SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATION PERFORMANCE: A QUALITATIVE REVIEW OF SELECTED STUDIES IN SUB-SAHARA

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Abstract:

This systematic literature review explores the relationship between leadership and organizational performance in Sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on qualitative insights drawn from selected studies. The review addresses four key research questions: (1) What leadership styles and approaches are most influential in driving organizational performance in the region? (2) What challenges and opportunities are prevalent in the leadership landscape and their influence on organizational outcomes? The findings indicate that transformational and participative leadership styles are prominently associated with positive organizational performance across diverse sectors. However, the review also highlights significant challenges, such as contextual constraints, resource limitations, and socio-cultural dynamics that impact leadership effectiveness. Opportunities for improvement are linked to adopting adaptive leadership approaches and enhancing leadership development initiatives. The review concludes by identifying

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critical research gaps, particularly the need for empirical studies focusing on sector-specific leadership models and their impact on long-term organizational sustainability in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: leadership, organizational performance, systematic literature review, Sub-Saharan Africa, qualitative review

1. Introduction

This systematic literature review examines how leadership styles impact organizational performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. Focusing on qualitative insights, it explores influential leadership approaches, identifies challenges and opportunities, and highlights the need for further research on sector-specific leadership models to enhance organizational sustainability.

1.1 Background

The relationship between leadership and organizational performance has been extensively studied across various regions and industries, reflecting the centrality of leadership in determining organizational success. In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, this relationship takes on added complexity due to unique socio-cultural, economic, and political factors. Leadership in sub-Saharan organizations must often navigate challenges such as resource scarcity, political instability, and cultural diversity, which can profoundly influence organizational outcomes. Despite these complexities, there has been growing interest in understanding how leadership styles and approaches impact organizational performance in this region (Folarin, 2021)

Leadership is a broad and dynamic concept that refers to the ability to influence others to achieve a common goal. Traditionally, leadership has been viewed as a top-down approach where a designated leader provides direction and oversight (Hurduzeu, 2015). However, modern definitions recognize leadership as a process that can occur at all organizational levels, involving collaboration and shared responsibility. Knies (2016) suggests that leadership involves not only guiding and directing but also motivating employees to align their efforts with organizational objectives. Moreover, leadership is considered situational, with different approaches required based on contextual needs and the environment in which an organization operates (Danişman *et al.* 2015; Knies, 2016)

Leadership is a vital component of organizational success, influencing performance, motivation, and innovation. Scholars have studied various leadership styles to understand how leaders can effectively guide their teams and organizations. These leadership types differ in terms of decision-making processes, relationships between leaders and followers, and approaches to motivation (Northouse, 2019).

1.2 Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership, also known as authoritarian leadership, is characterized by centralized decision-making, where the leader holds absolute power and control over the team. Leaders in this style tend to make decisions independently without input from subordinates (Cherry, 2021). While effective in situations requiring quick decisions or strict discipline, it can stifle creativity and lead to low morale among team members. Autocratic leadership is often observed in military settings or highly structured environments (Goleman, 2000).

1.3 Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership, often referred to as participative leadership, encourages collaboration and input from team members. Decisions are made collectively, with the leader facilitating discussions and ensuring that everyone's voice is heard (Northouse, 2019). This style fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among team members, enhancing motivation and job satisfaction. However, it can be time-consuming when quick decisions are needed. Democratic leadership is common in creative and academic settings where diverse perspectives are valued (Goleman, 2000).

1.4 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers to exceed expectations and embrace change. They focus on long-term vision, personal development, and building a shared sense of purpose (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership is effective in dynamic industries requiring adaptability, such as technology or healthcare, where continuous improvement is crucial (Northouse, 2019).

1.5 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is based on a system of rewards and penalties. Leaders using this style focus on established routines, goals, and standards, rewarding employees for meeting performance expectations and penalizing them for failing to do so (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This style can be effective in achieving specific, short-term goals, especially in environments with clear tasks and performance metrics, such as sales teams. However, it may lack the motivational elements needed to inspire long-term commitment or creativity (Maloş, 2012).

