

Leadership Styles and Employee Motivation at RTSA: An Analysis of Organizational Behaviour

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Abstract—The study examines the influence of leadership styles on employee motivation at the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) in Zambia. The research focused on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles to determine which style most effectively motivated employees within RTSA's organizational environment. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection. A sample of 60 respondents, including frontline staff, supervisors, and managers, was surveyed using a structured questionnaire that assessed perceptions of leadership styles and motivation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, while qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews from 15 participants to gain deeper insights into employee experiences. The results indicated that transformational leadership positively affected employee motivation but its effects were inconsistent, while transactional leadership showed a stronger, more immediate influence on motivation. In contrast, laissez-faire leadership negatively affected motivation, leading to disengagement. The study highlights the importance of organizational culture in enhancing the effects of leadership styles. The findings were significant for improving leadership practices at RTSA, contributing to better employee engagement and overall performance.

Keywords— Leadership Styles, Employee Motivation, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Organizational Culture, RTSA, Zambia.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a critical factor in organizational success, influencing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. In public sector organizations like RTSA in Zambia, effective leadership plays a vital role in achieving goals such as improving road safety and transport management. Transformational leadership, as noted by Bass (1985), enhances motivation by inspiring employees to exceed their self-interests and engage in innovative practices, fostering commitment and a sense of purpose. Recent studies (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008; Cummings & Bridgman, 2011) confirmed that transformational leadership continues to be a significant predictor of employee performance and engagement, especially in dynamic environments. In contrast, transactional leadership, which relies on rewards and punishments, is effective for short-term goal attainment but has limited long-term effect on motivation and creativity (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; Phiri & Nkhata, 2017). Studies (Banda, 2019) also suggest that while transactional leadership may work well in stable environments, it stifles innovation,

leading to reduced intrinsic motivation over time (Silva et al., 2016).

On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership, marked by leader disengagement, negatively affects employee motivation and engagement. Early studies by Bass and Avolio (1994) and more recent work (Silva et al., 2016) confirmed that this style leads to job dissatisfaction and disengagement, particularly in public sector organizations where clear guidance is crucial. Silva et al. (2016) further support this by showing that laissez-faire leadership creates role ambiguity, decreasing morale and productivity. This study aimed to explore the influence of these leadership styles on employee motivation at RTSA, focusing on how leadership styles interact with organizational culture in Zambian public institutions. It addressed the gap in the literature by examining how different leadership styles affect motivation within RTSA.

The problem with leadership at RTSA lies in the lack of understanding regarding how different leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—specifically influence employee motivation in the organization. While existing studies have examined the general effects of leadership styles on motivation (Bass, 1985; Chirwa & Kasongo, 2018; Phiri & Nkhata, 2017; Banda, 2019), there remains a gap in the literature regarding how these leadership styles interact within the context of Zambian public sector institutions like RTSA. Previous research (Silva et al., 2016; Eisenbeiss et al., 2008) has primarily focused on private sector organizations or has not fully explored these dynamics within the public sector, particularly in Zambia. We do not know how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles directly affect employee motivation and engagement at RTSA, or how organizational culture might influence these relationships. This gap in understanding limits the ability to develop effective leadership practices that could improve employee motivation and organizational performance at RTSA.

To address this gap, the study was guided by the following research objectives: (i) to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on employee motivation, (ii) to establish the effectiveness of transactional leadership on employee motivation, and (iii) to investigate the effect of laissez-faire leadership on employee motivation. These objectives helped to provide insights into how different leadership styles influence employee motivation and engagement, ultimately contributing to more effective leadership strategies within RTSA.

Past Studies

The connection between leadership styles and employee motivation has been widely studied across different organizational settings, globally, regionally, and locally. For instance, on a global perspective, Eisenbeiss et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee innovation and motivation. The study surveyed 205 employees from various global industries. The study concluded that transformational leadership positively influenced employee motivation and innovation, particularly in team-oriented environments. However, the study did not distinguish between private and public sector organizations, which could have different leadership and motivational dynamics, especially in a structured environment like RTSA.

Cummings & Bridgman (2011) explored the mediating role of organizational climate in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee motivation. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 350 employees from various global organizations. The study found that organizational climate plays a crucial role in enhancing the effects of transformational leadership on employee motivation. The research focused on larger organizations, which may not be directly applicable to smaller, more hierarchical public sector organizations like RTSA.

