

# **Correlations between Leadership Styles and Self-Esteem of Employees: A Case of Technical Colleges in Arusha City, Tanzania**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated on correlations between leadership styles and employees' self-esteem among colleges in Arusha City. It employed Descriptive Correlational research design with a quantitative approach whereby a total of 125 respondents filled the questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test and Pearson product Moment Correlational Coefficient. The findings revealed that the overall level of employees' self-esteem was high. There was a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership style and employees' self-esteem. Moreover, the findings showed no significant relationship between self esteem and such leadership styles as autocratic, laissez faire and democratic. The study therefore, recommended that College Principals should use transformational leadership in their colleges in most situations in order to increase employees' self-esteem.

**KEYWORDS:** Leadership, styles, self-esteem, correlation, employees, Arusha, Tanzania

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Self-esteem is an important variable in the success of any organization, educational institutions included. It is a factor that can determine effectiveness of educational institutions in terms of productivity and job satisfaction. Therefore, it is necessary for leaders in educational institutions to ensure high level of self-esteem among teaching and nonteaching staff. While there are many factors which can determine the level of employees' self-esteem, leadership style is a factor that cannot be ignored. This is supported by literature and studies from different parts of the global. According to Rank,

Nelson, Allen and Xu (2009), for instance, employees who have low self-esteem experience poor communication with their employer and do not appear to enjoy interactions at workplace. Limsila and Ogunlana (2007) argue that employees in colleges with low self-esteem do not have harmony between what they say and what they do and they normally feel anxious or insecure.

A study conducted by Carter (2007) in Georgia, revealed that transformational leadership influenced self-esteem and morale of employees while transactional leadership impacting structural and physical features of the institutions. The study concluded that transformational leadership variables contributed more to the employees' self-esteem than the transactional or laissez-faire leadership variables. Another study in New Zealand by Pierce and Gardner (2001) contended that an individual's self-esteem is formed around leadership styles and organizational experiences, leadership styles playing a significant role in determining employee motivation, work-related attitudes and behaviors.

While employees who have low self-esteem experience poor communication with their employer and are likely to have lower productivity in the organizations, it is important to establish leadership related factors that contribute to employees' self-esteem. Thus, it was deemed necessary to investigate on the correlations between leadership styles self-esteem of employees in the context of Technical Colleges in Arusha City in order to give necessary recommendations.

### **1.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Path-Goal theory of leadership which states that the leader can influence the perceptions of rewards and can clarify what the employees have to do to achieve these rewards. This theory was employed in order to identify the influence of different leadership styles on employees' self-esteem so that necessary recommendations can be done. The theory is concerned with the ways in which a leader can influence subordinate's motivation to achieve intended goals. Thus, leadership style is effective on the basis of how the leader influences the perceptions of work goals or rewards of subordinates (Northouse, 2013).

Path-Goal theory further states that leadership styles can influence employees' self-esteem positively or negatively, depending on the nature of leadership employed (House, 1971). The theory is therefore useful for understanding how various leadership behaviors affect the self-esteem of subordinates and their work performance. Path-goal Theory suggests that leaders should be flexible and that they should change their styles, as situations require (Yukl (2002). According to DeCaro (2005), when subordinates perceive leadership style as the source for satisfaction in their job, then the leadership is considered acceptable and can lead to the subordinate's satisfaction and subsequently self-esteem of employees will be maximized. Therefore, the leadership style is acceptable only when subordinates' perceive it as either an immediate or future source of job satisfaction.

## **1.2 Studies on Leadership Style and Self-Esteem**

A number of studies have discussed leadership styles in relation to self-esteem. A study in Nairobi by Wanjala, (2014) about the influence of leadership style on employees' job performance found that leadership style of a manager can affect the employee's job performance and employees' self-esteem either negatively or positively. In Ethiopia, for instance, a study of Tsigu and Rao (2015) established that transformational leadership style influenced employees' self-esteem better than transactional leadership. Hence, transformational leadership has positive influence on employees' self-esteem.

A study in Canada by Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi and Faiz (2011) found that workers who fell under pressure reported autocratic supervision on the part of their leaders. The leaders rarely allowed them to participate in the decision making. It was also reported that workers who were under stress reported harsh supervision and control on the part of their leaders, something which led to lower self-esteem, loneliness, isolation, and as a result, lower productivity. A similar study by Bateh and Heyliger (2014) in Florida revealed that faculty members who identified transformational leadership as dominant had increased job satisfaction and self-esteem; those who identified transactional leadership as dominant had increased job satisfaction while those who identified passive/avoidant leadership style as dominant had decreased job satisfaction.