1.6 Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership involves minimal interference or direction from the leader, allowing team members a high degree of autonomy. This style is effective when team members are highly skilled, experienced, and self-motivated (Goleman, 2000). It works well in environments where creativity and independence are necessary, such as research and development. However, the lack of guidance may lead to confusion or poor performance if team members lack clear goals or require support (Maloş, 2012).

1.7 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership places the leader in the role of a servant to their followers, prioritizing the needs of others above their own (Greenleaf, 2002). This style fosters a strong sense of community and encourages collaboration, empathy, and ethical behavior. It is effective in organizations that emphasize social responsibility, such as non-profits and educational institutions. However, this approach may sometimes hinder decisive action when authoritative leadership is needed (Northouse, 2019).

Research has established that leadership styles have a profound impact on employee performance and organizational outcomes. Several key leadership styles are widely studied: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership has garnered considerable attention for its effectiveness in fostering employee engagement, commitment, and innovation. According to a study by Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees to go beyond their usual tasks, which leads to enhanced organizational performance. Similarly, Adebayo *et al.* (2018) found that transformational leadership in South African businesses significantly improved employee job satisfaction and productivity.

Transactional leadership, in contrast, relies on structured rewards and penalties to manage employee behavior. While it can drive short-term results, transactional leadership may lack the motivational appeal necessary for sustained long-term engagement (Bass, *et al.* 2003; Tavanti, 2008). Furthermore, research by Eagly, *et al.* (2003) shows that laissez-faire leadership, characterized by a lack of oversight, often results in confusion and underperformance among employees due to insufficient direction.

Recent studies by Adesina & Oyewole (2021; Mburu (2019) suggest that transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, inspiration, and employee empowerment, tends to have a positive effect on organizational performance in sub-Saharan Africa. However, these benefits are often moderated by factors such as organizational culture, leadership adaptability, and the external environment, transactional leadership, characterized by its focus on structure, rewards, and performance monitoring, also plays a critical role in contexts where stability and compliance are prioritized (Chaudhry and Javed, 2012). As a result, leadership effectiveness in sub-Saharan organizations often requires a blend of these styles to address both the developmental and operational needs of the region.

Given the diversity and complexity of leadership dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa, this systematic literature review synthesizes key findings from existing research, focusing on peer-reviewed studies and empirical evidence to highlight specific leadership practices that have proven effective in enhancing organizational performance within the region. The review also identifies significant gaps in the current literature, particularly concerning the need for context-specific leadership models and strategies tailored to address region-specific challenges. These gaps underscore the importance of developing adaptive and culturally relevant leadership frameworks that can effectively respond to both internal organizational dynamics and external environmental factors. The insights gained from this review provide valuable guidance for scholars and practitioners seeking

to optimize leadership approaches to drive organizational performance in sub-Saharan Africa. To structure the analysis, this review employed research questions as a framework to explore the relationship between leadership and organizational performance.

2. Statement of the Problem

Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational performance, but many organizations not only in Sub-Saharan Africa face challenges due to inconsistent leadership styles. h Folarin (2021) study reveals that there are vacuum of true conscious leaders, whether in politics, religion, organization, business, education, sports or institutions. While leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor in driving innovation, employee engagement, and overall success, there remains a gap in understanding which leadership styles are most effective in this unique socio-cultural and economic context. Studies have shown that transformational and participative leadership styles are often favored for fostering collaboration and innovation (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2020; Boateng & Mensah, 2019), yet authoritarian and laissez-faire approaches persist, leading to demotivation and poor employee performance (Kareem & Hussein, 2019). Additionally, the impact of cultural and contextual factors on leadership practices complicates the adoption of effective leadership styles (Mensah *et al.*, 2021). A gap remains in understanding the specific leadership styles that drive organizational success in the region, underscoring the need for further research into leadership development opportunities (Adebayo & Fapohunda, 2018; Dlamini & Mthethwa, 2022).

