

Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Motivation: A Case Study of St. John's Hospital, Mzuzu, Malawi

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is an important factor in influencing employee motivation especially within the healthcare industry to ensure quality service delivery. This study examined the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi. The aim of this study is to assess how leadership styles at St. John's Hospital influence employee motivation and identify actionable recommendations that strengthen leadership in improving staff motivation.

The study used a mixed research design. Data was collected from a sample size of 150 employees. From the targeted sample, 138 were valid responses, representing 92.0%. The study used structured questionnaires as the primary tool to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data collected. The study findings were summarized using descriptive statistics for quantitative data, and thematic analysis for qualitative data to identify key patterns.

The results showed that employees generally had positive perceptions of leadership behaviours, especially regarding to performance recognition, goal communication, teamwork encouragement, employee involvement in decision-making, guidance and support and autonomy. Employees also reported relatively high levels of motivation including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, willingness to exert extra effort and intention to remain with the organisation. The Pearson correlation analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation ($r = 0.828$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis further demonstrated that leadership styles are significant predictors of employee motivation ($\beta = 0.828$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 68.6% of the variation in employee motivation.

The study concluded that effective leadership practices enhance employee motivation in health care organisations. The study suggests that hospital management should improve participative leadership, communication, employee performance recognition, teamwork and supervisory support to sustain employee motivation and achieve organisational success.

Keywords: Leadership styles; Employee motivation; Healthcare management; Malawi.

INTRODUCTION

Employee motivation is generally recognised as one of the main determinants of organizational performance, productivity and service quality. In the healthcare setting, motivated employees make a significant contribution to achieving better patient outcomes, quality health care delivery, and organizational effectiveness. Healthcare practitioners often work under a stressful environment that is known of heavy workload, limited resources, staff shortages, and increased expectations from patients. In this context, effective leadership is a key factor in shaping employee attitudes and commitment as well as willingness to carry out their duties effectively (Cummings et al., 2018; Musinguzi et al., 2018).

Leadership has long been known as a key organizational factor that is associated with employee behaviour and organizational success. Several types of leadership such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership associate with employee motivation differently (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2021). Motivation through vision, encouragement, recognition, and individualized support is characterized by transformational leaders, while rewards, supervision and performance management are the approaches used by transactional leaders to motivate employees. Laissez-faire leadership is usually related to lower levels of employee engagement due to limited engagement and support (Eagly et al., 2003; Skogstad et al., 2014).

The relationship between leadership and employee motivation is supported by several motivational theories. First, the self-determination theory states that motivation levels are improved if leaders establish an environment where employees feel satisfied by their needs for autonomy, competency, and social relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Secondly, according to the goal-setting theory, the level of employee motivation is improved if the leader is able to communicate clearly to employees about organisational goals and provide continuous feedback on performance (Locke & Latham, 2002). Thirdly, social exchange theory explains that employees are more committed to work and exhibit positive behaviours when they are treated fairly and are supported by the leaders (Blau, 1964).

Previous empirical studies consistently demonstrate that effective leadership is positively associated with employee motivation, organisational commitment, employee engagement, job satisfaction as well as organisational performance across different organisational contexts (Wang et al., 2011; Gyensare et al., 2019; Schaufeli, 2015; Aman, 2024; Reyaz, 2024; Chirwa, 2025; Mchungwa & Kara, 2025; Ndjoonduezu & Murangi, 2025). It is noted from similar literature in healthcare settings that supportive leadership contributes to improved teamwork, staff retention and quality healthcare delivery (Cummings et al., 2018; Musinguzi et al., 2018).

