



Received: 17-11-2025
Accepted: 27-12-2025

ISSN: 2583-049X

Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Styles in Enhancing Employee Performance: A Case Study of Ndola City Council

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Abstract

The study assesses the Effectiveness of Leadership Styles in Enhancing Employee Performance: A Case Study of Ndola City Council. It looks at the relationship between different leadership styles and employee performance in a public sector institution. The study's goal is to determine the prevalent leadership styles used by managers at Ndola City Council and assess how these styles affect employee motivation, productivity, commitment, and overall organizational efficiency. Data were obtained using both quantitative and qualitative methods, including structured questionnaires and interviews with employees and department leaders.

The study examined important leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire, and

evaluated their impact on employee morale and performance outcomes. The findings found that transformational leadership was the most effective in boosting teamwork, innovation, and job happiness, whereas transactional leadership helped with short-term task completion but hindered creativity. Laissez-faire leadership, on the other hand, was linked to lower levels of accountability and performance. The study shows that leadership style has a significant impact on employee performance and organizational effectiveness. It advises that the Ndola City Council use more participatory and transformational leadership approaches to increase staff engagement, improve service delivery, and boost overall institutional performance.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Employee Performance, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Ndola City Council, and Organizational Success

1. Introduction and Background

Globally, public organizational leadership has increasingly been recognized as one of the drivers of employee performance, organizational performance, and quality service delivery. Quality leadership does not only impact employees' morale and productivity but also the organizational capacity to meet public expectation. Northouse (2018) corroborates that leadership is a process through which people influence a group of people to behave in a specific way to achieve mutual goals, and in public service, its use is pivotal in ensuring accountability, transparency, and improved performance. Participative and transformational leadership, with an emphasis on inclusivity, creativity, and employee motivation, has been used in nations such as Canada, Sweden, and New Zealand and has translated into improved institutional performance and citizen satisfaction (Kaufman, 2017; Johansson, 2019). Some of these countries have shown that by embracing visionary and emotionally intelligent styles of leadership, public leaders can create more commitment among civil servants, ultimately leading to better public sector effectiveness and efficiency.

Furthermore, recent research proves that leadership significantly influences principal organizational performance such as job satisfaction, motivation, and effectiveness of service delivery. For instance, Trottier, Van Wart, and Wang (2020) observe that transformational leadership generates higher tiers of public sector innovation and accountability, particularly where leaders instil institutional purpose to complement the dreams of employees. The COVID-19 pandemic also reinforced the importance of adaptive leadership within public administration, in a way that leaders in countries such as South Korea and Australia responded constructively to health and economic crises by engaging staff in decision-making and building resilience across civil service systems (UNDP, 2021).

Regionally, the African states continue to struggle with leadership in the public service. The African Union (2011) Charter on

Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, within the Bring Together Agenda 2063, espouses ethical, transparent, and accountable leadership to steer development. Its implementation, however, is uneven due to entrenched political patronage, corruption, and a lack of capacity (Hope, 2020). Empirical work in Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria has established that in spite of public sector reforms, poor quality of leadership continues to be the biggest impediment to effective delivery of services.

In South Africa, for example, Booyens and Moyo (2016) established that participative and transformational leadership styles improved staff morale and institutional trust, which translated into better public service delivery. Conversely, autocratic and transactional leadership styles resulted in staff disengagement as well as institutional reform resistance.

In Kenya, Otieno (2018) [21] identified that the leadership style of the county governments directly affected employee performance where democratic leadership influenced better attendance, teamwork, and creativity. In Nigeria, the empirical evidence of Eze *et al.* (2021) validated that employee performance increased substantially when the leader employs a supportive, empowering leadership style in bureaucratic situations. Irrespective of the different governance contexts of African countries, something remains constant: the prevalence of top-down, centralized leadership styles that exclude workers from the decision-making table in strategic discussions, and thus, devalue performance and motivation (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015).

Locally, Zambia's public administration leadership environment is characterised by the legacy of colonialism and evolving aspirations for democratic, decentralised service provision. Zambia has experienced numerous reforms in its public sector since gaining independence in 1964, all directed towards increased accountability, effectiveness, and local participation. The Public Service Management Policy 2018 and National Decentralization Policy (2013) were meant to decentralize services to local institutions and foster inclusive governance. Despite all these, most of the institutions of the local government are dominated by hierarchical and bureaucratic leadership structures that are limited to workers' involvement and innovation (Zulu, 2019) [23].

Ndola City Council, one of the oldest and most rooted of Zambia's municipal councils, is an example of much of the system leadership problems bedevilling urban councils. According to Simutenda (2020), employees in office tend to be demotivated, disorganized in task implementation, and with minimal involvement in decision-making. These have been linked to rigid leadership styles that fail to encourage staff development or recognize the contribution of workers. While policy reforms encourage participatory management, leadership practices in reality are predominantly autocratic or transactional, thus undermining efforts towards employee performance enhancement.

