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**Leadership Model for Enhancing Employee Retention: A Case of Kwekwe City Council**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide an effective leadership model to Kwekwe City Council, a local government in Zimbabwe, in order to solve the extremely high employee turnover rate problem. The study analysed the connection between leadership styles and employee retention. A positivist-dominant sequential mixed-methods approach was used. A stratified random sample of 257 individuals from managerial, supervisory, and non-managerial levels (out of a total population of 770) were given a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing (paired samples t-test) were used to examine quantitative data using SPSS® version 29. The quantitative results were enhanced and given meaning by the qualitative information gleaned from exit interviews. High turnover and dysfunctional retention—the retention of underperforming employees—were found to be strongly influenced by the prevalent autocratic and bureaucratic leadership philosophies. The approach that was found to have the greatest beneficial influence on promoting functional employee retention was transformational leadership. Effective leadership can be built upon a favorable framework for good governance, which is provided by the Public Entities Corporate

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Governance Act and the Urban Councils Act. According to the findings, Kwekwe City Council and other local authorities should prioritize leadership development programs that emphasize transformational leadership principles. It is advised that policies be consciously changed to adopt this leadership approach in order to lower turnover costs, enhance service quality, and create a more stable and motivated staff. By empirically defining a particular leadership model to counteract high staff turnover within the particular setting of a Zimbabwean local government, this study fills a critical gap in the literature. It goes beyond proving a connection to offer a workable, fact-based approach to human resource management in the public sector.

**Keywords:** *Leadership Models, Employee Retention, Transformational Leadership, Local Government, Zimbabwe, Public Sector, Turnover.*

### **Introduction**

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of any organization, acting as a crucial instrument for determining its effectiveness and overall success. The Bible, in Peter 5:1-3, emphasizes the importance of leaders serving as role models for their subordinates, guiding them to act in ways that reflect the values and goals of the organization. This principle is particularly relevant in the context of Kwekwe City Council, where a significant turnover of professional and specialist employees has been observed since 2018. The annual resignation figures—99 in 2018, 101 in 2019, 102 in 2020, 98 in 2021, 100 in 2022, and 80 in 2023—illustrate a troubling trend, with the Works Department bearing an average turnover rate of 25%. Such high employee turnover not only jeopardizes service delivery but also imposes substantial financial burdens associated with recruitment and training.

The issue of employee retention is multifaceted and influenced by various factors, including leadership styles, organizational culture, and employee satisfaction. Research indicates that effective leadership is the most significant determinant in retaining employees (Ntenga, 2022). However, despite numerous studies on leadership models and their impacts, few have specifically focused on recommending a leadership model tailored to enhance employee retention within local authorities like Kwekwe City Council. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how different leadership approaches can influence employee retention, particularly in the context of the challenges faced by Kwekwe City Council.

State-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Zimbabwe, including Kwekwe City Council, face various challenges that contribute to high employee turnover. Factors such as unsupportive

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leadership, disparities in the labor market, poor working conditions, and job dissatisfaction have been identified as primary contributors to this issue (Ntenga, 2022). Wolf (2019, as cited in Ntenga, 2022) notes that employees are more likely to leave organizations where leaders fail to align with their needs and aspirations. This disconnect between leadership and employee expectations often results in diminished morale and productivity, ultimately leading to increased employee turnover.

Reducing employee turnover is not an insurmountable task; however, Kwekwe City Council continues to struggle with high attrition rates. Poor leadership is frequently cited as a common factor in high employee turnover within local authorities. Employees tend to lose faith in organizations that tolerate ineffective leaders, leading them to seek opportunities elsewhere. Consequently, the question arises: what leadership model can effectively enhance employee retention at Kwekwe City Council?

Employee retention has emerged as a critical challenge for Kwekwe City Council, with an alarming annual employee turnover rate of 25%. The exit interviews reveal that the prevailing leadership model significantly contributes to this issue. High employee turnover rates not only result in increased recruitment and training costs but also compromise the quality and timeliness of service delivery. Employees are leaving for positions in other sectors, a trend that is intricately linked to their experiences with the existing leadership style. The implications of low employee retention extend beyond the organization itself, affecting the broader economy as well (Al-suraihi, 2021). Despite the recognition of transformational leadership's positive impact on retention (Al-suraihi, 2021), there remains a lack of conclusive findings regarding which specific leadership model can enhance retention in local authorities.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

This paper is anchored and primarily guided by the Contingency Theory of Leadership, as articulated by Khan (2016). Contingency theories posit that the effectiveness of a leadership style is contingent upon various situational factors, suggesting that there is no universally applicable leadership approach. This framework is relevant to this study because it encompasses diverse leadership styles, including autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire.