Regionally, Sosik & Godshalk (2000) examined the effects of transformational leadership on employee creativity and motivation in Southern African companies. The study surveyed 250 employees from various companies in Southern Africa, focusing on creativity and motivation as key outcomes. The study confirmed that transformational leadership leads to higher levels of employee creativity and motivation, with positive effects on organizational performance. A critique of the study is that it could have further explored how different cultural settings in Southern Africa affect leadership dynamics, as culture can significantly influence leadership effectiveness.

Silva et al. (2016) explored the negative effects of laissez-faire leadership on employee morale and motivation in Southern African public organizations. The study surveyed 350 employees from both public and private organizations in Southern Africa. The study confirmed that laissez-faire leadership results in reduced motivation, job dissatisfaction, and disengagement in public sector employees. The study's focus on Southern Africa may limit its applicability to Zambia, where organizational dynamics and public sector challenges may differ.

Locally, Banda (2019) assessed the effects of laissez-faire leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Zambia's public sector. The study surveyed 100 employees from various Zambian government institutions. The study found that laissez-faire leadership significantly decreased employee motivation and engagement, leading to higher dissatisfaction. While useful for understanding laissez-faire leadership in Zambia, the study had a small sample size and did not account for specific leadership practices at RTSA.

Phiri & Nkhata (2017) analyzed the effects of transactional leadership on employee motivation in Zambia's health sector.

The study surveyed 150 employees working in public health institutions in Lusaka Province. The study found that transactional leadership was effective in driving short-term performance but had limited long-term effects on motivation. While the study is useful in understanding transactional leadership in the health sector, its narrow focus on one sector limits the broader application of its findings.

Chirwa & Kasongo (2018) examined the effects of transformational leadership on employee motivation in Zambian state-owned enterprises. The study used a survey conducted among 200 employees in state-owned enterprises, employing both structured questionnaires and interviews. The findings showed that transformational leadership positively influenced employee motivation, especially in organizations focused on growth and development. However, the study did not consider the influence of organizational culture, which could be a moderating factor in the effectiveness of transformational leadership.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed for this study, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The quantitative component involved a survey to measure employees' perceptions of leadership styles and motivation, while the qualitative component used semi-structured interviews to explore employees' experiences and insights in greater depth. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation analysis, and regression analysis to identify relationships between leadership styles and motivation. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover key themes regarding leadership and motivation.

2.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure the sample represented different levels within RTSA, including frontline staff, supervisors, and managers. The employee population was divided into strata based on roles, and participants were randomly selected from each group. This approach captured diverse perspectives on leadership styles and motivation. A total of 60 employees participated in the survey, providing a broad overview of the topic, while 15 employees were selected for semi-structured interviews to explore their personal experiences in more detail. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data from various organizational levels ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research topic and minimized bias, making the findings applicable across different employee roles (Sosik & Godshalk, 2020).

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data for the study were collected using two main techniques. First, a structured survey was administered to 60 employees at RTSA to assess their perceptions of leadership styles and motivation. The survey employed standardized instruments, including the Multi factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to evaluate leadership styles and the Job

Motivation Scale to measure employee motivation (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Cohen, 2016). These established tools provided reliable quantitative data on the leadership behaviors perceived by employees and their levels of motivation. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 employees, offering qualitative insights into their personal experiences with different leadership styles and how these influenced their motivation at work. This combination of survey and interview methods allowed for both a broad quantitative overview and a more in-depth understanding of the nuanced effects of leadership on employee motivation (Sosik & Godshalk, 2020; Cummings & Bridgman, 2019).

2.4 Conceptual Model and Data Analysis

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 demonstrates how leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) influenced employee motivation, with organizational culture serving as a mediating variable. Transformational leadership boosts motivation through inspiration and development, while transactional leadership motivates through rewards and structure, though its effect is often short-term. Laissez-faire leadership negatively affects motivation due to

minimal leader involvement (Eisenbeiss, van Knippenberg, & Boerner, 2015; Sosik & Godshalk, 2020). Organizational culture moderates these effects, enhancing the positive influence of transformational and transactional leadership while mitigating the negative effects of laissez-faire leadership (Cummings & Bridgman, 2019; Hair et al., 2010).

