

# Journal of Human Resource & Leadership



## **Influence of Assertive Leadership on Organizational Development: A Case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC)**

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**ISSN NO: 2616-8421**

# **Influence of Assertive Leadership on Organizational Development: A Case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC)**

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*How to cite this article: Mutangili S, K. (2020). Influence of Assertive Leadership on Organizational Development: A Case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). Journal of Human Resource & Leadership, Vol 4(5) pp. 21-34.*

## **Abstract**

Assertive leadership as an emerging domain of inquiry in leadership research has been portrayed as a new phenomenon in analyzing the role of leaders in organizations. The concept of assertive leadership has recently developed as an amendment to ethical and transformational leadership. It is considered that problems related to assertive leadership can be better observed from the position of the leader since the assertive leadership construct is mostly based on self-awareness rather than the evaluation of other individuals. The study related the concept of assertive leadership in refining organizational development of state corporations with a case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company using self-regulation and self-awareness. KPLC was chosen for this case study as it one of the key enablers of the Vision 2030 and energy security remains a matter of national priority. Over the years, the corporation has undergone major leadership and strategic changes in its business processes and portfolio as well as in its organization structure and where key leadership has been a key challenge. Both the Self-Regulation Theory and Self-Awareness Theory informed the study. Primary data was obtained using self-administered questionnaires. The findings indicated that self-regulation and self-awareness were positively and significantly related to organizational development. Thus, both the research hypotheses that self-regulation and self-awareness as a measure of leadership assertiveness has no significant effect on organizational development Kenya Power and Lighting Company were rejected since their p-values were below the critical 0.05. Based on the study findings, the study concluded that regulation and organizational development is positively and significantly related as was the case for self-awareness, which was also positively and significantly related to organizational development. The study concluded that the assertive leadership fosters greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, the balanced processing of information, and the relations on the part of the leaders working with their subordinates, thus fostering positive self-development. The study recommends

on management of the public sector institutions on managerial confidence and assertiveness leadership as it command the respect of their employees and superiors. The leadership should maintain good relationships with other staff members as an assertive leadership concept and can be enhanced by embracing the self-regulation aspect on behavior regulation, self-control, cognitive reappraisal and self-discipline.

**Keywords:** *Assertive Leadership, Self-Regulation, Self-Awareness, Organizational Development, State Corporations & KPLC.*

## 1.1 Introduction

Over the years, researchers have analyzed the role of leaders in organizations. Consequently, they have made different classification of leaders and leadership. Nowadays, there can be established different types of leaders and leadership according to their behavior and their objectives (Joo & Nimon, 2014; Avolio & Gardner, 2015). Assertive leadership has been related to a pattern of leader behavior, which draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate; it fosters greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, the balanced processing of information, and the relations on the part of the leaders working with their subordinates, thus fostering positive self-development. This concept of assertive leadership has recently developed as an amendment to ethical and transformational leadership (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Both theoretic and practitioners in the area of leadership (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing & Peterson, 2008) highlight the importance of assertive leadership. It is considered that problems related to assertive leadership can be better observed from the position of the leader since the assertive leadership construct is mostly based on self-awareness rather than the evaluation of other individuals (Luthans, Norman & Hughes, 2016). This study related the concept of assertive leadership in refining organizational development of public corporations with a case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company using self-regulation and self-awareness.

### 1.1.1 Assertive Leadership

Assertive representation of verified facts and sound decisions is a responsibility of leadership and is a far cry from confusing flexibility with indecision (Ellis, 2018). Appropriate assertiveness occurs when leaders have confidence in themselves and can distinguish between meaningful information and irrelevant, disconnected data. Capella (2018) label this type of assertive leader as “informed skeptics.” They found that the individuals best equipped to make good decisions are those who possess strong analytic skills, self-regulation, self-awareness and listen to others’ opinions but are willing to dissent (Rao, 2017).

According to Vohs and Baumeister (2016), self-regulation is concerned with how we control and manage ourselves and our emotions, inner resources and abilities. It also includes one’s ability to manage their impulses. It entails behavior regulation, self-control, cognitive reappraisal and self-confidence (Walumbwa, Christensen & Hailey, 2011). Self-regulation is the self-control and our ability to manage emotions, desires, and behaviors in order to reach a positive outcome. According to Mawritz, Greenbaum, Butts and Graham (2017), self-regulation represents a process of using self-regulatory resources to control undesirable impulses and override subsequent behavioral responses.