2.1 Research Objectives
RQ1: What are the key leadership styles and approaches identified in the literature that influence organizational performance in Sub-Saharan Africa?
RQ2: What challenges and opportunities are highlighted in the studies regarding leadership and organizational performance in the region?

3. Review Methodological Approach

This article presents a systematic literature review aimed at examining the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The review provides a qualitative assessment of selected studies to identify key trends, challenges, and gaps in the existing literature. This methodology section outlines the search strategy, scope, and criteria used for including and excluding studies, as well as the process of study selection.

3.1 Search Strategy
Databases Searched: A comprehensive search was conducted using a Google Scholar academic database to ensure coverage of relevant studies.

3.2 Review Keywords

The search utilized a combination of keywords and phrases related to the research topic. Key terms included:

1) Leadership styles,
2) Organizational performance,
3) Sub-Saharan Africa,
4) Leadership and performance,
5) Management practices.

3.2 Date Range

The review focused on literature published from 20015 to 2023 to capture recent developments and trends in the field.

3.3 Scope and Exclusion/Inclusion Criteria

3.3.1 Scope

The review concentrated on qualitative studies that explored the impact of different leadership styles on organizational performance within Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.3.2 Exclusion Criteria

1) Types of Studies: Quantitative studies, reviews, and meta-analyses.
2) Period: Studies published before January 2015.
3) Region: Studies outside Sub-Saharan Africa.
4) Language: Articles not published in English

3.3.3 Inclusion Criteria

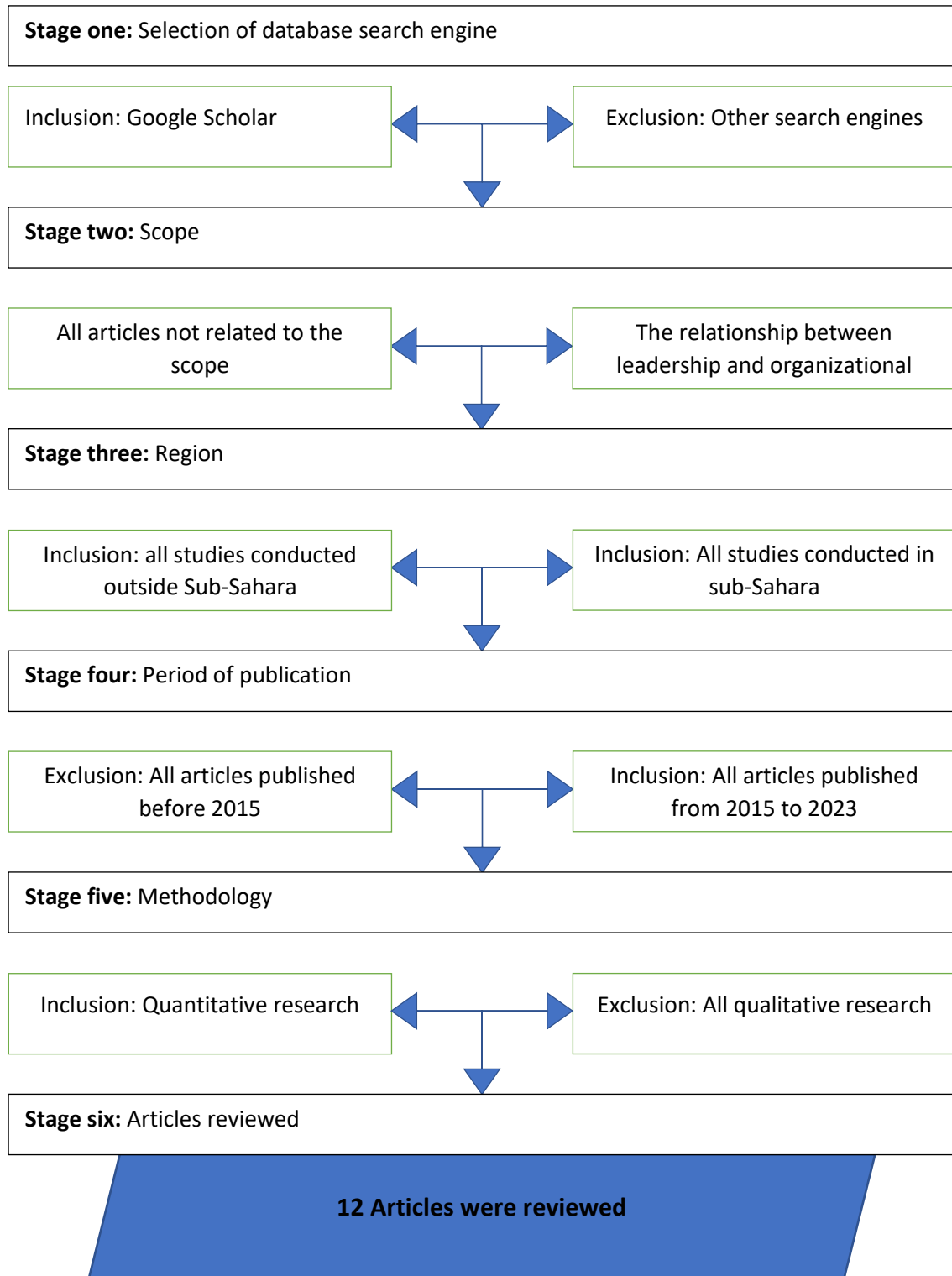The studies considered included empirical research, case studies, and theoretical papers.