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to address the research objectives. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data, while inferential statistics, including correlation analysis and multiple regression, assessed the relationships between leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and employee motivation (Hair et al., 2010; Cohen, 2016). Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative interview data to identify patterns and themes regarding employees' perceptions of leadership and motivation (Silva, Duarte, & Gonçalves, 2021). NVivo software facilitated the coding and identification of recurring themes (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 2004). These methods provided a comprehensive understanding of how leadership styles and organizational culture influence employee motivation.

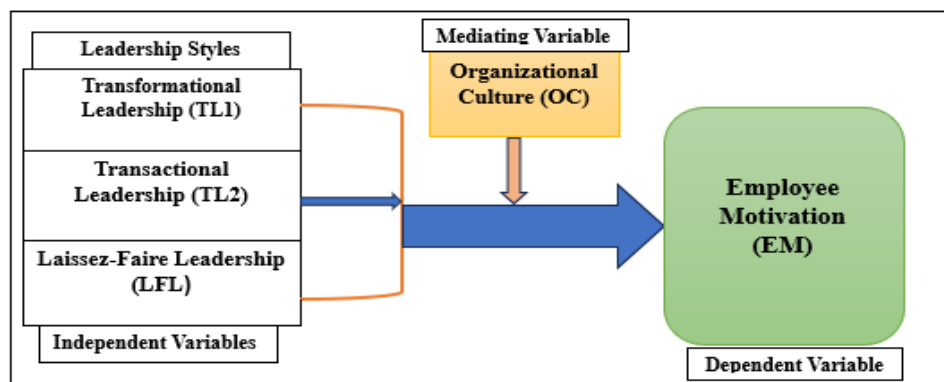


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Compilation, 2025

III. RESULTS

3.1 Leadership Styles

The results from table 1 show the distribution of responses regarding transformational leadership in three categories: supervisor inspiration, supervisor stimulation, and supervisor attention. For supervisor inspiration, the majority of respondents (66.7%) agreed and 23.3% strongly agreed, with a mean of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 0.613, indicating a generally positive perception of inspirational leadership. For supervisor stimulation, 66.7% of employees agreed, and 23.3% strongly agreed, with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.656, suggesting a strong perception of motivating and challenging leadership. Regarding supervisor attention, 65% agreed and 26.7% strongly agreed, with a mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 0.659, indicating that employees feel well-attended to by their supervisors.

TABLE 1: Transformational Leadership

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Supervisor Inspiration	Disagree	1	1.7	4.12	0.613
	Neutral	5	8.3		
	Agree	40	66.7		
	Strongly Agree	14	23.3		
Supervisor Stimulation	Disagree	2	3.3	4.10	0.656
	Neutral	4	6.7		
	Agree	40	66.7		
	Strongly Agree	14	23.3		
Supervisor Attention	Disagree	2	3.3	4.15	0.659
	Neutral	3	5.0		
	Agree	39	65.0		
	Strongly Agree	16	26.7		

Source; Field Data, 2025

Table 2 results show a positive view of transactional leadership, particularly in rewards, recognition, punishment, and goal expectations. A significant majority, 61.7% agreed and 30% strongly agreed on the effectiveness of rewards (mean: 4.20, SD: 0.632), indicating strong support. Regarding the punishment system, 60% agreed and 21.7% strongly agreed (mean: 3.95, SD: 0.852), showing general acceptance. For goal clarity, 63.3% agreed and 26.7% strongly agreed (mean: 4.15, SD: 0.633), reflecting satisfaction with goal-setting.

TABLE 2: Transactional Leadership

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Rewards & Recognition	Disagree	1	1.7	4.20	0.632
	Neutral	4	6.7		
	Agree	37	61.7		
	Strongly Agree	18	30.0		
System of Punishment	Strongly Disagree	2	3.3	3.95	0.852
	Disagree	1	1.7		
	Neutral	8	13.3		
	Agree	36	60.0		
Expectations & Goals	Strongly Agree	13	21.7	4.15	0.633
	Disagree	1	1.7		
	Neutral	5	8.3		
	Agree	38	63.3		
	Strongly Agree	16	26.7		

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 3 results show a negative perception of laissez-faire leadership. 63.4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with minimal supervision, indicating dissatisfaction (mean: 2.35, SD: 1.147). Additionally, 72.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the lack of direction and support from supervisors (mean: 2.28, SD: 1.136), highlighting a perceived absence of guidance. Regarding decision-making, 51.7% were neutral, and 28.3% agreed (mean: 2.42, SD: 0.962), suggesting moderate involvement but overall exclusion.

