



Received: 02-01-2026
Accepted: 03-02-2026

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Examining the Effects of Leadership Styles on Administrative Effectiveness in Local Government: A Case Study of Lusaka City Council

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2026.6.1.5817>

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Abstract

This study empirically investigated the relationship between leadership styles and administrative effectiveness at Lusaka City Council (LCC), Zambia. A descriptive cross-sectional design was employed, collecting data from a sample of 50 LCC employees across 14 departments using structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using STATA, with scale reliability verified via Cronbach's alpha. Results revealed that transformational ($\alpha = 0.8403$) and democratic ($\alpha = 0.6489$) leadership styles are the most dominant, positively influencing employee motivation, innovation, and ethical conduct. Over 90% of respondents confirmed that supervisors inspire a clear vision and encourage creativity. Transactional leadership ($\alpha = 0.8701$) also contributed

positively through accountability and reward-based systems. In contrast, autocratic ($\alpha = 0.4212$) and laissez-faire ($\alpha = 0.3649$) styles exhibited weak reliability and minimal prevalence. Administrative effectiveness ($\alpha = 0.9915$) was significantly enhanced under participatory and ethical leadership, evidenced by improvements in service delivery (60%), productivity (56%), and accountability (58%). The study concludes that transformational and democratic leadership are pivotal to administrative excellence at LCC. It recommends strengthening these leadership styles through targeted training, enhancing financial autonomy, improving staff capacity building, and integrating robust accountability and ICT systems to sustain administrative effectiveness.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Administrative Effectiveness, Transformational Leadership, Local Government, Organizational Performance

1. Introduction

Leadership has been globally established as a pivotal force shaping organizational outcomes, with its impact being particularly profound in the public sector where performance is intrinsically linked to service delivery and public accountability. Theoretical and empirical studies, such as those by Bass and Avolio (1994) [7] and Bass and Riggio (2006) [9], have demonstrated that transformational leadership, which inspires and aligns personal and organizational goals, can significantly enhance staff morale, citizen satisfaction, and institutional adaptability. Conversely, while transactional leadership provides structure and clarity for routine operations, scholars like Burns (1978) [12] and Van Wart (2013) caution that its overreliance can stifle the innovation and responsiveness required in complex governance environments. The evolution of leadership theory further underscores the value of participative and ethical approaches in fostering transparent governance, yet the applicability of these models is not universal; their effectiveness is heavily contingent upon specific sociopolitical structures, institutional maturity, and levels of civic engagement, as noted by Fernandez and Rainey (2006) [20].

In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the efficacy of leadership within local government is frequently mediated by a distinct set of structural and contextual challenges. Scholars such as Ayee (2013) [6] argue that despite the adoption of modern governance frameworks, the performance of public institutions is often hampered by legacy systems of patronage, limited financial autonomy, and the politicization of administrative roles. This regional reality is evident in countries like Nigeria and Ghana, where intergovernmental coordination issues and inconsistent policy implementation have impeded local authority performance (Kulemeka, 2015) [21]. Zambia exemplifies these challenges; although its Decentralisation Policy of 2013 aimed to empower local councils, practical implementation has been problematic. Heavy reliance on central government grants, coupled with instances of financial mismanagement and poor planning highlighted in the Auditor General's reports (2018–2022), reveals systemic weaknesses. As Mukwena (2020) [26] observes, leadership within Zambian councils is often reactive

and subject to political currents, undermining strategic planning and accountability.

Focusing on Lusaka City Council (LCC), these challenges manifest as persistent service delivery failures in critical areas such as waste management, drainage, and land administration, leading to widespread public dissatisfaction. Audits and studies, including those by the Office of the Auditor General (2021) and Ngoma and Simutenda (2022), consistently link these administrative shortcomings to weak leadership structures, poor communication, and a lack of accountability. For instance, even technological investments like automated revenue systems have been hampered by leadership-related issues such as resistance to change. While preliminary research by Mulenga and Banda (2021) ^[27] suggests a prevalence of directive leadership styles at LCC, a comprehensive empirical investigation into the specific leadership styles in use and their direct impact on administrative effectiveness remains a critical, unmet need. Therefore, this study is necessary to systematically examine this relationship, with the findings poised to inform vital leadership development and governance reforms for LCC and similar local government systems across Zambia.

1.1 Objectives

1.1.1 General Objective

To examine the effects of different leadership styles on administrative effectiveness in local government, with a specific focus on the operations of Lusaka City Council.

1.1.2 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the leadership styles adopted among senior and middle management at Lusaka City Council.
2. To assess the effectiveness of identified leadership styles on administrative effectiveness, measured through employee productivity, service delivery efficiency, and public satisfaction levels.
3. To evaluate the influence of external and internal factors on the relationship between leadership styles and administrative effectiveness in Lusaka City Council.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Bass and Riggio's (2006) ^[9] Transformational Leadership Theory, a robust framework that posits leaders who inspire through vision, stimulate intellectually, offer individualized support, and exemplify integrity achieve superior organizational outcomes. The theory provides the analytical lens to decode the leadership styles at Lusaka City Council (Objective 1) by distinguishing transformational behaviors from other styles, and directly connects to assessing their impact on administrative effectiveness (Objective 2), as evidenced by its proven linkage to enhanced employee motivation, service delivery, and public trust in analogous contexts like Nigerian local governments (Adebayo, 2018). Crucially, the framework's inherent recognition that leadership efficacy is contingent on external and internal factors (Bass & Riggio, 2006) ^[9] is instrumental for evaluating the moderating role of Zambia's unique political and resource constraints (Objective 3), thereby offering a comprehensive mechanism to explain how leadership practices interact with the specific institutional environment of the LCC to determine its administrative performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Leadership Styles Among Senior and Middle Management