In Malawi, studies done in the past have examined healthcare worker motivation, staff welfare and retention highlighting the importance of supportive management from the leaders and favourable working conditions (Kasenga & Hurtig, 2014; Chikaphupha et al., 2016; Chipeta et al., 2016; Dzimbiri & Molefi, 2022; Ndambo et al., 2022). However, there is little empirical evidence on how different leadership styles are associated with the motivation of employees in Malawian hospitals. This gap in the literature provided the foundation of the current study. The influence of leadership styles on employee motivation is important in improving organizational performance and provide better healthcare services. For this reason, this study aimed at examining the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi. The following objectives were achieved:

1. To examine leadership practices adopted by managers at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi.
2. To assess the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu.
3. To examine employees' perceptions of leadership styles at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership has consistently been identified as a significant factor in determining motivation, performance and service delivery in the private and public sector organizations. It involves influencing employees to achieve shared organisational goals by providing direction, support and motivation (Northouse, 2021; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). For healthcare organizations, effective leadership is very crucial because it influences employee morale, teamwork, commitment and quality of patient care (Cummings et al., 2018).

Among the leadership theories that have been discussed in the literature, transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leaderships have been found to be the most studied (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio & Bass, 2004). Transformational leaders motivate their employees through communication of a compelling vision, encouraging innovations, appreciating the efforts of their employees and providing personalized support. On the other hand, transactional leaders focus on supervision, performance evaluation and exchange of rewards in

order to achieve organizational objectives. Laissez-faire leaders are characterized by lack of leadership support and avoiding engagement (Eagly et al., 2003; Giltinane, 2013; Skogstad et al., 2014).

Employee motivation refers to as the internal and external factors that initiate, direct and sustain work related behaviours of employees. According to Self-Determination Theory, there is an increase in motivation when employees experience autonomy, competence and meaningful relationships within the workplace (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). To support that, Goal-Setting Theory proposes that motivation improves when employees have goals set for them and their achievements are recognized (Locke & Latham, 2002). Social Exchange Theory suggests that employees react positively to supportive leaders by showing higher commitment, loyalty and willingness (Blau, 1964).

Empirical evidence have shown that there is a positive association between leadership and employee motivation, organisational commitment, employee engagement, job satisfaction as well as organisational performance across different organisational environments (Wang et al., 2011; Breevaart et al., 2015; Gyensare et al., 2019; Aman, 2024; Amde, 2024; Reyaz, 2024; Chirwa, 2025; Mchungwa & Kara, 2025; Ndjoonduezu & Murangi, 2025). Research within healthcare organizations has demonstrated the role of supportive leadership in enhancing teamwork, performance of workers, employee satisfaction and retention, and quality care delivery (Cummings et al., 2018; McAlearney & Robbins, 2014; Musinguzi et al., 2018).

Studies carried out in Malawi have mostly concentrated on healthcare worker motivation, wellbeing of the workers, supportive leadership and retention. All these studies have revealed the significance of supportive leadership and good working environment in motivating health care employees, ensuring retention (Kasenga & Hurtig, 2014; Chikaphupha et al., 2016; Chipeta et al., 2016; Dzimbiri & Molefi, 2022; Ndambo et al., 2022).

While the majority of previous studies have revealed strong relationships between leadership and employee motivation, very few have analysed this relationship within faith-based hospitals in Malawi. Majority of Malawian studies have concentrated on staff motivation, retention and working conditions, rather than influence of leadership styles on employee motivation. Therefore, this study adds to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the influence of leadership styles on employee motivation at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a pragmatic methodological orientation and a mixed-method design to investigate the influence of leadership styles on employee motivation at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi. A pragmatic approach was appropriate because it suited the nature of the problem: as the study required to measure both the examination of measurable relationships and an understanding of employees' perceptions regarding leadership and motivation at St. John's Hospital (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

The total workforce of St. John's Hospital comprised 202 employees that represented the accessible population. The sample size of 150 respondents was determined by Yamane's formula to have a more representative sample of the population. A structured and self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The questionnaire had two parts: demographic information and statements measuring leadership styles and employee motivation on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 – for 'Strongly Agree'.

Before data collection process, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC). Furthermore, permission was granted by management of St. John's Hospital to conduct the research at their premises. Participation was voluntary, informed consent to participate in the study was obtained, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the process.

