summarizing, précising it and putting it into categories. Therefore, after collecting data, data collected through questionnaires were coded using

numerical codes. After data has been coded, the researcher entered them into the computer by ensuring that the data were be entered correctly. In order to obtain quantitative data Statistical Packages for Social Scientists computer software was used.

### **3.5 Validity of Data**

Kothari (2004) argues that data is valid when the instrument used to collect that particular data; in this case, data collection techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, will measure what they are supposed to measure. In addition, according to Fisher (2010), data is valid when concepts and terms that a researcher will use to analyse and describe his or her research represents the purpose of his or her study. Saunders *et al* (2009) views validity of data as concerned with whether the study findings are rarely about what they appear to be about. Basing on Fisher and Kothari's explanations, in order to ensure that data that were collected in this study is valid, the researcher will consider the following. First and foremost, the researcher ensured that the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data he or she has collected are thoroughly discussed and logically presented. Secondly, appropriate research techniques were adequately and competently used so that they can produce findings that will be reliably and will reflect the purpose of the study. It should then be noted that this validity of data is necessary because it would enable the reader find findings from this study credible.

### **3.6 Reliability of Data**

According to Kothari (2004) data is reliable when the instruments used to collect them will be able to provide consistent results. Saunders *et al* (2009) defines reliability of data as the extent to which techniques used to collect data or to analyse data will produce consistent results. According to Easterby-Smith *et al* (2008, quoted in Saunders et al, 2009) reliability of data can also be observed by asking the following questions. First, will the instruments

used to collect data produce same results on similar occasions? Second, will similar observations be reached by other researchers? Lastly, is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data? Basing on the above explanations, the researcher ensured that instruments that used to collect data were able to produce the same results if used by other researchers.

### **3.7 Ethical Issues**

Cooper and Schindler (2008, quoted in Saunders *et al*, 2009) defines ethics as the norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others. Saunders et al (2009) associate research with questions about how a researcher formulates and clarifies his or her research topic, designs his or her research and gains access to data, collects data, processes data, analyses data and writes up his or her findings in a moral and responsible manner. Basing on the above explanations, the researcher ensured that she gets a research clearance letter from the office of the Vice-Chancellor which enabled her to effectively conduct her study in the selected districts. The researcher will also seek approval letters from the Regional and Districts' Commissioners' offices for purposes of validity. Therefore, the researcher ensured that she followed formal ethical approvals for her research to ensure she went in accordance with all the prescribed ethical standards before she began the process of data collection.

### **3.8 Establishing Rapport**

The aim of the study is to examine the styles or approaches used in the selected higher learning institutions to manage employee's dissatisfactions. Employee grievance has been defined as a way of expressing an employee's dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace shown by the employee to his or her immediate supervisor. In addition, a conceptual framework has been developed to show how the researcher understands the

causes of an employee grievance. Also, a critical literature review was done to highlight a number of management theories were discusses as well as their link to the study. The study will be guided by the functionalist paradigm to understand social realities whereby interviews and questionnaires will be used as data collection techniques.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents, analyzes and discusses respondents' responses about the assessment of employee grievances handling at the UDSM and MUHAS. Data processing and analysis processes were carried out through Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) computer software. Among these 10 administrative staff were from the UDSM, while 12 administrative staff were from MUHAS. Also, 27 teaching staff were from MUHAS, whereas 19 were from the UDSM. Findings were described through simple descriptive statistics, which included tables, frequencies and percentages. Further explanations are provided concerning secondary data sources.

#### **4.2 Characteristics of Respondents**

This section presents and analyses characteristics of the respondents who were involved in this study. This study thought it was appropriate to consider characteristics of the

respondents. The social characteristics of the respondents so as to understand deeply why some issues observed during the time of the study occurred the way they did and their implications to institutional performance. The characteristics considered in this study included gender of the respondents, education level as well as work experience.