Globally, research demonstrates that leadership styles are critical determinants of administrative effectiveness in local government, though their impact is highly contextual. Studies in the Global North, such as those by Vigoda-Gadot and Vashdi (2020) ^[37] in Israel and Van Wart *et al.* (2021) in the United States, consistently affirm the efficacy of transformational and democratic leadership in enhancing service delivery, innovation, and community engagement. Conversely, research in the UK by Andrews and Boyne (2010) ^[3] and in Singapore by Tan and Low (2022) highlights the stabilizing role of transactional leadership in ensuring financial discipline and policy compliance, revealing a fundamental tension between innovation and stability. In Asian contexts, cultural nuances significantly moderate leadership outcomes; for instance, paternalistic leadership proves effective in China's high power-distance culture (Chen *et al.*, 2023) ^[15], while Vietnam's collectivist environment amplifies the benefits of transformational leadership (Nguyen & Tran, 2022) ^[30]. Cross-cultural meta-analyses by Kim and Wright (2023) confirm that while charismatic leadership universally enhances performance, the effectiveness of directive styles varies dramatically across cultural contexts, underscoring the absence of a one-size-fits-all model.

In the African regional context, leadership dynamics are shaped by a unique interplay of traditional governance structures, systemic constraints, and indigenous philosophies. Scholars like Matsiliza (2024) ^[24] and Ray (2011) ^[33] document how traditional leadership, when integrated with modern systems, can bolster legitimacy and community trust in countries like Botswana and South Africa. Meanwhile, empirical studies in Ethiopia by Reta (2021) strongly advocate for transformational leadership as the most effective style for navigating complex bureaucratic challenges and enhancing policy implementation. The cultural philosophy of 'Ubuntu', emphasizing communal support and relational leadership, is identified by Lerutla and Steyn (2025) as a distinctive African leadership asset that fosters inclusivity. However, pervasive structural impediments including political interference, inadequate training, and resource deficits often constrain leadership effectiveness, as argued by Igbokwe-Ibeto (2019). Furthermore, economic duress, as seen in Zimbabwe, can force a pragmatic reliance on transactional leadership for short-term stability, even at the cost of long-term innovation, illustrating the complex trade-offs leaders face across the continent.

Focusing on Zambia, the literature reveals a clear consensus on the importance of leadership quality for administrative outcomes but identifies a critical gap in empirical studies specific to Lusaka City Council (LCC). Analyses by the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR, 2020) ^[39] directly link ineffective leadership to service delivery delays and poor resource management in local councils. Research by Chirwa (2025) ^[16], though conducted in the health NGO sector, provides compelling evidence that transformational leadership positively influences employee motivation, a finding highly relevant to LCC's administrative challenges. Conceptual work by Mubanga

(2024) ^[25] proposes servant leadership as culturally suitable for Zambia, while evaluations of the Zambia Management and Leadership Academy (ZMLA) demonstrate the transformative potential of capacity building. Despite these insights, a 2010 Zimbabwean study suggests that harsh economic realities might sustain transactional approaches in Zambian municipalities. Collectively, these studies underscore a pressing need for localized, empirical research to dissect the specific leadership styles at play within LCC and their direct impact on overcoming its well-documented administrative inefficiencies.

2.2 Effectiveness of Leadership Styles on Administrative Effectiveness

A substantial body of global research confirms that leadership styles are a critical determinant of administrative effectiveness in local government, with transformational leadership consistently emerging as a primary driver of positive outcomes. Studies across diverse contexts, including the United Kingdom (Storey, Denis, & Salaman, 2017), the United States (Fernandez, Cho, & Perry, 2010) ^[19], and Australia (Bradley, Wallis, & Green, 2018) ^[10], demonstrate that leadership which inspires a shared vision and encourages innovation significantly enhances service delivery, employee morale, and community engagement. However, this global perspective is nuanced by regional adaptations; while democratic leadership fosters collaboration in Europe and South America (Vigoda-Gadot & Beerli, 2012; Spink, Ward, & Wilson, 2019), and servant leadership aligns with community-focused governance in Oceania (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2011) ^[18], transactional and even autocratic styles are recognized for providing necessary stability and compliance in resource-scarce or crisis situations (Doberstein, 2016 ^[17]; Li *et al.*, 2021). This illustrates that there is no universal "best" style; rather, administrative effectiveness is contingent on a leader's ability to adapt their approach to specific political, cultural, and operational contexts.

In the African regional context, leadership effectiveness is profoundly shaped by a complex interplay of indigenous values, systemic constraints, and governance traditions. Research from South Africa highlights the potency of transformational leadership infused with the 'Ubuntu' philosophy, which fosters trust and collaboration by emphasizing communal well-being (Lerutla & Steyn, 2021) ^[22]. Similarly, studies in Ethiopia (Reta, 2021) and Kenya (Otieno & Nyambegera, 2019) ^[32] affirm the role of transformational leadership in driving innovation and policy implementation. Yet, the continent's challenging administrative landscape, characterized by political interference and resource deficits (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2019), often necessitates pragmatic adaptations. This is evident in Nigeria, where democratic and autocratic styles are situationally employed (Adejuwon, 2018), and in Ghana, where servant leadership's effectiveness is contingent on robust institutional safeguards against political manipulation (Hale & Fields, 2017). The integration of traditional leadership structures, as documented in Botswana and South Africa (Matsiliza, 2024; Ray, 2011) ^[24, 33], further underscores the unique cultural dimension of African public administration, where legitimacy often derives from blending modern and traditional governance models.

Focusing on Zambia, the literature points to a clear correlation between leadership and administrative

performance, yet reveals a significant gap in empirical studies specifically targeting Lusaka City Council (LCC). Nationwide analyses by Bwanga, Kanyamuna, and Qutieshat (2023) ^[13] and Resnick, Siame, and Sishuwa (2022) establish that leadership quality directly impacts service delivery and bureaucratic commitment within local authorities. Transformational and participative leadership are posited as the most promising styles for fostering innovation and aligning with Zambia's decentralization goals (Chanda *et al.*, 2024; Mulenga & Mukuka, 2021) ^[14, 28]. Conversely, autocratic tendencies, often exacerbated by political interference, are consistently linked to poor outcomes and low staff morale (Resnick, Siame, & Sishuwa, 2022). While leadership development initiatives like the Zambia Management and Leadership Academy (ZMLA) show potential for building capacity, the extant research collectively underscores a pressing need for localized, empirical investigation to definitively identify the leadership styles in practice at LCC and measure their direct impact on overcoming the council's well-documented administrative inefficiencies in service delivery and resource management.