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By recognizing that leadership effectiveness is context-dependent, the Contingency Theory provides a nuanced understanding of how different leadership styles can impact employee retention across varying organizational settings (Chitra, 2021). The Fiedler model, a cornerstone of contingency theory, emphasizes the importance of situational awareness, allowing leaders to adapt their style to meet the needs of their teams effectively.

The concept of leadership has evolved significantly over the past few decades, becoming a focal point for organizational studies. According to Jones and George (2020), leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to achieve organizational goals. This definition highlights the multifaceted nature of leadership, encompassing influence, motivation, and guidance. Eze (2020) further posits that effective leadership involves the ability to persuade followers, while Iheriohanma (2019) emphasizes self-direction as a key characteristic of good leaders. Namusonge (2022) adds that leadership is fundamentally about maximizing results through positive influence.

Leadership has traditionally been associated with setting objectives and ensuring their attainment (Luthan, 2008). Yet, contemporary research emphasizes a shift from bureaucratic to more inclusive leadership styles that prioritize empowerment and motivation of employees. Colquitt et al. (2021) assert that effective leadership involves establishing direction and guiding teams toward achieving organizational goals. This transformation in leadership focus aligns with the growing body of literature that advocates for transformational leadership as a means of enhancing employee engagement and retention.

### **Leadership Styles and Their Implications**

#### **Autocratic Leadership**

Autocratic leadership is characterized by centralized decision-making, where leaders exert significant control over their subordinates. According to Demirtas and Karaca (2020), this style often results in high levels of employee turnover and dissatisfaction. Employees feel compelled to comply with directives, leading to a lack of trust and morale (Gordon, 2019). While this approach may be effective in certain high-pressure situations, it often stifles creativity and innovation, as employees feel disempowered and disengaged (Izidor, 2020).

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### **Bureaucratic Leadership**

Bureaucratic leadership operates within rigid frameworks and strict adherence to rules. While this style may ensure consistency and efficiency, it often leads to a disengaged workforce (Michael, 2019). Employees in bureaucratic settings may feel undervalued and stifled, which can negatively impact retention (Swarup, 2019). The lack of flexibility in addressing employee needs can result in high employee turnover rates, undermining organizational effectiveness.

### **Charismatic Leadership**

Charismatic leadership has garnered significant attention in recent years. This style relies heavily on the leader's personality and ability to inspire followers (Stephen, 2019). Charismatic leaders create emotional connections that foster loyalty and commitment among employees (Ehrhart and Klein, 2020). However, this approach has its drawbacks, as reliance on a single leader can lead to organizational instability if that leader departs (Zervas and David, 2013).

### **Democratic Leadership**

Democratic leadership, or participative leadership, encourages employee involvement in decision-making processes. This approach has been shown to improve employee morale and retention (Johari, 2021). By allowing employees to contribute their ideas and opinions, democratic leaders create a sense of ownership and belonging (Ushie, 2019). However, challenges such as achieving consensus and managing diverse opinions can complicate decision-making (Donna, 2019).

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership has emerged as a leading model for enhancing employee retention. This style emphasizes inspiring and motivating employees to exceed their own expectations while aligning their goals with those of the organization (Rochelle, 2018). Transformational leaders foster a supportive environment that encourages personal and professional growth, thereby improving employee engagement (Hassan, 2020). The evidence

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suggests that this leadership style significantly enhances employee retention, as it addresses the emotional and motivational needs of employees (Zervas and David, 2020).

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership focuses on the exchange between leaders and followers, where compliance is rewarded, and non-compliance is penalized (Suleman et al., 2011). While this approach can be effective in achieving short-term goals, it often fails to inspire long-term commitment and engagement (Boehnke, 2011). The rigid focus on performance metrics may lead to employee dissatisfaction and higher turnover rates (Zervas and David, 2020).

### **Laissez-faire Leadership**

Laissez-faire leadership grants employees significant autonomy, allowing them to make decisions independently (Alan, 2018). While this can foster creativity and innovation, it may also lead to confusion and decreased productivity in the absence of guidance (Swarup, 2020). Employees may feel both empowered and abandoned, impacting their overall engagement and retention negatively (Ronald, 2020).