#### 4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The aim of considering the gender of the respondents was to find out the extent to which men and women staffs at the UDSM and MUHAS were aware of how employee grievances are handled. Respondents' responses are presented in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents per Institution**

Gender of Respondents	Institution		Frequency	Valid Percent
	UDSM	MUHAS		
Male	14	13	27	39.8
Female	20	21	41	60.2
<b>Total</b>			<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field data, 2012

Table 4.1 reveals that 27 respondents (39.8%) were male, whereas 41 respondents (60.2%) were female. This shows that majority of respondents in this study were female followed by male respondents.

#### 4.2.2 Education Levels of the Respondents

This study considered the education level of the respondents was to examine the extent to which education levels enabled staff at MUHAS and UDSM

**Table 4.2: Education Level of Respondents at the UDSM and MUHAS**

<b>Educational level of respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
University	28	41.2
Secondary	21	30.9
Primary	11	16.2
College	8	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field data, 2012**

Table 4.2 shows that, 28 respondents (41.2%) were university graduates. 21 respondents (30.9%) completed secondary education. 11 respondents (16.2%) were standard seven leavers, while 8 respondents (11.7%) completed college education. This shows that majority of employees in the selected institutions had high level of academic achievement which could enable them to be aware of the way employees grievances are handled in their institutions.

#### **4.2.3 Work Experience of the Respondents**

This study considered the work experience of respondents was to find out how long respondents had worked at the UDSM and MUHAS. Work experiences of the respondents are presented in table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3: Work Experience of the Respondents**

<b>Work experience of respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
---------------------------------------	------------------	----------------------

6-12 months	29	42.7
1-5 years	16	23.5
6-10 years	12	17.7
1-5 months	6	8.8
10 years and above	5	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field data, 2012

Table 4.3 shows that 29 respondents (42.7%) have worked with the UDSM and MUHAS between 6 and 12 months. 16 respondents (23.5%) have worked with the UDSM and MUHAS between 1 and 5 years. 12 respondents (17.7%) have worked with the two institutions between 6 and 10 years. 6 respondents (8.8%) have worked between, 1 and 5 months, followed by 5 respondents (7.3%) have worked for 10 years and above. This shows that respondents had sufficient experience that enabled them to make a critical assessment about the way their supervisors handle their grievances.

### **4.3 Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

This section presents and discusses data on the way employee grievances are being handled at the UDSM and MUHAS. These data were collected through open and closed-ended questions which helped to assess respondents understanding of the way their immediate supervisors handle their problems.

#### **4.3.1 Styles Used in Handling Employee Grievance**

Under this item the study aimed to obtain respondents' responses about the style used by immediate supervisors at UDSM and MUHAS on daily basis to handle their subordinates' grievances. Respondents' responses are shown in table 4.4

**Table 4.4: Styles used in Handling Employees' Grievances at UDSM and MUHAS**

<b>Style Used to Handle Employee Grievances</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
We always exchange ideas and opinions about how to solve the grievances (integrating approach)	36	53.0
They always impose their ideas (dominating approach)	32	47.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field data, 2012**

Findings in Table 4.4 reveal that, 36 respondents (53.0%) pointed out that supervisors used integrating approach in trying to solve their grievances, followed by 20 respondents (47.0%) who revealed that their supervisors were very dominating in trying to find the solution to their grievances. This implies that some supervisors at both the UDSM and MUHAS used integrating approach while others used an intimidating approach in trying to solve employees' grievances.

As revealed in Table 4.4 above, 36 respondents (53.0%) pointed out that supervisors used integrating approach in trying to solve their grievances. When the researcher needed further explanations about this, respondents stated that supervisors used collaborative approach in solving employees' grievances. In this regard, respondents further indicated that they show greater concern for the problems facing their employees through exchanging ideas on how to solve the dissatisfaction, being open and willing to listen to their employees problems, and trying to settle the differences. This observation agrees with Rahim and Magner (1995) who argues that integrating style of handling employees' grievances should involve high concern for self as well as the other party involved in conflict.