2.3 Influence of Internal and External Factors on the Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Administrative Effectiveness

The relationship between leadership styles and administrative effectiveness is not direct but is profoundly mediated by a complex interplay of internal and external factors, a reality demonstrated by global research. Studies in Europe and North America reveal that internal organizational conditions are critical; for instance, transformational leadership thrives in environments with supportive cultures and motivated employees, while transactional leadership depends on clear internal structures for success (Antonakis *et al.*, 2019 ^[4]; Rodríguez & Morales, 2015). Externally, political and economic climates are equally decisive. Vigoda-Gadot and Beerli (2012) found that political stability and public trust in the U.S. determine whether transactional or transformational styles are more effective, whereas Smith and Hutchinson (2018) demonstrated in Australia that economic downturns can cripple reward-based transactional leadership, leaving transformational approaches more resilient. This global pattern confirms that leadership does not operate in a vacuum; its impact is contingent upon the specific internal dynamics and external pressures unique to each governance context.

This contingent relationship is further nuanced in Asian and African regional contexts, where cultural norms and systemic structures create distinct moderating environments. In Asia, the GLOBE study (House *et al.*, 2004) and subsequent research like that of Lin and Sun (2018) ^[23] establish that cultural dimensions, particularly high power distance and collectivism, shape employee preferences and the effectiveness of leadership styles, with paternalistic and charismatic approaches often being culturally endorsed. Similarly, in Africa, the philosophy of 'Ubuntu' and the influence of traditional leadership structures necessitate a leadership approach that emphasizes communalism and legitimacy (Lerutla *et al.*, 2025; Matsiliza, 2024 ^[24]). Furthermore, pervasive challenges such as political interference, economic volatility, and bureaucratic inertia consistently emerge as powerful external factors that can stifle innovative leadership and reinforce more directive,

transactional approaches for the sake of short-term stability, as seen in studies from Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe (Adejuwon, 2018; Nelima *et al.*, 2024 ^[29]; Mwenje *et al.*, 2017).

Within Zambia, this framework of contingent leadership is clearly evident, yet a precise understanding of its operation within the Lusaka City Council (LCC) remains underdeveloped. National studies indicate that the effectiveness of leadership styles in Zambian local government is heavily conditioned by both internal and external forces. Internally, bureaucratic inefficiencies, weak performance management systems, and challenges with employee retention and mission alignment can nullify the potential benefits of transformational or democratic leadership (Bwanga *et al.*, 2023; Resnick, 2022) ^[13, 35]. Externally, high levels of central government control and political interference significantly constrain local leadership autonomy, delaying decisions and limiting fiscal flexibility (Resnick, 2019) ^[34]. While empirical evidence from parallel sectors, such as education, suggests transformational leadership can improve outcomes (Chanda *et al.*, 2024a) ^[14], the extant literature culminates in a critical gap: the need for a focused investigation into how these specific internal and external factors within LCC including its organizational culture, resource constraints, and political economy directly moderate the impact of its senior and middle management's leadership styles on tangible administrative performance.

2.4 Literature Gap

Despite the wealth of global, regional, and national research examining leadership styles and their contextual influences, a significant and multi-faceted gap persists specifically regarding the Lusaka City Council (LCC). First, there is a clear empirical gap: while studies like those by Bwanga *et al.* (2023) ^[13] and ZIPAR (2020) ^[39] discuss Zambian local government broadly, and others draw inferences from parallel sectors like health and education (Chanda *et al.*, 2024; Chirwa, 2025) ^[14, 16], no study was identified that employs a comprehensive, primary research framework such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to directly measure and correlate the specific leadership styles of LCC's senior and middle management with hard, objective metrics of its administrative effectiveness. Second, a methodological gap is evident; the existing literature on Zambia often relies on broad surveys, small qualitative samples, or theoretical reviews, lacking the mixed-methods rigor and longitudinal depth needed to establish causality and capture the nuanced, dynamic interplay between leadership behaviors and administrative outcomes within a single, complex municipal entity like LCC. Finally, a contextual gap remains, as previous research has not sufficiently investigated how the unique confluence of internal LCC factors (e.g., its specific organizational culture, ICT adoption challenges, and staff morale) and external pressures (e.g., the precise nature of its relationship with the Ministry of Local Government and political dynamics in Lusaka) moderates the leadership-effectiveness relationship, leaving a critical void in understanding the levers for actionable, context-specific reform within Zambia's most prominent local authority.

3. Research Design

A case study design was adopted to facilitate an in-depth, contextual examination of leadership phenomena within the real-life setting of Lusaka City Council (Yin, 2018) ^[38].

3.1 Target Population

The population was defined as employees of Lusaka City Council, specifically those in administrative roles under senior and middle management, as they directly experience the leadership practices being studied.

3.2 Sampling Design

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure proportional representation across different departments, enhancing the reliability and reducing the sampling error of the findings (Bryman, 2016) ^[11].

3.3 Sample Size Determination

A sample size of 50 respondents was determined to be feasible and sufficient for basic statistical analysis, considering the study's scope and the homogeneous nature of the target population (Israel, 1992).

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The primary instrument was a structured questionnaire based on the validated Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X), which was pre-tested to ensure clarity and reliability (Bass & Avolio, 2000) ^[8].

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using STATA software, employing descriptive statistics and regression analysis to summarize data and determine relationships between variables (Acock, 2018) ^[1].

3.6 Triangulation

Methodological triangulation was employed by supplementing quantitative survey data with secondary sources like council records to cross-verify findings and add depth (Yin, 2018) ^[38].