According to Caldwell and Hayes (2016), self-awareness is the ability to accurately perceive the level of skill, knowledge, value and responsibility we use when it comes to our emotions. Palmer (2014) claims self-awareness requires self-reflection of assumptions and the impact of those

assumptions on others. It gives confidence both personally and professionally. Awareness is the root of self-esteem. It allows us to understand our strengths and our weaknesses and is a critical step along the path to self-improvement (Walumbwa, Christensen & Hailey, 2011). Self-awareness gives a sense of power, peace and prosperity mindfulness, self-discipline and strengths and weaknesses evaluation. Leaders become more confident with strengths and begin to spread and change how people perform their responsibilities and how effectively they interact with others. Sullivan (2017) asserts that self-awareness gives an understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses and the multi-faceted nature of the self; this includes developing an insight into the self, through exposure to others and being aware of one's impact on others.

### **1.1.2 Organizational Development**

Organizational Development (OD) is a field of research, theory and practice dedicated to expanding the knowledge and effectiveness of people to accomplish more successful organizational change and performance. Organizational development is the process of helping organizations improve through change in policies, power, leadership, control, or job redesign. The main focus is to improve efficiency and effectiveness within the organization. Organizational development can be undertaken by the organization's leadership. It is a process of continuous diagnosis, action planning, implementation and evaluation, with the goal of transferring knowledge and skills to organizations to improve their capacity for solving problems and managing future change.

### **1.1.3 Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC)**

Kenya Power is a limited liability company which transmits, distributes and retails electricity to customers throughout Kenya. It is a key player in the electric power supply sub sector with the mandate to purchase bulk electricity supply, transmit, distribute and retail electricity to end users or customers throughout Kenya. Its purpose, responsibilities and core functions as a commercial state corporation in Kenya are stated in its vision and mission statements and are expressed in its relationships with other key players in the power sub-sector and in its contributions to the country's long term public policy and national development objectives.

Consequently, many leadership and strategic techniques used by the company to manage their affairs tend to become outdated overnight. In the past ten years, the company has undergone major leadership and strategic changes in its business processes and portfolio as well as in its organization structure. Accelerated by the frequency of changes and rate of diffusion of change, today's world has moved from being evolutionary to revolutionary. According to Wachira, Karanja and Iravo (2018), organizations are constantly being forced to go through continuous adaptation due to forces of globalization, increased competition, changes in information technology and deregulations. The world is continuously changing and so organizations in it need to change in order to survive. During the last two decades the public sector has come under increasing pressure to improve performance and demonstrate greater transparency and accountability. This pressure has resulted in public sector organizations facing shifts in ways of operation. This study related the concept of assertive leadership in refining organizational development of public corporations with a case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company using self-regulation and self-awareness.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

State corporations and public entities are constantly subjected in many ongoing internal and external pressures that influence the necessity for potential changes within the leadership infrastructure. The organizations, therefore, must take on the challenges of implementing effective leadership or carry on with the existing leadership in place. Whereas businesses sector must continuously grow organically to survive, state corporations must constantly adapt to the changes in the marketplace and diversify to meet the changing national demands (Muthoka, Oloko, & Obonyo, 2017).

Kenya and Africa continues to grapple with many development challenges. The government and the private sector both play a critical role in tackling development challenges in Kenya. For the management to play the rightful role in the development it has to overcome many challenges which include poor leadership and corruption, lack of capabilities to fulfill the desired roles, approaches to development that are not responding to the needs of communities among other challenges (Gichanga, 2017). KPLC was chosen for this case study as it one of the key enablers of the Vision 2030 and energy security remains a matter of national priority and where key challenge experienced is leadership (MoEP, 2017).