Additionally, recent studies in Zambia illustrate a widening gap between the leadership expectations of employees and the leadership style of leaders. Kabwe (2021) [28] notes that workers in most urban councils, like Ndola, desire more participative, communicative, and supportive leadership. However, as a result of the persistence of the use of authoritarian management styles, there has been greater absenteeism, declining service quality, and a widening gap between leadership and operational staff.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Workers' performance in Zambia's local authorities has come under growing scrutiny through the continued inefficiency in service provision, low staff morale, and poor accountability structures (Simutenda, 2020; Kabwe, 2021 [28]). Despite such reforms as the Public Service Management Policy (2018) and Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019, councils continue to be typified by rigid, top-down leadership styles that are unsuitable for motivating workers or stimulating innovation (Zulu, 2019) [23]. Repeated issues like absenteeism, communication failures, and demotivated employees at Ndola City Council have been linked to poor leadership behaviors (Kapijimpanga & Moonga, 2021) [20]. Research in Africa has confirmed that leadership styles namely transformational and participatory styles have positive impacts on employee productivity, job satisfaction, and service delivery (Otieno, 2018 [21]; Eze *et al.*, 2021). However, in Zambia, there is very little empirical data directly linking style of leadership to outcomes in councils. Most councils still maintain a transactional or autocratic leadership culture, limiting staff participation and dragging morale down (Chirwa & Chileshe, 2020) [25]. Without context-sitting data to support leadership development, there are bound to be continuing performance gaps.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the dominant leadership styles employed by leaders at Ndola City Council.
2. To assess how these leadership styles influence employee motivation and job performance.
3. To evaluate employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of leadership styles practiced at the Council.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the prevailing leadership styles practiced at Ndola City Council?
2. In what ways do these leadership styles impact employee motivation and job performance?
3. How do employees perceive the effectiveness of their leaders' styles in enhancing performance?

2. Literature Review

This literature reviews existing literature relevant to leadership styles and their impact on employee performance, with emphasis on public institutions. It draws on global, regional (Africa), and local (Zambia) studies, aligning the review with the study's specific objectives. The themes addressed include dominant leadership styles in public institutions, their effects on employee performance, employee perceptions of leadership, and the research gap this study seeks to fill.

The literature review is organized around the three research objectives:

2.1 To identify the dominant leadership styles employed by leaders at Ndola City Council

Leadership is widely acknowledged as a vital factor influencing organizational effectiveness in both private and public entities. In the public sector, where bureaucratic institutions often impede efficiency, strong leadership is critical for aligning institutional goals with employee

enthusiasm, creativity, and accountability. Over the last decade, global research has highlighted the growing importance of leadership style in improving service delivery, employee happiness, and institutional adaptation (Northouse, 2018).

Globally, public institutions have shifted away from conventional bureaucratic and autocratic forms and toward more adaptable and participatory leadership approaches. In Canada, Sweden, and New Zealand, leadership frameworks place a greater emphasis on diversity, emotional intelligence, and transformational competencies. To improve staff engagement, the Canadian Treasury Board Secretariat established a values-based leadership framework that prioritised cooperation and creativity (Kaufman, 2017). Similarly, Johansson (2019) discovered that Swedish municipal managers who used transformational leadership characterised by empowerment and participatory decision-making enhanced accountability and service quality.

In the United States, Meier and O'Toole (2018) discovered that transactional leadership, while maintaining operational stability, was less effective at generating innovation or long-term drive. Judge and Piccolo's (2017) meta-analysis of more than 200 leadership studies from Europe and North America found that transformational leadership leads to greater levels of work satisfaction, commitment, and performance. Similarly, Trottier, Van Wart, and Wang (2020) discovered that transformative leaders in United States federal agencies increased intrinsic motivation through inspiration and appreciation. Browning (2021) in Australia concluded that participatory leadership, which involves employees in problem solving and decision-making, increased morale and production.

Leadership has been identified as a key driver of public sector transformation throughout OECD member nations. The OECD (2020) recognized initiatives in the Netherlands and Denmark that used coaching-based leadership styles to improve communication and employee engagement. In New Zealand, the Public Service Commission's (2021) "Spirit of Service" framework emphasized integrity, teamwork, and people-centered leadership, resulting in increased motivation and performance. These studies demonstrate that transformative and participative leadership approaches greatly improve public service outcomes.

Leadership effectiveness in public institutions has gained traction in Sub-Saharan Africa due to its impact on service delivery and employee morale. Despite significant governance reforms, many African public institutions maintain hierarchical and authoritarian leadership styles that stifle innovation and accountability (Hope, 2020). According to Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015), autocratic legacies harm performance. However, empirical evidence from various African countries shows a steady trend towards democratic and transformative leadership.

In Kenya, Otieno (2018) [21] discovered that democratic leadership increased employee productivity and happiness among county government workers. Similarly, Osei and Boateng (2016) found that participative leadership in Ghana's local government increased employee dedication and efficiency. Transformational leadership is positively associated with employee motivation and institutional effectiveness, according to studies conducted in South Africa (Mokgolo, Mokgolo, & Modiba, 2017) and Nigeria (Eze *et al.*, 2021). Tumwine *et al.* (2019) in Uganda and Muriithi and Kariuki (2020) in Kenya have both found that

supportive and inspirational leadership promotes professional progress and minimizes employee complaints. Perceptions of leadership fairness and transparency are also important. Kiggundu (2017) [29] and Ogbonna and Okoro (2020) discovered that perceived ethical and emotionally intelligent leaders increase employee loyalty and performance. Agyeman and Ponniah (2017) found similar results in Ghana, where employees under participative leaders reported higher levels of engagement and satisfaction. Leadership training programs that focus on transformational competencies have enhanced accountability and employee motivation in Rwanda and South Africa (Booysen, 2020; Rwanda Governance Board, 2019).