A study on factors that affect employee turnover and self-esteem in Tanzania by Gikutha (2009) demonstrated that the leadership style in an organization is a major factor in maintaining satisfaction for employees. The study recommended that the leadership style preferred by employees should be established and applied. Another study in Tanzania on Leadership Styles and Teachers' Job Satisfaction by Nyenyembe, Maslowski, Nimrod and Peter (2016) revealed that teachers were more satisfied with their job when their school heads worked closely with them by mentoring them as well as paying attention to their personal well-beings.

## **1.3 Significance of Employees' Self-Esteem**

Significance of self-esteem is brought to view by the fact that employees with high self-esteem view themselves in a positive light, are confident, and respect themselves, something which leads to high performance. In contrast, people with low self-esteem experience high levels of self-doubt and question their self-worth (Gyura, 2007). Low self-esteem individuals further tend to view life in a negative way, something which can result into a belief that "we are worthless" (Crocker, 2006). According to Paradise and Kernis, (2002), those employees with high self-esteem use better job search strategies, receive more positive evaluations, and better cope with unemployment than low-self-esteem individuals. Employees with low self-esteem, on the other hand, are at risk of poor performance in employment. Considering that low self-esteem corresponds to a maladaptive attribution profile, building self-esteem and self-confidence is important in bringing the best out of employees (Crocker, 2006).

A study conducted in Indonesia by Joha (2014) showed that emotional intelligence and dimensions have positive effect on organizational commitment when self-esteem as mediator factor is controlled. According to McColl Kennedy and Anderson (2005), the

efficiency and effectiveness of organizations cannot be achieved if human resources possess slow motivation, low self-esteem and low emotional intelligence. These situations may be causing employees to work with the rebellious feelings, often protesting, not satisfied and consequently low performance.

According to Scott and Lane (2000), low self-esteem causes people to be less creative in their work, less ambitious, and less likely to treat others respectfully. These feelings of inferiority and low self-image can be expressed through verbal messages and nonverbal behaviors such as yelling, whining, or intimidation through steady eye contact. Rosenberg (2005)'s research on how self-esteem might impact on occupational aspirations indicated that individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to reject and be overly sensitive to criticism, avoid making decisions and resent being told what to do. These feelings can result in a number of inappropriate communication styles or behaviors in the workplace. This study, therefore, sought to investigate on Correlations between self-esteem and such Leadership Styles as transformational, autocratic, Laissez Faire and Democratic in order to give appropriate recommendations.

## **2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study employed Descriptive Co-relational research design. Particularly, quantitative method was used to assess the influence of leadership styles on employees' self-esteem in Technical Colleges of Arusha City. The researchers used questionnaire method to collect data. According to Orodho (2013), questionnaires are more efficient, require less time, are less expensive and permit collection of data from a wide population.

Descriptive statistics were used to determine mean scores and standard deviation of responses under the following interpretation: 3.50-4.00 = Strongly Agree, 2.50-3.49 = Agree, 1.50-2.49 = Disagree and 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree. Besides, t-test analyzed difference in perceptions between categories of employees and Pearson Product Moment Co-relational Coefficient tested existing relationship between leadership styles and employees' self-esteem.

### **2.2 Population and Sampling**

Population is a specified group of cases from which a researcher studies a sample and to which the results from the sample are generalized (Neumann, 2006). Creswell (2005) defines population as a group of people having common characteristics. With this regard, teaching and non-teaching employees constituted the sample. Through simple random sampling the researchers selected 10 out of all 52 Colleges in Arusha City as sample from which a total of 125 teaching and non-teaching staff filled the questionnaire.

### **2.3 Validity and Reliability**

In order to check the validity of the instrument, research experts were given chance to go through the questionnaire and comment where necessary adjustments were to be done

before actual data collection. In order to establish reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted in two Colleges in Arusha City which are not part of the sample. Analysis of the questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's Alpha by the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences as indicated in table 1. Cut off point of acceptable reliability was 0.6. Two items were deleted from autocratic and Laissez Faire Leadership styles in order to raise the reliability of the variables.

**Table 1: Reliability of the Questionnaire**

SN	Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
1	Employees' Level of Self-esteem	10	.814	Reliable
2	Transformational Leadership Style	6	.938	Reliable
3	Autocratic Leadership Style	5	.670	Reliable
4	Laissez Faire Leadership Style	3	.675	Reliable
5	Democratic Leadership Style	6	.880	Reliable

### 3. 0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were four research questions which guided this study. Some of these research questions called for hypothesis testing.