Leadership styles were operationalised as a composite construct measured using six questionnaire items assessing employees' perceptions of leadership behaviours such as goal communication, involvement in decision-making, performance recognition, guidance and support, teamwork encouragement as well as

employee autonomy. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The composite construct demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.908$).

Employee motivation was operationalised using five questionnaire items measuring motivation performance, willingness to exert extra effort, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and intention to remain with the organisation (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.914$).

And employees' perceptions were operationalised using four items assessing fair treatment, listening, positive work environment, and effective communication (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.902$).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation were used to describe the characteristics of the participants and their perceptions about the leadership behaviours and the level of employee motivation. On the other hand, the Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between leadership style and employee motivation, while the simple linear regression analysis was used to test the effect of leadership styles on the employees' motivation. The reliability of the measurement scale was examined using Cronbach's alpha whereby all the constructs demonstrated high reliability (leadership styles $\alpha = 0.908$; employee motivation $\alpha = 0.914$; employees' perception $\alpha = 0.902$).

To complement the quantitative data, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were undertaken to gain in-depth insights into employees' perceptions, meanings and experiences regarding leadership behaviours and how these behaviours influenced their motivation. 20 employees from both clinical and non-clinical departments participated by responding to open-ended questions. Participants were selected using purposive sampling from the study population to ensure diverse perspectives across job categories at the hospital. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis approach. Responses were reviewed repeatedly, coded, categorized, and then synthesized into broader themes in line with the research objectives. Credibility was improved using triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative results, while anonymity was maintained by coding participants (e.g., P3, P17). Use of both methods helped to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership behaviours and employee motivation.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

150 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of St. John's Hospital, Mzuzu, and 138 valid questionnaires were returned and deemed correct for analysis, which gave a response rate of 92.0%. High response rate enhanced reliability and representativeness of the study results.

There was gender diversity among the respondents with a slightly higher proportion of 51.4% male employees and 40.4% female employees, with the rest employees choosing not to disclose their gender. This balanced participation is important to ensure that findings relating to leadership styles, motivation and perceptions does not represent a single gender perspective. In a healthcare setting such as St. John's Hospital, both genders play a crucial role in delivering health care, therefore, gender inclusive representation provides credibility of findings.

The respondents were drawn from all the age groups identified, implying a workforce comprising both youthful and older employees. This is a feature of a multigenerational workforce, which is common in most health facilities. This is significant since leadership expectations, motivational factors, and perceptions of the manager's behaviour vary across age groups and career stages.

Furthermore, respondents were considered from various job categories at the hospital. This is significant because the study captured perspectives from different employee groups ranging from those in clinical department to administration or support staff positions. Such diversity is important because leadership styles may be practiced differently depending to job demands, professional training and department context.

Quantitative Findings

Leadership Styles Adopted by Managers

The findings assessed the leadership styles relating to communication, participation in decision-making, recognition, support, teamwork, and autonomy. Although the study was informed by transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership theories, these leadership practices were combined to form a composite Leadership Styles variable for quantitative analysis. The findings indicate that employees reported positive leadership practices such as communication, support, participation, recognition, teamwork, and autonomy. The responses indicate moderate to relatively high levels of agreement across all leadership behaviour statements suggesting that managers generally exhibit positive leadership practices within the hospital.

Table 1. Leadership Styles Adopted by Managers

Leadership Behaviour Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Goals Communication	3.47	0.881
Decision-making Involvement	3.43	0.853
Performance Recognition	3.52	0.865
Guidance Support	3.43	0.853
Teamwork Encouragement	3.44	0.904
Employees Autonomy	3.35	0.925

Employee Motivation Influenced by Leadership Styles

The findings indicated a strong relationship between the motivation of the organisation's employees and leadership styles of supervisors. Variability in responses to questions on motivation outcomes shows the significance of leadership at the organisation in influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the employees. Overall motivation levels were moderately high, indicating that leadership styles play a significant role in shaping employee commitment, satisfaction, and retention intentions.