TABLE 3: Laissez-Faire Leadership

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Hands-Off Supervisor Approach	Strongly Disagree	16	26.7	2.35	1.147
	Disagree	22	36.7		
	Neutral	8	13.3		
	Agree	13	21.7		
Lack of Direction & Supervisor Support	Strongly Agree	1	1.7	2.28	1.136
	Strongly Disagree	15	25.0		
	Disagree	28	46.7		
	Neutral	4	6.7		
Decision-Making & Involvement by Supervisor	Agree	11	18.3	2.42	0.962
	Strongly Agree	2	3.3		
	Disagree	8	13.3		
	Neutral	31	51.7		
	Agree	9	15.0		
	Strongly Agree	12	20.0		

Source: Field Data, 2025

3.2 Employee Motivation and Level of Satisfaction

The results from Table 4 show that employees generally feel motivated to perform, with 55% agreeing and 26.7% strongly agreeing, yielding a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.710, indicating moderate to high motivation levels. The work environment also received positive feedback, with 55% agreeing and 26.7% strongly agreeing, resulting in the same mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.710, suggesting that employees are satisfied with their work environment. However, recognition and rewards showed slightly lower ratings, with 66.7% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing, resulting in a mean of 3.83 and a higher standard deviation of 0.847, indicating that while most employees agreed with the importance of recognition and rewards, there is more variation in responses regarding their adequacy.

TABLE 4: Employee Motivation

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Motivated to Perform	Disagree	1	1.7	4.07	0.710
	Neutral	10	16.7		
	Agree	33	55.0		
	Strongly Agree	16	26.7		
Work Environment	Strongly Disagree	1	1.7	4.07	0.710
	Disagree	10	16.7		
	Agree	33	55.0		
	Strongly Agree	16	26.7		
Recognition and Rewards	Disagree	8	13.3	3.83	0.847
	Neutral	3	5.0		
	Agree	40	66.7		
	Strongly Agree	9	15.0		

Source: Field Data, 2025

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 5 highlights the relationships between leadership styles, organizational culture, and employee motivation. Employee motivation has a mean of 3.99, reflecting moderate motivation, with a slight negative skew and a platykurtic distribution.

TABLE 5: Descriptive Statistics

Variable Name	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Employee Motivation	2.00	5.00	3.9889	0.68055	-0.856	0.687
Transformational Leadership	1.00	4.33	2.3500	0.97507	0.575	-0.629
Transactional Leadership	2.67	5.00	4.1000	0.56348	-0.666	0.514
Laissez Faire Leadership	1.00	4.33	2.3500	0.97507	0.575	-0.629
Organizational Culture	2.67	5.00	4.1000	0.52184	-0.383	0.790

Source: SPSS 25 Output, 2025

Transformational and laissez-faire leadership both have means of 2.35, indicating lower perceptions, while transactional leadership has a higher mean of 4.10, showing a more consistent positive view. Organizational culture is also

positively perceived (mean = 4.10), with slight variation. Overall, employee motivation is strongly influenced by transactional leadership and organizational culture, while transformational and laissez-faire leadership are seen less favorably.

3.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 6 presents the Pearson's correlation matrix, highlighting significant relationships between employee motivation (EM), leadership styles (transformational leadership 1 and 2, TL1 and TL2, laissez-faire leadership, LFL), and organizational culture (OC). The correlation between employee motivation (EM) and transformational leadership 1 (TL1) is negative and strong (-0.655), indicating that as transformational leadership behaviors decrease, employee motivation increases, with statistical significance ($p < 0.01$). In contrast, EM shows a positive, significant correlation with transformational leadership 2 (TL2) (0.730), suggesting that employees are more motivated in environments where transformational leadership is prominent. Laissez-faire leadership (LFL) shows a negative and strong correlation with EM (-0.655), indicating that laissez-faire leadership negatively impacts employee motivation. Organizational culture (OC) is positively correlated with EM (0.793), TL2 (0.657), and negatively correlated with TL1 (-0.603) and LFL (-0.603), suggesting that a supportive organizational culture enhances motivation, especially where transformational leadership is practiced, while undermining the effects of laissez-faire leadership. All correlations are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating strong relationships between these variables.