#### 1. What is perceived level of employees' self-esteem among Technical Colleges in Arusha City?

As it can be seen in Table 2, employees strongly perceived that they are trusted by their college Principals ( $M=3.9520$ ,  $SD=.56926$ ), they are positive toward themselves ( $M=3.8455$ ,  $SD=.38480$ ), they perform their duties confidently ( $M=3.7258$ ,  $SD=.53097$ ), they are competent in doing their day to day activities, they are satisfied with their work ( $M= 3.5840$ ,  $SD=.62455$ ) and they feel confident about their abilities in their working place ( $M=3.5840$ ,  $SD=.69774$ ). This implies that their self-esteem in terms of these items is very high.

Furthermore, employees agreed that they are open and honest with their shortcomings in their workplace ( $M=3.4800$ ,  $SD=.70253$ ), they are flexible and open to challenges ( $M=3.4113$ ,  $SD=.68683$ ), their peers respect and admire their way of doing things ( $M=3.4113$ ,  $SD=.75452$ ) and they are open to criticism and comfortable enough to acknowledge mistakes ( $M=3.3360$ ,  $SD=.64688$ ). This implies that self-esteem of employees is high. This is something worth noting because employees with high self-esteem view themselves in a positive light, are confident, and they respect themselves, something which leads to high performance (Gyura, 2007).

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Employees' Self-esteem**

SN	ITEM	MEAN	STD DEV	INTERPRETATION
1.	I am trusted by my college principal	3.9520	.56926	Very High
2.	I am positive toward myself.	3.8455	.38480	Very High
3.	I perform my duties confidently.	3.7258	.53097	Very High
4.	I am competent in doing my day to day activities.	3.6048	.69631	Very High
5.	I am satisfied with my work	3.5840	.62455	Very High
6.	I feel confident about my abilities in the workplace.	3.5840	.69774	Very High
7.	I am open and honest with my shortcomings in the workplace.	3.4800	.70253	High
8.	I am flexible and open to challenges in my workplace.	3.4113	.68683	High
9.	My peers respect and admire my way of doing things.	3.4113	.75452	High
10.	I am open to criticism and comfortable enough to acknowledge mistakes.	3.3360	.64688	High

**2. What is the level of self-esteem by employees categorized according to their positions?**

Having determined self-esteem of employees generally, it was necessary to find out the level of self-esteem in terms of their positions (teaching and non-teaching staff). This called for testing of a null hypothesis which states, *there is no significant difference in the level of self-esteem by employees categorized according to positions.* This null hypothesis was tested through t-test as seen in Table 3.

**Table 3: Group Statistics of Employees' Self-esteem by Position**

	What is your position?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ESTEEM	Teaching Staff	78	3.5385	.33661	.03811
	Non-Teaching Staff	41	3.5839	.32766	.05117

**Table 4: Independent t-test for Employees' Self-esteem by Position**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ESTEEM	Equal variances assumed	.090	.765	-.707	117	.481	-.04548	.06435	-.17292	.08196
	Equal variances not assumed			-.713	83.362	.478	-.04548	.06381	-.17238	.08142

As seen in Table 3, the mean score of self-esteem for teaching staff was 3.5385 while that of non-teaching staff was 3.5839. The score for both groups falls within the strong agreement zone (3.50-4.00), meaning self-esteem for both groups is high. The independent sample t-test in Table 4 indicates the sig of 0.48 which is greater than the critical value (0.05) thus we accept the null hypothesis and maintain that there is no significant difference in self-esteem by employees categorized according to their position, both groups having very high self-esteem.

**3. Is there significant relationship between employees’ self-esteem and leadership styles?**

This research question called for testing of a null hypothesis which states that, *there is no significant relationship between leadership styles and employees’ self-esteem*. The null hypothesis was subdivided into four sub null hypotheses that addressed specific leadership styles in question and was tested through Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient:

- a) *There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and employees self-esteem.*

**Table 5: Correlations between Transformational Leadership Style and Self-esteem**

		ESTEEM	TRANSFORMATION
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	125	125
Transformation Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.293**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	125	125

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

Table 5 indicates a Pearson Correlation of .293 with a Sig. of 0.01 level (2-tailed) which is lesser than the critical value (0.01) meaning that there is a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership style and employees’ self-esteem. This implies that the more transformational leadership style takes place, the higher the self-esteem of employees. Therefore, transformational leadership style is a determinant of employees’ self-esteem. This finding is in harmony with that of Bogler (2001) who suggested that transformational leaders more often stimulated the self-esteem of teachers, giving them feelings of success and allowing them to participate in determining school practices. Similarly, Carter (2007) concluded that transformational leadership variables contributed more to the employees’ self-esteem than transactional or laissez-faire leadership variables. This finding called for running of descriptive statistics on Transformational Leadership Style with Mean Score and Standard Deviation as seen in Table 8 in order to give necessary recommendations.