In Zambia, hierarchical traditions continue to have a strong influence on public sector leadership. Although decentralization and public service management reforms have been undertaken, their implementation has been hampered by autocratic leadership practices (Zulu, 2019; Chirwa & Chileshe, 2020) [23, 25]. According to research conducted specifically for Ndola City Council, recurrent leadership difficulties are impacting performance and service delivery. According to Simutenda (2020), restricted employee involvement in decision-making resulted in low job satisfaction and productivity. Kabwe (2021) [28] discovered that employees preferred communicative, inclusive, and motivating leadership, while many reported encountering controlling and apathetic management styles. Kapijimpanga and Moonga (2021) [20] found that transformational and democratic leadership techniques in Copperbelt local governments were related with increased productivity and accountability, whereas autocratic styles harmed teamwork and service delivery. According to government reports (GRZ, 2018) [7], inefficiencies in local councils are due to weak leadership and communication. Initiatives like the Local Government Capacity Enhancement Programme (Chitambala, 2021) and open staff forums at Ndola City Council (Kabwe, 2023) have showed promise in terms of morale and departmental collaboration. However, other challenges remain, including political patronage in appointments (Kanyamuna, 2021), insufficient training resources (GRZ, 2018) [7], and stiff bureaucratic structures (Chirwa & Chileshe, 2020) [25]. Using Bass and Riggio's (2006) Transformational Leadership Theory, evidence demonstrates that leaders who communicate clear visions and involve employees in collaborative problem-solving can improve performance outcomes. In contrast, transactional leadership in Zambian councils has been related to stagnation and reluctance to change (Kapijimpanga & Moonga, 2021) [20].

2.2 To assess how these leadership styles influence employee motivation and job performance

Leadership styles influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness across global, regional, and local governance systems. Internationally, studies in developed countries such as Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States have consistently shown that transformational and participatory leadership models improve employee engagement, motivation, and innovation. Evidence from OECD (2020) member nations reinforces the increased emphasis on adaptive and ethical leadership as a foundation for public sector change.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, research reveals both improvement and continuing difficulties. Transformational and democratic leadership styles are associated with improved employee morale, accountability, and performance, according to studies conducted in Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda. Bureaucratic rigidity, political meddling, and a lack of capacity development continue to restrict leadership effectiveness in African public institutions (Hope, 2020).

In Zambia, leadership style is an important predictor of employee performance in local government. According to research conducted in district and city councils, participatory and transformational leadership promotes teamwork, creativity, and accountability, whereas autocratic and transactional models frequently result in disengagement and inefficiency. The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ, 2018)^[7] recognizes inadequate leadership as a barrier to efficient service delivery and recommends leadership training that emphasizes inclusion, emotional intelligence, and participative management.

2.3 To evaluate employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of leadership styles practiced at the Council

Employee perceptions of leadership are critical in determining organizational effectiveness, especially in public organizations with bureaucratic structures and limited resources. Global study shows that how employees view their leaders has a substantial impact on motivation, engagement, trust, and desire to align with company goals (Greenberg, 1990)^[27]. Transformational and participatory leadership styles generally promote favourable employee attitudes due to their emphasis on fairness, transparency, inclusion, and vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Autocratic leadership, which limits employee autonomy, has been shown to reduce motivation and productivity (Deci & Ryan, 2000)^[26].

Perceived fairness appears as a key component of good leadership. According to Greenberg's (1990)^[27] theory of organizational justice, employees evaluate leaders based on distributive, procedural, and interactional justice characteristics, which collectively generate attitudes of equity, respect, and trust. Leaders who use equal practices and display honesty are more likely to win employee loyalty and commitment. Transformational leaders generate positive attitudes by encouraging individual reflection and establishing a common sense of purpose (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990)^[30].

Regional evidence supports these findings. According to studies conducted in East and Southern Africa, participatory and consultative leadership improves staff morale, cooperation, and performance. In Zambia, leadership in public institutions such as local councils is mostly hierarchical, which frequently leads to unfavourable employee impressions and low engagement. However, empirical research shows that when council leaders use collaborative and participatory techniques, staff motivation, trust, and service delivery outcomes improve significantly (Chirwa & Chileshe, 2020)^[25].

Despite these findings, the literature on leadership and employee performance in Sub-Saharan Africa has a number of methodological and contextual constraints. Much research uses qualitative designs, such as interviews and case studies, without including strong quantitative validation

procedures (Ngulube, 2015). Furthermore, study samples frequently lack representativeness, concentrating solely on particular institutions or sectors such as education and health while ignoring local government contexts (Sakala & Mwansa, 2020). Furthermore, much of the existing literature adapts findings from less stable administrative environments, such as Kenya and South Africa, to countries like Zambia, where political intervention, inadequate institutional autonomy, and resource constraints create unique obstacles (Kanyamuna, 2021).

A noteworthy gap in present research is the inadequate examination of employee viewpoints. Most leadership studies focus on management or structural analysis, while ignoring how employees perceive and experience leadership behavior (Kabwe, 2021)^[28]. This exclusion limits our understanding of the interpersonal and psychological aspects of leadership effectiveness. As a result, there is an urgent need for context-specific, empirically grounded research that incorporate employee perspectives into leadership evaluations, particularly among Zambian local governments such as Ndola City Council.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used in the study. The study aims to investigate the maize floor price policy and its effects on the mealie meal price.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design, which is suitable for systematically exploring the characteristics and relationships within a given phenomenon. According to Rowley (2013), descriptive studies are valuable as they provide insights into the characteristics of the population or phenomenon under study. This research design is ideal for this study as it aims to understand the effects of leadership styles on employee performance in the public sector, specifically focusing on Ndola City Council.

3.2 Sampling Technique

For this study, the researcher will employ simple random sampling techniques:

The simple random sampling is meant to sample trading companies in Zambia.

