

## LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SERVICE IN KENYA; UNDERSTANDING THE GENDER FACTOR

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### ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to explore the leadership styles and employee job satisfaction by gender among government employees in the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts, Kenya. The study adopted cross-sectional survey techniques and involved collection of quantitative data. Structured questionnaire were prepared in Likert Scale, and adopted the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) format. To measure employee job satisfaction, the researcher used the Work Quality Index (WQI). MLQ was adopted to evaluate the behavior of leaders they feel best match their satisfaction. The index was used to measure the extent to which leaders demonstrate behaviors' associated with transformational and transactional leadership. Theoretically, leadership styles (independent variable) affected the employee job satisfaction and gender being an intervening variable caused differences in employee job satisfaction. The study was conducted the Month of March 2016. Using random sampling, 222 employees were sampled to participate in the study. Further, all the 29 directors were sampled. The researcher distributed 298 questionnaires, out of which 251 complete questionnaires were returned (222 line employees and 29 directors). The researcher found that the dominant leadership styles were transformational and transactional and employees were moderately satisfied with their job. The findings indicated significant differences in job satisfaction based on the employees' gender.

**Keywords:** Leadership style, job satisfaction, Gender, Transactional, Transformational, Laissez-faire leadership.

### INTRODUCTION

Studies on the factors predictive of efficiency of organizations have revealed that the effectiveness of any organization is influenced by leadership and employee job satisfaction (Hamidifar, 2015). Positive attributes of employee satisfaction include motivation and dedication, of which are extensively influenced by leadership styles (Nothhouse, 2015). In Kenya, laws and policies have been enacted to promote gender participation in leadership with an aim of increased participation of women in the job market. In a study conducted by Mberia (n.d.), many laws and policies including the constitution of Kenya 2010 had provided for participation of women in leadership and in the job market. With this, it is expected that more women are increasingly getting employed in the public service and are also taking up leadership positions. Studies in other parts of the world have produced mixed results on the preferred leadership styles, job satisfaction and the gender relationship. However, the bottom line of all these studies is that leadership styles and employee job satisfaction has a bearing on the success of any organization. While the relationship between leadership style, job satisfaction and gender has been studied in many fields and different settings, few of these studies focus on this relationship in the context of public service in Kenyan. This study focused on the leadership styles employed by directors, employee job satisfaction and the

relationship between leadership styles, job satisfaction and gender. Specifically, the study concern itself with full-time employees at the Ministry of Sports, Culture and The Arts and explore the leadership behaviors, as adapted from Avolio& Bass' (2004) and employee job satisfaction as adopted from Putzier (1994).

With the increased interest in gender inclusion in appointments and leadership across the world, homogenous gender compassion at work place is increasingly becoming a universal phenomenon and with this the changing work environments and thus the dynamics. In Kenya, the commitment of the Government to attain gender equality is underlined in various national legal and policy documents, including, The Sexual Offences Act No 3 Of 2006, Gender Policy in Education (2007), Kenya Vision 2030, The Constitution of Kenya 2010 (GoK 2010), Kenya National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC,2011). Further, Women-friendly quota systems and policies such as affirmative action and girl-child education would be beneficial to the country and demonstrate an increase in political will. There is a widely accepted call to appoint females into position of leadership given that they are under-represented in various sectors of development and decision making in Kenya.

The Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts is tasked with the development of sports and the arts as industries for wealth and employment creation and also as tools for national cohesion and de-ethnicization of the Kenyan society. The Ministry is headed by a cabinet secretary and the various departments are headed by directors (Ministry of Sports, Culture & The Arts, 2016).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Leaders and employees form an integral part, fundamental for growth and development of every organization. For the envisaged growth to take place, the employees of an organization who are the chief implementing officers must be in a position to diligently execute their duties (Cummings & Worley, 2014). Where good leadership skills are practiced, there is measurable growth in the organization and the employees remain satisfied. A high rate of employee contentedness is directly related to a lower turnover and greater productivity (Sageer, Rafat, & Agarwal, 2012). Job satisfaction is a multivariate human attitude defined as employees' feelings about their jobs in general. Leadership styles can be grouped into three major types; transformation, transactional and the Laissez-faire leadership.

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership where a leader works with the rest of the staff members to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group (Northouse, 2015). Leaders who are able to apply this kind of leadership are able to enhance the motivation, morale, and job-performance of their employees through a variety of mechanisms; these include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to a project and to the collective identity of the organization; being a role model for followers in order to inspire them and to raise their interest in the project; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, allowing the leader to align followers with tasks that enhance their performance (Hunter,et at., 2013). Krishnan (2005) argues that the transformational leadership style enhances the organization employees towards achieving more rather than just what they had planned. Here, this leadership style leads to the process of transforming the followers' emotion, value, and goals for the specific performance based on their talent (Northouse, 2015).

