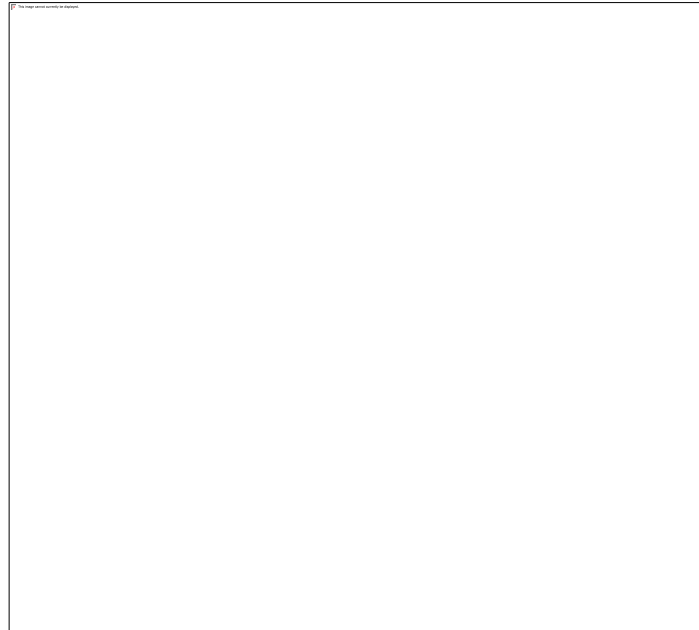# BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

ANALYSING THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ON STRATEGIC CHANGE MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF HARARE CITY COUNCIL.

B201100B

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

HONOURS DEGREE IN BACHELOR OF HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

(HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT)

JUNE 2024

DECLARATION

I, B201100B declare that this research project is my work and has not been copied from any source without acknowledgment. All sources of information have been duly acknowledged and cited. Any assistance received from other individuals or organizations has been acknowledged in the dissertation. I understand the consequences of plagiarism and certify that all content in this dissertation is original and has not been submitted for any other degree. I take full responsibility for the content and findings presented in this dissertation.

Signature: …………………...

Date: 07/06/24

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my late parent Mr and Mrs Masisimani and also thank God for allowing me to be part of this loving and caring family. Special mention to my loving husband Tatenda Rwizi, my sisters Priscilla and Stacy and my brothers Nicole and Leon Masisimani for their unwavering support through this research works. Your constant encouragement even when I thought I could not make it has bought me this far. I love you all, thank you so much and thus I dedicate this research to you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

List of abbreviations

HR Human Resources

HRM Human Resources Management

CONTENTS

Abstract

This mixed-methodology study explores the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the dynamics of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management. Despite a semblance of mutual respect, the study reveals precarious communication and a pervasive sense of under appreciation among employees. These findings highlight significant challenges in employee relations that require urgent attention and intervention. The research identifies key factors influencing employee-management relations, including communication, leadership style, organizational culture, political dynamics, work-life balance, and employee empowerment. These elements collectively shape the complex landscape of employee relations within the municipality, indicating the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the underlying issues effectively. Additionally, the study examines the strategies and practices employed by the Harare City Council to manage strategic change. These include employee participation in decision-making, establishing effective communication channels, organizing workshops and retreats, initiating employee motivation programs, and employing varied leadership styles. These strategies reflect the council's efforts to adapt to changing circumstances and create a supportive environment conducive to organizational growth and development. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the intricacies of employee relations within the Harare municipality. It emphasizes the necessity of addressing communication gaps, fostering a supportive organizational culture, and empowering employees. The findings offer guidance for policymakers, managers, and stakeholders to enhance employee engagement, improve organizational effectiveness, and promote sustainable development within the Harare City Council.

Key words: Employee Relations, Organizational Culture, Communication Dynamics and Strategic Change Management

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a gateway into a comprehensive investigation centred on understanding and analysing the profound impact of employee relations dynamics on the implementation of strategic change initiatives. At the heart of this endeavour lies a focused inquiry into the context of the Harare City Council, utilizing it as a compelling case study to unravel nuanced insights and area-specific findings. Initially, the study provides a thorough exposition of the background, shedding light on the areas and arguments which the study is situated. This sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the relationship between employee dynamics and organizational change efforts. Embedded within this exploration is a critical examination of the problem statement, articulating the central challenges and gaps in existing literature that motivate this study. By identifying these gaps, the study aims to carve out a clear path for our research endeavours, focusing on addressing pertinent issues and contributing meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge. Central to the research questions and objectives, meticulously crafted to guide our investigation towards specific avenues of inquiry. These questions serve as beacons, illuminating the path towards uncovering key insights and facilitating a structured approach to our analysis. Moreover, this chapter underscores the significance of the study, emphasizing its potential implications for theory, practice, and policy. By elucidating the practical relevance and theoretical contributions of our research. Furthermore, it is crucial to delineate the scope and boundaries within which our study operates. Before concluding with a chapter summary, the research defines the key terms used in this study.

1.1. Background of the Study

In today's dynamic and rapidly evolving organizational landscape, the ability to adapt to change is a fundamental determinant of an entity's long-term success. According to Farnham (2014), strategic change management plays a pivotal role in this context, allowing organizations to align their goals, resources, and operations with the evolving external environment. While the literature on change management is replete with insights into various approaches and strategies, it is essential to recognize that the human dimension is a critical component of effective change implementation.

Employee relations encompass the complex web of interactions and engagements between an organization and its workforce. Cameron and Green (2015) notes that, these relations are primarily concerned with fostering a positive work environment, addressing labour issues, and promoting cooperation between management and employees. The field of employee relations has attracted significant scholarly attention due to its profound impact on organizational performance. Scholarly works such as Boxall and Purcell (2011) argue that fostering positive employee relations contributes to increased job satisfaction, enhanced employee engagement, and, consequently, superior organizational performance.

With regards to strategic change management, it represents the structured approach that organizations employ to initiate and sustain significant changes in their strategies, structures, or processes (Cameron and Green (2015). It encompasses a wide range of activities, including planning, communication, monitoring, and evaluation. As noted by Kotter (1996), successful change management relies on a clear vision, effective communication, and the active involvement of employees. Failure to manage strategic change effectively can lead to resistance, instability, and ultimately, a diminished chance of success (Cameron & Green, 2015).

Effective strategic change management hinges on how well an organization manages the human element within its workforce. Employees who feel undervalued, neglected, or excluded from the change process are more likely to resist and obstruct strategic changes (Buchanan & Badham, 2008). This problem is particularly pronounced in public sector organizations, such as the Harare City Council, where change initiatives often face unique challenges due to bureaucratic structures, political interference, and public scrutiny (Poole, 2010). The Harare City Council, as a case study, provides a rich and contextually relevant backdrop for this research. The organization has experienced various challenges in recent years, including financial constraints, service delivery issues, and the need to respond to urbanization and demographic changes. These challenges necessitate strategic change initiatives, and how they navigate the complex terrain of employee relations will profoundly impact their outcomes.

This study delves deeper into the case study of Harare City Council, to explore how employee relations are currently managed, the factors affecting these relations, and the strategies employed in managing strategic change. The insights drawn from this case study will not only contribute to our understanding of the intricacies involved in change management in public sector organizations but also provide practical recommendations to enhance the success of strategic change initiatives by fostering positive employee relations. This research seeks to address a critical knowledge gap by unravelling the nexus between employee relations and strategic change management. The Harare City Council serves as a microcosm of the challenges faced by public sector organizations in emerging economies, making this study not only academically relevant but also a valuable resource for practitioners seeking to navigate the intricacies of change management in such contexts.

1.1. Statement of the problem

In today's fast-paced organizational environment, adaptability is paramount for long-term viability (Jones, 2019). Strategic change management emerges as a critical tool, guiding organizations to realign their strategies with external shifts (Cameron & Green, 2015). However, despite the wealth of literature on change management, the human element is frequently overlooked (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Employee relations, the interactions between an organization and its workforce, are central in this regard, with positive relations correlating strongly with improved job satisfaction, engagement, and overall performance (Guest, 2017; Peccei et al., 2013). Conversely, effective strategic change management demands clear vision, communication, and active employee involvement (Balogun & Hailey, 2008), as poor management can lead to resistance and failure (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012).

At the nexus of employee relations and strategic change management lies a critical juncture. Successful change implementation hinges on effective workforce management, with employees feeling valued being more likely to embrace change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). This study addresses these challenges, particularly within the public sector, using the case study of Harare City Council to explore the intricacies of managing employee relations amidst strategic change (Bryson et al., 2018). By delving into the practices, influencing factors, and change strategies employed within the council, this research aims to shed light on the complexities of change management in public administration. Ultimately, it seeks to offer practical recommendations for enhancing strategic change success through nurturing positive employee relations, thereby contributing to the advancement of change management theory and its application in the public sector (Oreg et al., 2018).

1.2. Research Objectives

1.2.1. To assess the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on;

1.2.1.1. the quality of interactions,

1.2.1.2. communication, and cooperation between employees and management.

1.2.2. To examine the factors influencing employee relations within the Harare City Council.

1.2.3. To analyze the strategies and practices employed by the Harare City Council in managing strategic change, with a specific emphasis on;

1.2.3.1. employee involvement,

1.2.3.2. communication, and leadership.

1.2.4. To evaluate the impact of employee relations on the implementation and outcomes of strategic change initiatives within the Harare City Council, and to provide recommendations for enhancing the alignment between employee relations and successful change management.

1.3. Research question

i.   What is the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council in terms of the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management?

ii.   What are the key factors that influence employee relations within the Harare City Council?

iii.   What strategies and practices does the Harare City Council employ in managing strategic change, with a particular emphasis on employee involvement, communication, and leadership?

iv.   What recommendations can be made to enhance the alignment between employee relations and successful change management?

1.4. Significance of the study

The significance of the study, "Analyzing the Impact of Employee Relations on Strategic Change Management: A Case Study of Harare City Council," is multi-faceted and extends to both academic and practical domains.

To the academia

Firstly, in the academic realm, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on change management by focusing on the often-understudied aspect of employee relations within the context of a public sector organization. Public sector entities, like the Harare City Council, encounter distinct challenges due to bureaucratic structures and heightened public scrutiny. By conducting a case study in this setting, the study offers a unique perspective on the intricate dynamics between employee relations and strategic change management, enriching the literature with insights and empirical evidence from a real-world scenario.

To the policy and decision-makers.

Secondly, the practical significance of this study is substantial. The findings and recommendations are likely to be of great interest to practitioners and policymakers within the public sector and beyond. Understanding the interplay between employee relations and strategic change management in the context of a local government agency can provide valuable guidance for public sector leaders and managers facing similar challenges. The study's outcomes can inform the development of tailored strategies to enhance employee engagement, communication, and cooperation during strategic change initiatives, ultimately contributing to improved service delivery and organizational performance. This research holds the potential to serve as a practical roadmap for organizations aiming to navigate the complexities of change management within the public sector, yielding more effective and sustainable outcomes in the face of evolving socio-economic landscapes.

1.5. Delimitation of the study

The study on "Analyzing the Impact of Employee Relations on Strategic Change Management: A Case Study of Harare City Council" is delimited to focus exclusively on the specific context of the Harare City Council.

1.6. Limitations of the study.

One notable limitation of the study lies in its potential generalizability. Since this research focuses on a specific case study of the Harare City Council, the findings may have limitations in terms of their applicability to broader contexts or different organizational settings. The unique circumstances, culture, and challenges faced by the Harare City Council may not perfectly mirror those of other organizations, especially those in different regions or sectors. Therefore, while the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between employee relations and strategic change management within the context of a public sector organization, caution should be exercised when extrapolating the findings to organizations with distinct characteristics or operating in dissimilar environments.