3.3 Target Population

Population is the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected. According to Babbie (1992), a study population is the aggregation of elements from which the sample elements are actually selected. This researcher targets a population of traders and residents in the country.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The main instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions. They will be administered to the respondents at their business premises. The researcher used structured self-administered questionnaires covering all the variables in the study. In these questionnaires, a five-point Likert scale was used to ease data processing and analysis. The scale was marked 1-4, where 1 represents very effective and 4 represents ineffective.

The data to be obtained will mainly be sourced through the use of questionnaires. 50 questionnaires will be self-

administered with open-ended and closed-ended questions. The proper guild will be offered to ensure an accurate supply of information.

3.5 Triangulation

Triangulation is a research technique used to validate by comparing the results from multiple sources or methods (Denzin, 1978). In this study, triangulation was used to compare the results from the qualitative and quantitative phases. The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews, while the quantitative phase involved a questionnaire survey. By comparing the results from both phases, the study aimed to increase the validity and reliability of the findings (Bryman, 2006). Triangulation also helped to identify patterns and themes that emerged from both phases, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Creswell, 2014).

3.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics will be used to analyze the data (Kumar, 2019). Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize and describe the data, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations (Creswell, 2014). Inferential statistics will be used to test hypotheses and make inferences about the population, including correlation analysis and regression analysis (Kumar, 2019). The data analysis will be done using statistical software, which is a common practice in social science research (Bryman, 2016).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent from participants (Bryman, 2016). Participants will be assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

3.8 Limitations

According to Beins (2003), limitations are factors which a researcher foresees as restrictions, problems and such other elements which might affect the attainment of objectivity and validity of the research findings. The following are some of our limitations of the study:

Financial constraints: funding to conduct the research was a challenge in that this research was self-funded, and there were a lot of costs to be incurred, such as transport, printing of questionnaires, binding and others.

4. Presentation of Research Findings and Discussion of Results

4.1 Overview

This chapter examines, interprets, and presents the findings that were obtained from the completed questionnaires that were collected and later analysed. The first section of this chapter presents the demographic findings, presents the qualitative results of this study, and the last section presents the discussion of findings.

4.2 Presentation of Results on Background Characteristics of the Respondents

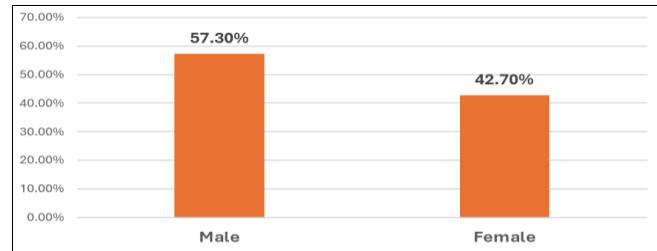


Fig 4.2.1: Sex

According to Figure 1, 57% of the respondents were male, and 42% were female. The majority of the respondents in the study were males. More men participated in the survey than women.

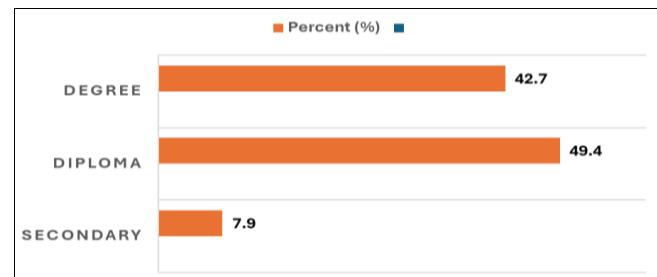


Fig 4.2.2: Level of Education

According to Figure 2, 49.4 % of the respondents were Diploma holders, 42.7 % were Degree holders, while 7.9 % of the respondents were secondary school graduates. The study found that the Council has a relatively high number of trained and educated employees. It was therefore evident that the Council has a high proportion of skilled personnel.

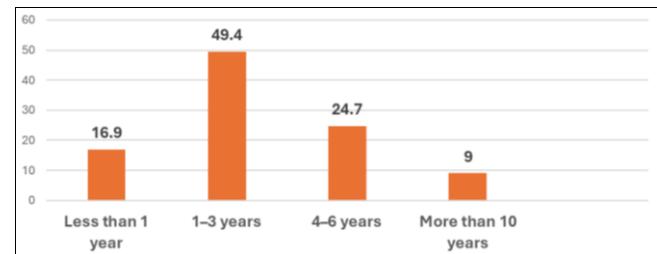


Fig 4.2.3: Years of Employment

The study found that 49.4 % of the respondents have been with Ndola City Council for 1 – 3 years. 24.7 % of the respondents have been at the Council for at least 4 – 6 years. 16.9 % of the respondents recorded being at the Council for less than a year. While 9 % indicated they have worked for more than 10 years. The data suggests that the Ndola City Council has a workforce that is relatively new. The study found that most employees have been at the Ndola city council for less than 3 years.

4.3 Presentation of results based on objective 1: To identify the dominant leadership styles employed by leaders at Ndola City Council

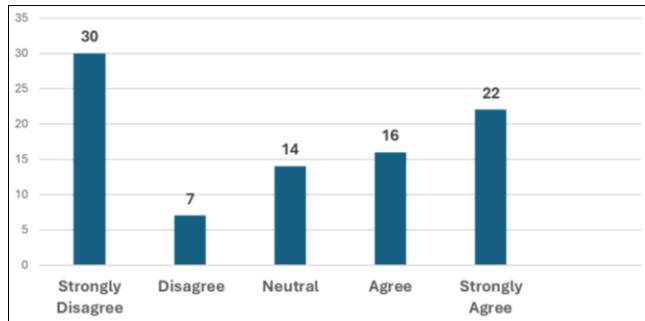


Fig 4.3.1: Leaders in my department consult staff before making key decisions

The study found that 30% of the respondents strongly disagreed that leaders in departments consult staff before making key decisions, and 7 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, 22 % of the respondents strongly agreed, while 16 % of the respondents agreed with the statement. The study further indicated that 14 % of the respondents were neutral on the subject.