According to the Rahim and Magner (1995), the style should involve collaboration between parties, for example openness while discussing the cause of the grievance, exchange of

information and examination of differences in order to reach an acceptable solution to both parties. However this study found that, despite the fact that majority of respondents stated that their supervisors used integrating style in solving their grievances, still some respondents were not happy about the way supervisors worked on the conclusions reached during the discussion on how to settle the grievance.

In addition, 32 respondents (47.0%) revealed that supervisors used an intimidating approach in handling employee's grievances. In trying to explain this, respondents stated that during the discussion on how to solve the problem facing an employee, supervisors always tend to defend what they perceive to be right and try to win and sometimes do not want to listen to the concern of the aggrieved employee. Consequently, employees do not see the importance of tabling their grievances to their immediate supervisors so that they can be worked on accordingly. This observation agrees with Thomas and Kilmann (1974) who argued that a dominating manager always stands up with his or her rights, defending a position that his or her opinion is correct and simply trying to win.

#### **4.3.3 Respondents' Perceptions**

Under this item the study aimed to obtain respondents' assessment (perceptions) of the way supervisors handle their grievances. Respondents' responses are shown in table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.5: Respondents' Perceptions**

<b>Respondents' Perceptions of the way Supervisors Handle their Grievances</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Moderate	31	45.6
Not Effective	16	23.6
Effective	10	14.8

Highly effective	7	10.2
Not sure	4	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field data, 2012**

Findings in Table 4.5 reveal that, 31 respondents (45.6%) indicated that the way their supervisors solve their grievances was moderate. 16 respondents (23.6%) revealed that the way supervisors solved their grievances was not effective. 10 respondents (14.8%) stated that the way supervisors solved their grievances was effective, followed by 7 respondents (10.2%) who stated that the way supervisors solved their grievances was highly effective. 4 more respondents (5.8%) indicated that they were not sure about how supervisors handled employee grievances. This implies that respondents at both the UDSM and MUHAS had their own assessment of the way supervisors dealt with their grievances as demonstrated above.

Table 4.5 above shows that, 31 respondents (45.6%) indicated that the way their supervisors solve their grievances was moderate. In trying to explain this, respondents reported that this was due to the fact that many of their grievances were not handled to their higher satisfaction. These respondents noted that despite some problems associated with the commitment of their supervisors towards handling their subordinates' grievances, their supervisors are striving to ensure that they found lasting solutions to the problems facing their subordinates.

Besides, 16 respondents (23.6%) revealed that the way supervisors solved their grievances was not effective. These respondents indicated that because some supervisors believed in an intimidating style, they tend to make the aggrieved employees feel they are the ones

whom should be blamed for the problem instead of trying to settle the problem in more collaborative manner. Respondents further stated that lack of human resources management skills among supervisors was the major factor for the attitudes shown by their supervisors in handling employee grievances. This observation contradicts with Ivancevich (1998) who argued that organizations prefer satisfied employees simply because such employees make the work environment more pleasant.

Also, 10 respondents (14.8%) stated that the way supervisors solved their grievances was effective. These respondents stated that they appreciated the way supervisors handled employee grievances because they aimed at looking for lasting solutions to problems facing their subordinates. This observation is supported by Byars and Rue (2006) who argues that job satisfaction has a positive impact on turnover, absenteeism, tardiness, grievances, and strikes.

In the same vein, 7 respondents (10.2%) revealed that the way supervisors solved their grievances was highly effective. Likewise, these respondents appreciated the way supervisors managed problems among their subordinates. However, this study found that majority of employees complained about the way supervisors managed their grievances because the process was to a larger extent one sided. Lastly, 4 more respondents (5.8%) indicated that they were not sure about how supervisors handled employee grievances. These respondents indicated that they were not aware of what it meant by employee grievance and hence did not know anything about the styles used in managing their grievances. This study found that low level of academic achievement among these employees was at the root of their ignorance of employee grievance and how they are being managed.