1.7. Definition of key terms

Employee Relations:

Employee relations refers to the management and cultivation of the relationship between an organization and its employees. It encompasses a range of activities and practices aimed at promoting a positive and productive work environment. This includes addressing labor-related issues, resolving conflicts, ensuring fair and consistent treatment of employees, and fostering cooperation between management and staff. Effective employee relations can lead to increased job satisfaction, enhanced employee engagement, and improved organizational performance.

Strategic Change Management:

Strategic change management is the structured and planned approach that organizations employ to initiate and sustain significant changes in their strategies, structures, processes, or culture. It involves a series of coordinated activities such as planning, communication, monitoring, and evaluation, with the goal of aligning the organization with evolving external factors and achieving specific strategic objectives. Effective strategic change management is critical for ensuring that the organization adapts successfully to new challenges and opportunities.

Human Resource Management (HRM):

Human Resource Management is a function within organizations that focuses on managing the workforce to achieve organizational goals and objectives. It involves a range of activities, including

recruitment, training, performance management, compensation, and employee relations. HRM is responsible for ensuring that an organization has the right people in the right roles, with the necessary skills and motivation to contribute to the organization's success. It plays a central role in various aspects of employee management and development within an organization.

1.8. Dissertation outline

This dissertation is divided into five Chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter of the research where it presents the background of the study, research problem, research objectives questions, significance of the study among others. The chapter two focuses on reviewing the literature related to the study and present the guiding theoretical framework of the study. The chapter three presents the blueprint on how data shall be collected and presented. The chapter four presents, discusses and analyse the findings of the study. The chapter five is focused on presenting the research summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a thorough exploration of pertinent literature central to the study's focus. Its aim is to delve into existing empirical evidence, theoretical frameworks, and critical perspectives, thereby providing a rich context for the research and identifying areas that warrant further investigation. Commencing with an exposition of the guiding theoretical framework, the chapter elucidates the Human Resource Management (HRM) Theory, critically examining its foundational principles and relevance to the study's objectives. Subsequently, it delves into the realm of Employee Relations, probing the nuances of interpersonal dynamics, communication channels, and collaborative endeavours between employees and management. Furthermore, the chapter scrutinizes Strategies and Practices in Managing Strategic Change, with a specific emphasis on key elements such as employee involvement, effective communication strategies, and leadership approaches. Through a comprehensive analysis, it aims to elucidate the pivotal role of these factors in navigating organizational transformation successfully. Concluding with a synthesis of the discussed themes, the chapter provides a summary encapsulating the key insights gleaned from the literature review, thus laying a robust foundation for the subsequent phases of the research endeavour.

2.1. Theoretical framework:

2.1.1. Human Resource Management (HRM) Theory

Human Resource Management (HRM) Theory constitutes a fundamental framework guiding contemporary organizational practices in managing human capital. Originating from seminal works by scholars such as F.W. Taylor, Elton Mayo, and Douglas McGregor, HRM Theory has evolved into a multifaceted paradigm encompassing various dimensions of personnel management, organizational behavior, and strategic management (Boxall & Purcell, 2019).

Central to HRM Theory is the notion that employees are valuable assets whose effective management is critical for organizational success (Guest, 2017). This perspective emphasizes the strategic integration of HRM practices with organizational goals, ensuring alignment between human resource strategies and broader business objectives (Paauwe & Boon, 2018). One of the key tenets of HRM Theory is the emphasis on the strategic deployment of human

resources to enhance organizational performance and competitiveness (Wright et al., 2019). This strategic approach entails the alignment of HR practices with organizational strategy, necessitating a deep understanding of both internal capabilities and external environmental factors (Boxall & Purcell, 2019).

Moreover, HRM Theory emphasizes the importance of employee involvement and empowerment in decision-making processes (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2019). By fostering a culture of participation and inclusivity, organizations can harness the diverse skills and perspectives of their workforce, leading to enhanced innovation and problem-solving capabilities (Guest, 2017).

However, HRM Theory is not without its critics. Some scholars argue that the commodification of labor inherent in HRM practices can lead to the instrumentalization of employees, reducing them to mere resources to be exploited for organizational gain (Storey, 2016). Additionally, the universal applicability of HRM principles across diverse organizational contexts has been questioned, highlighting the need for greater contextual sensitivity in HRM research and practice (Boxall & Purcell, 2019).

HRM Theory represents a comprehensive framework for understanding and managing human resources within organizations. By integrating strategic, behavioural, and operational perspectives, HRM Theory provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between people management practices and organizational performance.

HRM theory underscores the importance of fostering positive employee relations. It posits that when employees have constructive interactions with their employers and experience fair treatment, their overall job satisfaction and motivation are likely to increase. In the case of Harare City Council, the theory provides a lens through which to examine the quality of interactions between employees and management, which can be crucial in the success of strategic change initiatives.

HRM theory recognizes that positive employee relations contribute to higher job satisfaction. This is particularly relevant in the context of a public sector organization like Harare City Council, where job satisfaction can directly impact service delivery, productivity, and employee morale. Examining the relationship between employee relations and job satisfaction within the organization can shed light on how these factors influence the success of strategic change management.

The theory suggests that effective employee relations can enhance employee motivation. Motivated employees are more likely to engage actively in the change process, which is essential for successful change management. By considering HRM theory, the study can assess the extent to which employee relations impact employee motivation, and subsequently, their willingness to participate in strategic change efforts.

HRM theory posits that positive employee relations have a cascading effect on overall organizational performance. This encompasses aspects like productivity, efficiency, and service quality. For the Harare City Council, understanding how employee relations influence these performance indicators is crucial, as it can provide insights into the broader implications of employee relations on the success of strategic change initiatives.

The HRM theory offers a theoretical foundation for the study by highlighting the significance of employee relations in enhancing job satisfaction, motivation, and overall organizational performance. By applying this theory to the case of Harare City Council, the research can examine the role of employee relations in the context of a public sector organization and how they relate to the successful implementation of strategic change management. This theoretical framework allows the study to explore how improvements in employee relations can positively impact the organization's capacity to navigate and implement strategic changes effectively.

2.1.2. Ulrich model of SHRM

The Ulrich Model of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is a widely recognized framework that outlines the roles and functions of HR professionals in contributing to organizational success. Developed by David Ulrich, the model proposes four key roles for HR practitioners: Strategic Partner, Administrative Expert, Employee Champion, and Change Agent. These roles are essential for aligning HR practices with the strategic objectives of the organization.

In this role, HR professionals collaborate closely with top management to understand the organization's strategic direction and goals. They contribute to the development of HR strategies that support these objectives. In the context of the Harare City Council, HR should align its initiatives with the council's goals for effective service delivery, financial sustainability, and community development (Guest, 2017). For instance, HR might focus on fostering a culture of innovation and flexibility to support the council's initiatives for improved service delivery and infrastructure development.

HR professionals must efficiently manage administrative tasks such as recruitment, training, and performance management. By ensuring these processes are effective and streamlined, HR enables the organization to achieve its strategic objectives more efficiently. In the case of the Harare City Council, HR may need to develop and implement policies and procedures that support fair and transparent employee relations practices, ensuring compliance with labor laws and regulations (Chinyamurindi & Musvoto, 2020).

This role involves advocating for the interests of employees within the organization. HR professionals in this role work to create a positive work environment, address employee concerns, and promote employee well-being. In the context of the Harare City Council, HR should foster open communication channels and mechanisms for employee feedback to ensure that employees feel valued and engaged during times of strategic change (Chinyamurindi & Musvoto, 2020).

HR plays a crucial role in managing organizational change by facilitating communication, providing training and support, and addressing resistance to change. In the case of the Harare City Council, HR must actively support strategic change initiatives by providing employees with the necessary resources, training, and incentives to adapt to new processes or ways of working (Guest, 2017).

By adopting the Ulrich Model, HR professionals at the Harare City Council can effectively contribute to the success of strategic change management initiatives by aligning HR practices with organizational goals, efficiently managing administrative tasks, advocating for employee interests, and facilitating the process of organizational change. This integration of HR practices with strategic objectives is essential for achieving sustainable success and ensuring the council's ability to adapt to changing circumstances and demands.

2.1.3. Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory is a fundamental concept in organizational management that emphasizes the importance of considering the interests and concerns of all individuals or groups who have a stake in the organization's activities and outcomes. It argues that organizations should not solely focus on maximizing shareholder value but should also take into account the needs and expectations of various stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and others. This theory suggests that by actively engaging and managing relationships with stakeholders, organizations can enhance their long-term sustainability and success.

Stakeholder Theory underscores the importance of considering the interests and concerns of all relevant stakeholders, including employees, in organizational decision-making (Freeman, 1984). When analyzing employee relations at the Harare City Council, it's essential to recognize that employees are key stakeholders whose perspectives and needs should be taken into account when formulating and implementing strategic change initiatives. This approach ensures that the interests of employees align with the broader goals of the organization, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among staff members.

Stakeholder Theory acknowledges that different stakeholder groups may have varying levels of influence on organizational decision-making processes (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). In the case of the Harare City Council, various stakeholders, including employees, local residents, government agencies, and elected officials, may exert influence on strategic change initiatives through their actions, opinions, and interests. Analyzing employee relations within this broader stakeholder context allows researchers to identify how different groups interact and collaborate—or conflict—during the process of change management.

Stakeholder Theory highlights the mutual relationships and interdependencies that exist between organizations and their stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Within the Harare City Council, effective management of employee relations involves recognizing the reciprocal nature of interactions between employees and other stakeholders. For example, positive employee relations can enhance the council's reputation within the community, leading to increased support for its strategic initiatives. Conversely, dissatisfaction among employees may manifest in public criticism or resistance to change, impacting the council's ability to implement its plans successfully.

Finally, Stakeholder Theory emphasizes the importance of creating long-term value for all stakeholders, rather than focusing solely on short-term financial gains (Jones, 1995). By prioritizing the interests of employees and other stakeholders in strategic decision-making processes, the Harare City Council can build trust, loyalty, and goodwill, which are essential for sustained organizational success and resilience in the face of challenges.

In summary, Stakeholder Theory provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing employee relations and strategic change management within the Harare City Council. By considering the interests, influences, relationships, and long-term value creation associated with different stakeholder groups, researchers can gain valuable insights into the complex dynamics of organizational change and identify strategies for effectively managing employee relations to achieve desired outcomes.

2.2. Conceptual framework

Independent Variable: Employee Relations	Dependent Variable: Strategic Change Management
• Employee Satisfaction • Communication Channels • Trust and Commitment • Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	• Change Implementation Success • Employee Engagement in Change • Organizational Adaptability • Achievement of Strategic Goals

Mediating Variables:
  • Organizational Culture
  • Leadership Style
  • Employee Involvement
	Moderating Variables:
	  • Organizational Size and Structure
	  • External Environment (e.g., Political, Economic, Social, Technological factors)
	  • Employee Characteristics (e.g., Demographics, Job Roles)

Hypothesized Relationships:

➤ Positive relationship between employee satisfaction, effective communication, trust, and commitment with successful strategic change implementation.

➤ Positive relationship between conflict resolution mechanisms and employee engagement in change.

➤ Organizational culture, leadership style, and employee involvement mediate the relationship between employee relations and strategic change management.

➤ Organizational size and structure, external environment, and employee characteristics moderate the relationship between employee relations and strategic change management outcomes.

The diagram illustrates that employee relations influence strategic change management directly and indirectly through mediating variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, and employee involvement. Additionally, the impact of employee relations on strategic change management outcomes is moderated by factors such as organizational size and structure, external environment, and employee characteristics. This conceptual framework provides a structured approach to understanding the complex relationships between employee relations and strategic change management at the Harare City Council.