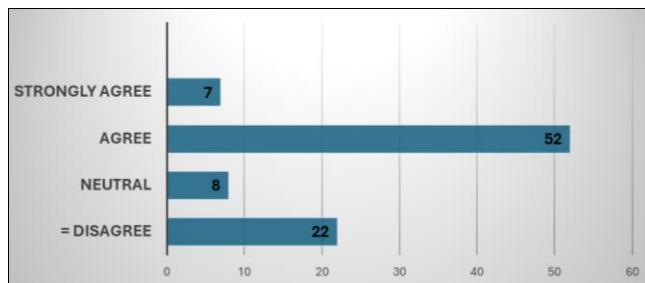


Fig 4.3.2: Leadership practices are more autocratic than participatory

The study found that 52 % of the respondents agree with the statement that Leadership practices are more autocratic than participatory. 22 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement. 7 respondents indicated that they strongly agreed. 8 % of the respondents were neutral on the subject. The study concluded that most of the respondents in the study feel that an autocratic leader is prevalent at the Ndola City Council.

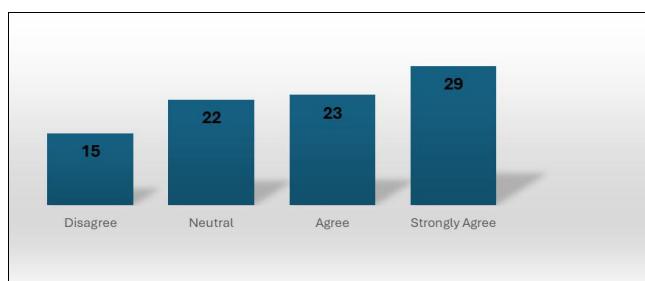


Fig 4.3.3: Staff involvement in departmental planning

29% strongly agreed. This was followed by 23 % of respondents who agreed. A combined 52 % of the respondents agreed with the statement in varying degrees. 22 % of the respondents in the study were neutral on the subject. 15 % of the respondents did not agree with the

statement. It can therefore be concluded that most of the respondents feel that they are included in the decision-making process at Ndola City Council.

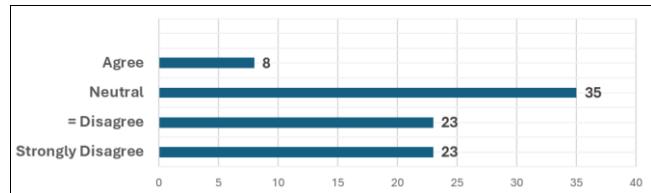


Fig 4.3.4: Supervisors give orders without asking for input

The data show that 35% of the respondents were neutral on the matter. Only 8 of the respondents agreed with the statement. As for the remaining 23 % strongly disagreed, and a further 23 % disagreed with the statement. A combined 46 % of respondents disagreed with the statement. The study found that most of the respondents did not agree with the statement; 35 % of neutral respondents may indicate that respondents were not comfortable with the question.

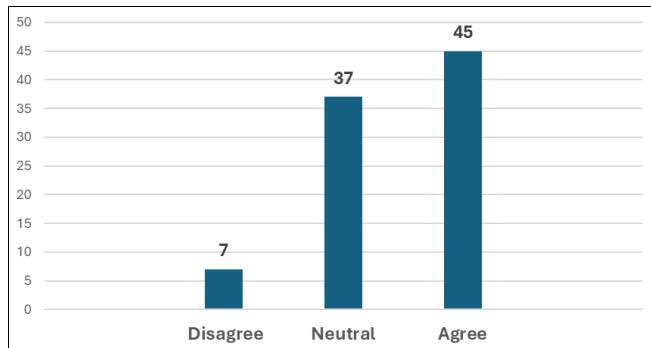


Fig 4.3.5: Managers use rewards and penalties frequently

45 % of the respondents agreed with the statement that Managers use rewards and penalties frequently (transactional style). 37 % of the respondents were neutral on the matter. 7 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Most of the respondents in the study felt that Managers use rewards and penalties frequently (transactional style). This draws towards the presence of transactional style.

4.4 Assessing how these leadership styles influence employee motivation and job performance

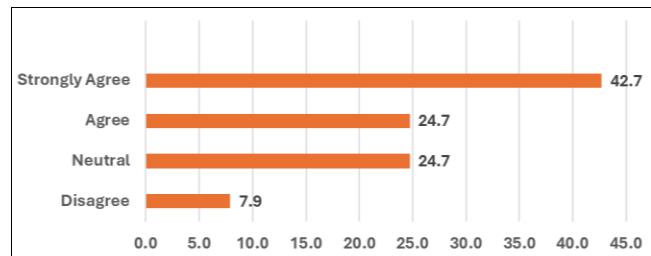


Fig 4.4.1: Level of agreement to improved performance resulting from leadership styles adopted

The number of respondents who agree with the statement was 24.7 %. Respondents who were neutral about the subject were 24.7 %. Only 7.9 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The study found that most of

the respondents at 67.4 % a combination of strongly agreed and agreed indicated that they are encouraged to perform better by their managers' leadership styles.