Assertive leadership, an emerging domain of inquiry in leadership research has been related to a pattern of leader behavior which draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate; it fosters greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, the balanced processing of information, and the relations on the part of the leaders working with their subordinates, thus fostering positive self-development. This study related the concept of assertive leadership in refining organizational development of public corporations with a case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company using self-regulation and self-awareness.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study was guided by the following research objectives;

- i. To evaluate the influence of self-regulation as a measure of leadership assertiveness on organizational development Kenya Power and Lighting Company.
- ii. To establish the influence of self-awareness as a dimension of leadership assertiveness on organizational development in Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

## **1.4 Research Hypotheses**

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses;

- i. Self-regulation as a measure of leadership assertiveness has no significant effect on organizational development Kenya Power and Lighting Company.
- ii. Self-awareness as a dimension of leadership assertiveness has no significant effect on organizational development in Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

## **2.1 Empirical Review**

Leach, Liu and Johnston (2015) conducted study on the role of self-regulation training in developing the motivation management capabilities. The study empirically investigates self-regulation training and how it can facilitate salesperson performance. Findings suggested that self-regulatory training can enhance salesperson self-regulation capabilities, decrease role ambiguity, and thereby aid sales performance. Furthermore, our findings suggest that the value of self-

regulation training may not be uniform across all sales trainees. Specifically, self-regulation training may be more beneficial to salespeople after they have developed a level of mastery over fundamental core selling capabilities. According to Sullivan (2017), self-awareness results in implicitly creating a feedback loop that is critical to monitoring and controlling behavior. This runs deep into our identity, allowing sensitive and appropriate reaction to the perceptions of others. Self-awareness theory suggests that individuals who are more cognizant of how they are perceived by others are better at incorporating information from others into their self-appraisals and, ultimately, into their behavior. Leaders are more effective when they demonstrate that they are receptive to feedback from others.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

### **2.3.2 Self-Regulation Theory**

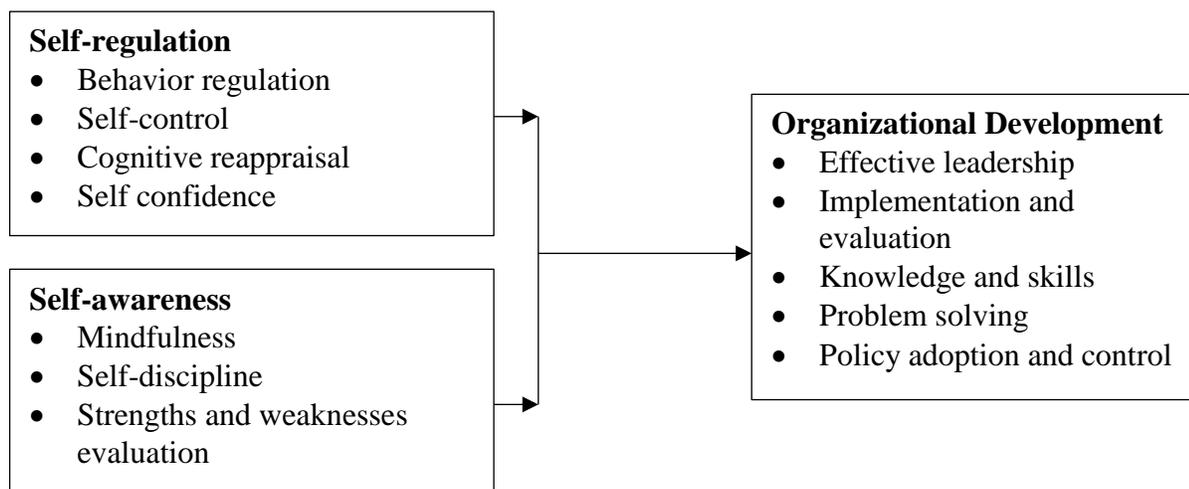
Self-regulation theory (SRT) by Baumeister, Schmeichel and Vohs (2007) is a system of conscious personal management that involves the process of guiding one's own thoughts, behaviors, and feelings to reach goals. Self-regulation consists of several stages, and individuals must function as contributors to their own motivation, behavior, and development within a network of reciprocally interacting influences. Self-regulation theory says that we expend effort in control of what we think, say and do, trying to be the person we want to be, both in particular situations and in the longer-term. The self-regulation theory appreciates the individual as an active agent who engages in a dynamic process of first assessing threats and challenges then using problem-solving strategies to address them. The theory is a system of conscious personal management that helps us control what we think, say and do. The theory also guides in goal attainment and motivation where one can use this theory to regulate their daily chores and habits to meet a certain goal. Self-regulation theory (SRT) is relevant as it guides a leader as an active agent who engages in a dynamic process of first assessing threats and challenges and then using problem-solving strategies to address them..