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Key limitations included the potential for social desirability bias in self-reported data and limited generalizability due to the single case study focus, though mitigation strategies were applied (Bryman, 2016) ^[11].

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards, including obtaining formal permissions, securing informed consent, and ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality (Resnik, 2018).

4. Findings and Results

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents (Bio Data)

The background characteristics of the respondents reveal a robust and well-qualified sample from Lusaka City Council, comprising a workforce predominantly in their early to mid-career stages (30-39 years, 34%) with a fairly balanced gender distribution (54% male, 46% female) and strong

representation across all hierarchical levels, including senior management (36%), middle management (34%), and junior staff (30%). The sample was drawn from a balanced cross-section of departments, with the largest contingent from Financial and Procurement Services (26%), and featured a highly educated profile, with 70% of respondents holding a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Furthermore, a significant 62% of respondents had over 11 years of service, indicating a blend of extensive institutional memory and fresh perspectives, thereby ensuring that the collected data on leadership and administrative effectiveness is both comprehensive and deeply informed.

4.2 The leadership styles adopted among senior and middle management at Lusaka City Council

Table 1: Dominant Leadership Styles at Lusaka City Council

Leadership Style	Key Indicator	% Positive Response	α -coefficient	Prevalence
Transformational	Inspires a clear vision	9%	0.8403	Dominant
Democratic	Encourages staff participation	100%	0.6489	Dominant
Transactional	Establishes clear objectives	100%	0.8701	Prevalent
Autocratic	Makes decisions alone	(Low Agreement)	0.4212	Minimal
Laissez-Faire	Provides minimal guidance	(Low Agreement)	0.3649	Minimal

The analysis reveals a distinctly participatory and motivational leadership environment at Lusaka City Council, characterized by the dominant presence of transformational and democratic styles, with near-universal agreement from staff on key indicators like vision-setting (90%) and participation (100%). This is complemented by a strong, reliable transactional leadership foundation ($\alpha=0.8701$) focused on clear objectives. In stark contrast, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership are statistically negligible and unreliable constructs ($\alpha=0.4212$ and $\alpha=0.3649$), confirming a management culture that decisively favors inspiration, inclusion, and structure over control or passivity.

Key Reliability Tables

Table 2: Reliability for Transformational Leadership

Test scale = mean(unstandardized items)						
Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
inspiresvi-n	50	+	0.9145	0.8230	.1685714	0.7254
encourages-y	50	+	0.8203	0.6489	.2102041	0.8119
recognizes-s	50	+	0.6711	0.4784	.2847619	0.8721
ethicalsta-s	50	+	0.8756	0.7751	.202585	0.7566
Test scale					.2165306	0.8403

The reliability analysis confirmed the transformational leadership scale demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.8403$), indicating the items effectively and reliably measured the construct as a whole. While items like "inspires vision" and "ethical standards" showed the strongest correlations, all components, including the slightly

lower-correlated "recognizes achievements," were deemed essential, forming a cohesive and robust measurement tool for assessing this leadership style within the council.

Table 3: The reliability test for the transactional leadership

Test scale = mean(unstandardized items)						
Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
setsclarg-s	50	+	0.8474	0.7607	.2801361	0.8347
rewardsrec-n	50	+	0.8434	0.6985	.2393197	0.8462
corrective-s	50	+	0.9081	0.7873	.1906122	0.8235
monitorswork	50	+	0.8528	0.7632	.2719728	0.8300
Test scale					.2455102	0.8701

The reliability analysis demonstrated excellent internal consistency for the transactional leadership scale ($\alpha = 0.8701$), confirming its robustness in measuring the construct. All items showed strong, significant correlations (0.84-0.91), with "corrective actions" being the most defining feature, collectively forming a highly coherent and reliable instrument for assessing transactional leadership practices.

Table 4: The reliability test for the democratic leadership

Test scale = mean(unstandardized items)						
Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
staffparti-n	50	+	0.8365	0.6385	.0341497	0.4126
valuesopin-s	50	+	0.7638	0.5092	.0477551	0.5200
promoteste-k	50	+	0.7375	0.5257	.0537415	0.5223
openenviro-t	50	+	0.4426	0.1079	.1027211	0.7733
Test scale					.0595918	0.6489

The democratic leadership scale demonstrated moderate reliability ($\alpha = 0.6489$), with core components like "staff participation," "valuing opinions," and "promoting teamwork" showing strong alignment with the construct, though the weaker correlation of "open environment" slightly reduced the scale's overall internal consistency.

Table 5: Examples Where Supervisors Inspired or Motivated Employees

Motivation Approach	Summary of Examples	Freq.	%
Recognition & Rewards	Supervisors boosted morale by recognizing achievements (e.g., revenue collection, financial reporting, punctuality, ethical procurement, school inspections, health outreach, audits, customer service, records management).	20	40%
Leading by Example	Supervisors inspired staff by actively participating in initiatives (e.g., city clean-up, tree planting, borehole maintenance, cholera response, housing reforms, maternal health campaigns).	10	20%
Team Engagement & Dialogue	Motivation achieved through dialogue meetings, inclusiveness in reforms, and acknowledging staff input during restructuring or policy changes.	7	14%
Celebrating	Supervisors inspired staff by celebrating	7	14%

Project Successes	milestones (e.g., drainage completion, road repairs, ICT system upgrades, bridge construction, city master plan, e-governance projects).		
Mentorship & Encouraging Innovation	Supervisors motivated staff by offering mentorship, encouraging creativity (e.g., mobile apps, land-use proposals, housing design), and valuing new ideas.	6	12%
Total		50	