Table 2. Employee Motivation Influenced by Leadership Styles

Motivation Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivates Performance	3.49	0.953
Extra Effort	3.45	0.888
Job Satisfaction	3.41	0.868
Commitment	3.46	0.905
Retention	3.46	0.889

Employees' Perceptions of Leadership Styles

Employees' perceptions were found to play an important role in understanding the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation. The findings showed that fairness and respect were critical on how

employees perceived the leadership behaviours. Communication effectiveness also played a critical role on how employees perceived leadership. In short, respondents generally perceived leadership practices positively, particularly in terms of fairness, respect, and workplace climate, which are critical drivers of motivation in healthcare settings.

Table 3. Employees' Perceptions of Leadership Styles

Perception Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fair Treatment	3.41	0.868
Listening	3.44	0.967
Positive Environment	3.51	0.968
Effective Communication	3.40	0.971

Reliability Analysis

Before conducting inferential statistics, the reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha test checks internal consistency between the items within a particular scale measuring the same construct. As per Creswell and Creswell (2018), a score of 0.70 or higher is acceptable in social science research. Coefficients for Cronbach's alpha indicated excellent internal consistency for all constructs. Leadership styles had a reliability coefficient of 0.908, employee motivation of 0.914, while the perceptions of employees were 0.902, all above the suggested threshold of 0.70.

Table 4. Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Leadership Styles	0.908
Employee Motivation	0.914
Employees Perception	0.902

Correlation Analysis

Results from the Pearson Correlation Analysis showed a strong positive relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation ($r = 0.828$, $p < 0.001$). There was a significant positive relationship between leadership styles and perception of employees ($r = 0.788$, $p < 0.001$). The perceptions of employees were positively related to employee motivation ($r = 0.677$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	Leadership Styles	Employee Motivation	Employees' Perceptions
Leadership Styles	1	0.828***	0.788***
Employee Motivation	0.828***	1	0.677***
Employees' Perceptions	0.788***	0.677***	1

Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the influence of leadership styles on motivation among employees. The regression analysis was statistically significant ($F(1,136) = 296.563$, $p < 0.001$) explaining 68.6% of the variation in employee motivation ($R^2 = 0.686$). Leadership styles positively associated with employee motivation ($\beta = 0.828$, $B = 0.884$, $t = 17.221$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 6. Regression Analysis

Statistic	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p-value	Standardised β	Unstandardised B	t-value
Value	0.828	0.686	0.683	296.563	<0.001	0.828	0.884	17.221

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings complemented the quantitative results by demonstrating that employees generally perceived supportive leadership behaviours as important drivers of motivation. Thematic analysis identified eight recurring themes including leadership communication, employee participation in decision-making, recognition and feedback, supportive supervision, fairness and respect, autonomy and trust, job satisfaction and retention as well as leadership improvement practices. Overall, participants consistently described supportive leadership behaviours as important contributors to employee motivation and organisational commitment.

Participant quotations reinforced these findings. One of the participants mentioned, “When my manager provides me with clear guidance about expectations, it motivates me because I know what I need to achieve” (P3). This illustrates how effective communication is important. “When management asks us for our views, we feel valued and motivated to put in more effort” (P8), was one of the points made by a participant, indicating how motivating participatory leadership style can be. “Even a small appreciation like ‘thank you’ from my supervisor motivates me to perform better” (P12), was another statement that reflected on recognition being an important motivator. These qualitative perceptions reinforced the quantitative evidence that effective leadership positively influences employee motivation within the hospital.