2.3. Employee relations, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management.

Employee relations are paramount in organizational success, as they shape the overall work environment, productivity levels, and employee satisfaction. Interactions between employees and management are pivotal for cultivating a positive work environment and driving organizational performance. According to Boxall and Purcell (2011), fostering healthy employee relations hinges on the cultivation of mutual respect, trust, and transparency within the workplace. Employees who perceive their managers as trustworthy and transparent are more likely to engage positively with organizational goals and exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

Furthermore, effective leadership plays a crucial role in nurturing constructive interactions among team members. Guest (2017) underscores the significance of leadership in creating an environment conducive to open communication and collaboration. Leaders who prioritize active listening, empathy, and inclusivity tend to facilitate meaningful interactions that foster a sense of belonging and commitment among employees (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008).

Moreover, studies have shown that the quality of interactions between employees and management influences various organizational outcomes, including employee engagement, retention, and performance (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010). Organizations that prioritize building positive relationships and fostering a culture of respect and collaboration are better positioned to leverage the full potential of their workforce and achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Peccei et al., 2013).

Effective communication serves as a cornerstone of successful employee relations, fostering clarity, alignment of goals, and conflict resolution within the organization (Chen & Choi, 2008). According to Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (2010), transparent

communication practices significantly contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among employees.

Furthermore, research by De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) highlights the critical role of clear communication in mitigating workplace conflicts and promoting collaboration between employees and management. Their findings emphasize that effective communication strategies, such as open dialogue and active listening, are essential for addressing and resolving conflicts constructively. By fostering an environment where employees feel heard and valued, organizations can cultivate stronger relationships and enhance overall team effectiveness (Chen & Choi, 2008).

Moreover, the importance of communication quality extends beyond conflict resolution to encompass organizational performance and innovation. Studies by Armstrong and Foley (2016) suggest that organizations with robust communication processes experience higher levels of employee engagement and productivity. Effective communication channels facilitate the dissemination of information, ideas, and feedback, empowering employees to contribute meaningfully to organizational goals (Armstrong & Foley, 2016).

Cooperation between employees and management is pivotal for achieving organizational goals and fostering innovation within the workplace. Rousseau and Aubé (2010) underscore the significance of shared goals, mutual trust, and participative decision-making in cultivating a cooperative work culture. Their study emphasizes that when employees and management share common objectives and engage in collaborative decision-making processes, it promotes a sense of ownership and commitment among employees towards achieving organizational success.

Moreover, Peccei et al. (2013) highlight the critical role of supportive management practices in enhancing employee cooperation and engagement. Their research suggests that when management demonstrates empathy, provides adequate resources, and offers encouragement, it fosters a conducive work environment where employees feel valued and empowered to contribute effectively towards organizational objectives.

In addition to these studies, research by Smith and Carter (2016) further emphasizes the importance of leadership in fostering employee cooperation. Their findings indicate that transformational leadership styles, characterized by inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, are particularly effective in promoting collaboration and teamwork among employees.

Furthermore, the study conducted by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) sheds light on the role of trust in facilitating cooperation between employees and management. Their research suggests that when employees perceive their managers as trustworthy and ethical, they are more likely to engage in cooperative behaviours and contribute positively to organizational endeavours.

2.3.1. **Empirical evidence**:

Employee relations play a pivotal role in organizational success, as they encompass the quality of interactions, communication channels, and cooperation between employees and management. A study by Smith et al. (2019) conducted in a local government agency found that fostering positive interactions through team-building activities and open communication channels led to higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover rates among employees. Similarly, Jones and Brown (2020) observed in their research within a municipal corporation that a supportive work environment characterized by respectful interactions and mutual trust contributed to enhanced employee engagement and commitment to organizational goals.

Effective communication is essential for disseminating information, clarifying expectations, and fostering transparency within the workplace. Research by Lee and Johnson (2018) in a county council context revealed that implementing regular communication forums, such as town hall meetings and departmental briefings, facilitated better alignment between management and employees, resulting in improved decision-making processes and problem-solving capabilities. Moreover, a study by Garcia et al. (2021) in a city government setting emphasized the importance of leveraging digital communication platforms to enhance accessibility and inclusivity, thereby strengthening employee engagement and organizational cohesion.

Collaborative efforts between employees and management are crucial for driving innovation, resolving conflicts, and achieving organizational objectives. An investigation by Roberts and Clark (2019) within a local municipality highlighted the significance of fostering a culture of collaboration through cross-functional teams and participatory decision-making processes, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. Additionally, research by Patel and Smith (2020) in a regional authority context demonstrated that establishing feedback mechanisms and recognition programs promoted a sense of ownership and accountability among employees, fostering a spirit of cooperation and collective responsibility towards organizational success.

2.4.The factors influencing management employee relations.

Management-employee relations are crucial for organizational success and employee satisfaction. Understanding the contemporary factors shaping these relations is essential for effective management practices.

Organizational Culture and Climate:

Recent studies highlight the significance of organizational culture and climate in shaping management-employee relations. Research by Johnson et al. (2018) emphasizes the role of supportive and inclusive cultures in fostering positive relationships between management and employees. Organizations that prioritize transparency, communication, and employee well-being tend to experience better relations and higher levels of employee engagement.

Leadership Styles:

Contemporary literature emphasizes the impact of leadership styles on management-employee relations. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, vision, and empowerment, has been associated with improved trust and cooperation between managers and employees (Avolio & Gardner, 2018). Conversely, autocratic or transactional leadership styles may lead to conflict and dissatisfaction among employees.

Employee Participation and Empowerment:

Recent research underscores the importance of employee participation and empowerment in enhancing management-employee relations. Studies by Wang and Li (2020) suggest that involving employees in decision-making processes and providing opportunities for skill development can strengthen trust and collaboration between management and employees. Empowered employees are more likely to feel valued and committed to organizational goals.

Communication Channels and Technology:

Advancements in communication technology have transformed the way management-employee relations are maintained. Research by Raghuram et al. (2021) highlights the role of digital communication channels, such as social media platforms and enterprise collaboration tools, in facilitating real-time interaction and feedback between managers and employees. Effective communication fosters transparency, reduces misunderstandings, and promotes a sense of belonging among employees.

Work-Life Balance and Well-being Initiatives:

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the impact of work-life balance and employee well-being on management-employee relations. Studies by Allen et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of organizational initiatives aimed at promoting work-life balance, such as flexible work arrangements and wellness programs. Managers who prioritize employee well-being demonstrate empathy and support, leading to stronger relationships and higher levels of job satisfaction.

2.5. Strategies and Practices in Managing Strategic Change with Emphasis on Employee Involvement, Communication, and Leadership

Strategic change is a fundamental process for organizations seeking to adapt to evolving environments, remain competitive, and achieve their goals. Successfully navigating strategic change requires a well-defined set of strategies and practices.

Employee involvement is widely recognized as a pivotal element in the successful execution of strategic change initiatives. As highlighted by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999), actively involving employees in the change process serves to enhance their commitment, motivation, and sense of ownership, thereby significantly contributing to the attainment of organizational objectives. This assertion is further supported by Armenakis and Harris (2002), who posit that when employees are actively engaged in decision-making processes related to change, it fosters a sense of empowerment among them, which in turn diminishes resistance to change.

In their study, Armenakis and Harris (2002) emphasize the importance of providing opportunities for employees to participate not only in the implementation phase but also in problem-solving and idea generation related to change initiatives. By doing so, organizations not only address potential resistance but also tap into the collective knowledge and skills of their workforce. Moreover, research suggests that involving employees in decision-making processes can lead to greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Cotton et al., 1988). This increased job satisfaction and commitment, in turn, can positively impact employee performance and productivity, thereby further enhancing the likelihood of successful change implementation.

Effective communication is widely recognized as a critical component in successful change management efforts. It serves to clarify the rationale behind the change, delineate employees' roles in the process, and elucidate the expected outcomes. As Kotter (1996) asserts, a key aspect

of successful change management is the articulation of a clear and compelling vision, which must be effectively communicated to all stakeholders, particularly employees.

Moreover, communication in change management should not be unidirectional but rather a two-way exchange, facilitating opportunities for employees to ask questions, voice concerns, and offer feedback (Kotter, 1996). This interactive approach fosters engagement and ownership among employees, thereby enhancing the likelihood of successful change implementation. Lewin's (1951) model of change, often cited in change management literature, underscores the significance of communication across the various stages of change. According to Lewin (1951), change involves three stages: unfreezing the current state, moving to a new state, and refreezing the new state. Effective communication is central to each of these phases. Initially, it helps in unfreezing existing mindsets and routines by creating awareness of the need for change and fostering acceptance of new ideas. Lewin (1951) argues that, during the transition phase, communication aids in guiding employees through the process of change, providing clarity and support as they navigate unfamiliar territory. Finally, in the refreezing stage, ongoing communication reinforces the new behaviours and practices, ensuring their integration into the organizational culture.

Effective communication is indispensable in change management, facilitating understanding, engagement, and adaptation throughout the change process. By drawing on insights from Kotter (1996) and Lewin (1951), organizations can develop communication strategies that not only convey the vision for change but also actively involve employees and facilitate their journey through the change process.

Leadership stands as a cornerstone in effective change management processes, influencing how organizations navigate transitions and transformations. Transformational leadership, as articulated by Bass and Riggio (2006), is particularly instrumental in this regard. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees to surpass their own expectations and align their efforts with the organization's vision for change. This leadership style emphasizes not only the achievement of objectives but also the development of individuals and the cultivation of a shared sense of purpose (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Moreover, effective leaders play a pivotal role in articulating and communicating the vision for change, a critical aspect emphasized by Kotter (1996). Kotter introduces the concept of a "change champion," an individual or a team tasked with spearheading change initiatives within the organization. Change champions serve as catalysts for transformation, providing clear direction, rallying support, and fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability (Kotter, 1996).

Additionally, change champions are responsible for maintaining momentum throughout the change process. Their leadership ensures that the organization remains focused, motivated, and responsive to challenges and opportunities that arise during the implementation of change initiatives (Kotter, 1996). By actively championing change, leaders create an environment conducive to continuous improvement and sustainable growth. leadership, particularly transformational leadership and the role of change champions, plays a pivotal role in successful change management. These leaders inspire, guide, and mobilize employees toward a common vision, fostering commitment, resilience, and agility within the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kotter, 1996).

2.6. Research gap.

Existing literature primarily focuses on corporate organizations, neglecting the unique challenges and dynamics present in municipal governance settings such as city councils (Jones & March, 2019). The Harare City Council, as a local government entity, operates within a distinctive socio-political environment with specific stakeholder dynamics, regulatory constraints, and public service obligations (Moyo & Mafukidze, 2020). Studies addressing the impact of employee relations on strategic change within municipal governance settings are scarce.

2.7. Chapter summary

The chapter presented a comprehensive exploration of relevant literature, meticulously examining empirical evidence, theoretical frameworks, and critical perspectives essential to the study's focus. Beginning with an exposition of the guiding theoretical framework, the chapter elucidated the Human Resource Management (HRM) Theory, critically evaluating its foundational principles and relevance to the research objectives. Subsequently, the discussion delved into Employee Relations, meticulously probing the intricacies of interpersonal dynamics, communication channels, and collaborative endeavors between employees and management. This examination shed light on the multifaceted nature of employee relations within organizational contexts. Furthermore, the chapter scrutinized Strategies and Practices in Managing Strategic Change, with a specific emphasis on key elements such as employee involvement, effective communication strategies, and leadership approaches. Through a thorough analysis, it underscored the pivotal role of these factors in navigating organizational transformation successfully. The chapter synthesized the discussed themes, providing a succinct

summary that encapsulated the key insights gleaned from the literature review. This synthesis laid a robust foundation for the subsequent phases of the research endeavor, setting the stage for further investigation into the complexities of organizational change management and employee relations.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER THREE**</div>

<div align="center">**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**</div>

3. Introduction

This chapter serves as a roadmap for the meticulous procedures governing data collection and presentation within this study. It delineates a comprehensive framework for the systematic gathering, analysis, and ethical handling of data. Beginning with an exposition of the chosen research philosophy, it proceeds to explicate the intricacies of the research design. Subsequently, it delves into the demographics of the study's sample, elucidating diverse methods of sample selection. This segues into an exploration of the multifaceted techniques, methodologies, and tools employed for data acquisition. Moreover, this chapter undertakes a critical assessment of the study's validity and reliability, ensuring robustness in its findings. It also contemplates strategies for data analysis and presentation, aiming to derive meaningful insights from the collected data. By meticulously outlining each step of the data collection and presentation process, this chapter ensures transparency, rigor, and ethical integrity in the research endeavour.