1) Types of studies included empirical and theoretical qualitative studies focusing on leadership and organizational performance.
2) Period: Studies published from 2015 to 2023.
3) Region: Studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa.
4) Language: Articles published in English.

3.4 Study Selection

The selection of studies followed a multi-stage process. Titles and abstracts of articles identified through the search strategy were reviewed to determine relevance. The Selected articles underwent a full-text review to ensure they met the inclusion criteria and finally, articles were assessed based on relevance to the research questions and methodological rigor.

A flowchart illustrating the study selection process is provided below:

Figure 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Stage one: Selection of database search engine

Inclusion: Google Scholar	Exclusion: Other search engines

Stage two: Scope

All articles not related to the scope	The relationship between leadership and organizational

Stage three: Region

Inclusion: all studies conducted outside Sub-Sahara	Inclusion: All studies conducted in sub-Sahara

Stage four: Period of publication

Exclusion: All articles published before 2015	Inclusion: All articles published from 2015 to 2023

Stage five: Methodology

Inclusion: Quantitative research	Exclusion: All qualitative research

Stage six: Articles reviewed

12 Articles were reviewed

Authors' name(s)	Year	Title of the study
Mgeni, T.	2015	Impact of Entrepreneurial Leadership Style on Business Performance of SMEs in Tanzania.
Boateng, G. B., Yidana, J. A., Amoako-Gyampah, K., & Okyere, S.	2017	Distributed Leadership and Team Performance in Educational Institutions in Ghana. Institutions in Ghana.
Adebayo, O., Fagbemi, T., & Akintola, O. M.	2018	Leadership Styles and Organizational Performance in South African Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
Muller. R, Smith. E. and Lillah, R.	2018	Perceptions Regarding the Impact of Servant Leadership on Organisational Performance in The Eastern Cape
Maluta Mukhezakule & Orthodox Tefera	2019	The Relationship between Corporate Strategic Leadership and Sustainable Organisation Performance: Proposing a Conceptual Framework for the South African Aviation Industry
Kesse Appiah, Z.	2020	The impact of leadership styles on employees' job performance: XYZ organization in Ghana.
Folarin, K.	2021	Leadership Styles, Organizational Performance and Effectiveness among Sub-Saharan
Nyiro, F., Opiyo, J., & Wanyonyi, S.	2021	Leadership styles and their impact on employee performance in the Kenyan hotel industry
Appiah, E. K., & Agboola, C.	2021	The Interplay of Transformational Leadership and Ethnicity in Sub-Sahara Africa: Diversity and Inclusion Perspective.
Al Derei. H. S. S and Musa. H.	2022	Effect of Leadership Style on Innovation Technology and Organisational Performance: A review
Chileshe, M., & Mwiinga, J.	2023	The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance in SMEs in Zambia.
Chikwaba, A. & Matafwali. M.	2024	The Influence of Leadership on Employee Performance: A qualitative study of one hospitality industry in Lusaka District, Zambia

