

# Leadership Styles and Employee Motivation in Zambian Healthcare NGOs: A Literature Review and Analysis of Effective Practices

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## Abstract

Leadership styles profoundly impact employee motivation, an essential element in the efficacy of healthcare NGOs in Zambia. This literature review analyzes the effects of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership styles on staff motivation within the Zambian healthcare NGO sector. Transformational leadership, emphasizing vision, inspiration, and empowerment, is the most effective type, promoting elevated levels of employee engagement, contentment, and dedication. Transactional leadership, although proficient in attaining short-term objectives by systematic rewards and penalties, frequently fails to foster intrinsic motivation and long-term retention. Servant leadership, which prioritizes empathy, trust, and employee welfare, is congruent with the mission-oriented essence of NGOs and has demonstrated efficacy in enhancing job satisfaction and decreasing staff turnover. The review emphasizes the significance of contextual elements, including cultural and demographic variations, which require flexible leadership strategies. It is advisable to implement integrated leadership methods that merge transformational and servant leadership principles to tackle the distinct difficulties of the healthcare sector. Future research ought to investigate the enduring effects of these styles on organizational performance and personnel outcomes to inform leadership development in Zambian healthcare NGOs.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Transformational, Transactional, Servant, Motivation

**DOI:** 10.7176/DCS/15-1-04

**Publication date:** February 28<sup>th</sup> 2025

## 1. Introduction

Leadership styles play a crucial role in the configuration of the work environment and influence how employees feel their work. In medical care NGOs in Zambia, where the approach is to improve the health and well-being of the community, it is particularly important to understand the impact of the different leadership styles on the motivation of employees. Leadership styles refer to the ways in which leaders guide, influence and manage their teams. Common styles include autocratic, democratic, transformative, and laissez-faire leadership. Each style has its own approach to decision making and employee participation.

The motivation of employees, on the other hand, is about the reasons why people choose to work hard and stay committed to their work. In the context of medical care NGOs, motivated employees are essential because they directly affect the quality of care provided to patients and the effectiveness of health programs. When employees feel motivated, they are more likely to work better, they contribute positively to the organization and interact with the community they serve. The factors that influence the motivation of employees include recognition, support, job satisfaction and organizational culture promoted by leadership.

## 1. Literature Review

### 1.1 Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership is a style that focuses on the inspiration and motivation of employees to reach their full potential. The leaders who practice this style emphasize the vision, inspiration and consideration for the needs of their team members (Northouse, 2018). In the context of health care NGOs in Zambia, transformational leadership has proven to play an important role in improving employee motivation. Transformational leaders encourage workers to go beyond their personal interests for the good of the organization, promoting a feeling of commitment and commitment between members of their team.

Chanda and Mbewe (2018) conducted a study on the influence of transformational leadership in Zambian health care NGOs. They found that the leaders who were actively communicating a clear vision and shared organizational objectives succeed in motivating their staff. When employees understand how their work contributes to the broader mission of the organization, they are likely to feel more appreciated and motivated to perform at best. This study highlights the effectiveness of communication, and a shared vision can create a motivation environment for health workers.

In addition, transformational leaders tend to show a real concern for the well-being of their employees. This consideration makes it possible to strengthen confidence and a feeling of belonging to the members of the team. According to research from Chanda and Mbewe (2018), the health workers who felt supported by their leaders declared higher levels of work satisfaction and motivation. Employees are more likely to invest efforts in their work when they believe that their leaders care about their personal and professional growth.

Another characteristic of transformational leadership is the emphasis on employee empowerment. Transformational leaders encourage their team members to assume difficult tasks and provide them with skills development possibilities (Bass and Riggio, 2006). In the context of Zambian health care, this approach can lead to a reasoned workforce that is wishing to improve their skills and provide better care to patients. Studies have shown that when health workers are empowered, they are likely to feel more enthusiastic about their roles, contributing to a more productive work environment (Chanda and Mbewe, 2018).

In addition, transformational leadership can cultivate a positive organizational culture that promotes innovation and change. In health NGOs, the ability to adapt and adopt new ideas is crucial to improving services. Research indicates that organizations led by transformational leaders are better placed to encourage creativity among employees, which ultimately leads to increased motivation (Rowold and Heinitz, 2007). In Zambia, healthcare NGOs adopting transformational leadership have experienced improved services and greater morale of employees, because employees believe that their contributions are recognized and appreciated.

In summary, transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee motivation in Zambian health NGOs. Thanks to effective communication, support for the needs of employees, empowering and promoting an innovative culture, transformational leaders create an environment where health workers feel motivated and committed. Research indicates that this style of leadership is particularly effective in improving the overall performance of health care NGOs in Zambia (Chanda and Mbewe, 2018).