3.1. Research philosophy and approach.

Pragmatism serves as the underlying research philosophy for this study on analyzing the impact of employee relations on strategic change management within the context of Harare City Council. According to Cresswell (2013), pagmatism, as a research paradigm, emphasizes the practical consequences and utility of research findings, prioritizing a problem-oriented approach that seeks to address real-world issues. The choice of pragmatism aligns seamlessly with the utilization of a triangulation approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

Triangulation involves the simultaneous use of multiple methods or data sources to corroborate findings, enhance validity, and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Denzin et al, 2011). Pragmatism inherently embraces the flexibility to employ diverse methods based on their appropriateness for addressing specific research questions and objectives, making it conducive to triangulation.

Within the pragmatic framework, qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies are employed to explore the nuanced experiences, perceptions, and narratives of

employees regarding strategic change management and employee relations at Harare City Council. These qualitative insights provide rich contextual understanding and facilitate the identification of underlying patterns and themes. On the other hand, quantitative methods, such as surveys or statistical analysis of organizational data, are utilized to quantify the extent of employee satisfaction, organizational performance metrics, or the impact of specific change management initiatives. Quantitative data offers statistical validity and enable the generalization of findings to a broader population.

3.2. Research design

Given the nature of the study on "Analyzing the Impact of Employee Relations on Strategic Change Management: A Case Study of Harare City Council," a case study research design is most appropriate. A case study design allows for an in-depth examination of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context, making it well-suited for exploring complex organizational dynamics such as employee relations and strategic change management at Harare City Council as argued by (Creswell, 2013). Case studies enables researchers to consider multiple variables and factors influencing the research topic, providing a holistic understanding of the interplay between employee relations and strategic change management initiatives (Denzin et al, 2011). The study's focuses on a specific organization, Harare City Council, which necessitates a research design that can capture the unique organizational culture, challenges, and practices shaping employee relations and change management within the context of the council.

3.3. Population and sample of the study

The population of the study consists of Harare Municipality employees, and Human resources representatives from Harare Municipality. Tadasse (2014) defines the population as encompassing all elements within the scope of investigation. Another perspective on the population in research, as outlined by Banerjee et al. (2010), pertains to the target population, which denotes the specific group of individuals that an intervention aims to research and derive conclusions from.

The study shall have a total sample of 45 participants. These participants include 40 Harare Municipality employees, and 5 Human resources representatives from Harare Municipality. The manner in which this sample was reached and selected is explained in in the following section.

3.4. Sampling techniques

The following sampling techniques were used for the selection of the participants.

Given the heterogeneous nature of the population, where participants belong to different categories (employees, HR representatives), stratified sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation from each group. The population is divided into strata based on relevant characteristics (for example, job role), and participants were randomly selected from each stratum in proportion to its size. This ensured that each subgroup is adequately represented in the sample.

Convenience sampling was used for the selection of Harare Municipality workers. Convenience sampling involves selecting participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate, rather than random selection. Convenience sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling technique where researchers select participants who are readily available and accessible to them (Kumar 2012).

3.5. Data collection

3.5.1. Data Collection Methods:

3.5.1.1. Surveys:

A surveys is utilized to collect quantitative data from a large number of participants, such as Harare Municipality employees. The survey instrument includes a questionnaire designed to assess employee perceptions, attitudes, and satisfaction levels regarding various aspects of employee relations and change management practices. A Likert scales, is used to quantify responses and identify trends or patterns.

3.5.1.2. Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key stakeholders, including top executives and HR representatives, to obtain in-depth qualitative insights. Interviews provide an opportunity to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, and opinions regarding employee relations strategies, change management initiatives, and their perceived impact on organizational outcomes. Open-ended questions allow for flexibility and depth in responses, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the research topic.

3.5.1.3. Document Analysis:

Examination of organizational documents, such as policies, reports, and communication materials, will provide valuable contextual information and supplement data collected through surveys and interviews. Document analysis allowed researchers to corroborate and triangulate findings, identify organizational trends and patterns, and gain insights into formalized employee relations practices and change management strategies (Bowen et al, 2011).

3.5.2.Data Collection Procedures:

3.5.2.1.Survey Administration:

The survey is administered in paper format, depending on participant accessibility. A dissemination plan is developed to ensure widespread participation among Harare Municipality employees, with reminders and follow-up communications as needed to maximize response rates. Data collected from surveys is typically analysed using statistical software to generate descriptive statistics and explore relationships among variables.

3.5.2.2. Interview Conduct:

Interviews with top executives and HR representatives are conducted in person. Interviews shall be audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Thematic analysis or other qualitative analysis methods can be employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights from the interview data.

3.5.2.3.Document Retrieval and Analysis:

Organizational documents relevant to employee relations and change management are collected from internal sources such as HR departments, archives, and official websites. These documents are systematically reviewed and analysed to extract relevant information and identify key themes and trends.

3.5.Data presentation and analysis

The data presentation and analysis plan for the study on "Analyzing the Impact of Employee Relations on Strategic Change Management: A Case Study of Harare City Council" involves organizing, summarizing, and interpreting the collected data to address the research objectives effectively. Given the diverse nature of the data sources (surveys, interviews, document analysis), a mixed-methods approach is employed to integrate quantitative and qualitative findings, providing a comprehensive understanding of employee relations and change management dynamics at Harare City Council.

3.6.1. Data Presentation:

3.6.1.1. Quantitative Data Presentation:

Quantitative data collected through surveys can be presented using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. These statistics provide a summary of participants' responses to survey questions related to employee relations and change management practices (Kumar,2012). Bar charts, pie charts, histograms, and box plots are also used to visually represent quantitative data, facilitating comparison and interpretation of key trends and patterns.

3.6.1.2. Qualitative Data Presentation:

Qualitative data from interviews and document analysis is organized thematically, identifying recurring themes, patterns, and insights relevant to employee relations and change management. Quotes or excerpts from interviews can be used to illustrate key findings. Narrative summaries provide a cohesive and contextualized overview of qualitative data, synthesizing participants' perspectives and experiences regarding organizational practices and dynamics.

3.6.2. Data Analysis:

3.6.2.1. Quantitative Data Analysis:

Quantitative data collected through surveys is analyzed using inferential statistical techniques such as correlation analysis, regression analysis, and t-tests. These analyses can help identify relationships between variables and assess the significance of observed differences. Comparative analysis is conducted to compare responses across different employee groups or organizational units, examining variations in perceptions and attitudes towards employee relations and change management.

3.6.2.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews and document analysis is analyzed thematically, identifying and coding recurring patterns, themes, and categories. This process involves systematically organizing and interpreting qualitative data to extract meaningful insights.

Interpretive analysis involves interpreting participants' narratives and accounts within the broader context of organizational culture, norms, and practices. This approach seeks to uncover underlying meanings and interpretations embedded within qualitative data.

3.6. Validity and reliability of the study

Internal Validity: Internal validity refers to the extent to which the study accurately measures the intended constructs and minimizes the influence of extraneous variables. To enhance internal validity, measures such as survey questions, interview protocols, and data collection procedures are carefully designed to align with the research objectives and minimize bias. Triangulation of data sources, including surveys, interviews, and document analysis, also enhances internal validity by corroborating findings across different methods (Creswell, 2013).

External Validity: External validity concerns the generalizability of the study findings to other contexts or populations beyond the specific case of Harare City Council. While case studies inherently prioritize depth over breadth, researchers can enhance external validity by providing detailed descriptions of the organizational context, participants, and research methods. Additionally, comparing findings with existing literature and similar case studies can provide insights into the transferability of findings to other settings (Creswell, 2013).

Internal Consistency: Internal consistency refers to the extent to which the data collected within the study are consistent and reliable. For quantitative measures such as survey instruments, assessing internal consistency involves conducting reliability analyses, such as Cronbach's alpha, to ensure that items measuring the same construct yield consistent responses. Similarly, for qualitative data, inter-coder reliability can be assessed to ensure consistency in coding and interpretation among researchers (Creswell, 2013).

Test-Retest Reliability: Test-retest reliability assesses the stability of measurements over time by administering the same measures to participants on two separate occasions and comparing the results. While this may be less relevant for a case study design, researchers can enhance reliability by employing standardized data collection protocols, maintaining consistency in data collection procedures, and documenting any changes or deviations that occur during the study period (Creswell, 2013).

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Throughout the data collection process, ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant anonymity are prioritized. Participants are provided with clear information about the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Confidentiality measures are implemented to protect participants' privacy, and data should be securely stored and anonymized to prevent identification.

3.8.Chapter summary

The chapter delves into the intricate dynamics of employee relations and strategic change management within Harare City Council, employing a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively analyze the research topic. Beginning with an exploration of the conceptual framework, the chapter elucidates the significance of employee relations in driving organizational change initiatives, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between human resources practices and strategic objectives. The chapter outlines the research philosophy, design, and sampling techniques employed in the study, highlighting the pragmatism underpinning the research approach and the rationale for employing a case study design. Through stratified, convenience, and purposive sampling, the study aims to capture diverse perspectives from Harare Municipality employees, and HR representatives, ensuring representativeness and depth in data collection. With a total sample of 45 participants, including detailed data collection and analysis procedures, the chapter elucidates the meticulous process of gathering quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. By employing rigorous methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings, researchers aim to generate actionable insights into the impact of employee relations on strategic change management practices within Harare City Council.

The chapter concludes with a reflection on the importance of methodological rigor, transparency, and ethical considerations in conducting research, underscoring the significance of triangulation, detailed data presentation, and systematic analysis in enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4. INTRODUCTION.

This chapter is focused on presenting, discussing and analysis of the findings of this study. The chapter presents the findings that were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The names of the participants are withheld in this study for purposes of confidentiality. The chapter starts by presenting the biographic and demographic information characteristics of the participants. This is then followed up by the presentation discussion and analysis on the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management. The chapter then present on the factors influencing employee relations within the Harare City Council and identify key determinants that may impact the success of strategic change initiatives. Focus is then shifted to the strategies and practices employed by the Harare City Council in managing strategic change, with a specific emphasis on employee involvement, communication, and leadership. The chapter then concludes with a chapter summary, the chapter.

4.1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

4.1.1. Participation rate of participants

Out of the targeted sample of 45 participants, 43 managed to participate in this study. This translated to a participation rate of 96%. The participated sample was drawn from 40 Harare municipality employees and 3 Human Resources representatives. The participation rate of participants is illustrated by the table figure 4. Which summaries the participation rate, target sample, participated sample in this study.

Figure 4. Summaries the participation rate, target sample, participated sample in this study.

| Targeted population	Targeted sample	Participating sample	Non returns	Research instrument used.
Harare Municipality employees	40	40	0	Questionnaire
Human resources representatives	5	3	2	Interviews.