4. Findings

Review and analysis of findings provide significant insights into the leadership dynamics, communication, and the work environment within the organization. Based on the content, these results were synthesized into several key qualitative themes that include the following:

4.1 Theme: Preference for Transformational and Participative Leadership

Findings from all the reviewed studies reveal that employees favor transformational and participative leadership, which encourages collective decision-making and collaboration. They believe such styles would drive positive change and improve performance by promoting inclusivity and innovation. When asked about preferred leadership styles, the respondents unanimously favored a more inclusive and transformational leadership approach. They expressed a desire for leadership that promotes collective decision-making, collaboration, and a sense of belonging. Chikwaba and Matafwali (2024) study reveals that employees felt that transformational leadership, which fosters employee participation and innovation, would bring about positive organizational change and enhance performance. Many organisations rely heavily on effective leadership. A study conducted by Adebayo *et al.* (2018) highlights the crucial connection within the context of South Africa. The research provides valuable insights into the impact of different

leadership styles on SME performance in a developing economy. The study explores the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on organizational success. Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring employees, encouraging creativity, and fostering innovation. On the other hand, transactional leadership centers on setting clear expectations, offering rewards, and implementing punishments.

Nyiro *et al.* (2021) further adds that this form of leadership accentuates the inspiration of employees, intellectual stimulation, and personalized consideration. Employee engagement has a direct impact on the performance of hotels. Engaged employees are more likely to surpass expectations for guests, leading to increased customer satisfaction and favorable reviews. This, in turn, can boost occupancy rates, revenue, and overall success for the organization. Boateng *et al.*'s research indicates that implementing distributed leadership practices in Ghanaian schools has a positive impact on team performance. The study reveals key findings such as increased collaboration among staff members, empowering teachers in decision-making processes, fostering better teacher-student relationships, and enhancing problem-solving through leveraging the diverse expertise of the staff (Chileshe & Mwiinga 2023).

4.2 Theme: Leadership Style Inconsistencies Affect Participation

The findings reveal contrasting views on leadership styles in the organization, primarily oscillating between autocratic and participative leadership with employees feeling sidelined in decision-making processes despite a participatory leadership image being projected. Many respondents felt that the leadership structure was influenced by the founders' differing cultural backgrounds (African and Western), leading to a dualistic leadership approach. However, the employees perceived the autocratic style as dominant, where decisions were controlled strictly by leadership, and employees' input was largely disregarded. This imbalance created a sense of disempowerment among the staff, with some describing leaders as "bossy" and "pretending to involve employees in decision-making" (Kesse Appiah, 2020; Chikwaba, & Matafwali.2024)

4.3 Theme: Communication and Motivation Challenges

Communication and motivation emerged as a pivotal theme in the analysis. In a study conducted by Adewuyi *et al.* (2015), the relationship between leadership style, work motivation, and employee performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms was examined. The findings of the study revealed that transformational leadership has a significant positive influence on work motivation, resulting in improved employee performance. On the other hand, a stark contrast was observed between those who felt criticized and demotivated by the leadership and others who experienced positive reinforcement and motivation. Some interviewees cited tension and a fault-finding culture, leading to a stressful work environment, while others praised the organization for fostering creativity, offering career development opportunities, and recognizing achievements through appraisals and incentives (Kesse Appiah 2020; Mumba 2022).