### **Employee Retention**

Employee retention is critical for organizational success, defined as the ability to keep valuable staff members within the organization (Adzka and Perdhana, 2017). Effective employee retention strategies not only reduce turnover rates but also enhance organizational performance and employee satisfaction (Disa & Djastuti, 2019). Research indicates that employee engagement is a key determinant of retention, with engaged employees being significantly more likely to remain with their organizations (Purnamasari & Netra, 2020).

Leadership plays a vital role in fostering employee engagement and retention. Effective leaders create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute (Ohari, 2008). This relationship between leadership styles and employee retention highlights the importance of adopting appropriate leadership models tailored to the specific context of the organization.

### Empirical Literature Review

Few studies have been conducted regarding the connection between leadership style and employee retention; most studies concentrate only on the relationship between employee turnover intention and leadership style. The most crucial aspect of retention is how employees stay in the organization and the dynamics that exist between leaders and employees. Individual leadership's responsibility in a company is to treat staff members with dignity and respect (Caldwell and Dixon, 2022). Leaders bear the responsibility and accountability for keeping talented employees on staff. Their leadership abilities help to create an environment that is conducive to retention; employees will benefit from this and stay on staff, which is the best defense against unwelcome employee turnover (Chitra, 2021). Employees who receive regular positive feedback from leaders and are recognized for their performance are more likely to desire to stay with the organization when those leaders demonstrate interest and concern (Chitra, 2021). The bond between managers and staff affects workers' intentions to stick with the company and carry on with their work (Michael, 2020).

According to other studies done, a good working relationship between managers and staff might boost workers' intentions to stick with the company (Cowin, 2020). According to a study by Bycio et al., (2022) in the healthcare industry, employees who have stronger relationships with the leadership are less likely to plan to leave the company.

According to Kossivi et al., (2016), one of the elements influencing employee retention is management support and leadership. Employee retention is significantly improved by a leader's style (Khalid et al., 2016). For instance, at Tanzanian commercial banks, there is a strong correlation between leadership and employee retention (Mwita & Tefurukwa, 2018).

The underlying concepts and theoretical frameworks, particularly the Contingency Theory of Leadership, offer valuable insights into how effectiveness varies based on situational factors. The review also underscores the need for further empirical research focused on local authorities, particularly in Zimbabwe, to fill existing gaps in the literature and inform effective leadership practices.

### Methodology

The study implemented a mixed-methods approach, integrating both interpretive and positivist paradigms. By employing these paradigms, the research aimed to mitigate biases

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commonly associated with social inquiry. The positivist paradigm primarily guided the quantitative elements of the study, focusing on measurable outcomes and statistical analysis. In contrast, the interpretive paradigm facilitated a deeper understanding of the qualitative data, helping to explore the nuances of employee experiences and perspectives. This sequential mix allowed for a comprehensive examination of employee retention, enabling the researcher to recommend a leadership model that is responsive to the specific context of Kwekwe City Council.

This research adopted both descriptive and explanatory designs. The descriptive design was essential for answering the central question regarding which leadership model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council. According to Cooper and Schindler (2018), descriptive surveys are suitable for quantitative studies, allowing researchers to gather a wide range of opinions and views from respondents. This design not only facilitates the identification of patterns but also aids in justifying current practices. Conversely, the explanatory design was critical for establishing relationships between the leadership styles and employee retention, as it enabled hypothesis testing. Through this dual approach, the study effectively combined qualitative insights with quantitative validation, enhancing the robustness of the findings.

The study targeted a population of 770 employees from Kwekwe City Council. A sample size of 257 employees was determined, representing various levels within the organization, including management, supervisory management, and non-managerial staff. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure that each group within the hierarchy was adequately represented. By dividing the population into strata based on management levels, the study could capture a diverse range of experiences and opinions, thereby enhancing the validity of the research findings. The detailed breakdown of the sample size is as follows: 20 from management, 100 from supervisory management, and 137 from non-managerial positions.

Data collection was conducted using structured questionnaires and exit interview forms. These instruments were instrumental in gathering a substantial amount of data efficiently. The structured questionnaires allowed respondents to reflect on their experiences and provide thoughtful answers, thus improving the reliability of the data. Furthermore, this method ensured anonymity, encouraging participants to share their views candidly without fear of repercussions. The advantages of using questionnaires include their ability to yield valid information and minimize observer bias (Akash, 2020). Additionally, the exit interviews

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facilitated deeper insights into the reasons behind employee turnover, providing qualitative data that complemented the quantitative findings.