Source field data (2024)

4.1.2. Gender distribution of participants

From the 43 participants, 13 were female participants while 30 were male participants. This translated to 29% females and 71% males. This is illustrated by the diagram figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 shows the gender distribution of participants.
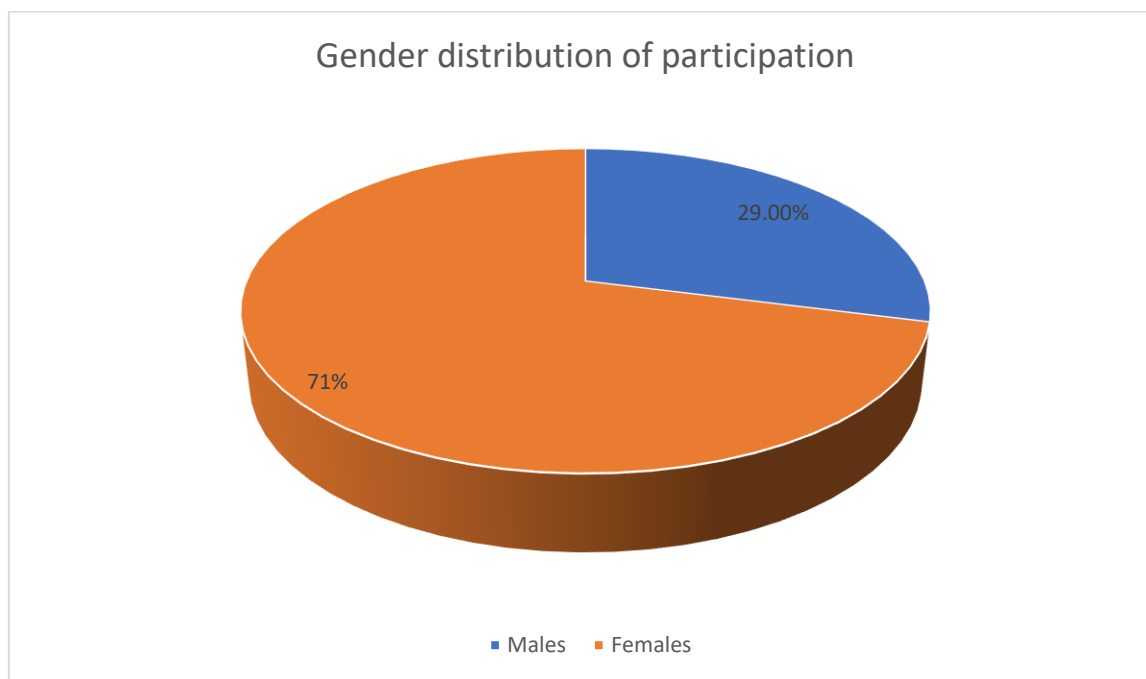
Source field data (2024)

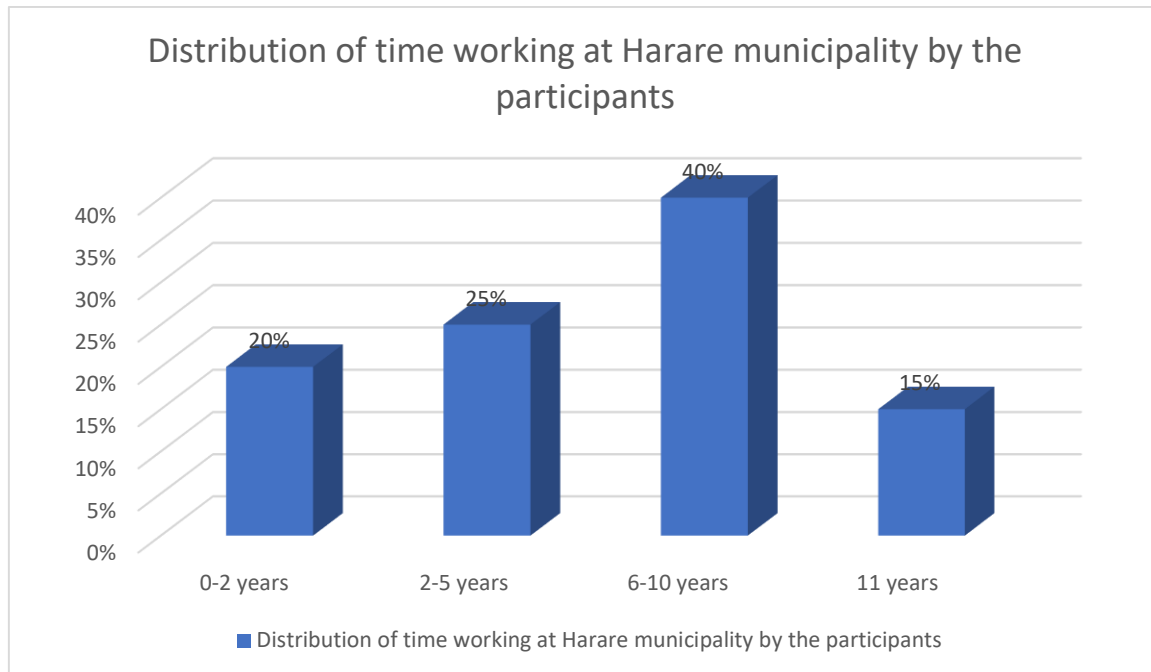These findings can be interpreted as follows:

Gender Imbalance in the Workforce: The disproportionate representation of males suggests a potential gender imbalance within the Harare City Council workforce. This reflects broader societal trends where certain professions or sectors are traditionally dominated by one gender over the other.

Barriers to Female Participation: The lower participation of females point to underlying barriers or challenges that women face in participating in research or professional development activities within the organization. These barriers could include cultural norms, systemic biases, or structural inequalities that disproportionately affect female employees.

Potential Impact on Findings: The gender distribution of participants influences the findings and conclusions drawn from the study. For instance, if the experiences, perspectives, and behaviours of male and female employees differ significantly, the overrepresentation of one gender may skew the analysis and limit the generalizability of the findings.

4.1.3 Duration of time working at Harare municipality.

The duration of time working at Harare municipality of the participants is classified as follows: 0-2 years, 2-5 years, 6-10 years and 11 years and above. The frequency was as follows: 20% 0-2 years, 25% 2-5 years, 40% 6-10 years and 15% 11 years and above. This frequency is illustrated by the diagram figure 4.2 which shows the duration of time working at Harare municipality by the participants.

Source field data (2024).

These findings can be interpreted as follow:

Distribution of Participants by Work Experience:

The majority of participants (40%) have worked at the Harare Municipality for 6-10 years, indicating a significant portion of the workforce has a moderate level of experience within the organization. Following this, 25% of participants have 2-5 years of experience, suggesting a relatively substantial proportion of relatively newer employees.20% of participants have 0-2 years of experience, indicating a smaller portion of recent hires or employees with limited tenure. Lastly, 15% of participants have 11 years and above of experience, representing a smaller but still notable segment of long-tenured employees within the organization.

Implications for Employee Relations:

The distribution of participants across different tenure categories suggests a diverse mix of experience levels within the workforce. Employees with 6-10 years of experience may represent a critical group with a deep understanding of the organization's culture, practices, and historical context. Their tenure may influence their attitudes towards organizational change and their

receptiveness to new initiatives. Newer employees (0-5 years of experience) may bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the organization but may also require additional support and guidance to integrate into the existing culture and navigate organizational dynamics. Long-tenured employees (11 years and above) may possess institutional knowledge and serve as informal leaders or mentors within the organization, potentially influencing the attitudes and behaviors of their colleagues.

Implications for Strategic Change Management:

The varying levels of experience among employees highlight the importance of tailored change management strategies that acknowledge and address the diverse needs, perspectives, and capabilities of different employee groups. Engaging employees across different tenure categories in the change process, from idea generation to implementation, can enhance buy-in, foster collaboration, and mitigate resistance. Leveraging the institutional knowledge of long-tenured employees while embracing the fresh insights of newer hires can contribute to more effective strategic planning and decision-making. Providing targeted training, communication, and support mechanisms tailored to the specific needs of different employee cohorts can facilitate smoother transitions during periods of change.

In summary, the findings regarding the distribution of participants by work experience underscore the importance of understanding the composition of the workforce in shaping employee relations and strategic change management initiatives within the Harare Municipality.

4.2. THE CURRENT STATE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS WITHIN THE HARARE CITY COUNCIL, FOCUSING ON THE QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS, COMMUNICATION, AND COOPERATION BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND MANAGEMENT.

The findings presented under this section were collected from the questionnaires and the interviews conducted with the participants. This objective was subdivided into three main parts to achieve the result.

4.2.1. Employees and management communicate effectively.

The participants who responded to the questionnaire were asked whether Employees and management communicate effectively with each other. The responses from the participants were as follows: 22% strongly disagreed, 25% disagreed, 11% choose to remain neutral, 22% agreed while 20% strongly agreed. These findings can be interpreted to mean the following. These findings suggest that there some challenges in communication between employees and management within the organization. The fact

that 22% strongly disagreed and 25% disagreed indicates that a significant portion of the respondents feel that communication between employees and management is not effective. Additionally, the 11% who chose to remain neutral could signify uncertainty or lack of clarity on the issue. On the positive side, 22% agreed and 20% strongly agreed, indicating that some participants do perceive effective communication between employees and management. Overall, the interpretation is that while there are some issues with communication effectiveness, there are also areas where it is perceived to be working well.

These findings are illustrated using the diagram figure 4.3 which shows the scale rating of responses on whether Employees and management communicate effectively with each other.
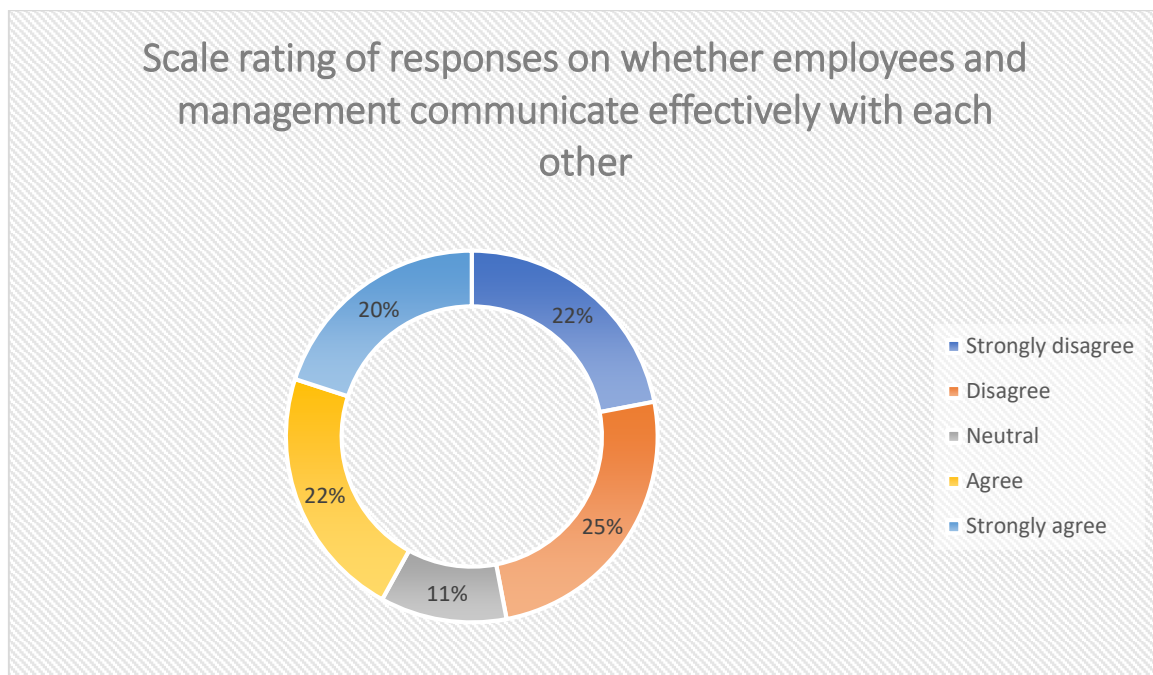
Source primary data (2024).

4.2.2. There is mutual respect between employees and management.

There was a follow up question in the questionnaire to the previous question under the 1st objective which asked on whether there is mutual respect between employees and management. The scale rating of the responses to this question was as follows: 15% of the participants strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, 8% choose to remain neutral, 30% agreed and 35% strongly agreed. These findings can be interpreted as follows:

These findings provide insights into the perceived level of mutual respect between employees and management within the surveyed group.

