



Indigenous Legal Knowledge Systems in Tanzanian Law Practice: A Mixed-Methods Inquiry

Sabina Mwamwaya^{1,2}, Micheal Sserunkuuma^{1,3}, Gladys Kinyanjui³, Akiba Kabasele³

¹ Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Arusha

² Department of Research, University of Dar es Salaam

³ University of Dar es Salaam

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Correspondence: smwamwaya@outlook.com

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Author notes

Sabina Mwamwaya is affiliated with Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Arusha and focuses on Law research in Africa.

Micheal Sserunkuuma is affiliated with Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Arusha and focuses on Law research in Africa.

Gladys Kinyanjui is affiliated with University of Dar es Salaam and focuses on Law research in Africa.

Akiba Kabasele is affiliated with University of Dar es Salaam and focuses on Law research in Africa.

Abstract

Indigenous legal knowledge systems (ILKS) play a significant role in various African jurisdictions, including Tanzania. However, their integration into formal legal practices remains underexplored. The study employs a combination of qualitative interviews with legal practitioners and quantitative surveys among a sample population. Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and structured questionnaires designed to capture both subjective perspectives and objective data regarding ILKS utilization and acceptance within the Tanzanian legal system. A key finding from this research is that over half (54%) of surveyed practitioners reported integrating at least one ILKS domain into their practice, with themes emerging around inheritance law and customary dispute resolution mechanisms. Interviews revealed a nuanced understanding among practitioners regarding the perceived benefits and challenges associated with incorporating ILKS. This mixed-methods study contributes to the evolving discourse on legal pluralism by providing empirical evidence of ILKS integration in Tanzanian law practice, highlighting both potential synergies and obstacles to their adoption within formal legal systems. Future research should consider longitudinal studies examining long-term impacts of ILKS integration, as well as policy initiatives aimed at fostering greater compatibility between traditional and contemporary legal practices. Practitioners could benefit from training programmes that emphasise the importance and practical application of integrating ILKS into their work.

Keywords: African, Indigenous, Knowledge, Systems, Methodology, Ethnography, Jurisprudence

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