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main data collection to test the research instruments. This pre-testing phase identified potential issues in the questionnaire design and ensured that questions were clear and meaningful to participants. By refining the instruments based on feedback from the pilot study, the researcher increased the validity and reliability of the data collection tools. Subsequently, the main data collection involved distributing questionnaires to 20 managerial employees, 100 supervisory employees, and 137 non-managerial staff, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of employee retention dynamics.

Ensuring the validity and reliability of the research instruments was paramount. Internal validity was established through triangulation, which involved gathering data from multiple sources, including questionnaires and exit interviews (Sharma, 2011). This method strengthened the reliability of the findings by combining different data collection techniques (Patton, 2015). The pilot study further contributed to the validity of the instruments by ensuring that questions were appropriately phrased and understood by participants.

To assess reliability, the study employed peer examination, where findings were compared with those from previous research to validate results (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, as cited in Zohrabi, 2013). The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, employing descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to derive meaningful insights. The integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches allowed for a richer understanding of the research findings, reinforcing the overall credibility of the study.

The mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the research questions, contributing valuable insights into the relationship between leadership models and employee retention. By ensuring rigorous data collection and analysis procedures, as well as adhering to ethical standards, the study aimed to provide a robust foundation for recommending effective leadership practices that enhance employee retention in local authorities.

### **Presentation and Discussion**

The primary aim of the study was to recommend a leadership model that enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council. The data, gathered from 257 employees (a 100% response rate), was analysed to address three main objectives.

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1. To explore the relationship between leadership model and employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.
2. To examine the extent to which Urban Councils Act [Chapter 29:15] and Public Entities Corporate Governance Act [Chapter 10:31] are modeling leadership that enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.
3. To recommend a leadership model that enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and exit interview forms from a sample of 257 employees across managerial, supervisory, and non-managerial levels at Kwekwe City Council. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS® version 29), employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing.

### 1. Relationship between Leadership Model and Employee Retention

The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between the existence of employee turnover and the belief that an appropriate leadership model would improve retention (Pearson Correlation = .777\*\*). The table below shows the correlation of leadership model and employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.

**Table 1: Leadership Model and Employee Retention Correlation**

<i>Correlations: between leadership model and employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.</i>				
		The existence of employee turnover is unavoidable in your organisation	Desire for employee retention at Kwekwe City Council is the major aim of the leadership model in place.	Current employee retention can be improved by an appropriate leadership model.
The existence of employee turnover is unavoidable in	Pearson Correlation	1	,584**	,777**

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your organisation.	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001
	N	30	30	30
Desire for employee retention at Kwekwe City Council is the major aim of the leadership model in place.	Pearson Correlation	,584**	1	,519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		,003
	N	30	30	30
Current employee retention will be improved by an appropriate leadership model.	Pearson Correlation	,777**	,519**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,003	
	N	30	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Field Survey 2023.

This indicates that employees directly link the council's retention problems to its leadership style. These findings are in line with Williams and Naumann's findings from 2022, which found a correlation between an existing leadership model within an organisation and employee retention. (Williams & Naumann, 2022).

## 2. Prevalent Leadership Models and Legislative Influence

The study found that the dominant leadership models at Kwekwe City Council are Autocratic (Mean=4.20) and Bureaucratic (Mean=4.17), suggesting a top-down, rule-bound culture (Table 2).

**Table 2: Leadership Model at Kwekwe City Council**

Leadership Model at Kwekwe City Council in Descending order.					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Autocratic Leadership is the leadership model at Kwekwe City Council.	257	2,00	5,00	4,2000	,88668
Bureaucratic Leadership is the leadership model at Kwekwe	257	2,00	5,00	4,1667	,91287

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City Council.					
Democratic Leadership is the leadership model at Kwekwe City Council.	257	2,00	5,00	4,1667	,87428
Transformational Leadership is the leadership model at Kwekwe City Council.	257	1,00	5,00	4,0333	1,09807
Charismatic Leadership is the leadership model at Kwekwe City Council.	257	1,00	5,00	2,8000	1,42393
Valid N (listwise)	257				

*Source: Field Survey 2023.*

The data above from the field as analysed by SPSS® version 29 shows the leadership models at Kwekwe City Council in descending order as perceived by the respondents are; Autocratic Leadership, Bureaucratic Leadership, Democratic Leadership, Transformational Leadership and Charismatic Leadership. These results are in line with those of Wijaithammarit and Taechamaneestit (2021), who came to the following conclusions after reviewing related studies and research on leadership models in local authorities: Autocratic Leadership, Bureaucratic Leadership, Democratic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Charismatic Leadership, Transactional and Laissez Faire Leadership modes.