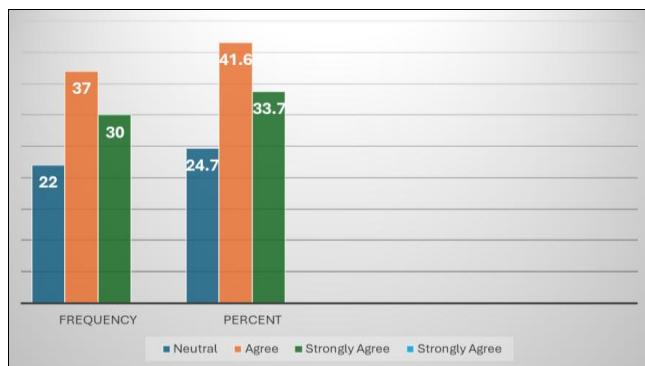


Fig 4.4.2: Leadership influence on job satisfaction

Many of the respondents agreed with the statement at 41.6 % whereas 33.7 % of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement. 24.7 % of the respondents were neutral on the matter. The study concluded that many of the respondents derive job satisfaction from the leadership styles of their managers. It can therefore be concluded that at the Ndola City Council, leadership style influences the level of job satisfaction among employees.

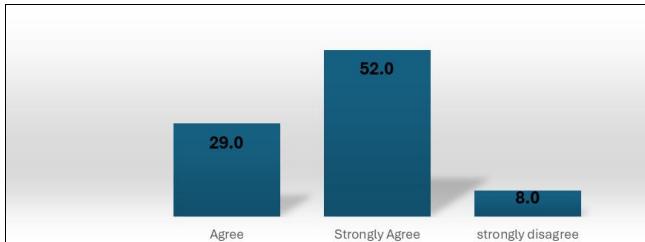


Fig 4.4.3: Leadership affects how motivated I feel at work

The study found that 52 % of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that their motivation is affected by leadership style. 29 % of the respondents agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 8 % of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. The study concluded that most of the respondents' motivation was affected by the leadership style.

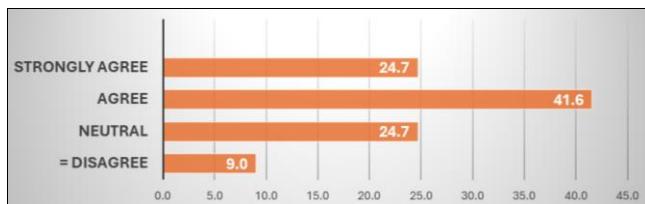


Fig 4.4.4: Level of agreement on empowerment by role played in the job

As seen in the figure, the proportion of respondents who agreed with the statement that "I feel empowered in my job role because of leadership practices" was 41.6 %. Those who strongly agreed were 24.7 %. Neutral responses accounted for 24.7 % and 9 % of the responses that disagreed with the statement. The study concluded that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that they feel empowered in their jobs because of leadership practices.

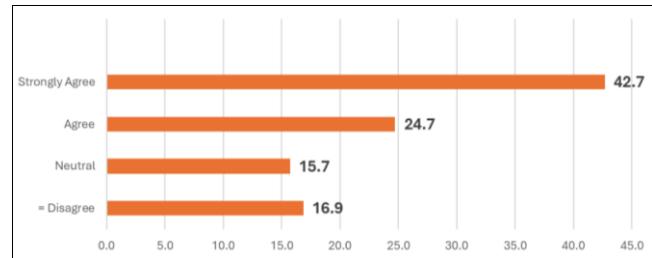


Fig 4.4.5: Level of agreement with leadership's inspiration to commit to the organisation's goals

The data revealed that 42.7% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "leadership inspires me to be more committed to organisational goals". 24.7 % of the respondents agreed. On the other hand, 16.9 % of the respondents disagreed, while 15.7 % were neutral on the matter. From this data, it can be concluded that most respondents are inspired by leadership to be committed to organisational goals.

4.5 Evaluating employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of leadership styles practised at the Council

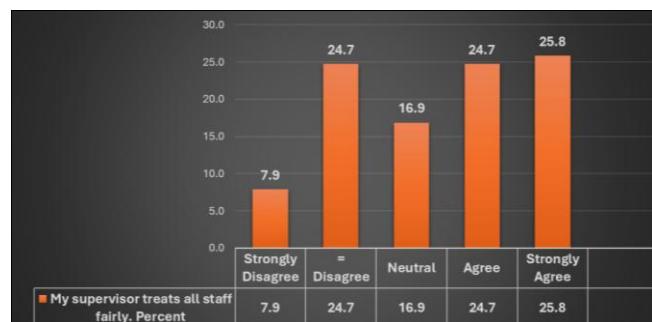


Fig 4.5.1: Supervisor treats all staff fairly

According to the findings, the number of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement that "my supervisor treats all staff fairly" was 25.8 %. Those who agreed with the statement were 24.7 %. The neutrals were 16.9 %. On the other end, 24.7 % also disagreed with the statement. 7.9 % of the remaining respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. The study concluded that at least 50.5 % of the respondents perceived their supervisors to be fair when it comes to their interactions with all staff.