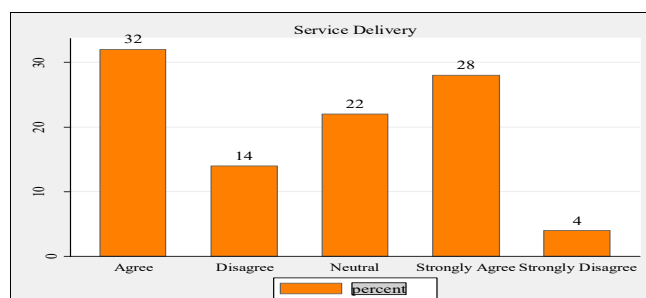
The examples provided by respondents illustrate that supervisors at Lusaka City Council employ a variety of approaches to inspire and motivate employees. The most common method, cited by 40% of respondents, was recognition and rewards, where supervisors acknowledged achievements in areas such as revenue collection, audits, customer service, and health outreach. Other notable approaches included leading by example (20%), with supervisors actively participating in initiatives like city clean-ups, tree planting, and maternal health campaigns; team engagement and dialogue (14%), which emphasized inclusiveness and acknowledging staff input during reforms; celebrating project successes (14%), such as completing infrastructure and ICT projects; and mentorship and encouraging innovation (12%), where supervisors supported creativity and valued new ideas.

Table 6: Examples of Supervisor Involving Teams in Decision-Making

Category	Summary of Team Involvement	Freq.	%
Policy & Strategy Development	Involving staff in policy drafting, strategy formulation, revenue systems, service charters, and efficiency reviews.	10	20%
Workshops, Consultations & Meetings	Organizing planning workshops, town halls, brainstorming sessions, and consultative forums for inclusive input.	9	19%
Infrastructure & Urban Planning	Engaging engineers, planners, and stakeholders in road projects, housing, zoning, bridge planning, and urban rehabilitation.	9	18%
Digital & Systems Development	Team input in system testing, digitization, ICT hackathons, complaint handling redesign, licensing renewal, and digital platforms.	8	16%
Health & Social Programs	Involving staff and community in health sensitization, sanitation campaigns, immunization design, welfare projects, and empowerment programs.	7	14%
Finance & Budgeting	Team input in budget planning, revenue forecasting, audits, and financial planning.	5	10%
Total		50	100%

The examples indicate that supervisors at Lusaka City Council actively involve teams in decision-making across multiple functional areas. Participation was most common in policy and strategy development (20%), followed closely by workshops, consultations, and meetings (19%), and infrastructure and urban planning (18%), where staff contributed to road projects, housing, and zoning initiatives. Digital and systems development (16%) involved team input in ICT projects, digitization, and service redesign, while health and social programs (14%) included staff and community engagement in campaigns and welfare initiatives. Finance and budgeting (10%) also saw collaborative input in planning and audits.

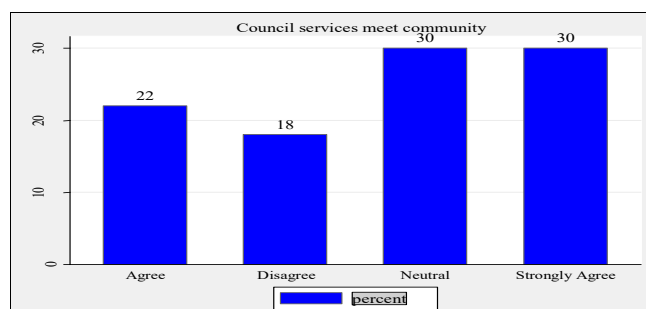
4.3 The effectiveness of identified leadership styles on administrative effectiveness, measured through employee productivity, service delivery efficiency, and public satisfaction levels



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 1: Service delivery

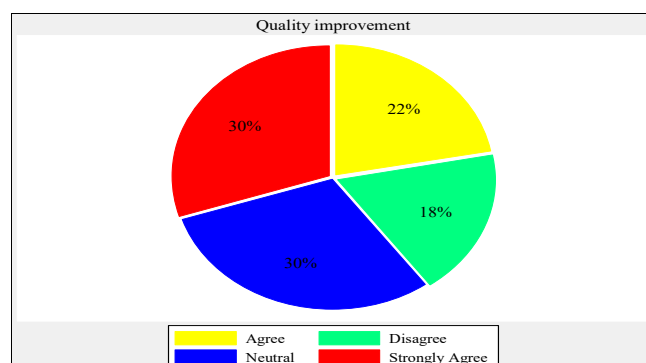
The findings on service delivery efficiency indicate mixed perceptions among respondents. A majority expressed positive views, with 32% agreeing and 28% strongly agreeing that the council delivered services such as waste collection, road maintenance, and permits efficiently in the past 12 months. However, 22% remained neutral, while 14% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed, suggesting that although most respondents acknowledged improvements in service efficiency, a notable minority still questioned the consistency and quality of delivery.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 2: Council services meet community

The results on whether council services meet community needs reveal generally positive but cautious views. A combined 50% of respondents (22% agree, 28% strongly agree) affirmed that services such as waste management, licensing, and road maintenance meet local needs. However, a sizable 36% remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty or mixed experiences, while 14% disagreed.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 3: Quality improvement

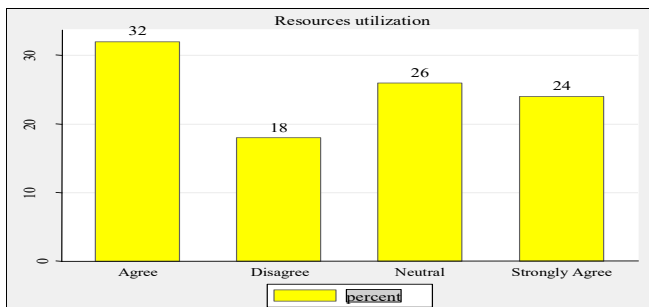
The findings on quality of services under current leadership show a fairly balanced distribution of views. A combined 52% of respondents (22% agree, 30% strongly agree) indicated that services such as waste management, public health, and licensing have improved, reflecting a majority recognition of progress. However, 30% remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty or mixed experiences across departments, while 18% disagreed, indicating dissatisfaction among a minority.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 4: Leadership practices