#### **4.3.4 Problems which Hinder Effective Management of Employee Grievance**

Under this item the study aimed to obtain respondents' responses on factors which hinder effective management of their grievances. Respondents' responses are presented in table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Factors which Hinder Effective Management of Employees' Grievances**

<b>Problems which Hinder Effective Management of Employees' Grievances</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Lack of Human Resources Management (HRM) skills	24	35.3
Bureaucratic procedures	20	29.4
Selfishness	10	14.7
Fear to be demotion and terminated	8	11.7
Unequal relationship between supervisors and subordinates	6	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field data, 2012**

Findings in Table 4.6 demonstrate that, 24 respondents (35.3%) revealed that lack of human resources skills among supervisors was the first problem. 20 respondents (29.4%) stated that the bureaucratic procedures in handling employees' grievances was the second problem. 10 respondents (14.7%) indicated that selfishness among supervisors was the third problem. 8 respondents (11.7%) reported that fear among employees to be demoted or terminated was the fourth problem, followed by 6 respondents (8.9%) who noted that unequal relationship between supervisors and subordinates was the last problem. This implies that a number of problem hinder effective handling of employee grievances at both the UDSM and MUHAS as shown above.

Table 4.6 above reveals that, 24 respondents (35.3%) revealed that lack of human resources skills among supervisors was the first problem. In trying to explain this, respondents stated that due to lack of human resources management skills, some supervisors fail to respond

adequately to the problems facing their subordinates. According to them, human resources management skills on the part of supervisors should include good communication skills on the part of supervisors, which should include for instance, ability of the supervisors to listen to problems aired by their subordinates; use of polite language; involving their subordinates in decision-making of anything that directly touches their lives; ability to relate equally with their employees irrespective of their level of academic achievement, gender and work experience, the list is long. However, this study found that not all supervisors lacked professional human resources management skills. But this encourages public higher learning institutions to ensure that they recruit professional human resources managers in order to get away with this.

Additionally, 20 respondents (29.4%) stated that bureaucratic procedures were the second problem. These respondents revealed that unnecessary bureaucratic processes were another problem hindering effective handling of employee grievances. In this regard, respondents stated that it was not easier for employees to meet the high level of decision-making in order to inform them about their problems. According to them, this situation was mainly due to the fact that because immediate supervisors did not allow them to meet higher authorities under the excuse that higher authorities have a lot of commitments. Alternatively, they have delegated minor employee problems to immediate supervisors.

Moreover, 10 respondents (14.7%) indicated that selfishness among supervisors was another problem hindering effective handling of employee grievances. In respect to this, respondents explained that sometimes supervisors did not take into consideration the interests of their subordinates during the process of trying to solve the problems which they are facing, this being the major reason why their supervisors were unable to come up with an appropriate to the problem faced by employees. 8 respondents (11.7%) reported that fear among employees to be demoted or terminated was the fourth problem. Some respondents

indicated that sometimes supervisors should not be viewed as hindrances towards effective handling of problems faced by their fellow employees.

Elaborating on this, respondents revealed that some of their fellow employees were not ready to air their grievances to their supervisors for fear of being demoted or terminated; hence, blaming those who used to air their grievances. Lastly, 6 respondents (8.9%) revealed that unequal relationship between supervisors and subordinates was the last problem. In this respect, respondents indicated that the unequal relationship between them and their immediate supervisors made it difficult for them to tell their problems. According to them, equal relationship would facilitate effective handling of their grievances. This implies that the two selected higher learning institutions have a number of factors which hinder effective handling of employee grievances, hence, leading to loss of job morale and poor performance among some employees.

#### **4.3.5 Respondents Views Over what Should be Done**

Under this item the study aimed to obtain respondents' opinions about what should be done to so that both the UDSM and MUHAS can effectively handle their employees' grievances.

Respondents' opinions are demonstrated in Table 4.7

**Table 4.7: Respondents Views over What Should be Done**

<b>Respondents views over what should be done to effectively handle employee grievance</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Recruitment of professional HRM	26	38.2
Review available remuneration schemes	22	32.4
Reduce bureaucratic procedures in managing	11	16.2

employee grievances		
Advocate mutual respect between supervisors and subordinates	9	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field data, 2012**

Findings in Table 4.7 indicate that, 26 respondents (38.2%) suggested that both the UDSM and MUHAS should recruit professional HRMs. 22 respondents (32.4%) suggested that the two institutions should review their remuneration schemes. 11 respondents (16.2%) suggested that they should reduce bureaucratic procedures in solving employee problems. 9 respondents (13.2%) ported that suggested that both supervisors and subordinates should build the culture of mutual respect. This implies that employees knew what should be done allow the lower levels of management at both the UDSM and MUHAS effectively handle problems faced by their employees.