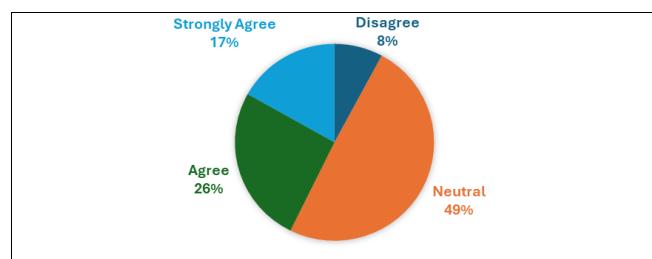


Fig 4.5.2: Leadership is transparent

The study found that 49 % of the respondents indicated that they were neutral on the matter of the leadership at Ndola City Council being transparent in their dealings. 25 % agreed, 17 % strongly agreed, while 8 % disagreed. The study found that most of the respondents felt that the Council was transparent with its people. The study

concluded that the Ndola City Council leadership is transparent when dealing with its subordinates.

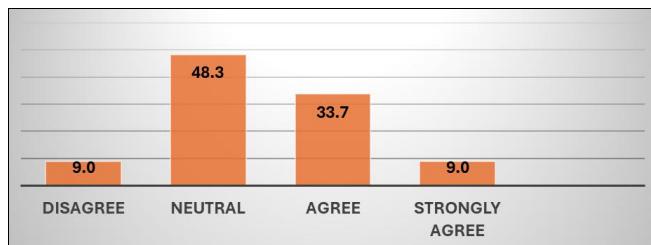


Fig 4.5.3: Communication is clear and effective

On the subject of Leadership communication, being clear and effective. Figure 18 indicates that 48.3 % of the respondents were neutral on the matter. This was followed by 33.7 % of the respondents who agreed with the statement. 9 % of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while the other 9% disagreed with the statement.

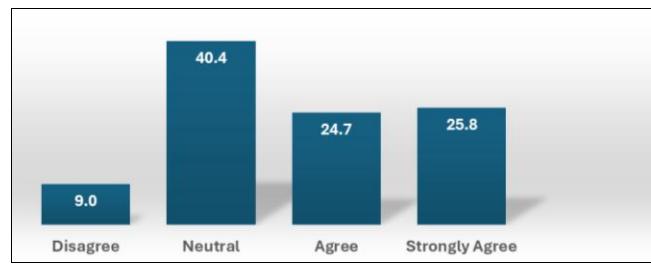


Fig 4.5.4: Employee views are considered when making decisions

The study found that 25.8 % of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement "Employees' views are considered in decision-making". 24.7 % of the respondents agreed. On the other hand, 9.0 % of the respondents disagreed, while 40.4 % were neutral on the matter. From this data, it can be concluded that most employees felt that they were involved in decision-making at the Ndola City Council.

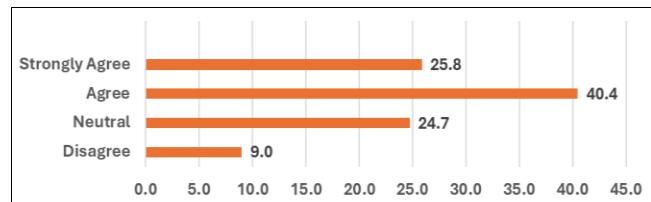


Fig 4.5.5: Our leaders are perceived to be competent and visionary

The study established that 40.4 % of the respondents indicated that they agreed that leaders at Ndola City Council are competent and visionary leaders. This was supported by 25.8 % of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. 24.7 % of respondents were neutral on the subject matter. Only 9 % of the other respondents disagreed with the statement. The data provided indicates that most of the respondents in the study supported the idea that leaders at Ndola City Council were competent and visionary in nature.

4.6 Discussion of Research Findings

Below is a comprehensive summary of the major findings of the study based on each objective of the study.

4.6.1 To identify the dominant leadership styles employed by leaders at Ndola City Council

To achieve its objective, the study first looked at whether

leaders at Ndola City Council consulted their members of staff when making key decisions. This was used as a key indicator for determining democratic and participatory leadership. It was found that there was a significant split, where 42% of respondents revealed that they strongly disagreed or disagreed with the notion that leaders consult staff before making key decisions. The results showed that 43% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 15% of the respondents in the study remained neutral on the matter. It was concluded that the findings were mixed, thus suggesting inconsistency in the leadership styles of participatory and democratic leadership traits within the Council. The data revealed that some leaders clearly involved their employees in making key decisions. A tendency to make unilateral decisions by leaders was also apparent. The findings suggest that most respondents felt excluded when it came to making important decisions, which tends to dilute the dominant leadership style.

It was further observed that autocratic leadership traits existed. According to the data collected, most respondents (52%) indicated that they agreed that leadership traits were more autocratic in nature than participatory. 22% of the respondents disagreed, and 8% of them remained neutral on the matter. This clearly demonstrates that autocratic leadership existed and was experienced by employees at the Council. This revelation highlighted a top-down approach to leadership. The findings reflect a common characteristic among public sector bureaucratic systems, where typically authority and decision-making are centralised.

4.6.2 Assessing how these leadership styles influence employee motivation and job performance

Leaders who are high on traits such as fairness, support, and effective communication can significantly contribute to a quality and positive work environment. This leads to increased chances of enhanced employee morale and satisfaction.

The research findings further demonstrate how leadership significantly influences employee motivation. The study found that 81 % of the respondents agreed that their motivation at work was influenced by the leadership style. The study showed that 52% strongly agreed and 29% agreed. It was further noted that 8% of the respondents strongly disagreed. It was concluded that the leadership traits, whether transformational, participatory, transactional, or autocratic, have a direct influence on the level of employee motivation. Leadership that is known to inspire, provide mentorship, and communicate clearly enhances motivation levels.