In summary, quantitative and qualitative findings showed strong convergence between the two strands of evidence. While the quantitative analysis established a statistically significant positive relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation, the qualitative findings provided contextual explanations for this relationship by providing an analysis of how supportive leadership practices influenced the attitudes of employees and work behaviours. Together, the findings indicate that leadership practices characterised by communication, recognition, participation as well as support contribute substantially to employee motivation at St. John's Hospital.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi. The findings show that employees generally perceived leadership positively particularly regarding performance recognition, goal communication, teamwork encouragement, guidance and support and involvement in decision-making. The results imply that leadership style at the hospital creates an environment that promotes collaboration, employee participation and organisational commitment. With leadership styles accounting for 68.6% of the variation in employee motivation – the quantitative results showed a substantial positive relationship between employee motivation and leadership styles. These results were supported by the qualitative findings, which demonstrated how employees perceived supportive leadership practices such as clear communication, recognition, involvement in decision-making, guidance and teamwork, as important elements influencing their motivation. All of these results show the importance of leadership strategies in improving attitudes of hospital employees and productivity.

The findings of this study showed that managers within St. John's Hospital generally adopt leadership practices that promote collaboration, participation and employee support. Effective communication emerged as an important aspect of leadership practices because it showed that managers make an effort in ensuring employees know what is expected from them and what goals they should strive to achieve. Clear communication is very vital in the healthcare sector because it promotes coordination, minimizes misunderstandings and contributes to effective health care service delivery (Northouse, 2021). The study also found that the managers engage their employees in the process of decision-making and promote teamwork among employees. While teamwork encourages collaboration and coordination among employees, employee involvement in organizational is associated with a sense of ownership and belonging. Such qualities of leadership are vital in the context of hospitals since the quality of delivery of services relies on the ability of staff members from various professional backgrounds to collaborate effectively (Robbins & Judge, 2022). This study agrees with the Transformational Leadership Theory as proposed by Bass & Riggio (2006). In their theory, leaders motivate individuals with vision, inspiration, and personal support. Northouse (2021) and Yukl & Gardner (2020) further state that leaders inspire their employees with trust and commitment towards organisational objectives. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which focuses on three important elements namely autonomy, competence and relatedness, which are key aspects of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Furthermore, it was established that employee perception played an important role in understanding the relationship between leadership behaviours and employee motivation. This indicates that even where leadership structures are formally instituted, employees' perceptions of these structures will determine whether or not they are motivating or demotivating. Leadership behaviours such as fairness, respect, and communication likely inspire trust among employees. The qualitative findings also found that employees appreciate leaders who listen to their problems and empathize with them. These behaviours were found to be more motivating than any formal incentives, even in resources constrained environments. The qualitative findings further strengthened the quantitative results by providing employee lived experiences of leadership practices within the hospital. Participants consistently emphasised that clear communication, participation in decision-making, recognition, supportive supervision and respectful treatment enhanced their motivation and commitment to work. The convergence of qualitative and quantitative findings therefore provides stronger evidence that supportive leadership practices are positively associated with employee motivation in the study setting.

Descriptive analysis revealed that performance recognition had the highest mean score ($M = 3.52$) while the lowest mean score was observed in autonomy ($M = 3.35$), although both were above the neutral point of the scale. This translates that employees valued their leaders for recognising their performance but not all perceived an opportunity to make independent decisions. These findings validate Self-Determination Theory, which highlights the importance of leaders satisfying needs of their employees for competence, autonomy, and relatedness in improving their motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Locke and Latham (2002) state that employee motivation improves when leaders clearly communicate expectations, provide constructive feedback and acknowledge employee achievements.

The study also found that the employees exhibited high levels of motivation with respect to commitment, extra effort, job satisfaction and intention to stay at the hospital. These results suggest that employees generally maintain positive attitudes towards their work regardless of challenging environment of healthcare. The same observation were reported by Cummings et al. (2018), who found that supportive leadership helps to improve nursing outcomes, teamwork and increases employee satisfaction. McAlearney and Robbins (2014) also found out that supportive leadership practices enhance the efficiency of the workforce through collaboration, professional development and employee engagement.

The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the leadership styles and employee motivation ($r = 0.828$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that any improvement in leadership styles results in higher level of employee motivation. The finding is in line with Wang et al. (2011) meta-analysis which revealed that transformational leadership had a significant impact on employee performance, commitment and motivation across different organizational environments. Musinguzi et al. (2018) also found positive relationship between leadership style, employee motivation, teamwork and job satisfaction among healthcare

employees in Uganda. In another study, Mavhungu and Bussin (2017) found out that effective leadership positively impacts organisational performance through increased employee motivation.