TABLE 6: Pearson's Correlation Matrix

		EM	TL1	TL2	LFL	OC
EM	Pearson Correlation	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
TL1	Pearson Correlation	-0.655**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
TL2	Pearson Correlation	0.730**	-0.473**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
LFL	Pearson Correlation	-0.655**	1.000**	-0.473**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
OC	Pearson Correlation	0.793**	-0.603**	0.657**	-0.603**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 25 Output, 2025

3.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 7 presents the multivariate model results, which demonstrated a strong relationship between the independent variables—transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and organizational culture—and employee motivation. The R value of 0.861 and R Square of 0.741 indicate that 74.1% of the variance in employee motivation can be explained by these factors, suggesting a robust model. The adjusted R Square of 0.727 reinforces this, suggesting that the model remains reliable even after adjusting for the number of predictors. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.218 indicates no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, ensuring the model's assumptions are met. The F-test ($F = 53.473$, $p < 0.001$)

confirms that the model as a whole is statistically significant, meaning the independent variables collectively explain employee motivation. In terms of individual effects, transactional leadership ($B = 0.404$, $p = 0.001$) and organizational culture ($B = 0.561$, $p < 0.000$) both have a positive and significant influence on employee motivation, suggesting that supportive leadership and a positive organizational culture drive motivation. On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership ($B = -0.166$, $p = 0.008$) has a negative effect, highlighting that minimal supervision and involvement hinder employee motivation. These findings emphasize the importance of active leadership and a strong organizational culture in enhancing employee motivation, while highlighting the detrimental effects of laissez-faire leadership.

TABLE 7: Multivariate Model Results

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	0.861 ^a	0.741	0.727	0.355	2.218	
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression		20.255	3	6.752	53.473	0.000 ^b
Residual		7.071	56	0.126		
Total		27.326	59			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	0.422	0.583		0.724	0.472
	Transactional Leadership	0.404	0.110		3.684	0.001
	Laissez Faire Leadership	-0.166	0.060		-2.769	0.008
	Organizational Culture	0.561	0.131		4.280	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Motivation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Culture, Laissez Faire Leadership, Transactional Leadership

Source: Survey Data, 2025

3.6 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of this study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 15 employees, focusing on their experiences with different leadership styles and their effects on motivation. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes and patterns from the interview responses. *Theme 1: Perception of Transformational Leadership* – Employees generally expressed a positive view of transformational leadership, highlighting the significant effect of leaders who inspired and encouraged personal development on their motivation. They emphasized that leaders who fostered a sense of purpose and supported their growth had a notable influence on their engagement and performance. "When my supervisor encourages me to develop new skills and gives me a sense of purpose, I feel more motivated to contribute to the team" (Employee 3). *Theme 2: Perceptions of Transformational Leadership* – Employees generally expressed a positive view of transformational leadership, emphasizing the effect of leaders who inspire and encourage personal development on their motivation. Many employees mentioned that when supervisors

actively fostered a sense of purpose and supported their professional growth, their motivation to perform and contribute to the organization increased significantly. *"When my supervisor encourages me to develop new skills and gives me a sense of purpose, I feel more motivated to contribute to the team"* (Employee 3).

Theme 3: Transactional Leadership and Rewards – While transactional leadership was seen as effective for short-term motivation, employees noted that it lacked the ability to foster long-term engagement or creativity. Employees appreciated the rewards and recognition provided by transactional leadership, but many felt that this approach focused mainly on performance metrics rather than personal growth. *"I appreciate the recognition and rewards I get for meeting targets, but I feel it's just about hitting numbers, not really about growing as an individual"* (Employee 7).

Theme 4: Laissez-Faire Leadership and Disengagement – Laissez-faire leadership was largely viewed negatively by employees, with many expressing dissatisfactions with the lack of direction and involvement from supervisors. Employees reported feeling disengaged and uncertain about their roles when leaders took a hands-off approach. *"When my supervisor is hardly around and leaves me to figure things out alone, I feel disconnected and unmotivated"* (Employee 9).