As it can be seen in Table 6, employees agreed that the Principals inspire them in the Colleges (M=3.4000, SD=.69561), they are proactive and form new expectations to

employees (M=3.3607, SD= .81378), they motivate employees to go beyond their self-interests (3.2177, SD=.76041), they set realistic and achievable vision for the organizations (M=3.1680, SD= .80056), they adopt changes to keep moving forward (M=3.1360, SD=.85519) and they have ability to make difficult decisions (M=3.0000, SD= .91581). This implies that the transformational leadership style takes place in institutions under investigation.

**Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Transformational Leadership Style**

SN	ITEM	MEAN	STD DEV	INTERPRETATION
1.	The principal inspires employees in the college.	3.4000	.69561	Agree
2.	The principal is proactive and forms new expectations to employees.	3.3607	.81378	Agree
3.	The principal motivates employees to go beyond their self-interest.	3.2177	.76041	Agree
4.	The Principal sets a realistic and achievable vision for the organization.	3.1680	.80056	Agree
5.	The principal adapts changes to keep moving forward.	3.1360	.85519	Agree
6.	The principal has ability to make difficult decisions.	3.0000	.91581	Agree

*b) There is no significant relationship between Autocratic leadership style and employees self-esteem.*

This null hypothesis was tested by Pearson product Moment Correlational Coefficient as reflected in Table 7. As it can be seen in the Table, there is a Pearson correlation of -.129 with the Sig. of .151 which is greater than the critical value (0.01). Thus, the correlation between autocratic leadership and employees’ self-esteem is statistically not significant. Therefore, Autocratic Leadership Style does not influence employees’ self-esteem.

**Table 7: Correlations between Autocratic Leadership and Self Esteem**

		AUTOCRATIC	ESTEEM
AUTOCRATIC	Pearson Correlation	1	-.129
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.151
	N	125	125
ESTEEM	Pearson Correlation	-.129	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.151	
	N	125	125



c) *There is no significant relationship between Laissez Faire leadership style and employees self-esteem.*

This null hypothesis was tested by Pearson product Moment Correlational Coefficient as reflected in Table 8. As it can be seen in the Table, there is a Pearson correlation of -.175 with the Sig. of .151 which is greater than the critical value (0.01). Therefore, the correlation between Laissez Faire leadership style and employees’ self-esteem is not statistically significant. Therefore, the Laissez Faire Leadership Style does not influence employees’ self-esteem.

**Table 8: Correlations between Laissez Faire Leadership Style and Self-esteem**

		ESTEEM	LAISSEZ
ESTEEM	Pearson Correlation	1	-.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.051
	N	125	125
LAISSEZ	Pearson Correlation	-.175	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	
	N	125	125

d) *There is no significant relationship between Democratic leadership style and employees self-esteem.*

This null hypothesis was tested by Pearson product Moment Correlational Coefficient as reflected in Table 9. As it can be seen in the Table, there is a Pearson correlation of .050 with the Sig. of .577 which is greater than the critical value (0.01). Therefore, the correlation between Democratic leadership style and employees’ self-esteem is statistically not significant. Therefore, Democratic Leadership Style does not influence the level of employees’ self-esteem.

**Table 9: Correlations between Democratic Leadership Style and Self-esteem**

		ESTEEM	DEMOCRATIC
ESTEEM	Pearson Correlation	1	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.577
	N	125	125
DEMOCRATIC	Pearson Correlation	.050	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.577	
	N	125	125

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that, the overall self-esteem of employees in institutions under investigation is high.

There is a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership style and employees' self-esteem. This means that college principals who use transformational leadership style inspire employees, motivate them to go beyond their self interest; they make difficult decisions, set realistic and achievable visions for the organization, adapt changes to keep moving forward and they are proactive to form new expectations to employees.

Among leadership styles under investigation, it is only transformational leadership style that influences self-esteem. And this influence is positive, meaning, the more transformational leadership style is used, the higher the self esteem of employees.

The researchers recommends that college principals should use transformational leadership in their colleges in most situations to increase employees' self-esteem because transformational leadership has significant influence on employees' self-esteem as compared to Autocratic Leadership Style, Laissez Faire Leadership Style and democratic leadership style.

This can be done by inspiring employees, motivating them to go beyond their self interest, making difficult decisions, setting realistic and achievable vision for the organization and adapting changes to keep moving forward.

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