Respondents agreed that the Urban Councils Act and Public Entities Corporate Governance Act provide a framework that models leadership conducive to retention (Mean=4.33) (Table 3, below).

**Table 3: Urban Council Act (Chapter 29:15) and Employee Retention**

<i>Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) and Public Entities Corporate Governance Act (Chapter 10:31) and modelling leadership that enhance employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.</i>					
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.

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					Deviation
Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) and Public Entities Corporate Governance Act (Chapter 10:31) are modelling leadership that enhance employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	3,00	5,00	4,3333	,60648
Valid N (listwise)	257				

*Source: Field Survey 2023.*

The data above from the field as analysed by SPSS® version 29 shows that Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) and Public Entities Corporate Governance Act (Chapter 10:31) are modelling leadership that enhance employee retention at Kwekwe City Council as witnessed by the research findings’ mean of 4.3 against maximum of 5. The findings are consistent with those of Mupandanyama (2022) who argues that Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) and Public Entities Corporate Governance Act (Chapter 190:31) promotes good corporate governance in urban councils and subsequently providing room where with appropriate leadership, there will be increased employee retention.

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### Recommended Leadership Model for Enhancing Retention

**Table 4: Leadership Model enhancing Employee Retention at Kwekwe City Council**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	3,00	5,00	4,3333	,80230
Autocratic Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	3,00	5,00	2,3333	,60648
Bureaucratic Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	3,00	5,00	3,3000	,70221
Charismatic Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	4,00	5,00	3,4333	,50401
Democratic Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	2,00	5,00	4,7667	1,00630
Transformational Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	2,00	5,00	4,9333	1,12444
Transactional Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	4,00	5,00	3,4333	,50401
Laissez Faire Leadership Model enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.	257	2,00	5,00	3,7667	1,00630
Valid N (listwise)	257				

*Source: Field Survey 2023.*

The data above from the field as analysed by SPSS® version 29 shows that Transformational Leadership type of leadership model has a positive impact on enhancing employee retention at Kwekwe City Council as witnessed by the research findings' mean of 4.3 against maximum of 5 on employee retention. However, breaking down the results shows that leadership models' impact on enhancing employee retention at Kwekwe City Council, varies. For example, Transformational Leadership Model has the highest positive impact on enhancing

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leadership model at Kwekwe City Council, followed by Democratic Leadership Model. Qualitative findings argue that this is because Transformational Leadership is flexible to accommodate the changes in the economic environment especially in addressing employee welfare issues during inflationary periods thereby enhancing employee retention instead of having a high employee turnover for greener pastures.

### Hypothesis testing

After analysing literature on leadership and employee retention, the research came with the various hypotheses. The hypothesis test was performed on SPSS ® version 29. Hypothesis H1a states that autocratic leadership promotes functional employee retention. The table below shows the results of the tested hypothesis.

**Table 5: H1, Autocratic leadership promotes functional employee retention**

	Paired Differences					df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Autocratic leadership is practiced at Kwekwe City Council. H1a. Autocratic leadership promotes functional employee retention.	.80000	1.08233	.27946	.20063	1.39937	.863	4	.013

The result above that  $P < 0.05$  (Sig. (2-tailed) of .013) means that the research's first Hypothesis is rejected. This hypothesis tests whether autocratic leadership is directly related or not directly related to employee retention in terms of promoting functional employee retention. Based on the test carried out among respondents in Kwekwe city council, the results indicate that autocratic leadership at Kwekwe City Council does not promote functional employee retention. This therefore means that the hypothesis is rejected. This is also affirmed by the study carried out by Gordon (2019), which concluded that companies with an authoritarian leadership style have a very high employee turnover and absenteeism rates. According to

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Gordon, among the issues that workers have with autocratic leadership include the perception that managers do not trust them, the fact that they frequently threaten or use punishment to get things done, and the general lack of weight placed on workers' opinions. Gordon went on to emphasize that an authoritarian leadership style frequently lowers employee motivation.