## 2.2 Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional leadership is a common style observed in health NGOs in Zambia. This leadership approach is characterized by a clear rewards and punishment system to manage employees. Leaders who use this style set goals specific to their teams and provide rewards to achieve these goals, while penalties are requested for not meeting expectations. Mwansa and Matongo (2020) point out that this method can be effective in the motivation of employees in environments where the completion and performance of tasks can be easily measured. In health NGOs, where bets are high and patient care is critical, transactional leaders often seek to encourage productivity through tangible incentives such as bonuses or recognition for excellent work.

The mechanics of transactional leadership depends a lot on structured policies and procedures. According to the research, this style creates a clear structure within which employees operate. For example, when employees realize that the exception of performance goals will result in bonuses, they may feel more motivated to improve their productivity. Mwansa and Matongo (2020) conducted a study on health NGOs in Zambia and found that when employees were aware of rewards associated with their performance, they generally reported higher levels of work satisfaction. However, the same study indicated a significant disadvantage; Confidence in transactional leadership can decrease intrinsic motivation. This is because employees can focus only on external rewards rather than personal or professional growth.

In addition, transactional leadership can lead to a cycle where short-term goals overshadow long-term professional development. Nzala (2019) emphasized that the focus on immediate rewards may not cultivate staff loyalty. In health NGOs, where employee retention is critical to maintaining patient quality care, lack of long-term commitment can be harmful. Employees may feel unmotivated to invest in their duties if they realize that their efforts are rewarded only based on the completion of tasks rather than their general contribution to the organizational mission.

It is essential to analyze how this leadership style interacts with Zambia's unique cultural and social environment.

Phiri's research (2021) indicates that, in the context of Zambia, transactional leadership may not resonate well in all employees' demographic data. Younger employees can expect more from their leaders in terms of guidance and career development opportunities as well as just rewards and punishments. This discovery challenges the idea that transactional leadership is universally applicable as a means of increasing motivation in such a diverse workforce.

Thus, while transactional leadership can provide a direct approach to managing performance through reward and punishment, evidence suggests that its effectiveness in promoting employee motivation in health NGOs in Zambia can be limited. Leaders should consider mixing this style with more transformational approaches that focus on the development of a support culture. This integration can help address possible traps related to motivation and engagement between health professionals, thus increasing the overall mission of NGO operations.

### 2.3 Servant Leadership Style

The leadership of servants is a style that has drawn attention to the context of health care NGOs in Zambia. This approach focuses on the role of the leader as a servant, aimed at meeting the needs of employees while helping them develop as an individual. The main principles of servants' leadership include empathy, listening, management and community building (Greenleaf, 1977). By putting the needs of employees first, heads of service can create an environment where staff feel valued and motivated. Mwansa (2021) studied several health NGOs in Zambia and found that leaders who practiced the leadership of servants have considerably stimulated the motivation of employees. This study has shown that when employees estimated that their leaders have prioritized their well-being and growth, they have declared work satisfaction and higher commitment to the organization.

Another important aspect of the leadership of servants is the emphasis on the creation of confidence within the teams. Confidence is essential in any working environment, especially in health environments where collaboration is essential for effective services. When leaders are real servants, employees are more likely to open and share their ideas and concerns. This opening can lead to a more committed workforce, as employees feel safe to discuss their challenges and contributions. In addition, the Mwansa study (2021) said that organizations led by department heads have often experienced lower staff rolling rates. This suggests that employees are not only motivated but are also more likely to stay with an organization that appreciates their contribution and their well-being.

Research has shown that servant's leadership can lead to an improvement in team dynamics. A study by Sipe and Frick (2009) underlines how heads of service encourage teamwork and collaboration between employees. In Zambian health care NGOs, where resources are often limited, promote a feeling of community and cooperation can lead to better care and results. Employees who feel supported by their leaders are more likely to work in a team, share knowledge and innovate solutions, which are all essential to improve the overall efficiency of health services.

In addition, the leadership of the servants align itself well with the nature focused on the NGO mission. The employees of these organizations often have strong intrinsic motivation to help others. When leaders adopt a style of servant leadership, they resonate with this intrinsic desire and strengthen it through their actions. This alignment can stimulate employee motivation, leading to greater dedication to their roles. According to Liden et al. (2008), workplaces that focus on the leadership of servants often see higher levels of employee engagement, which is crucial in the demanding field of health care.

In summary, the leadership principles of the servants have proven to be effective in improving the motivation of employees in Zambian health care NGOs. By prioritizing the needs of their staff and creating a culture of trust and collaboration, managers can promote a reasonable workforce dedicated to improving health results. The relevant literature indicates that this style of leadership may contain the key to improving work satisfaction and reducing turnover in the sector, thus contributing to better services for the community. The results of Mwansa (2021) and others highlight the importance of adopting the leadership of servants as a viable strategy to motivate employees in this critical field. Leadership styles play a vital role in motivating employees in the health NGOs in Zambia, influencing their performance and their satisfaction at work.