Table 4.7 above indicates that, 26 respondents (38.2%) suggested that both the UDSM and MUHAS should recruit professional HRMs. In this regard, respondents stated that both the UDSM and MUHAS administration should make sure that they recruit well-qualified human resources managers. According to them, recruiting well-qualified human resources managers will play a fundamental role in minimizing the rate of employee grievances not only in the selected public higher learning institutions but for their constituent colleges, hence, increase employees' job morale and improve their performance.

Furthermore 22 respondents (32.4%) suggested that the two institutions should review their remuneration schemes. Respondents stated that in order for the UDSM and MUHAS to minimize grievances among their employees, they should design which should at reviewing the structures of their remuneration schemes so that they can meet the needs of all

categories of employees. However, respondents doubted that this might take a lot of time because of lack of commitment observed in among some supervisors whom should take problems faced by their subordinates ahead.

More importantly, 11 respondents (16.2%) suggested that they should reduce bureaucratic procedures in solving employee problems. These respondents revealed that bureaucracy in solving employees problems observed among some supervisors should be adequately dealt with by higher levels of administration, in order to effectively reduce the rate of grievances among subordinate employees. Lastly, 9 respondents (13.2%) ported that suggested that both supervisors and subordinates should build the culture of mutual respect. According to them, mutual relationship would build the culture of friendship and togetherness between supervisors and employees.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the study summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations of this study. It also suggests areas for further research. The general objective of this study was to examine how employee grievances are being handled at the UDSM (main campus) and MUHAS. Specifically, this study aimed to find out factors which cause employee grievance, identify style used at the departmental level of decision-making to address employee grievance, find out employee perceptions about the way management handle their grievances, discover the factors which hinder effective handling of employee grievance, explore what should be done to effectively handle employee grievance. To achieve these objectives, data were collected from 68 staff out of which 22 were administrative, while 46 were teaching staff. Among these 10 administrative staff were from the UDSM, while 12 administrative staff were from MUHAS. Also, 27 teaching staff were from MUHAS, whereas 19 were from the UDSM.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The first specific objective aimed at identifying the style used in handling employee grievances. On the one hand, this study found that majority of supervisors used integrating approach in trying to solve their employees' grievances. In this respect, the study found that supervisors used collaborative approach in solving employees' grievances through exchanging ideas on how to solve the dissatisfaction, being open and willing to listen to problems faced by their employees and try to settle the differences.

Further, the study found that another group of supervisors use intimidating approach in handling problems faced by their subordinates. This study found that in the course of trying

to solve employees' grievances, supervisors always tend to defend what they perceive to be right and try to win and sometimes do not want to listen to the concern of the aggrieved employee, which makes employees do not realise the importance of tabling their grievances to their immediate supervisors so that they can be appropriately managed. However this study found that, despite the fact that majority of respondents stated that their supervisors used integrating style in solving their grievances, still some respondents were not happy about the way supervisors worked on the conclusions reached during the discussion on how to settle the grievance.

The second specific objective aimed at examining how respondents perceive the way supervisors handle their grievances. The study found that respondents perceived the way their supervisors handled their grievances to be moderate, effective, highly effective, and not effective. Those who stated that the handling of their grievances was moderate revealed that this was due to the fact that many of their grievances were not handled to their higher satisfaction. Also, the study found that, the way supervisors solved their grievances was not effective because some supervisors believe in an intimidating style, which makes the aggrieved employees feel they are the ones to be blamed for the problem instead of trying to settle the problem in more collaborative manner. This was mainly caused by lack of human resources management skills among supervisors.