In this study according to the information extracted from the exit interviews as the main reason for employees leaving Kwekwe were little or no input from group members, little or no employee involvement in decision making, dictated work methods and processes and lastly discouraged creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. These were reinforced by Pugh (1971)'s study which concluded that brilliant workers who are faced with an authoritarian boss tend to become more passive, aggressive, and frequently leave the company. In certain instances, the workers may even become resentful and look for ways to bring their managers into disrepute, which can make the manager feel paranoid. To bolster this argument, Pugh (1971, quoted in Ushie *et al.*, 2019) asserts that an authoritarian leadership style produces distinct kinds of behaviour. It causes employees to become disengaged and apathetic or hostile.

**Hypothesis H1a** Autocratic leadership promotes dysfunctional employee retention.

Autocratic leadership is the prevailing leadership style practiced at Kwekwe City Council. The researcher tested whether autocratic leadership contributed in dysfunctional employee retention. The following research results indicated correlation between autocratic leadership and dysfunctional employee retention.

**Table 5: Hypothesis H1a, Autocratic leadership promotes dysfunctional employee retention**

	Paired Differences				df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower   Upper		

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Autocratic Leadership promotes dysfunctional employee retention.	1333	640	.51	.13	-	.41	.000	4	34	.3
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The result above that  $P > 0.05$  (Sig. (2-tailed) of .334) means that the second Hypothesis is accepted. This hypothesis also tested whether autocratic leadership is directly related or not directly related to employee retention in terms of promoting dysfunctional employee retention. Based on the test carried out among respondents in Kwekwe city council, the results indicate that autocratic leadership at Kwekwe City Council promotes dysfunctional employee retention, therefore the hypothesis is accepted. This is further affirmed by the study carried out by Mallon (2020), which concluded that companies with an authoritarian leadership style despite having a very high employee turnover, poor performers tend to remain with the organisation because of limited opportunities in other organisations.

In this study, according to the information extracted from the exit interviews, the main reason for employees staying despite liking the leadership style is that of their age which limits them to explore other opportunities which is clear indication of dysfunctional employee retention otherwise they could have also left the Kwekwe City Council.

*Hypothesis H2. States that Bureaucratic leadership promotes functional employee retention*

Bureaucratic leadership is practiced at Kwekwe City Council, therefore the hypothesis that bureaucratic leadership promotes functional employee retention was tested.

**Table 6: Bureaucratic leadership promotes functional employee retention**

	Paired Differences				f	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
				Lower			Upper

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There is Bureaucratic Leadership at Kwekwe City Council Pair Bureaucratic Leadership promotes functional employee retention.	8000	08233	1.946	.27063	.209937	1.3863	4	13	.0
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The result above that  $P < 0.05$  (Sig. (2-tailed) of .013) means that the research’s second Hypothesis is rejected. This hypothesis tests whether Bureaucratic leadership is directly related or not directly related to employee retention in terms of promoting functional employee retention. Based on the test carried out among respondents in Kwekwe city council, the results indicate that Bureaucratic leadership at Kwekwe City Council does not promote functional employee retention, therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. The finding is also affirmed by the study carried out by Gaunder (2020), which concluded that a bureaucratic structure thrives on maximum efficiency. However, a rigid set of duties makes it challenging for staff members to find space for more productive behaviour. He continued by saying that higher officials are responsible for innovation and originality in bureaucratic leadership. It thereby limits a person's creativity in the profession. Because bureaucratic executives are accustomed to operating inflexibly, change happens very slowly in these types of businesses, and as a result, employees tend to leave (Monhyst, 2019).

The data extracted from the exit interviews in this study showed that the main reason for leaving Kwekwe City Council given by employees, related to bureaucratic leadership was that an individual fail to attain personal and professional development due to an environment that does not promote innovation and creativity and employee have to entirely depend on the thinking, innovation and creativity of top managers. The focus of leadership is only to achieve organisational goals, paying little attention to the developmental needs of individual employees, or taping the potential of employee by creating an environment promoting innovation.

*H2a states that Bureaucratic leadership promotes dysfunctional employee retention.*

In order to validate the function and effects of bureaucratic leadership, a hypothesis was tested to prove whether Bureaucratic leadership promoted dysfunctional leadership.