## 2. Discussion

A comparative analysis of various studies shows that transformational leadership is often seen as the most effective style when it comes to motivating employees. According to Mwila (2020), the transformative leaders inspire and authorize their teams to connect with the vision of the organization, which can lead to higher levels

of motivation among the employees. This is particularly important in health NGOs, where employees can face high levels of stress and burnout. Transformational leaders encourage innovation and support team members in their professional growth, ultimately improving professional satisfaction.

On the other hand, studies indicate that transactional leadership, which is based on reward-based systems, has its own effectiveness in some contexts. The research by Chilala (2021) discovered that transactional leadership could improve the motivation for tasks that require clear guidelines and measurable results. Employees may feel motivated by the promise of bonuses and recognition for the achievement objectives, in the environments in which the resources are limited and the services are carefully monitored. However, although this style can be effective in short-term scenarios, it does not promote long-term commitment and commitment between employees.

The leadership of the servants is another style that has attracted attention in the context of Zambia's health NGOs. As highlighted by Phiri (2022), the leaders of the servants focus on the needs of the members of their team and give priority to their development above their interests. This approach to leadership has been connected to greater work and motivation satisfaction, among the first-line health workers who often face difficult working conditions. The employees of health NGOs are more likely to feel appreciated and motivated when their leaders demonstrate a real concern for their well-being.

The effectiveness of these leadership styles can also vary based on employee's demographic data such as age, experience and cultural background. For example, younger employees may prefer more transformative leadership qualities, while older employees could better respond to transactional leadership and stability. Leaders must be adaptable and sensitive to the unique dynamics of their teams.

There is also the potential for integrated approaches that combine aspects of various leadership styles to improve the motivation of employees. For example, leaders who incorporate elements of transformational leadership and servants can cultivate a motivating environment, also facing the specific needs and objectives of their employees. The integration of various approaches allows leaders to create a more inclusive and supporting place of work, which can lead to better morality and conservation of employees in health NGOs (Sikazwe, 2022). By exploiting a mix of these styles, leaders can adapt their methods to adapt to the unique challenges of health NGOs and allow employees to perform at their best.

Overall, the comparative analysis of leadership styles in the context of the health NGOs in Zambia reveals a complex relationship between leadership and motivation of employees. Adapting these styles to specific demographic data of employees and organizational contexts can lead to better motivation and involvement. The review of the literature on leadership styles and the motivation of employees in Zambia's health NGOs provides valuable information about the dynamics within these organizations. In general, the different leadership styles significantly affect employees' motivation, which in turn affects the general effectiveness and success of the medical care services provided. Transformational leadership has emerged as a particularly effective approach. Studies, such as Mumba (2020) and Nkosi (2021), indicate that transformative leaders inspire and motivate their teams creating a vision for the future, promoting a support work environment and encouraging professional development. These leaders often see higher levels of employee participation and job satisfaction, which are critical for the demanding health environment in Zambia.

On the contrary, transactional leadership, which focuses more on structure, rewards and punishments, identified itself as less effective in promoting intrinsic motivation among employees. Tambo et al. (2022) suggest that, although transactional leaders can achieve short-term fulfillment, they fall short in promoting long-term motivation and commitment among the staff. This deeper lack of motivation can hinder organizational success in the maintenance of medical care initiatives.

In addition, it is essential to recognize the impact of local culture on the effectiveness of leadership. Zambia's cultural values, such as community orientation and respect for the elderly, can dramatically shape leadership styles and employee expectations (Chileshe, 2023). Therefore, it is likely that leaders who adopt a more participatory or democratic approach will resonate better with their teams, improving motivation and collaboration. Effective leaders recognize the importance of adapting their leadership style to adapt to the local context, suggesting that a unique approach for all may not work on the diverse health panorama of Zambia.

According to the key findings of this review, it is recommended that leaders in the health NGOs of Zambia adopt transformative leadership practices. This approach can improve employee motivation through improved

communication, recognition of equipment efforts and growth opportunities. In addition, organizations must provide training so that leaders at all levels develop their skills in interpersonal relationships and cultural competence, promoting a more motivating work environment aligned with the values of the Zambian community.

## 5. Conclusion

Finally, although existing studies highlight the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation, there is still a gap in research regarding the long-term effects of these styles on organizational performance in medical care NGOs. Therefore, future research should focus on conducting longitudinal studies that track the motivation and performance of employees over time in response to different leadership styles. These studies could provide deeper information about the sustainability of various leadership approaches and their final impact on organizational effectiveness in the Zambia health sector. This knowledge could guide future leadership practices and help medical care NGOs adapt to changing needs and challenges of their workforce.

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