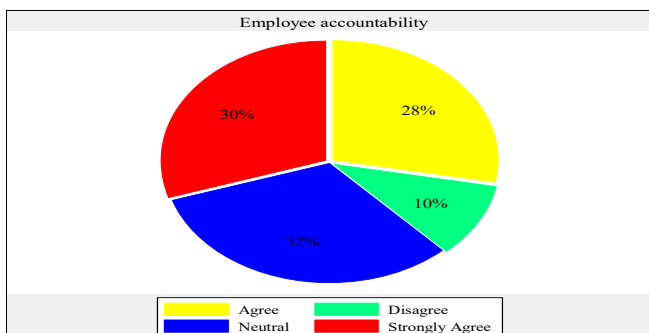
The results show that a majority of respondents (54%) either agreed or strongly agreed that leadership practices have improved productivity, while 24% remained neutral and 22% disagreed, indicating that although leadership is generally perceived as a positive influence on productivity, there are still notable mixed views among employees.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 5: Resources utilization

The results show that a majority of respondents (56%) agreed or strongly agreed that financial, human, and material resources are managed effectively under current leadership, while 26% remained neutral and 18% disagreed, indicating that resource management is generally viewed positively but with some perceived gaps.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 6: Employee accountability

The results show that regarding employee accountability, a majority of respondents (58%) agreed or strongly agreed that staff are held accountable for their performance, while 32% remained neutral and 10% disagreed, indicating that accountability is generally recognized but with some mixed perceptions.

Table 7: The reliability analysis for the administrative effectiveness

Test scale = mean(unstandardized items)						
Item	Obs	Sign	item-test correlation	item-rest correlation	average interitem covariance	alpha
servicedel-y	50	+	0.9624	0.9514	1.047609	0.9909
servicemee-s	50	+	0.9576	0.9466	1.075583	0.9909
qualityimp-t	50	+	0.9676	0.9586	1.05809	0.9905
taskcomple-n	50	+	0.9735	0.9669	1.082682	0.9903
leadership-y	50	+	0.9768	0.9700	1.045219	0.9901
resourceut-n	50	+	0.9614	0.9513	1.073644	0.9907
transparen-g	50	+	0.9618	0.9518	1.074125	0.9907
employeeac-y	50	+	0.9822	0.9778	1.079592	0.9899
ethicallea-p	50	+	0.9772	0.9708	1.053965	0.9900
Test scale					1.065612	0.9915

The reliability analysis for the administrative effectiveness scale, which combined items on service delivery, community needs, quality improvement, task completion, productivity, resource utilization, transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership, yielded an exceptionally high Cronbach's alpha of 0.9915. This result demonstrates outstanding internal consistency, far exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, and suggests that the items are highly cohesive in measuring a single underlying construct of administrative effectiveness. Each item had strong item-test and item-rest correlations (ranging from 0.95 to 0.98), indicating that none of the indicators were redundant or weakening the scale. The high average inter-item covariance (1.066) further confirms that responses across the items were strongly aligned.

Table 8: Positive Changes in Productivity (from Supervisor's Leadership)

Category	Freq.	Percent
Improved Timeliness & Deadline Adherence	12	24%
Reduced Backlogs & Delays	10	20%
Increased Efficiency & Workflow	7	14%
Boosted Morale & Motivation	6	12%
Improved Accountability & Follow-ups	2	4%
No Change in Productivity	6	12%
Minimal / Slight Improvement	8	16%
Total	50	100%

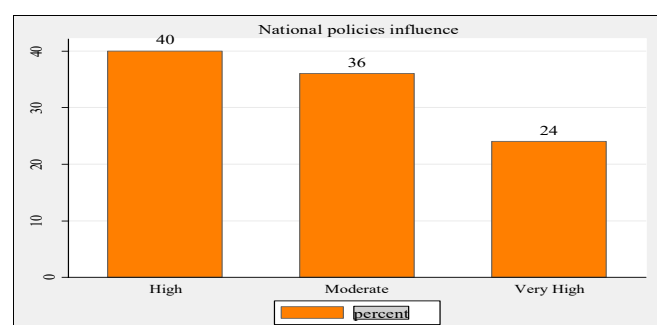
The results show that supervisors' leadership has led to several positive changes in productivity, with 24% of respondents reporting improved timeliness and adherence to deadlines, 20% noting reduced backlogs and delays, and 14% observing increased efficiency and workflow. Additionally, 12% cited boosted morale and motivation, while 4% highlighted improved accountability and follow-ups. However, 16% reported minimal improvements and 12% perceived no significant change, indicating that while leadership has positively influenced productivity for many, some staff have seen limited or no impact.

Table 9: Council Services Most Affected by Leadership Practices

Service Area	Freq.	Percent
Licensing & Permits	14	28%
Infrastructure (Roads & Drainage)	14	28%
Waste Collection	12	24%
Public Health & Sanitation	10	20%
Total	50	100%

The results indicate that licensing and permits and infrastructure projects (roads and drainage) were the most affected by leadership practices, each cited by 28% of respondents. Waste collection improvements were noted by 24%, while public health and sanitation saw positive changes reported by 20% of participants. Overall, leadership practices contributed to enhanced efficiency and oversight across key council services, although some inconsistencies and delays remain in certain areas.