Also, the study found that the way supervisors solved their employees' grievances was effective because supervisors aimed at looking for lasting solutions to problems facing their subordinates. In the same vein, the study revealed that the way supervisors solved their grievances was highly effective. Likewise, respondents stated they were happy with the way supervisors handled their problems. However, this study found that majority of employees complained about the way supervisors managed their grievances because the process was to a larger extent one sided. Lastly, the study found that some respondents not

sure about how supervisors handled employee grievances because they were not aware of what it meant by employee grievance and hence did not know anything about the styles used in handling their grievances. This study found that low level of academic achievement among these employees was at the root of their ignorance of employee grievance and how they are being handled.

The third specific objective aimed at discovering problems which hinder effective handling of employee grievance. This study found that lack of human resources management skills, bureaucratic procedures, selfishness, and unequal relationship between supervisors and employees. In the case of lack of human resources management skills, this study found that, due to lack of human resources management skills, some supervisors fail to respond adequately handled the problems facing their subordinates. However, this study found that not all supervisors lacked professional human resources management skills. But this encourages public higher learning institutions to ensure that they recruit professional human resources managers in order to get away with this.

In terms of bureaucratic procedures, this study found that it was not easier for employees to meet the high level of decision-making in order to inform them about their problems. The study also found that selfishness which manifested itself when supervisors failed to consider the interests of their subordinates while trying to solve their problems. In terms of fear to be demoted and terminated, this study found that sometimes supervisors should not be viewed as hindrances towards effective managed of problems faced by their fellow employees because sometimes some employees are not ready to air their grievances to their supervisors for fear of being demoted or terminated. Lastly, unequal relationship between supervisors and subordinates made it difficult for employees to tell their problems to their supervisors. This implied that the two selected higher learning institutions have a number of factors which hinder effective handling of employee grievances.

The fourth and last specific objective aimed to explore respondents' views about what should be done in order effectively handle employee grievances. This study found that in order to effectively manage employees' grievances the UDSM and MUHAS should recruit professional HRMs, review their remuneration schemes, reduce bureaucratic procedures in solving employee problems, and both supervisors and subordinates should build the culture of mutual respect. In terms of recruiting professional HRMs, this study found that recruiting well-qualified human resources managers will play a fundamental role in minimizing the rate of employee grievances not only in the selected higher learning institutions. Moreover, the study found that both the UDSM and MUHAS should design strategies which should aim at reviewing the structures of remuneration schemes so that they can meet the needs of all categories of employees. In terms of reducing bureaucratic procedures, bureaucracy in solving employees' problems should be adequately dealt with in order to reduce the rate of grievances among employees. Lastly, mutual relationship between supervisors and employees would build the culture of friendship and togetherness.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Basing on the summary of findings stated above, this study concluded that:

- (i) Two types of styles are being used by supervisors at both the UDSM and MUHAS in handling employees' grievances. However, this study found that majority of supervisors use integrating approach in managing problems faced by their subordinates as compared to dominating style.
- (ii) A number of problems hinder effective handling of employee grievances at both the UDSM and MUHAS. These problems include lack of human resources skills among supervisors, bureaucratic supervisors, selfishness, fear among employees to be demoted or terminated, and unequal relationship between

supervisors and subordinates. Therefore, appropriate actions should be taken to ensure that these problems are worked out.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Basing on the conclusion above, this study recommended the following:

1. Both the UDSM and MUHAS should ensure they recruit well-qualified human resources managers. These will enable these public institutions reduce the rate of employee grievances observed in this study as well as attract many teaching and non-teaching staff to work with these well-reputed higher learning institutions in our country.
2. The UDSM and MUHAS management should ensure that both qualified and unqualified employees are equally treated. This would enhance the sense of collaboration and togetherness and belongingness among their employees.
3. The UDSM and MUHAS management should ensure they work harder to address the challenges identified throughout this study which culminated into unprecedented loss of morale among employees, loss of productivity, poor performance of employees, loss of credibility, and job dissatisfaction among employees.
4. The UDSM and MUHAS should review their remuneration schemes so that they can enable their employees meet their basic needs. This will enable them not only to meet the basic needs of their employees but also to go on retaining the existing teaching and non-teaching staff.

#### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted at kinondoni district in Dar-Es-Salaam.the study was limited by number of factors. the factors include limited understanding among

employees of the styles used in managing their grievance which are integrative, compromising, among others. Some respondents were unable to provide detailed information on these styles. Other limitations include failure by some respondents to honour the agreed time for interviews. However the researcher ensured that the study is conducted according to the university timetable.

### **5.6 Areas for Further Studies**

This study focused at the two public higher learning institutions namely, the UDSM and MUHAS located in Dar es Salaam. Therefore, similar studies should be conducted in other public higher learning institutions or their constituent colleges located in other regions of the country in order to facilitate establishment of reliability of the findings obtained by this study and the conclusions which came along.

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## APPENDICES: RESEARCH TOOLS

### A.QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES

I am **Jane Mubezi**, student at the Open University of Tanzania pursuing a Masters Degree of in fulfilment of my studies. I am conducting a study on the “*Examination of Styles used in Handling Employees’ Grievances in Public Higher Learning Institutions in Tanzania: The Case Study of the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in Dar es Salaam.*” I kindly request your sincere ideas with regard to the topic under study by filling in the questionnaire. I promise that the response of the questionnaire will be anonymous and confidential.

#### *Instructions*

Mark with a tick across the provided options that exactly or closely represent your answer. If you have comment on any question you are allowed to write in any space and indicate the question or section number.

*For more information, kindly contact Mrs. Jane Mubezi Email:*

**SECTION ONE: Personal Information**

1. Gender

Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Education Status

a. Primary education ( ) b. Secondary ( ) c. University ( )  
 other.....

3. Work experience

a. 1-5 months ( ) b. 6-12months ( ) c. 1-5 years ( ) d. 6-10years ( ) 10 years  
 and above

**Section two: Styles used at the Higher learning institutions to handle employee grievance**

4. Are there any measures taken to address employee grievances in your department?

Yes ( ) No ( )

5. If yes, would you please tick the appropriate styles in the table provided below?

Integrating	Compromising	Avoiding	Intimidating

6. To what extent have those measures been effective in addressing employee grievance?

Greater extent	Lower extent	Moderate	Not effective

**1=Greater extent; 2=Lower extent; 3=Moderate; 4=Not effective**

7. What would you suggest to improve the measures taken to address employee grievances?

.....

**SECTION TWO: Employee perceptions about the way the management respond to their grievances**

<i>How do you perceive the way supervisors handle your grievances</i>	Effective	Highly effective	Not sure	Moderate	Not effective
1. How do you perceive the way the management responds to your grievances?					
2. How do you perceive the way supervisors strive to minimize the rate of employee grievances?					
3. How would you generally characterize the way the management responds to employee grievance					

**1=Effective; 2=Highly effective; 3=Not sure; 4=Moderate; 5=Not effective**

**Section three: Factor that hinder effective management of employee grievances**

1. Are there any factors that hinder effective management of employee grievances?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2. If yes would you please list them in the provided below?

.....

.....

.....

3. If no, explain why.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

16. What does the management do to deal with those problems?

.....  
.....  
.....

***Section four: What should be done to effectively manage employee grievances***

17. Is there any need for higher learning institutions to find ways of effectively handling employees' grievances?

Yes ( )      No ( )

18. What do you think you be done so as to effectively handle employee grievances?

.....  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

**B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Name of the department/employee
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Education level
5. What do you understand by the term employee grievance?
6. What does the department do to deal with employee grievance?
7. What do you do as the head of the department to minimize employee grievance?
8. What is your intention in trying to deal with employee grievance in your department?
9. How many times have you been involved managing employee grievance?
10. To what extent has the university management adequately dealt with employee grievance?
12. What are the measures taken to manage employee grievance?
13. Are employees satisfied with the way the management manages their grievances?
14. What are the possible challenges encountered in managing employee grievances?
15. What do you do to overcome them?