4.4 Theme: Cultural and Contextual Influence on Leadership

Leadership is shaped by organizational culture and the broader societal context. In the NGO sector as reported by Kesse Appiah (2020) in Ghana, participative leadership is seen as essential for fostering community growth and development, whereas autocratic leadership is viewed as obstructive to progress. The influence of organizational culture and the broader societal context played a significant role in shaping leadership practices. The respondents acknowledged the importance of leaders adapting their style to suit the cultural and community environment in which they operate. Leadership in the NGO sector was seen as needing to be collective and participative to foster growth and development within communities. The dominance of autocratic leadership was viewed as detrimental to progress, while a democratic leadership style was seen as more conducive to community growth and employee morale. Adewuyi *et al.* (2015) study also points out the impact of contextual factors such as industry demands, company culture, and employee demographics on the effectiveness of leadership styles in driving motivation and performance.

4.5 Theme: Effectiveness and Dominance of Democratic Management Style

The Democratic management style is the most prevalent and influential approach utilized by the school head, demonstrating significant effectiveness in both motivating teachers and enhancing their performance. This style is predominantly used and is highly rated for its positive impact on teacher performance. Teachers find this style motivating due to its inclusive, participative, and respectful nature, which fosters a positive working environment and good relationships. This approach is seen as providing clear direction, respect and creating a conducive school climate that enhances overall teacher performance. The Democratic style, characterized by collaborative decision-making and respect for teacher contributions, stands out as the most effective management style in the school. It significantly motivates teachers, positively impacts their performance, and contributes to a supportive and productive work environment. The frequent use of this style reflects its alignment with creating a positive and engaging atmosphere for teachers (Boateng *et al.* 2027; Adebayo *et al.*, 2018; Kesse Appiah 2020; Mumba 2022).

4.6 Theme: Challenges and Limitations of Authoritarian and Laissez-faire Management Styles

Both the Authoritarian and Laissez-faire management styles present challenges and limitations in their application. The Authoritarian style is perceived as demotivating and negatively impacting teacher performance by creating fear, frustration, and a lack of respect. At the same time, the Laissez-faire style, though rarely used is seen as ineffective and leading to confusion and poor performance due to its minimal guidance and oversight. The Authoritarian management style, with its controlling and punitive approach, is less effective in motivating teachers and often results in negative outcomes. The Laissez-faire style, characterized by a lack of involvement and direction, also fails to support effective teacher performance. These styles are less favored and contribute to a

less productive and more problematic work environment compared to the Democratic approach.

4.7 Theme: opportunities highlighted in the studies regarding leadership and organizational performance

- **Transformational Leadership as a Driver of Innovation**: Transformational leadership presents a significant opportunity for fostering innovation in organizations. Leaders who encourage creativity, collaboration, and shared decision-making create environments where employees feel empowered to propose new ideas and solutions (Mumba, 2022; Nyiro *et al.*, 2021). This leadership style, therefore, positions organizations to capitalize on the collective intelligence and innovation potential of their workforce, enhancing competitiveness.

- **Cultural Alignment with Participative Leadership**: Another opportunity lies in aligning leadership approaches with local cultural values. Participative leadership resonates well in Sub-Saharan Africa due to its emphasis on collective decision-making and community involvement, which are integral to many African cultures (Kesse Appiah, 2020). By leveraging this cultural compatibility, organizations can build stronger connections with employees, improve morale, and foster a more inclusive work environment.