Tales (2010) classify the transformational leadership under five different styles as follows: Intellectual stimulation where employees are encouraged to be creative and innovative but with a certain limit and are encouraged to solve older cases with new ways ; Individual consideration where the employer develops a relationship similar to that of a mentor and a mentee with the employee and in the process of teaching and sharing ideas or knowledge ; In Inspirational motivation, the employer gives a clear vision, meaning of task and a challenging task are being given by the leader to the employee; in Idealized influence, the leaders are the role models who take the initiative, understand, and have the determination in completing tasks while in Attributed charisma, The leader acts and speak in a way that convince their followers to respect and admire them.

Gregory, Russell, & Patterson (2004) defined the transactional leadership style as comprising motivation and directing to achieving followers self-interest through rewards and punishment for the exchange. A transactional leader could increase the employees' performance especially when employees' performances are being measured quantitatively and reward or punishments are being given fairly. There are three dimensions of transactional leadership: contingent rewards, active management-by-exception and passive management-by-exception. In contingent rewards, there is an exchange of reward system between employers and employees. Employees are being promised to gain something from completing a task. In active management-by-exception, leaders examine and monitor for any error or mistakes and apply corrective action. In passive management-by-exception, leaders take action only after mistake occurred.

Laissez-faire leadership is when leaders employ a non-transformational style and instead become uninvolved with their subordinates and members. In other literature, laissez-faire leadership has been argued as an absence of leadership style (Wong & Giessner 2015, Mathieu et al., 2015). Laissez-faire leaders make no policies or group-related decisions. The leader instead, relegates the goals, decisions and challenges arising from the organization to the group members. Such leaders therefore have very little or no authority within their group organization. The laissez-faire leader thus has but to trust subordinates to make appropriate decisions. In some instances, such leaders would strive to employ highly trained and reliable members into the group or organization so as to provide leadership and direction to the organization. The subordinates of a laissez-faire leader must be able to be problem solvers, be able to work independently or self-monitor and producing successful end products (Skogstad et al., 2015).

Several studies have been conducted to compare the differences in leadership styles between men and women. In a study conducted by Burke & Collins (2001) among accountants in different organizations, it was found that leadership styles of female accountants differ from those of the male accountants. In their study, females were more likely than males to employ transformational leadership. In another study conducted by Funk (2015) in Brazil, women's styles of leadership were not found to be inherently more inclusive than men's and that strategy, rather than style, likely determines whether a leader will be more inclusive. Other studies have also revealed various results on the differences in leadership styles between the two genders (Gartzia & Van Engen 2012; Paustian-Underdahl, Walker & Woehr 2014).

### **Employee Job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a multivariate human attitude defined as employees' feelings about their jobs in general. Employee satisfaction is essential to the success of any business. A high rate

of employee contentedness is directly related to a lower turnover and greater productivity. Job satisfaction is considered a strong predictor of overall individual well-being (McCann, Graves, & Cox, 2014). Employees should strive for satisfaction in their work given the amount of time devoted to work throughout their lives (Koslowsky et al, 2002). Job satisfaction and occupations can be viewed as a bi-dimensional concept consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction dimensions. Intrinsic sources of satisfaction depend on the individual characteristics of the person, such as, the ability to use initiative, maintain good relationships with the supervisors and team members, quality of output and personal drive. Extrinsic sources of satisfaction are situational and depend on the environment such as pay, promotion, job security, financial and other advantages of a job (Rose, 2003). Mohammad Mosadegh Rad & Yarmohammadian (2006) identified some of the factors that might contribute to the job satisfaction that consist of: wages, benefits, accomplishment, independence, acknowledgment, communication, working job conditions, job importance, co-workers, professionalism, organizational climate, relationships, working for a reputable agency, supervisor support, positive, job security, workplace flexibility, team environment and genetic factors. Meanwhile, Vigoda and Cohen (2003) pointed out that job satisfaction and leadership style could improve the relationship between employees and employers. Therefore, it is clearly indicated that leadership styles have influence to the job satisfaction among employees.