Moreover, regression analysis showed that leadership style is a significant predictor of employee motivation ($\beta = 0.828$, $p < 0.001$) accounting for 68.6% of the variation in employee motivation. These results show that leadership styles are one of the critical factors that are associated with employee motivation at St. John's Hospital. This finding is similar to what has been established in recent research studies in Africa and around the world.

These findings help contribute to the limited literature on leadership in the context of the healthcare industry in Malawi. Previous studies in Malawi mainly focussed on other aspects like employee welfare, motivation and staff retention rather than direct influence of leadership styles. For instance, Kasenga & Hurtig (2014), Chikaphupha et al. (2016), Chipeta et al. (2016), Dzimbiri & Molefi (2022), and Ndambo et al. (2022) all noted the importance of supportive management practices in motivating their subordinates.

Overall, the study reveals that leadership styles play an important role in shaping employee motivation in healthcare institutions. The findings show that good leadership practices have strong relationship between motivational levels and employees engagement. Effective communication, recognition of employee contributions, teamwork, participation of employees in decision making and continuous support are critical components of a highly motivated workforce. While these findings are consistent with previous studies, this research contributes context-specific evidence from a faith-based hospital in Malawi where empirical studies on leadership and employee motivation is limited.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the current research was to examine the impact of leadership styles on motivation of the employees at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu, Malawi. The results revealed that employees generally perceived leadership styles positively particularly in relation to performance recognition, goal communication, teamwork encouragement, guidance and support, and participation in decision-making. Employees indicated high levels of motivation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, desire to provide extra effort as well as willingness to stay at the organisation.

The research indicated a high positive association between leadership styles and employee motivation. The correlation analysis showed that there is a connection between good leadership and employee motivation, and at the same time regression analysis revealed that there was 68.6% predictive value for employee motivation. These findings suggest that effective leadership practices are important in promoting employee motivation and improving organisational performance within healthcare institutions.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen leadership practices and employee motivation within healthcare organisations;

Strengthen Leadership Development and Supportive Leadership Practices: Healthcare institutions should invest in continuous leadership development programmes that equip managers and supervisors with competencies in effective communication, participatory decision-making, employee recognition, teamwork as well as supportive supervision. Improvement of these leadership practices is likely to have positive impacts on employee motivation, commitment and organisational effectiveness (Northouse, 2021; Yukl & Gardner, 2020).

Integrate Leadership Competencies into Human Resource and Health Sector Policies: The healthcare policymakers and organisational leaders need to integrate the issue of leadership competencies into recruitment, promotion, performance management and management development initiatives. Policies related to employee engagement, ethical leadership, transparency and supportive working environment may assist in improving motivation and retention of the employees (Cummings et al., 2018; Chipeta et al., 2016; Dzimbiri & Molefi, 2022).

Promote Further Research on Leadership and Employee Motivation: Future research need to be conducted on impact of different leadership styles and their influence on motivation of employees within the healthcare especially with large sample sizes and longitudinal research design to determine the effectiveness of leadership practices in Malawi's health sector (Mavhungu & Bussin, 2017; Cummings et al., 2018).

Declaration

Ethical Approval

The ethical approval of this study was sought from University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) prior to the commencement of data collection. Permission for the study was also obtained from the management of St. John's Hospital, Mzuzu, Malawi. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study.

UNIMAREC Permit Protocol Number: P.02/26/772

Informed Consent

The informed consent form was signed by all participants before collecting the data. All participants were briefed regarding the objectives of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and that the information shared would be kept confidential.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available as they include private information collected from participants and the institution in which the research was conducted. But, on request and permission from the institution, anonymized data can be provided by the corresponding author.

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Author Contributions

Peter Yawala: Conceptualisation, conducted the literature review, designed the methodology, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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