- **Need for Leadership Capacity Building**. There was a strong consensus on the need for leadership development and training. The findings indicate that capacity-building initiatives could significantly improve leadership practices by enhancing leaders' skills, judgment, and adaptability. Training programs were viewed as essential for developing integrity, credibility, and long-term sustainability, ensuring the leaders are well-equipped to manage both internal organizational needs and external community dynamics (Adewuyi *et al.* 2015; Kesse Appiah 202; Chikwaba & Matafwali 2024)

- **Increased Employee Engagement through Recognition and Motivation:** Transformational and democratic leadership styles offer opportunities to boost employee engagement by recognizing individual contributions and motivating employees through personal development (Boateng *et al.*, 2027). When employees feel valued and part of decision-making processes, they are more likely to be motivated and perform at higher levels, leading to better organizational outcomes (Adebayo *et al.*, 2018).

- **Leveraging Technology for Leadership Development**: Studies also point to the opportunity for integrating technology in leadership development programs, especially in remote and resource-constrained settings. E-learning platforms, leadership webinars, and online collaborative tools can be leveraged to train leaders more efficiently and at a lower cost, thus democratizing access to leadership training (Chikwaba & Matafwali, 2024).

4.8 Theme: Leadership Characteristics on Employee Performance

The studies reveal the impact of leadership characteristics on employee performance. Leadership characteristics play a crucial role in influencing employee performance within an organization. Influential leaders can inspire, motivate, and create a positive work environment that fosters productivity and engagement. According to Cikwaba and Matafwali's study, key leadership characteristics that impact employee performance include:

- **Good Listening Skills.** A recurring theme was the importance of leaders being good listeners. Employees valued leaders who paid attention to their opinions, as it fostered mutual respect, built strong relationships, and reduced workplace conflicts. Employees felt that when leaders listened, it improved morale, collaboration, and service delivery. This responsiveness enhanced employees' sense of being valued and led to better overall performance. Listening leaders created a more inclusive work environment where employees felt their voices were heard, leading to higher engagement and satisfaction. Employees emphasized that this led to improved team dynamics and customer service as leaders became more attuned to front-line feedback.

- **Leading by Example.** Employees noted that leaders should lead by example, setting standards for behavior and performance. This theme emphasized the need for consistency between what leaders say and do. Leaders who modeled the expected behavior created a sense of trust and reliability among employees, improving their commitment to tasks and reducing frustrations. The study by Chikwaba and Matafwali (2024) reveals that when leaders were hands-on and willing to perform tasks alongside employees, it reinforced credibility and fostered a culture of cooperation. Conversely, a lack of alignment between a leader's actions and words could lead to disillusionment and lower employee motivation.

- **Appreciating Good Work Performance.** The third theme focused on leaders recognizing and appreciating employees' efforts. Employees emphasized that acknowledgement of their hard work increased morale and motivation. Appreciation was seen as essential for retaining talent and creating a positive workplace culture. The findings reveal that leaders who recognized and praised good performance contributed to higher job satisfaction and productivity. Recognition created a ripple effect, inspiring other employees to improve their performance in hopes of receiving similar appreciation, which positively affected workplace morale and overall performance.

5. Discussion

The findings from the reviewed literature indicate that leadership styles significantly influence organizational performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. Transformational and participative leadership styles were consistently identified as the most effective in

promoting employee engagement and driving innovation (Adebayo *et al.*, 2018; Kesse Appiah, 2020; Mumba, 2022). These leadership styles emphasize collaboration, shared decision-making, and recognition of individual contributions, which lead to higher levels of motivation and performance (Nyiro *et al.*, 2021; Boateng *et al.*, 2027). For instance, transformational leaders inspire employees by creating a vision for the future, fostering innovation, and ensuring that their team members are empowered to contribute to organizational goals (Adebayo *et al.*, 2018). In the context of African organizations, where community and collective effort are central cultural values, participative leadership also allows for decision-making processes that resonate with local practices (Kesse Appiah, 2020).