Studies of the factors predictive of employee satisfaction have included employee demographic factors and organizational structures. Clark (1997) tested the proposition that men and women in identical jobs should be equally satisfied. His study found out that women had higher job satisfaction than men despite of the fact that they occupied positions which were lower in stature and income than for males. In another study conducted by Metle (2001) among women working in the private banking sector, women reported gender discrimination in seniority and qualifications but gender was not a significant factor predictive of job satisfaction. Another study conducted by Allen et al. (2016), suggested that women are less likely to receive help from their managers toward advancement and are less satisfied than men. This may be as a result of tasks assignment discrimination and background mismatch. The apparent difference in job satisfaction led to the statement; ‘the paradox of the contented female worker’. Clark (1997) in his study, aimed at explaining the paradox observed that that women are significantly less likely to identify earnings as the most important aspect of a job and thus concluded that employees who identify earnings as the most important aspect of their work tended to have lower overall job satisfaction. Similar findings were registered by Bender, Donohue & Heywood (2005) where higher earnings was found to add more to the job satisfaction of men than to that of women. Further, Clark’s study demonstrated that women are significantly more likely to identify social relations at work as the most important aspect of a job and that this identification correlates with higher job satisfaction. The findings of these studies suggest that men and women make occupation and workplace choices based on different preferences over job attributes.

As shown in figure 1 below, leadership styles affect employee satisfaction and this is influenced by demographic factors including gender.

## Conceptual framework

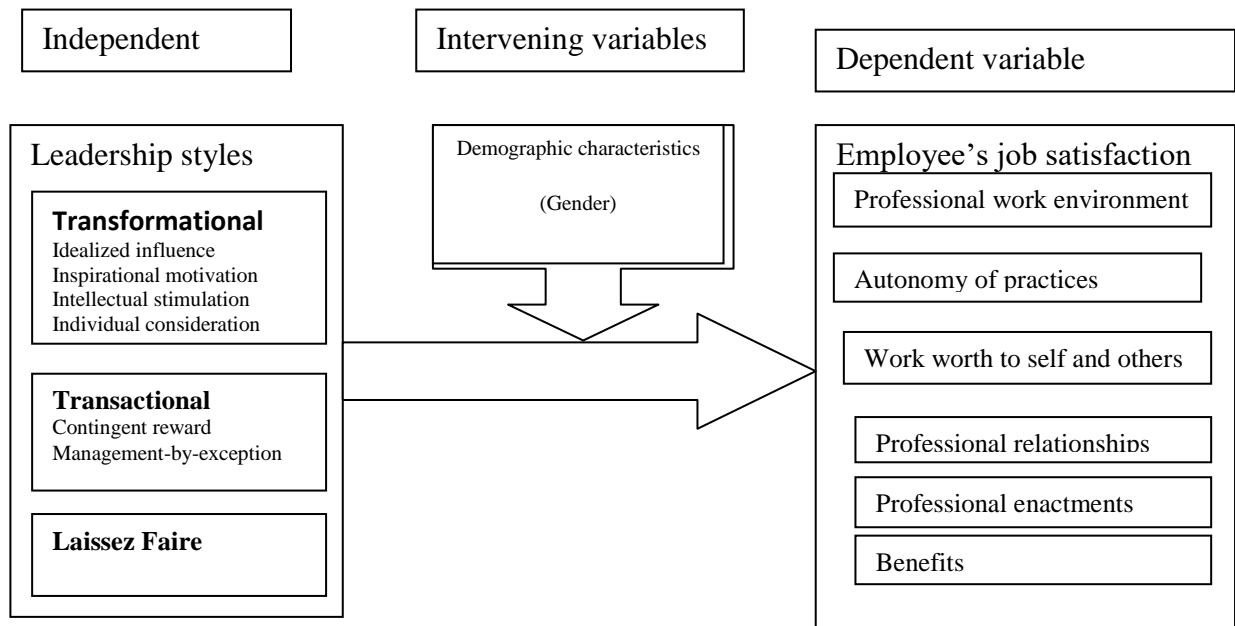


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted cross-sectional survey techniques and data was collected through quantitative methods. Structured questionnaires were developed to collect the data. The questionnaire was prepared in Likert Scale, and adopted the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) format. The study also used the Work Quality Index (WQI) questionnaire which was used to measure the job satisfaction. MLQ was adopted to evaluate the behavior of leaders they feel that are best match their satisfaction. The Work Quality Index with Likert Scale was also used to measure employee's job satisfaction. Data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive and inferential statistics have been used in the analysis of the data.