The empowerment of employees also came out as a key characteristic that influences leadership. The statistics from the study revealed that 66.3% (24.7% strongly agreed and 41.6% agreed) with the assertion that employees felt empowered in their duties because of leadership qualities. Those that provided neutral responses were 24.7%, while 9% of the respondents disagreed. This led to the conclusion that leadership traits at Ndola City Council encourage a sense of autonomy and confidence amongst the employees. This in turn tends to positively contribute to performance. Empowerment predisposes employees to take the necessary initiative and deliver results with assigned tasks.

Recognition has long been widely accepted as a tool for increasing employee motivation. The study recognised the importance of recognition. On the matter of recognition, the findings show that 68.5% of respondents, which include

33.7%, strongly agreed and 34.8% agreed, appreciated being recognised and appreciated for their efforts at work. Those that disagreed were 23.6%. 7.9% indicated neutral. The results of this study are generally positive. This confirms the fact that leadership traits contribute to employees feeling valued, which in turn tends to enhance employee motivation, general morale, and individual performance.

To establish what influences individuals' commitment to the organisation's objective. The study investigated leadership influences on commitment to organisational goals as another crucial performance indicator. The study revealed that 67.4% of the respondents, i.e., 42.7% strongly agreed; 24.7% agreed, demonstrating that leadership tends to motivate employees to be committed to the organisation's goals. In contrast, 16.9% of respondents disagreed, and 15.7% were neutral. These results confirm that leadership plays a significant part in influencing employee commitment to organisational objectives. When the leader's vision is clear and articulate, it tends to inspire employees, and the employees become committed to the organisation's goals and objectives.

4.6.3 To evaluate employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of leadership styles practised at the Council

The results of the study revealed that 50.5% of respondents (25.8% strongly agreed and 24.7% agreed) concluded that their views were considered in decision-making. 9% of the respondents disagreed. The number of respondents that were neutral was 40.4% representing a significant proportion. Despite the majority stating the affirmative, the significantly high neutral sentiments may imply that employee involvement may be inconsistent and occasional. The study revealed a greater need for institutionalisation of participation in decision-making processes. This will promote inclusiveness. There is a need to enhance a sense of ownership among employees.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Overview

The main findings of the study for each objective will be highlighted in the current chapter. This chapter also provides a conclusion to the study, recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders, and recommendations for future studies are also presented in the current chapter.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that Ndola City Council predominantly uses a mixed hybrid of Leadership styles. This conclusion was drawn from the comparison of the statistical means that revealed strong participatory leadership tendencies. Transactional leadership was next in terms of prominence in leadership styles. The study further revealed the presence of autocratic and transactional leadership tendencies at Ndola City Council. The study concluded that transformational and Participatory leadership types were perceived to be the most prominent. This conclusion is evidenced by planning involvement, which had scored the highest means of 3.74, whereas transformational behaviour scored 3.57. The study further highlights the apparent presence of autocratic and transactional qualities. These scores mean scores of 3.49 and 3.43 respectively. According to this, Ndola City Council exhibits a hybrid leadership style.

With regards to the second objective of assessing how these leadership styles influence employee motivation and job performance. The study results undoubtedly indicated that

the dominant leadership styles at Ndola City Council had a strong and positive effect on the members of staff motivation and performance. Positive Leadership traits that were considered to be supportive in nature, empowering for employees, appreciative, and inspirational could greatly enhance the employees' morale, their job satisfaction, commitment, and output. The study demonstrated that employees who feel they are recognised and empowered are motivated. These come because of effective leadership; their performance improves.

The fact that there are significant neutral responses and those of disagreement across all the variables indicates that the positive impact of leadership may not be experienced in the same way by all employees. The study also highlighted the need for consistency among leaders to ensure that all employees benefit from leadership traits that encourage motivation and high performance.

The third objective aimed at evaluating employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of leadership styles practised at the Council. The study revealed that employees at Ndola City Council of a strong view that leadership at the Council was effective, this was especially so in relation to attributes like fairness, transparency, competence, and visionary qualities. The research also noted areas that required improvements, such as the strengthening of communication, Leaders ensuring consistent fairness for all staff and enhancing employee participation in decision-making. Addressing these areas would further reinforce leadership effectiveness and contribute to a more inclusive and motivated workforce.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Leaders at Ndola City Council should continue to promote democratic and consultative leadership styles. Employees should be actively involved in decision-making processes, which will enhance their sense of ownership and responsibility in achieving organisational goals.
2. Continuous leadership and management training programs should be introduced for council leaders and managers. Such programs should focus on modern leadership approaches, ethical practices, and people management skills to further strengthen leadership effectiveness.
3. Given the youthful nature of the workforce, structured mentorship programs should be established to enable experienced employees to guide younger staff. This will enhance institutional learning, build capacity, and ensure the sustainability of leadership practices.
4. To maintain trust and transparency, leaders should uphold high ethical standards and accountability measures. Establishing clear performance management systems, codes of conduct, and whistleblower protection mechanisms will further enhance employee confidence in leadership.
5. Teamwork should be further reinforced through team-building initiatives, cross-departmental collaboration, and joint training workshops. Leaders should nurture a culture of cooperation, fairness, and mutual respect, which will strengthen organisational performance.

5.3.1 Recommendation for Future Studies

Teamwork should be further reinforced through team-building initiatives, cross-departmental collaboration, and joint training workshops. Leaders should nurture a culture of

cooperation, fairness, and mutual respect, which will strengthen organisational performance. lessons from the Ndola City Council should inform leadership development strategies in other public institutions across Zambia. Policymakers should adopt frameworks that emphasise democratic, inclusive, and ethical leadership as central to improving service delivery and institutional efficiency.

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