However, a critical challenge identified was the inconsistency in leadership approaches within organizations. Some studies highlighted the tension between the ideal of participative leadership and the reality of autocratic tendencies, where leaders make decisions unilaterally despite promoting inclusivity (Kesse Appiah, 2020; Chikwaba & Matafwali, 2024). This duality often leads to disempowerment and frustration among employees, reducing overall organizational morale and effectiveness (Chileshe & Mwiinga, 2023). This finding suggests that while African leaders may value participatory processes, structural or cultural barriers may prevent their full implementation.

Communication and motivation were highlighted as crucial factors affected by leadership styles. Transformational leadership was linked with better communication practices and increased motivation due to the focus on individual recognition and personal development (Adewuyi *et al.*, 2015; Mumba, 2022). Leaders who consistently communicated a clear vision supported innovation, and recognized employee achievements were more likely to cultivate a motivated and high-performing workforce (Boateng *et al.*, 2027). Conversely, organizations with more authoritarian leadership styles reported lower levels of employee engagement and performance, as employees often felt undervalued and micromanaged (Adebayo *et al.*, 2018; Kesse Appiah, 2020). These negative outcomes reinforce the argument that a lack of employee autonomy and poor communication stifles creativity and diminishes performance.

The role of cultural and contextual factors in shaping leadership effectiveness cannot be overlooked. Sub-Saharan Africa is characterized by diverse cultural landscapes, and leadership effectiveness often depends on the leader's ability to navigate these cultural nuances. Participative leadership was particularly effective in settings where community involvement and collective decision-making are culturally embedded, such as in NGO sectors (Kesse Appiah, 2020; Adewuyi *et al.*, 2015). Autocratic leadership, on the other hand, was often rejected as it conflicted with community-centered cultural expectations, ultimately hindering organizational growth (Boateng *et al.*, 2027). This finding aligns with the view that leadership strategies must be contextually adapted to reflect the cultural norms and societal values of the regions in which they are applied (Nyiro *et al.*, 2021).

A critical finding from the studies reviewed was the call for enhanced leadership capacity-building in organizations. Many respondents believed that developing

leadership skills through structured training programs would enable leaders to be more adaptive, particularly in meeting both organizational and community needs (Chikwaba & Matafwali, 2024). This reflects the increasing demand for leaders who can balance global leadership practices with locally relevant approaches (Adebayo *et al.*, 2018). Leadership integrity and good judgment were frequently cited as key areas for capacity development, particularly in navigating complex organizational challenges (Mumba, 2022).

Democratic leadership styles, particularly in educational settings, were found to have a positive impact on teacher motivation and performance (Boateng *et al.*, 2027; Mumba, 2022). Democratic leadership was characterized by collaboration, respect for teacher input, and shared decision-making, which fostered a sense of ownership and increased job satisfaction among teachers. Studies indicated that when teachers felt valued and involved in decision-making processes, their performance improved, leading to better educational outcomes (Chikwaba & Matafwali, 2024). In contrast, authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles were linked to poor organizational outcomes, with employees feeling disconnected from their work and less motivated to contribute effectively (Kesse Appiah, 2020).

Lastly, the findings emphasize the importance of leadership characteristics such as listening skills, leading by example, and recognizing good performance. Leaders who actively listened to their employees and involved them in decision-making processes were able to foster trust and improve team dynamics (Chikwaba & Matafwali, 2024). Similarly, leaders who set a good example through their behavior and work ethic were more likely to inspire their employees, enhancing organizational cohesion and commitment (Adebayo *et al.*, 2018). Recognition of employee achievements was also found to be a powerful motivator, leading to a positive work environment and improved morale (Mumba, 2022; Kesse Appiah, 2020).

In conclusion, the studies reviewed demonstrate that transformational and participative leadership styles are the most effective in promoting employee motivation and enhancing organizational performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. Leadership effectiveness is context-dependent, with cultural factors significantly determining the success of different leadership approaches. Furthermore, leadership capacity-building, especially in communication, integrity, and cultural adaptation, is crucial for improving organizational outcomes.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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