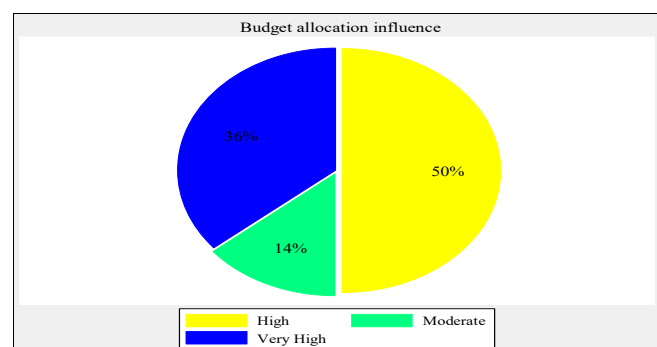
4.4 The influence of external and internal factors on the relationship between leadership styles and administrative effectiveness in Lusaka City Council



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 7: National policies influence

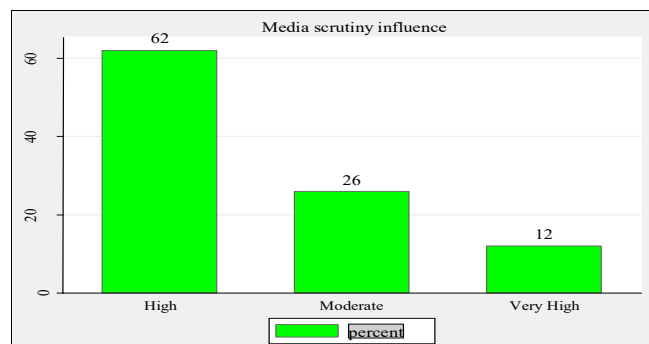
The results show that national government policies significantly influence leadership decisions at the council, with 40% of respondents rating the influence as high, 36% as moderate, and 24% as very high, highlighting the strong impact of policy frameworks on local government leadership practices.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 8: Budget allocation influence

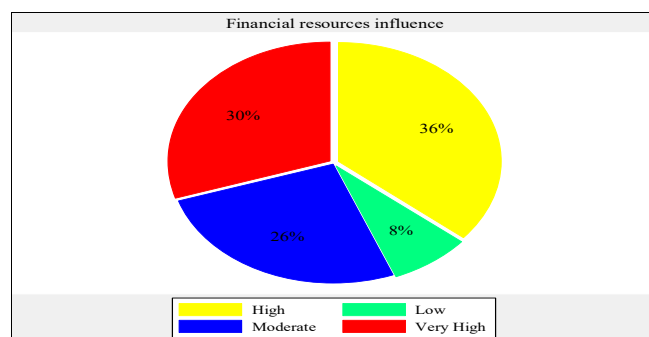
The findings indicate that budget allocations from the central government play a crucial role in shaping leadership effectiveness, with half of the respondents (50%) rating its influence as high, 36% as very high, and 14% as moderate, demonstrating that financial resources are a key determinant in local government decision-making and administrative performance.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 9: Media scrutiny influence

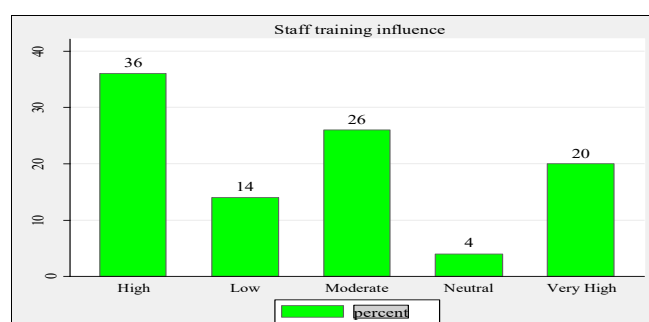
The findings indicate that media scrutiny strongly impacts leadership and administrative practices, with 62% of respondents rating its influence as high, 12% as very high, and 26% as moderate, suggesting that council leaders operate under significant public and media oversight that shapes their decisions and accountability.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 10: Financial resources influence

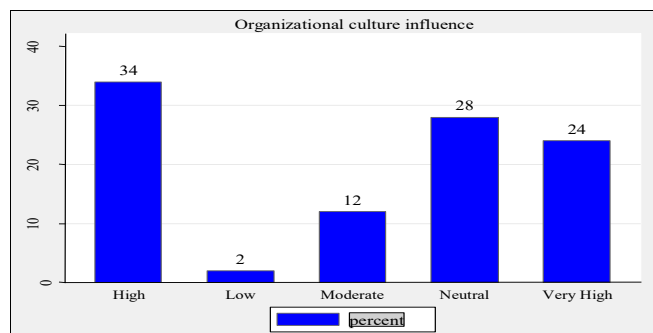
The results show that financial resources significantly influence council operations and leadership effectiveness, with 36% of respondents rating the influence as high, 30% as very high, 26% as moderate, and a smaller portion (8%) as low, highlighting that adequate funding is crucial for achieving organizational goals and implementing leadership decisions effectively.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 11: Staff training influence

The results indicate that staff training plays a critical role in influencing council performance, with 36% of respondents rating its influence as high, 20% as very high, 26% as moderate, 14% as low, and 4% as neutral, suggesting that well-trained personnel significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery and leadership practices.



Source: Primary Data, 2025

Fig 12: Organizational culture influence

The findings show that organizational culture significantly influences council operations, with 34% of respondents rating its impact as high, 24% as very high, 12% as moderate, 28% as neutral, and 2% as low. This indicates that a strong, positive culture contributes meaningfully to leadership effectiveness, staff motivation, and overall administrative performance.

Table 10: Greatest Influence on Leadership Effectiveness in the Council

Factor	Freq.	%
Budgetary Allocations / Financial Resources	14	24%
Staff Training / Capacity Building	11	22%
Staff Motivation / Employee Incentives	11	22%
Collaboration & Teamwork	5	10%
Organizational Culture	5	10%
National Policies / Government Interference	2	4%
Media Coverage	1	2%
Total	50	100%

The findings indicate that budgetary allocations and financial resources have the greatest influence on leadership effectiveness in the council, with 24% of respondents highlighting that adequate funding is essential for implementing initiatives and ensuring service delivery. Closely following are staff training and capacity building and staff motivation or employee incentives, each cited by 22% of participants as crucial for enhancing productivity, decision-making, and overall support for leadership. Collaboration and teamwork and organizational culture were also noted, accounting for 10% each, emphasizing the role of coordinated efforts and shared values in achieving effective leadership. Lesser influences included national policies or government interference (4%) and media scrutiny (2%), suggesting that external pressures play a minor but notable role.