## RESULTS

### Demographic characteristics of the participants:

A majority of participants (n=113) were aged 31-40 years. Most participants (n=98) were diploma holders. The highest number of participants (n=98) had served in the government for 11-15 years. Twenty nine managers participated in this study (21 male and 8 females). The results were as shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participating line employees &amp; managers

	Variable	Line employees (145)	Directors (29)
Gender	Male	133	21
	Female	89	8
Age:	below 30	54	2
	31-40	94	19
	41-50	51	5
	51 and above	23	3
	Less than 5 years	37	0
Duration of service	6-10 yrs	74	7
	11-15 yrs	80	9
	21-25 years	31	13
Level of education	Certificate	55	0
	Diploma	98	0
	Bachelor's	67	11
	Masters'	2	18

### Leadership style

The results based on the seven factors were summarized by use of mean and standard deviations. The results in Table 1 show that a larger percentage of the managers had a mean responses ranging from between 1.94-3.24. Overall, the mean scores for all leadership styles were very close. The most preferred leadership style was Management-by-exception (3.24) and Laissez-faire leadership (3.01). Most directors did not prefer Inspirational motivation leadership style (1.94). From this study, most directors showed preference for transactional leadership and Laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership was least employed.

Table 6. Leadership style scores

Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Overall score	2.672892	0.53	1.942184	3.244297
Idealized influence	2.378471	1.2764	1.333	5
Inspirational motivation	1.942184	1.1746	1	5
Intellectual stimulation	2.366897	1.2253	1	4.666
Individual consideration	2.929908	1.0422	1.333	4.666
Contingent reward	2.838161	1.1892	1.3333	5
Management-by-exception	3.244207	0.9429	1.3333	5
Laissez-faire leadership	3.010418	1.0881	1	5

### Leadership style and demographic characteristics

The study used a five likert scale and therefore the midpoint was taken to be 3. Any score above 3 indicate a positive attitude towards particular leadership style while scores below 3 indicate a negative attitude to the style. T-test results show significant differences in leadership styles based on gender as in Table 7. The results show that the overall means for females in Idealized influence style was (3.6645), in Inspirational motivation style was (3.457083), and in Intellectual stimulation style was (3.913333), and these were significantly higher than the means for males in these styles (1.888556), (1.366667), and (1.793651) respectively. The overall mean for male directors for Laissez-faire leadership style



was (3.3) and this was significantly higher than the female directors (2.249). There was no significant difference in Individual consideration, Contingent reward and Management-by-exception approaches in leadership between the male and the female directors. On average, male directors proffered Laissez-faire leadership styles while female directors employed transformational leadership styles.

Table 7: T-test for differences in leadership style by demographic profiles

Leadership style	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	T	Sig.
Idealized influence	Male	21	1.888556	1.012	4.24734	0.000229
	Female	8	3.6645	0.99		
Inspirational motivation	Male	21	1.366667	0.315	7.62556	0.00219
	Female	8	3.457083	1.27		
Intellectual stimulation	Male	21	1.793651	0.749	7.0359	0.0001
	Female	8	3.913333	0.828		
Individual consideration	Male	21	2.666667	1.096	-0.04395	0.96
	Female	8	2.915875	0.954		
Contingent reward	Male	21	2.85619	1.248	-0.12994	0.897578
	Female	8	2.790833	1.096		
Management-by-exception	Male	21	3.237476	0.869	0.55087	0.586255
	Female	8	3.456014	1.165		
Laissez-faire leadership	Male	21	3.3	0.917	-2.54137	0.017097
	Female	8	2.249	1.191		

### Employee job satisfaction

The mean scores for all the dimensions of job satisfaction investigated was 13.96966 as shown in Table 3, and this suggests that employees were moderately satisfied with their jobs on average but were satisfied with their professional work environment. In particular, the highest level of satisfaction was in the Professional work environment, Benefits, Work worth to self and others, Autonomy of practices, professional relationships and professional enactments respectively.

Table 3: Job satisfaction scores

Dimension	Mean	Std.Dev
Professional work environment	19.68869	8.117422
Autonomy of practices	9.369352	3.779333
Work worth to self and others	17.3571	6.141032
Professional relationships	9.328463	3.888927
Professional enactments	8.881087	4.481053
Benefits	19.1933	8.387816
Overall	13.96966	5.799264

### Job satisfaction and Gender

T-test runs revealed that there were significant differences in job satisfaction based on gender in each dimension investigated as shown below in Table 4. From the data, it was found out that the overall satisfaction for females (15.93912) was higher than that for males (12.00021).

Further, female respondents showed higher means for each of the dimensions of job satisfaction investigated. This therefore indicates that females showed more job satisfaction than males.