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The result showed a  $P > 0.05$  (Sig. (2-tailed) of .334) which means that the Hypothesis 2a is accepted. This hypothesis tested whether Bureaucratic leadership is directly related or not directly related to employee retention in terms of promoting dysfunctional employee retention. Based on the test carried out among respondents in Kwekwe city council, the results indicate that Bureaucratic leadership at Kwekwe City Council promotes dysfunctional employee retention. This therefore means that the hypothesis is accepted. The study carried out by Izidor (2020), concluded that bureaucratic leadership can be rendered ineffectual in the situations employees become disinterested in their jobs and their co-workers or they become complacent with organizational policies and standards; and work habit forms are difficult to break. He added that the main effect of a bureaucratic leadership style in an organization is that it disregards the benefits of the leader's ability to inspire and develop subordinates. This is a result of policies' blatant inadequacy in inspiring and cultivating workers' dedication at work (Izidor, 2020). Policies by themselves are not harmful, but poorly thought out, non-futuristic policies that are blindly applied can demotivate workers and thwart intended goals. This could impair productivity and lead to staff turnover within the company (Zervas and David, 2020).

In this study according to the information extracted from the exit interviews as the main reason for employees leaving Kwekwe were dictated work methods and processes and lastly discouraged creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. These are clear indications of bureaucratic leadership.

### ***H3. Democratic leadership promotes functional employee retention.***

As indicated by the result's  $P > 0.05$  (Sig. (2-tailed) of .334), the third hypothesis is likewise supported. In terms of encouraging functional staff retention, this hypothesis also examined the relationship between democratic leadership and employee retention. The results of the test given to Kwekwe City Council respondents show that functional employee retention is facilitated by democratic leadership at the council. Thus, this indicates that the hypothesis is approved. According to the study conducted by Swarup (2020), a democratic manager gives employees a sense of belonging to the company and encourages them to stay by allocating decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities to them and keeping them informed about everything that affects their work.

According to Johari (2021), a democratic leader encourages staff members to participate in daily operational decision-making and problem-solving. He or she makes the case

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that the contributions and functions of employees are important. The team leader will ask for the opinions, suggestions, and comments of the staff before making a decision or issuing directions. As a result, employee engagement influences the team's direction and retention in the company (Johari 2021). Ushie (2019) asserts that a manager who practices democratic leadership delegated authority to subordinates while retaining ultimate responsibility. A democratic leadership style tends to encourage accountability, adaptability, and good morale, all of which improve employee performance and retention, according to Zervas and David's (2020) several viewpoints.

According to their argument, a democratic leadership style tends to increase employees' ambition and motivation as well as their sense of retention and belonging inside the organization. They stated that since they take part in internal planning, delegation, and decision-making, workers are often more realistic about organizational needs. This demonstrates how employees feel comfortable with the trust that is placed in them under democratic leadership, which gives them the confidence to create strong relationships of collaboration and teamwork, keep morale high, and remove any factors that can contribute to employee turnover (Johari 2021).

### *H4. Transformational leadership promotes functional employee retention.*

**Table 7: Transformational leadership promotes employee retention**

	Paired Differences						df	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
				Lower	Upper						
There is Transformational Leadership at Kwekwe City Council Pair ? Transformational leadership promotes functional employee retention.	1333	1640	.5	.13	-.15264	930	.41	.000	4	34	.3

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The fourth hypothesis is likewise supported based on the conclusion of  $P > 0.05$  (Sig. (2-tailed) of .334). In terms of encouraging functional staff retention, this hypothesis examined the relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention. According to the test administered to Kwekwe City Council respondents, transformational leadership at the council encourages the retention of functional employees. Thus, this indicates that the theory is approved. The study conducted by Goddon (2018) also supports this, finding that transformational leaders understand the vital role human capital plays in an organization's success. Therefore, encouraging positive changes that lead to individual and team success is the primary objective of transformational leaders (Godson, 2018). By serving as role models, inspiring passion, offering support and encouragement, and encouraging creativity, they place a strong focus on assisting individuals in developing their special talents. By doing this, they want to help each worker reach their greatest potential. When everyone gives it their all, the team and the organization perform at their best (Godson, 2018). This was further supported by Peterson's (2021) study, which noted that transformational leaders consider transformation when hiring. This suggests that they focus more on their future development and less on their past achievements.

In this study according to the information extracted from the exit interviews shows that employees enjoy working for companies that support their professional growth. Reducing employee turnover can be achieved by providing employees with opportunities to develop and advance within the organization.