Table 11: Other Influencing Factors on Leadership Practices

Factor	Freq.	%
Political Interference / Pressure	8	16%
ICT Systems (Adoption / Failures / Gaps)	8	16%
Staff Shortages	6	12%
Corruption	3	6%
Donor Funding / Influence	7	14%
Staff Turnover	6	12%
Bureaucracy	1	2%
Public / Community Feedback & Pressure	5	10%
Staff Union Negotiations	3	6%
Recognition Schemes	1	2%
Frequent Leadership Changes	1	2%
Total	50	100%

The results show that multiple internal and external factors influence leadership practices within the council. Political interference or pressure and ICT systems each accounted for 16% of responses, highlighting how external pressures and technology gaps can disrupt priorities, delay decisions, and affect workflow efficiency. Donor funding (14%) and staff shortages (12%) further shape leadership practices by affecting resources and operational capacity, while staff turnover (12%) weakens continuity and slows implementation. Other notable influences include public/community feedback (10%) that encourages accountability, corruption (6%) undermining trust and fairness, and staff union negotiations (6%) impacting timelines. Lesser factors such as bureaucracy, recognition schemes, and frequent leadership changes each contributed 2%, indicating minor but still relevant effects on leadership practices.

4.5 Discussion of Research Findings

The empirical findings reveal a dominant leadership culture at Lusaka City Council (LCC) centered on transformational and democratic styles, characterized by high levels of staff inspiration (90%), participative decision-making (100%), and ethical conduct (96%). This aligns strongly with Bass and Riggio's (2006) [9] transformational theory and Likert's (1967) participative management framework, which posit that such approaches enhance organizational commitment and decision quality. The strong statistical reliability ($\alpha = 0.8403$) for transformational leadership reinforces its validity as a core construct, a finding consistent with Avolio and Yammarino (2013) [5] who link such leadership to heightened motivation in public institutions. This is complemented by a prevalent transactional leadership approach, evidenced by universal agreement on clear goal-setting (100%) and a highly reliable scale ($\alpha = 0.8701$), creating a balanced environment that echoes Fernandez *et al.* (2010) [19] who argue effective leaders "blend inspiration with structure." In stark contrast, autocratic and laissez-faire styles are statistically negligible and unreliable ($\alpha = 0.4212$ and $\alpha = 0.3649$), confirming a decisive organizational shift away from management styles that Lewin *et al.* (1939) and Skogstad *et al.* (2017) [36] associate with stifled innovation and reduced accountability.

This leadership framework correlates strongly with measurable gains in administrative effectiveness. A majority of employees reported improvements in service delivery (60%), task completion efficiency (56%), and resource utilization (56%), with an exceptionally reliable overall effectiveness scale ($\alpha = 0.9915$) confirming these perceptions are coherent. This positive relationship between transformational leadership and administrative outcomes is well-established in global literature, as demonstrated in studies by Storey *et al.* (2017) in the UK and Wahab *et al.* (2019) in Malaysia. However, persistent neutral responses (22-36%) across various metrics and a notable minority expressing disagreement (18-20% on service quality and ethics) indicate that these positive outcomes are not yet uniformly experienced. This reflects a common challenge in public sector reforms noted by Fernandez and Rainey (2006) [20], where leadership impact can be uneven due to bureaucratic inertia and variable implementation across departments, pointing to a need for more widespread application of leadership reforms.

Critically, the study demonstrates that leadership effectiveness is heavily contingent on a complex interplay of internal and external factors, supporting the contingency perspective advocated by scholars like Vigoda-Gadot and Beer (2012). Externally, leadership autonomy is significantly constrained by central government control, with budgetary allocations (86% high/very high influence) and national policies (76%) acting as powerful determinants, a challenge that Resnick (2019) ^[34] specifically identifies as a key constraint in Zambian local governance. Internally, the success of leadership practices is directly shaped by staff motivation (62%), training (56%), and organizational culture (58%), factors that Bwanga *et al.* (2023) ^[13] highlight as critical for public service delivery in Zambia. This empirical evidence underscores that even the most effective leadership styles cannot achieve their full potential without addressing the foundational constraints identified by Igboke-Ibeto (2019) namely, the need for greater fiscal autonomy, systematic capacity building, and mitigating political interference to enhance long-term administrative performance.

5. Conclusion

This study provides conclusive evidence that transformational leadership (90% positive response, $\alpha=0.8403$) and democratic leadership (100% positive response) constitute the dominant and most effective leadership paradigm at Lusaka City Council, directly driving measurable improvements in administrative effectiveness where 56% of employees report enhanced productivity and service delivery. The research definitively establishes that autocratic and laissez-faire leadership are statistically insignificant ($\alpha=0.4212$ and $\alpha=0.3649$), confirming their incompatibility with effective local governance. Critically, the findings demonstrate that leadership success is heavily constrained by external factors, particularly budgetary dependence (86% influence) and national policies (76% influence), while being enabled by internal factors including staff motivation (62%) and training (56%). These results empirically validate that sustainable administrative excellence requires a dual strategy: strengthening participatory leadership internally while simultaneously advocating for fiscal decentralization and policy stability externally.

6. Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Chisala, for his invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and encouragement throughout this research. His expertise and dedication provided clarity and direction at every stage of the study, and his mentorship has been a constant source of inspiration and growth. I am truly grateful for the time and effort he invested in ensuring the successful completion of this work.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to my family and friends for their unwavering support, love, and understanding during this academic journey. Special thanks to my husband, Lubinda Akamandisa, and our children, Tabo, Peniel, and Lusa, for their patience, motivation, and continuous encouragement. I also acknowledge my classmates for their cooperation, helpful discussions, and shared experiences that made this academic pursuit both meaningful and rewarding. Above all, I thank God Almighty for His

wisdom, strength, and grace that enabled me to accomplish this milestone.

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