Table 4:T-test for differences in job satisfaction by gender

Dimension	Male		Female		F	sig.
	Mean	Std.Dev	Mean	Std.Dev		
Professional work environment	15.7594	8.566275	23.61798	7.668569	25.81758	0.006
Autonomy of practices	8.233083	4.035613	10.50562	3.523053	94.55996	0.007
Work worth to self and others	16.22556	6.089754	18.48864	6.19231	243.7164	0.013
Professional relationships	8.398496	3.971375	10.25843	3.806478	168.8525	0.01
Professional enactments	8.166667	4.328437	9.595506	4.633669	266.7313	0.015
Benefits	15.21805	8.342424	23.16854	8.433208	13.77593	0.002
Overall	12.00021		15.93912			

## DISCUSSION

In this study, Management-by-exception leadership style was the most preferred while Most Inspirational motivation leadership style was the least proffered. From this study, most directors showed preference for transactional leadership (contingent reward and management-by-exception) and Laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership (idealized influences, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration) was least employed. No previous research in the public service in Kenya has been conducted on the proffered leadership styles; however the findings do support research that found a similar pattern of preferred leadership style exhibited by Service leaders (Moore & Rudd, 2006). While recognizing that transformational and transactional leadership styles complement each other (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh 2016), research has shown that transformational leadership behavior is correlated with preferred organizational outcomes such as employee motivation and performance

The study has also shown that preferences for leadership styles depended on the gender of the directors. While women directors showed preference for transformational leadership, male directors tended to prefer Laissez-faire leadership styles. These findings concur with a study conducted by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Van Engen (2003) where a meta analysis of data obtained across the world compared leadership traits variables across gender. The differences in leadership styles between men and women had been explored by Kawatra & Krishnan, (2004) who concluded that feminine leadership creates team-oriented, collaborative, and people-oriented cultures and that they are non-aggressive and non-competitive orientation of feminine leadership.

The study has also demonstrated that employees are moderately satisfied with their job. A similar study conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed that employees had moderate level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among the respondents (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). The moderate levels of employee satisfaction could be explained by the several factors including infrastructural development and leadership styles employed by the directors. A study conducted by Mosadeghrad & Ferdosi (2013) indicated that employees' job satisfaction and commitment depends upon the leadership style of managers. However, the study revealed that most of the employees were moderately satisfied with their jobs on average but were satisfied with their professional work environment. This finding points to the fact that most employees valued their professional work environments despite of the possible poor



physical resources and leadership styles employed by the directors. The finding mirrors another study conducted in Pakistan, where nurses were positive about their professional work environment but were in general not satisfied with their work (Kumar, Ahmed, Shaikh, Hafeez & Hafeez 2013).

In this study, employees' gender has been shown to be related to their levels of job satisfaction. These results affirm previous studies by Hancer & George (2003) and Rad & Yarmohammadin (2006), where it was found out that employees' job satisfaction was related to their demographic profiles. The study found that female employees tend to be more satisfied than male employees, and this is consistent with Hancer and George's (2003) findings in a study conducted among restaurant workers. A study conducted by Oshagbemi's study (2000) of university teachers however found contradicting results. While Oshagbemi's study found out that female staff members were less satisfied in the academia than their male counterparts, this study revealed that male staff members in the public service were less satisfied with their jobs.

This study does provide some insights for the public service in Kenya, who should realize the implications for leadership styles on organizational achievements. Given the provision of gender inclusion in leadership, deliberate attempts should be made by the Public Service commission in Kenya to include more women in leadership. Directors in the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts in Kenya should also realize the importance of the job facets used in this study, which can enhance their employees' level of job satisfaction. Managers should consider ways of enhancing job facets such as the professional relationships and professional enactments, since they were the factors with least satisfaction among the employees in enhancing job satisfaction among employees. Further, directors of the departments under the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts should recognize where the lowest levels of job satisfaction lie among the male employees so as to be able to direct improvement. For further research, we recommend use of a qualitative approach in order to provide further impetus on gender disparities in leadership styles and job satisfaction.

The limitations of this study included the facts the questionnaires in this study were adapted from other researchers in different contexts i.e. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) format was used to measure job satisfaction among nurses in a different cultural setting and therefore still need further adaptation for use in different cultures and in our case, the public service in Kenya. The other challenge involved accessibility of most employees. The researchers therefore had to extend the study over a period of three months. We recommend that online methods of data collection could be adopted by future researchers with similar objectives and context.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The aim of this study was to find out the preferred leadership styles among directors and employee job satisfaction. The study also aimed at finding out the relationship between the preferred leadership styles, job satisfaction and gender. The results of the data analysis indicated that most directors preferred Management-by-exception leadership style and that there were indeed significant differences in leadership styles among male and female directors. The study also found out that employees were moderately satisfied with their jobs and that levels of satisfaction was related to the gender of the employees.

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