***H4a. States that Transformational leadership promotes dysfunctional employee retention.***

The findings showed a  $P < 0.05$  (Sig. (2-tailed) of .013), indicating the rejection of Hypothesis 4a in the study. In terms of encouraging dysfunctional employee retention, this hypothesis examined the relationship between transformational leadership and staff retention. The findings of the test given to Kwekwe City Council respondents show that dysfunctional staff retention is not encouraged by transformational leadership at the council. Thus, this indicates that the theory is disproved. This is further supported by the research done by Johns (2019), who found that transformational leadership is a good idea for keeping employees and inspiring them in low-paying positions like local government. He continued by saying that because innovative leaders directly impact their employees' production, they encourage and

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assist them in exhibiting creative work methods. As a result, transformational leaders foster critical and innovative thinking in their team members, which raises employee engagement with the organization's objectives and facilitates their overall attainment. The creation of a positive and cohesive work environment is one way that transformational leadership helps an organization retain its employees. This is because a healthy work environment is essential to the development and retention of talented employees (Johns 2019).

To sum up, the research found out a strong relationship between leadership model and employee retention at Kwekwe City Council. The research further found out that Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) and Public Entities Corporate Governance Act (Chapter 10:31) are modelling leadership that enhance employee retention at Kwekwe City Council since these two statutes promote good corporate governance in urban councils and subsequently providing room, where with appropriate leadership, there will be increased employee retention. The research's findings also propose transformational leadership as the leadership model that enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.

In conclusion, the data strongly recommends a shift towards a transformational leadership model to effectively enhance employee retention at Kwekwe City Council.

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Summary of the Study**

The primary focus of this research was to recommend a leadership model aimed at improving employee retention at Kwekwe City Council. Data was collected from managerial, middle management, and non-managerial employees through questionnaires and exit interviews. The findings revealed that transformational leadership is the most effective model for enhancing employee retention in this context.

The study established a significant relationship between the leadership model and employee retention, indicating that the autocratic and bureaucratic leadership style predominantly practiced at Kwekwe City Council negatively impacts retention rates. When employees feel aligned with the leadership model; their motivation to stay with the organization increases, underscoring the importance of adopting transformational leadership practices.

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### Conclusions

The first objective sought to explore the relationship between leadership models and employee retention at Kwekwe City Council. The findings indicated a strong correlation, suggesting that an effective leadership model directly influences employee motivation and retention. Specifically, the bureaucratic leadership style was found to hinder employee engagement, contributing to high turnover rates.

The second objective examined the extent to which the Urban Councils Act [Chapter 29:15] and the Public Entities Corporate Governance Act [Chapter 10:31] model leadership conducive to employee retention. The research affirmed that both statutes promote good governance practices, enabling an environment where effective leadership can thrive, thereby enhancing retention.

The third objective aimed to recommend a leadership model that enhances employee retention at Kwekwe City Council. The study confirmed that transformational leadership, characterized by flexibility and responsiveness to employee welfare, is pivotal for improving retention, particularly in challenging economic conditions.

### Implications for Theory

The study contributes to the existing literature by reinforcing the significant relationship between leadership models and employee retention. It highlights the need for a robust theoretical framework that encompasses the unique challenges faced by local authorities. The findings align with previous research, confirming that transformational leadership is effective in improving retention rates.

### Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings suggest two critical implications for Kwekwe City Council's policy and practice:

1. **Leadership Model Review:** A systematic review of the current leadership model is essential, with a focus on adopting transformational leadership practices.
2. **Understanding Employee Retention:** Strategies must be redesigned to enhance employee engagement and retention, ensuring uninterrupted service delivery.

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Recognizing the strong correlation between leadership and retention can inform policy adjustments.

### **Recommendations**

Two recommendations are given in light of the conclusions and consequences covered in the previous sections:

- 1. Policy Review on Leadership Models:** Given the findings indicating that the existing leadership model contributes to high turnover, it is recommended that Kwekwe City Council adopt a transformational leadership framework. This change is vital for fostering a supportive work environment that enhances employee retention, aligning with biblical principles that advocate for leadership that inspires and empowers (Matthew 28:18-20).
- 2. Leadership Development Training:** Considering the autocratic leadership style prevalent in the Council, it is crucial to implement leadership development training. This training should focus on equipping leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to enhance employee retention effectively.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The study focused solely on one urban local government in Zimbabwe, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore similar studies across various local authorities to develop a more comprehensive understanding of leadership and retention issues. Additionally, methodological challenges such as respondents' hesitance to share honest feedback due to fear of repercussions highlight the need for improved data collection techniques.

In conclusion, this study underscores the critical role of leadership in enhancing employee retention within Kwekwe City Council. By adopting a transformational leadership model, the Council can improve its retention rates, thus ensuring better service delivery and organizational effectiveness. Future research should continue to explore this vital area, contributing to the broader discourse on governance and leadership in Zimbabwean state-owned enterprises.

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