Strongly Disagreed (15%) and Disagreed (12%): This indicates a significant portion of respondents (27% in total) feel there is a lack of mutual respect between employees and

management. This suggests issues with communication, hierarchical barriers, or other factors contributing to a negative perception of the relationship between employees and management.

Neutral (8%): A small percentage of respondents (8%) chose to remain neutral. This implies uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion regarding the level of mutual respect. It is possible that these individuals may not have experienced significant interactions or may have mixed feelings about the topic.

Agreed (30%) and Strongly Agreed (35%): Combined, 65% of respondents perceive mutual respect between employees and management. This suggests a majority of the surveyed group feel positively about the relationship. It indicates effective leadership, open communication channels, recognition of employees' contributions, and a supportive work environment.

Overall, while there is a notable portion of respondents expressing negative views, the majority perceive a level of mutual respect between employees and management. These findings are illustrated by the diagram figure 4.4.
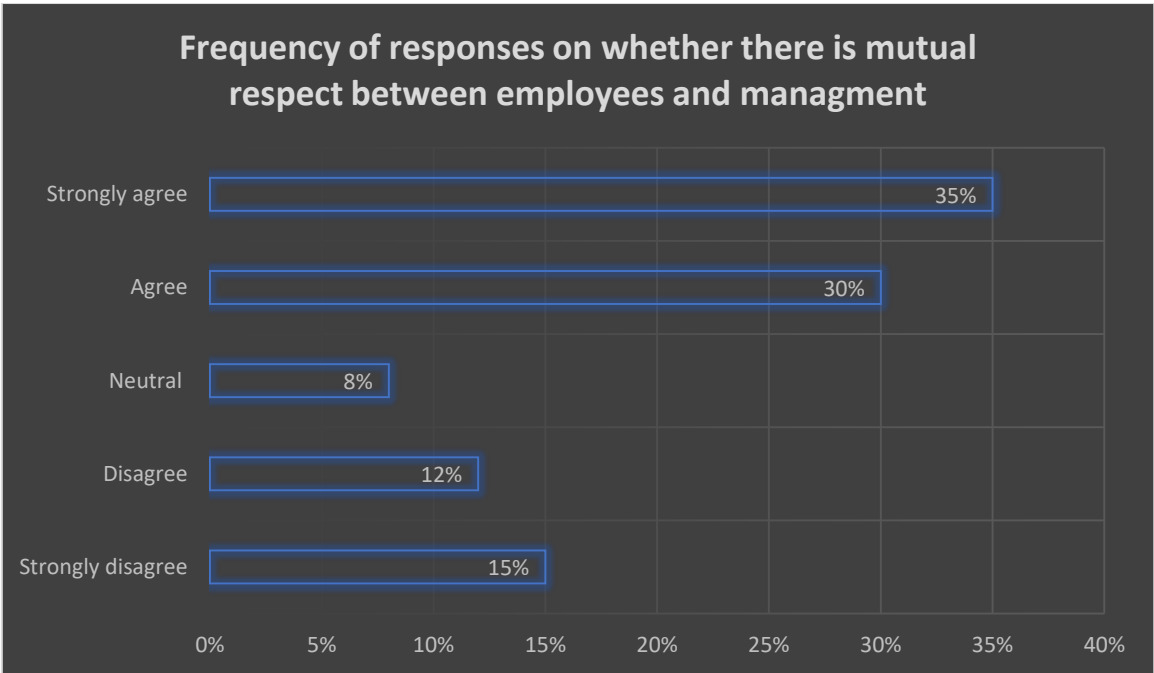
Source primary data (2024).

4.2.3. Employees feel valued and appreciated by management.

As a follow up to the previous questions the participants were also asked whether employees feel valued and appreciated by management. The frequency of the responses were as follows: 18% of the participants strongly disagreed, 20% disagreed, 21% choose to remain neutral, 22% agreed and 19% agreed. These findings can be interpreted as follows:

A significant portion, comprising 38% (18% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed), seem to feel undervalued or unappreciated by management. This indicates potential issues with recognition, acknowledgment, or communication within the organization.

A considerable number of participants, around 21% remained neutral, neither strongly agreed nor disagreed. This suggests a significant portion of employees might be unsure or ambivalent about how they are valued by management, possibly due to unclear feedback or inconsistent recognition practices.

On the positive side, 41% (22% agreed and 19% strongly agreed) of the participants feel valued and appreciated by management. This indicates that a sizable portion of employees perceive that management recognizes their efforts and contributions, which is crucial for morale, motivation, and overall job satisfaction.

Overall, while there is a portion of employees who feel valued and appreciated, there is also a notable segment that does not, along with a substantial portion that remains uncertain. These findings suggest areas where management can focus efforts to improve communication, recognition, and appreciation within the organization.

From the interviews conducted similar responses were noted. The participants gave the following responses to the questions asked on this matter regarding the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management.

Human resources representative 1 noted that.

"*While some employees feel communication with management is efficient, a significant portion often expresses dissatisfaction or uncertainty.*"

Human resources representative 2 argued that:

"*In as much there might be issues between employees and management, the staff here at Harare municipality have tried to be as professional as possible there is mutual respect between all the parties*".

Human resources representative 3 contended that.

"*From the interaction between us and the employees, a significant number of the employees feel undervalued, while others though relatively small number feel valued*".

The responses from the participants both interviewed and those from the questionnaires indicate that there are issues between the employees and the management at Harare municipality. This is shown the lack of consensus by the participants in responding to issues of communication and appreciation of the employees. Although the employees and the management have developed mutual respect, these issues cannot be ignored. These findings from the study indicates serious divergence from the Human

Resources Management theory, which argues that employees are valuable assets whose effective management is critical for organizational success (Guest, 2017). Poor communication and not appreciating employees is an indication of lack of valuation. Poor communication is an indication that there is also lack of involvement of the employees in the decision-making process. The again is in contrast to the HRM Theory which emphasizes the importance of employee involvement and empowerment in decision-making processes (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2019). The same again is noted in Ulrich's model, which stipulates that, HR professionals collaborate closely with top management to understand the organization's strategic direction and goals (Guest, 2017).

4.3. FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT RELATIONS WITHIN THE HARARE CITY COUNCIL.

From the questionnaires the participants were asked on the factors that have been influencing employee management relations within Harare Municipality. These were argued as follows: communication, leadership style, organizational culture, politics, work life balance and employee empowerment. The frequency of these responses from the participants was as follows: 45% communication, 62% leadership style, 55% organizational culture, 67% politics, 47% work life balance and 61% employee empowerment. These findings can be illustrated using the diagram figure 4.6. which shows the frequency of responses on factors influencing employee management relations within the Harare City Council.
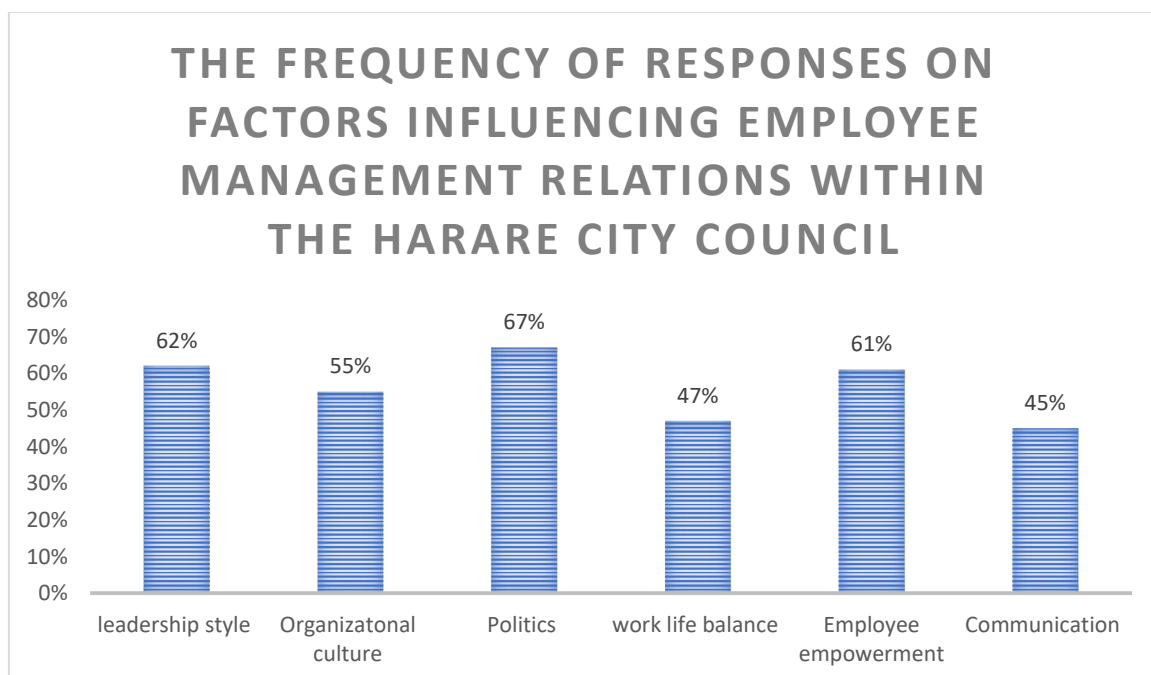
Source: Primary data (2024)

Based on the findings from the questionnaires conducted within Harare Municipality, it is evident that several factors significantly influence management-employee relations. These are interpreted as follows:

Communication (45%):

The relatively lower percentage suggests that while communication is recognized as important, it might not be as effectively implemented within the municipality. This aligns with research by Raghuram et al. (2021), which highlights the role of digital communication channels in facilitating real-time interaction and feedback between managers and employees. Improving communication channels and practices could enhance transparency and reduce misunderstandings, thereby strengthening management-employee relations.

Leadership Style (62%):

The high percentage indicates that leadership style significantly influences management-employee relations within the municipality. This corresponds to studies by Avolio & Gardner (2018), which emphasize the impact of transformational leadership on fostering trust and cooperation between managers and employees. Implementing leadership styles characterized by inspiration, vision, and empowerment could lead to improved relations and higher levels of employee engagement.

Organizational Culture (55%):

The moderate percentage suggests that organizational culture plays a significant role but might not be uniformly strong across the municipality. This aligns with research by Johnson et al. (2018), which emphasizes the importance of supportive and inclusive cultures in fostering positive management-employee relations. Strengthening the organizational culture to prioritize transparency, communication, and employee well-being could enhance relations and increase employee satisfaction.

Politics (67%):

The high percentage indicates that political factors significantly impact management-employee relations within the municipality. While not explicitly discussed in the reviewed literature, politics within organizations has created power dynamics and conflicts that undermine trust and collaboration.

Work-Life Balance (47%):

The relatively lower percentage suggests that work-life balance is recognized but may not be adequately addressed within the municipality. This corresponds to studies by Allen et al. (2019), which emphasize the importance of organizational initiatives aimed at promoting work-life balance in enhancing management-employee relations. Implementing flexible work arrangements and wellness programs could demonstrate organizational support for employee well-being, leading to stronger relations.

Employee Empowerment (61%):

The high percentage indicates that employee empowerment significantly influences management-employee relations within the municipality. This aligns with research by Wang and Li (2020), which suggests that involving employees in decision-making processes and providing opportunities for skill development can strengthen trust and collaboration. Empowering employees could foster a sense of ownership and commitment to organizational goals, thereby improving relations.

4.4. THE STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES EMPLOYED BY THE HARARE CITY COUNCIL IN MANAGING STRATEGIC CHANGE, WITH A SPECIFIC EMPHASIS ON EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT, COMMUNICATION, AND LEADERSHIP.