Theme 5: Importance of Organizational Culture – A strong organizational culture was identified as a key factor in motivating employees. Respondents highlighted that a supportive and inclusive culture, where everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas and work as a team, significantly impacted their engagement and job satisfaction. *"The organization's culture really motivates me. When everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas and work as a team, I feel more invested in my work"* (Employee 5).

Theme 6: Support and Guidance from Supervisors – Employees emphasized the importance of receiving regular support and guidance from their supervisors to stay motivated. Those who received clear direction and constructive feedback felt more empowered and motivated to perform well. *"Having a supervisor who checks in regularly and provides feedback makes me feel that my work is valued and that I'm on the right track"* (Employee 2).

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study strongly support the first objective of analyzing the effect of transformational leadership on employee motivation. The results suggest that transformational leadership positively influences employee motivation, with respondents expressing a high level of motivation when they perceived their leaders as inspirational and committed to their development. This finding aligns with previous studies, such as those by Eisenbeiss et al. (2015), which highlight that transformational leadership fosters an environment where employees feel empowered and motivated. Moreover, Cummings & Bridgman (2019) emphasized that transformational leaders who encourage personal growth and provide a sense of purpose are more likely to boost employee engagement. The positive outcomes from this study are consistent with existing literature, indicating that

transformational leadership remains a key predictor of employee motivation across various organizational contexts.

Regarding the second objective of assessing the effectiveness of transactional leadership on employee motivation, the study found that transactional leadership had a positive but short-term effect on motivation. Employees appreciated the rewards and recognition associated with transactional leadership, as also confirmed by Judge & Piccolo (2004), who found that transactional leadership is effective in driving performance in the short term. However, as noted by Kumar & Singh (2018), the study also revealed that while transactional leadership may enhance motivation in routine task-based environments, it may not sustain long-term engagement or foster creativity. These findings suggest that transactional leadership, though beneficial for performance-driven outcomes, may require complementary leadership approaches to ensure sustained motivation.

The third objective of examining the effect of laissez-faire leadership on employee motivation was thoroughly explored in the study, which found that laissez-faire leadership had a negative impact on employee motivation. This finding aligns with previous research by Silva et al. (2021), which indicated that a lack of guidance and involvement from leaders often results in disengagement and dissatisfaction among employees. In this study, employees reported feeling disconnected and unmotivated when their supervisors adopted a hands-off approach, echoing the findings of Phiri & Tembo (2019), who noted that laissez-faire leadership contributes to a lack of direction and support. The negative impact of laissez-faire leadership on motivation underscores the importance of active leadership involvement in fostering a supportive and engaging work environment.

V. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—on employee motivation within RTSA, focusing on how these leadership styles influence employee engagement and performance. The study successfully addressed the three main objectives: first, it analyzed the effect of transformational leadership, finding that it positively influences employee motivation by inspiring and empowering employees, consistent with previous research. Second, the study established that transactional leadership has a positive but short-term effect on employee motivation, aligning with past studies that suggest its effectiveness in achieving immediate goals but limited impact on long-term motivation. Finally, the study investigated the negative effect of laissez-faire leadership on employee motivation, showing that employees feel disengaged and unmotivated when supervisors adopt a hands-off approach, confirming findings from previous literature.

The findings of this study have important implications for organizational leadership, particularly in public sector institutions like RTSA. Leaders should prioritize transformational leadership behaviors to inspire and develop their employees, as this style has a sustained positive effect on motivation. Transactional leadership can still be used to

achieve short-term goals but should be complemented with more proactive leadership strategies to maintain long-term employee engagement. Additionally, the study highlights the need for clear guidance and support from supervisors, as laissez-faire leadership was found to detract from motivation. In practice, this means that organizations should avoid laissez-faire leadership in favor of more active and supportive leadership styles to foster a motivated and engaged workforce. The study also suggests that fostering a supportive organizational culture can amplify the effects of positive leadership styles on employee motivation, thereby improving overall organizational performance.

5.1 Recommendations

Following the study findings, the following recommendations were proposed from this study:

- RTSA leadership should enhance transformational leadership practices to inspire and motivate employees effectively.
- Supervisors should provide clear guidance and regular feedback to maintain high levels of employee motivation.
- The HR department should organize training on effective leadership styles, focusing on transformational leadership.
- RTSA should foster a supportive organizational culture that encourages collaboration and employee development.
- Management should minimize laissez-faire leadership and adopt more active, engaged leadership approaches.

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