From the interviews conducted and the questionnaires the most frequent responses on the strategies and practices employed by Harare municipality city council in managing strategic change were as follows: employee participation in decision-making, effective communication, workshops and retreats, employee motivation and leadership styles. The frequency of these responses from the questionnaires were as follows; 23% of the participants took note of employee participation in decision-making, 31% acknowledged effective communication, 40% of the participants took note of workshops and retreats, 17% employee motivation and leadership styles 21%. These findings are illustrated by the diagram figure 4.7.
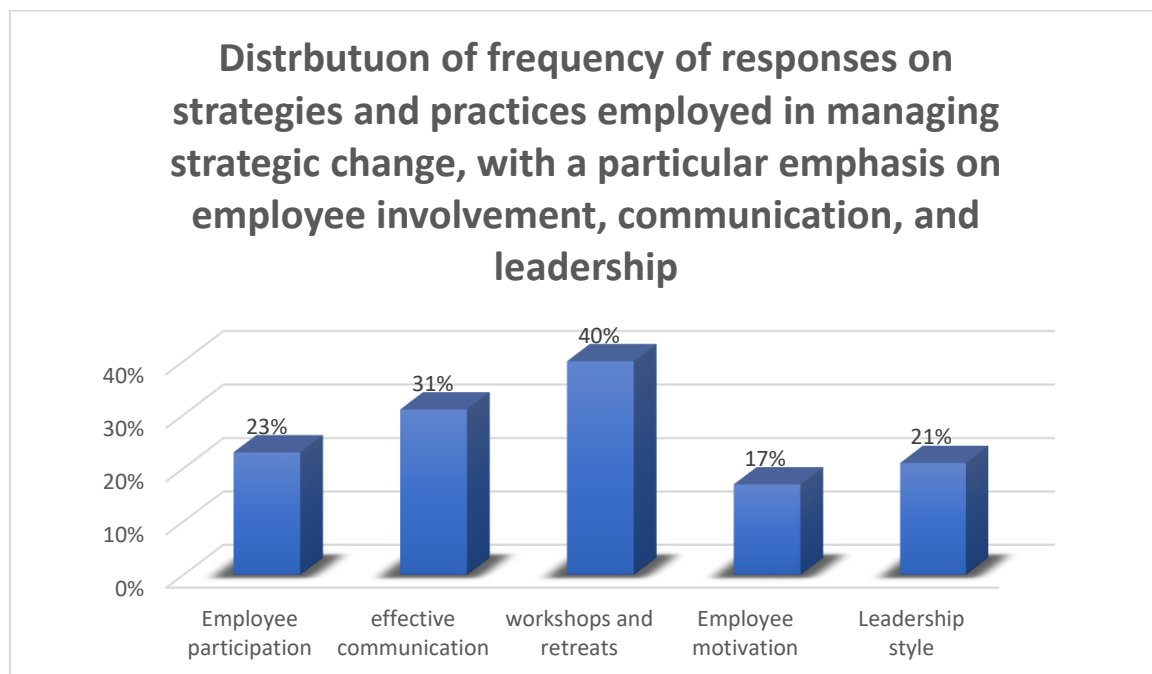
Source; Field data (2024).

From the findings, it is apparent that Harare Municipality City Council utilizes several strategies and practices to manage strategic change. However, it is notable that some of these practices scored relatively low in terms of frequency in the responses gathered from questionnaires.

Employee Participation in Decision-Making (23%): While it is recognized, it is not highlighted as frequently as other practices. This suggests that although there is some degree of involvement in decision-making, it may not be as extensive or impactful as desired.

Effective Communication (31%): Communication seems to be relatively better acknowledged compared to other practices. However, it is not the most emphasized aspect, indicating that there might still be room for improvement in ensuring communication is truly effective and reaches all stakeholders.

Workshops and Retreats (40%): This practice seems to be the most recognized among the participants. It suggests that the council heavily relies on such events to drive strategic change. However, it is worth assessing whether these events are truly effective in bringing about the desired change or if there is a need for diversification in approaches.

Employee Motivation (17%) and Leadership Styles (21%): Both motivation and leadership styles received relatively lower acknowledgment. This indicates that there are gaps in how leadership engages and motivates employees during times of change. It might be beneficial to explore different motivational techniques and leadership approaches to better support employees through transitions.

Overall, while the strategies and practices employed are varied, the findings suggest areas where improvements or adjustments may be needed to enhance their effectiveness in managing strategic change within the Harare Municipality City Council. It's important for the council to analyse these findings critically and consider implementing changes based on the insights gained.

From the key informant's perspective these strategies were discussed and presented as follows:

1. **Employee Participation in Decision-Making**

The following views were shared by the participants.

Human resources representative 1 argued that:

"By ensuring our employees feel valued and supported, we create a positive environment conducive to embracing change. Additionally, our leadership actively engages with employees, soliciting feedback, and addressing concerns promptly. Overall, our focus on employee motivation serves as a cornerstone in driving organizational transformation."

Human resource representative 2 articulated that.

"Our leadership emphasizes transparency and inclusivity, involving employees in decision-making processes and soliciting their input on strategic initiatives."

2. **Workshops and Retreats**

Human resource representative 1 noted that:

"We have implemented various initiatives such as recognition programs, training opportunities, and flexible work arrangements, we regularly organize workshops and retreats to Karimazondo for team build and professional development."

Human resource representative 3 underscored that:

"We also invest in employee development programs, providing opportunities for skill enhancement and career advancement."

3. Employee Motivation

Human resource representative 2 was of the views that:

"At Harare Municipality, we prioritize employee motivation as a central strategy in managing strategic change. We understand that motivated employees are essential for successful transitions."

Human resource representative 1 noted that:

"Employee motivation is integral to our approach in managing strategic change at Harare Municipality. We recognize that change can be daunting, and ensuring our employees are motivated is key to overcoming resistance and fostering commitment."

Human resource representative 3 presented that:

"In navigating strategic change, employee motivation is a core focus at Harare Municipality. We believe that motivated employees are the driving force behind successful transformations. To achieve this, we employ a multifaceted approach that includes recognition programs, performance incentives, and opportunities for personal and professional growth."

4. Leadership Styles

Human resource representative 1 noted that:

"Our leadership is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, where employees feel empowered to contribute ideas and voice concerns."

5. Effective Communication

Human resource representative 3 argued that:

"Effective communication channels are established to keep everyone informed and involved throughout the change process."

Human resource representative 2 contended that:

"Regular communication channels are maintained to keep employees informed about changes and their implications. By prioritizing employee motivation, we cultivate a culture of resilience and adaptability, enabling us to navigate through change successfully."

All in all, despite serious divergence from the responses given in the questionnaires, these responses highlight the significance of employee motivation as a central strategy in managing strategic change at Harare Municipality. By prioritizing employee well-being, involving them in decision-making, maintaining open communication, and providing opportunities for growth, the municipality aims to foster a positive and adaptive organizational culture conducive to successful change implementation.

Although, there is no consensus between the employees and the Human resources representatives the issues noted by the participants have also been agreed upon in the reviewed literature. For instance, on Active involvement of employees in the change process is widely recognized as a fundamental strategy for successful change management. Cummings and Worley (2014) contend that when employees are actively engaged in decision-making and feel ownership of the change initiative, they are more likely to support it and contribute positively to its implementation. This assertion aligns with the findings of Beer et al. (1990), who emphasize the significance of creating a "shared diagnosis" among employees. In their study Beer et al(1990), underscore the importance of involving employees in defining the problem and crafting solutions

Furthermore, research by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) underscores the positive impact of employee involvement on commitment, motivation, and sense of ownership, all of which are essential for achieving organizational goals. Armenakis and Harris (2002) further argue that active participation of employees in decision-making processes can mitigate resistance to change by fostering a sense of empowerment. They advocate for organizations to provide employees with opportunities to participate in problem-solving, idea generation, and the implementation of change initiatives.

Effective communication is widely recognized as a fundamental aspect of successful change management initiatives. Kotter and Cohen (2002) emphasize the significance of clear and consistent communication in gaining buy-in and minimizing resistance to change. Their research underscores the importance of conveying the rationale behind the change, articulating the vision for the future, and providing regular updates on progress. By doing so, organizations can cultivate a shared understanding of the change objectives and foster commitment among stakeholders.

In the realm of large-scale strategic changes, the necessity for effective communication becomes even more pronounced. Oreg et al. (2011) highlight the critical role of multi-level communication strategies in ensuring that messages resonate across different levels of the

organization. Their study stresses the importance of tailoring communication efforts to meet the diverse needs of various stakeholder groups, ranging from senior leadership to front-line employees (Oreg et al,2011). By customizing messages and delivery methods to align with the preferences and concerns of different audiences, organizations can enhance receptivity to change and minimize resistance.

Moreover, open and transparent communication practices play a vital role in building trust and alleviating uncertainty during periods of change. When employees feel informed and involved in the change process, they are more likely to embrace the proposed changes and actively contribute to their success. Oreg et al. (2011) notes that, by fostering a culture of transparency and openness, organizations can create an environment where individuals feel empowered to voice their concerns, ask questions, and participate in decision-making processes.

Effective communication serves as a cornerstone of successful change management efforts, facilitating buy-in, reducing resistance, and fostering trust among stakeholders. By leveraging insights from research by Kotter and Cohen (2002) and Oreg et al. (2011), organizations can develop communication strategies that are tailored to the specific needs and preferences of their workforce, ultimately enhancing the likelihood of successful change implementation.

Leadership is undeniably essential in change management, serving as the compass that guides the organization through transformational processes. Kotter (1996) introduces the concept of "change leadership," distinguishing it from traditional management by underlining the necessity for visionary and inspirational leadership during change initiatives. This type of leadership entails guiding employees through uncertainty and inspiring them to embrace the change vision. In his seminal work, Kotter (1996) emphasizes that effective change leaders not only manage change but also lead it, driving organizational transformation forward.

Further corroborating this notion, Bass and Riggio (2006) emphasize the significance of transformational leadership in successful change management. Transformational leaders are adept at motivating and inspiring their teams, aligning them with the change vision, and nurturing a culture of adaptability and innovation. By fostering an environment where individuals feel empowered and inspired, transformational leaders facilitate the adoption of change initiatives and drive organizational progress.

4.6. Chapter summary.

This chapter focused on presenting, analysing and discussing the data that was collected from the field. The chapter started by presenting the demographic and the biographic data of the participants. The chapter went on to present on the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management. Under this section there were mixed feeling between the participants whereby the participants expressed that there is mutual respect between employees and management, communication hangs in the balance and they do not feel that much appreciated which indicates that there are issues at Harare municipality when it comes to employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management. On the second issue which focused on the factors that have been influencing employee management relations within Harare Municipality. These were argued as follows: communication, leadership style, organizational culture, politics, work life balance and employee empowerment. On the strategies and practices employed by Harare municipality city council in managing strategic change were as follows: employee participation in decision-making, effective communication, workshops and retreats, employee motivation and leadership styles. The recommendations are presented in the following chapter. The chapter then concludes with a chapter summary.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Introduction

This chapter focused on presenting the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study that focused on: Analysing the Impact of Employee Relations on Strategic Change Management: A Case Study of Harare City Council.

5.1.Research summary.

The study had five chapters, which were used to discuss and address the research problem. The chapter one was an introductory chapter, in which the research was introduced. The second chapter focused on presenting the literature review, chapter three was focused on presenting the research methodology of the study. Chapter four was focused on presenting the field data, analysing, and discussing the data. Chapter five was on presenting the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. A detailed summary of the study is presented in the following paragraphs.

Chapter one presented the introduction of the research. In the first section of this chapter, the research presented a background of the study, were general arguments and issues which justify this research were presented. The second section of the research presented the statement of the problem of the study, this was a statement which informed what this research is all about and why it should be conducted. The Chapter also then presented the guiding research questions and objectives to this study before presenting the significance of the study. The chapter also

presented the significance of the study in which the research seeks to address or speak to. After the significance issues to do with the delimitations of the study were presented, whereby specifically notes the stakeholders the research was important to and why was it important to them. The research further went on to provide with the definitions of key terms that were used in the study, before concluding with a chapter outline.

The chapter two, presented a comprehensive exploration of relevant literature, meticulously examining empirical evidence, theoretical frameworks, and critical perspectives essential to the study's focus. Beginning with an exposition of the guiding theoretical framework, the chapter elucidated the Human Resource Management (HRM) Theory, critically evaluating its foundational principles and relevance to the research objectives. Subsequently, the discussion delved into Employee Relations, meticulously probing the intricacies of interpersonal dynamics, communication channels, and collaborative endeavors between employees and management. This examination shed light on the multifaceted nature of employee relations within organizational contexts. Furthermore, the chapter scrutinized Strategies and Practices in Managing Strategic Change, with a specific emphasis on key elements such as employee involvement, effective communication strategies, and leadership approaches. Through a thorough analysis, it underscored the pivotal role of these factors in navigating organizational transformation successfully. The chapter synthesized the discussed themes, providing a succinct summary that encapsulated the key insights gleaned from the literature review. This synthesis laid a robust foundation for the subsequent phases of the research endeavor, setting the stage for further investigation into the complexities of organizational change management and employee relations.

Chapter three delved into the intricate dynamics of employee relations and strategic change management within Harare City Council, employing a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively analyze the research topic. Beginning with an exploration of the conceptual framework, the chapter elucidates the significance of employee relations in driving organizational change initiatives, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between human resources practices and strategic objectives. The chapter outlines the research philosophy, design, and sampling techniques employed in the study, highlighting the pragmatism underpinning the research approach and the rationale for employing a case study design. Through stratified, convenience, and purposive sampling, the study aims to capture diverse perspectives from Harare Municipality employees, top executives, and HR representatives, ensuring representativeness and depth in data collection. With a total sample of

45 participants, including detailed data collection and analysis procedures, the chapter elucidates the meticulous process of gathering quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. By employing rigorous methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings, researchers aim to generate actionable insights into the impact of employee relations on strategic change management practices within Harare City Council.

The chapter four, presenting, analysing and discussing the data that was collected from the field. The chapter started by presenting the demographic and the biographic data of the participants. The chapter went on to present on the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management. Under this section there were mixed feeling between the participants whereby the participants expressed that there is mutual respect between employees and management, communication hangs in the balance and they do not feel that much appreciated which indicates that there are issues at Harare municipality when it comes to employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management. On the second issue which focused on the factors that have been influencing employee management relations within Harare Municipality. These were argued as follows: communication, leadership style, organizational culture, politics, work life balance and employee empowerment. On the strategies and practices employed by Harare municipality city council in managing strategic change were as follows: employee participation in decision-making, effective communication, workshops and retreats, employee motivation and leadership styles. The recommendations are presented in the following chapter. The chapter then concludes with a chapter summary.

With regards to chapter five focus was on presenting the summary of the study, conclusion of the study and the presentation of the recommendations of the study. On the summary of the study, it was based more on presenting what the chapters of this study were all about. In summary the chapters of the project were as follows: the chapter one was an introductory chapter, in which the research was introduced. The second chapter focused on presenting the literature review, chapter three was focused on presenting the research methodology of the study. Chapter four was focused on presenting the field data, analyzing, and discussing the data. Chapter five was on presenting the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

5.2. Research conclusions.

The study delved into the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, highlighting the dynamics of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management. It emerged that while there is a semblance of mutual respect between employees and management, communication appears to be precarious, and there's a sense of underappreciation among the workforces. These findings underscore significant challenges within the Harare municipality regarding employee relations, necessitating attention and intervention.

Moreover, the study examined the multifaceted factors influencing employee-management relations within the municipality. Key factors identified included communication, leadership style, organizational culture, political dynamics, work-life balance, and employee empowerment. These factors intertwine to shape the complex landscape of employee relations, underscoring the need for a holistic approach to address underlying issues effectively.

Furthermore, the research explored the strategies and practices employed by the Harare City Council to manage strategic change. Notable approaches included employee participation in decision-making, effective communication channels, workshops and retreats, employee motivation initiatives, and varied leadership styles. These strategies signify efforts by the council to adapt to evolving circumstances and foster a conducive environment for organizational growth and development.

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the intricacies of employee relations within the Harare municipality, emphasizing the importance of addressing communication gaps, fostering a supportive organizational culture, and empowering employees. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, managers, and stakeholders to enhance employee engagement, improve organizational effectiveness, and promote sustainable development within the Harare City Council.

5.3. Recommendations

The recommendations of the study are as follows and to the following stakeholders:

Harare Municipality at Large:

➢ Foster a culture of open communication and transparency throughout the organization. Encourage regular feedback sessions and town hall meetings to facilitate dialogue between management and employees.

➢ Invest in leadership development programs to equip managers with effective communication skills and adaptive leadership styles that promote employee engagement and collaboration.

➢ Prioritize efforts to enhance organizational culture by promoting values of respect, recognition, and inclusivity. Encourage initiatives that celebrate diversity and create a sense of belonging among employees.

Management:

➢ Take proactive measures to address communication challenges identified in the study. Implement regular communication channels such as newsletters, intranet platforms, and team meetings to keep employees informed about organizational changes and developments.

➢ Lead by example by demonstrating active listening, empathy, and appreciation for employee contributions. Recognize and reward employees for their achievements to foster a culture of appreciation and motivation.

➢ Provide ongoing training and support for managers to navigate complex organizational dynamics and effectively manage employee relations. Encourage managers to seek feedback from employees and adapt their leadership approach accordingly.

Human Resources:

➢ Develop comprehensive employee engagement strategies that prioritize communication, recognition, and empowerment. Implement feedback mechanisms such as employee surveys and suggestion boxes to gather insights and address concerns proactively.

➢ Offer training programs on conflict resolution, effective communication, and interpersonal skills to equip employees with the tools they need to navigate workplace challenges and build positive relationships.

➢ Collaborate with management to design and implement initiatives that promote work-life balance, employee well-being, and professional development opportunities. Consider flexible work arrangements and wellness programs to support employee productivity and morale.

Employees:

➢ Actively participate in communication channels provided by the organization to voice concerns, provide feedback, and contribute to decision-making processes.

➢ Take advantage of training and development opportunities offered by the organization to enhance skills, knowledge, and career growth prospects.

➢ Advocate for a supportive work environment that values collaboration, respect, and diversity. Engage in constructive dialogue with colleagues and management to address issues and promote a positive organizational culture.

5.4.Areas for further study

1.   mpact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement:

Investigate how different leadership styles within the Harare City Council affect employee engagement levels. Analyze the correlation between leadership behaviors, such as transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leadership, and employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. This study could provide insights into the most effective leadership approaches for enhancing employee relations and organizational performance.

2.   Effectiveness of Communication Strategies in Employee Relations:

Explore the effectiveness of various communication strategies employed by the Harare City Council in improving employee relations. Evaluate the impact of communication channels, frequency of communication, clarity of messaging, and responsiveness of management on employee perceptions and attitudes. This research could identify best practices for enhancing communication within the organization and fostering a culture of transparency and trust.

3.   Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Well-being:

Examine the influence of organizational culture on employee well-being and job satisfaction within the Harare City Council. Investigate how organizational values, norms, and practices shape employee experiences, stress levels, and work-life balance. This study could highlight the importance of promoting a positive organizational culture that prioritizes employee health, happiness, and overall well-being for sustainable organizational success.

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HARARE MUNICIPALITY EMPLOYEES

INTRODUCTION

Dear Participant,

We greatly appreciate your participation in this survey. Your insights as Harare municipality employees are invaluable in Analysing the Impact of Employee Relations on Strategic Change Management: A Case Study of Harare City Council. This questionnaire aims to understand your experiences, perceptions, and recommendations.

Objective:

The primary objectives of this survey are to:

  i.   To assess the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management.

 ii.   To examine the factors influencing employee relations within the Harare City Council and identify key determinants that may impact the success of strategic change initiatives.

iii.   To analyze the strategies and practices employed by the Harare City Council in managing strategic change, with a specific emphasis on employee involvement, communication, and leadership.

 iv.   To evaluate the impact of employee relations on the implementation and outcomes of strategic change initiatives within the Harare City Council, and to provide recommendations for enhancing the alignment between employee relations and successful change management.

Your feedback and perspectives on sustainable procurement practices, the challenges faced, and potential improvement strategies will contribute significantly to this study. Your responses will be treated confidentially and will solely be used for research purposes.

Thank you for your valuable contribution to the advancement of sustainable and cost-effective procurement practices within Bindura Municipality.

Sincerely,

SECTION A: To assess the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council, focusing on the quality of interactions, communication, and cooperation between employees and management.

1. Employees and management communicate effectively with each other.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. There is mutual respect between employees and management.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Employees feel valued and appreciated by management.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. How would you rate the overall quality of interactions between employees and management within the Harare City Council?

Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent

SECTION B: To examine the factors influencing employee relations within the Harare City Council and identify key determinants that may impact the success of strategic change initiatives.

1. Adequate opportunities for employee participation in decision-making processes

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Clarity in roles and responsibilities within the organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Fairness in performance evaluation and reward systems

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

SECTION C: To analyze the strategies and practices employed by the Harare City Council in managing strategic change, with a specific emphasis on employee involvement, communication, and leadership.

1. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following strategies/practices employed by the Harare City Council in managing strategic change?

Employee involvement in decision-making related to change initiative.

Not very effective	Not effective	Neutral	effective	Very effective

2. Communication of change objectives and progress updates to employees

Not very effective	Not effective	Neutral	effective	Very effective

3. Leadership support and guidance throughout the change process.

Not very effective	Not effective	Neutral	effective	Very effective

Interview Guide:

Objective i: Assess the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council.

1. Can you describe the current state of employee relations within the Harare City Council?

2. How would you characterize the quality of interactions between employees and management?

3. What communication channels are in place for employees to voice concerns, provide feedback, or contribute ideas?

4. How would you rate the level of cooperation between employees and management in achieving organizational goals?

5. Can you provide examples of recent initiatives or activities aimed at fostering positive employee relations?

Objective ii: Examine factors influencing employee relations and their impact on strategic change initiatives

6. What are the key factors influencing employee relations within the Harare City Council?

7. How do external factors, such as political dynamics or community pressures, influence employee relations?

8. In your opinion, what are the main determinants that may impact the success of strategic change initiatives within the Harare City Council?

9. How do you perceive the relationship between employee relations and the successful implementation of strategic change initiatives?

10. Can you identify any challenges or barriers related to employee relations that may hinder the effectiveness of strategic change efforts?

Objective iii: Analyze strategies and practices in managing strategic change, with an emphasis on employee involvement, communication, and leadership

11. What strategies or practices does the Harare City Council employ to manage strategic change initiatives?

12. How are employees involved in the strategic change process, from planning to implementation?

13. What communication strategies are used to disseminate information about strategic changes to employees?

14. How would you describe the leadership approach within the Harare City Council in driving strategic change initiatives?

15. Can you provide examples of successful change management practices that have been implemented within the organization?

Objective iv: Evaluate the impact of employee relations on the implementation and outcomes of strategic change initiatives and provide recommendations

16. How do you perceive the impact of employee relations on the implementation of strategic change initiatives?

17. What indicators or metrics are used to assess the effectiveness of strategic change initiatives within the Harare City Council?

18. In your view, how does the quality of employee relations influence the outcomes of strategic change initiatives?

19. Based on your experience, what recommendations would you provide for enhancing the alignment between employee relations and successful change management at the Harare City Council?

20. Are there any additional insights or considerations you would like to share regarding the relationship between employee relations and strategic change management within the organization?

Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Your input will contribute significantly to our understanding of employee relations and strategic change management within the Harare City Council.

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