### **2.3.3 Self-Awareness Theory**

Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund's (1972) proposed self-awareness theory. The theory states that when we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behavior to our internal standards and values. The theory proposed that, at a given moment, people could focus attention on the self or on the external environment. Focusing on the self enables self-evaluation. When self-focused, people compare the self with standards of correctness that specify how the self ought to think, feel, and behave (Walumbwa, Christensen & Hailey, 2011). The process of comparing the self with standards allows people to change their behavior and to experience pride and dissatisfaction with the self. Self-awareness is thus a major mechanism of self-control. When people focus attention on the self, they compare the self with standards, try harder to meet standards, and show stronger emotional responses to meeting or failing to meet a standard. The tendency to change the self to match a standard depends on other variables, particularly perceptions of how hard it will be to attain the standard (Luthans, Norman & Hughes, 2016). Self-awareness theory is relevant as it makes leaders focus attention on the self will increase self-awareness, allows people to change their behavior and to experience pride and dissatisfaction with the self and they compare the self with standards, try harder to meet standards, and show stronger emotional responses to meeting or failing to meet a standard.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is hypothesized model identifying the model under study and the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. It is a study tool intended to assist a study to develop awareness and understanding of the variables under scrutiny as illustrated in the Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### 3.1 Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design aimed at collecting large number of quantitative data to establish patterns of assertive leadership in the state corporation. The study’s respondents was be drawn from KPLC (Headquarters) where the respondent was drawn from the top management, middle management and support staff. The study used the managers since they are the key individuals handling the leadership issues within the departments and the support staff since they implement the leadership policies and guidelines from their leaders. The study purposely selected 10 top managers, 15 middle managers and 35 support staff as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Category	Respondents
Top Managers	10
Middle managers	15
Support Staff	35
Total Respondents	60

Primary data was be obtained using self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was made up of closed questions relating to the study’s objectives. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation were be used for the quantitative data. Inferential data analysis was done using Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis.

The regression analysis was presented as below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

Y is the dependent variable (Organizational Development)

X<sub>1</sub> = Self-Regulation

X<sub>2</sub> = Self awareness

e is error term

β<sub>0</sub> represents the constant

β<sub>1</sub>... β<sub>2</sub> are regression coefficients for each independent variable.

#### 4.1 Results and Findings

The section focuses on data analysis, findings and were presented in tables. The response rate was analyzed to show the representative from the sample size. The study administered 60 questionnaires and the results are as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Response Rate**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Returned	56	93%
Unreturned	4	7%
Total	60	100%

Babbie (2004) also asserted that return rates of above 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on these assertions from renowned scholars, 84.71% response rate is very good for the study. Thus, the response rate of 93% under this study was very good for study.

#### 4.2 Demographic Characteristics

Demographic information provides data regarding research participants and is necessary for the determination of whether the individuals in a particular studies are representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes. This is as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Demographic Characteristics**

	<b>Gender</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	31	55%
Female	25	45%
	<b>Age</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Below 30 years	8	14%
31-40	5	9%
41-50	15	27%
Above 50	28	50%
	<b>Level of Education</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
College	14	25%
University	42	75%
	<b>Experience</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1 year	9	16%
2 to 5 years	20	36%
6 to 10 years	11	20%
More than 10 years	16	29%

The results show that majority of members were male represented by 55% and female at 45%. Under age, majority were above years followed by 41-50 years with 27% and below 30 years with 14%. The least was 9% who indicated that they were 31-40 years. Under education, the results indicated that most of the staff had a university degree at 75%. The results showed that most of the respondents have been staff at the agency for 2 - 5 years represented by 36% and followed by more than 10 years represented by 29% and 6 -10 years with 20% and lastly less than 1 year with 16%. This was also an indication that the staff had considerable experience to respond to the questionnaires.

### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics

The purpose of descriptive statistics was to enable the study to meaningfully describe a distribution of scores or measurements using indices or statistics.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics**

	Descriptive Statistics		
	Self-Regulation	Self-Awareness	Organizational Development
N	56	56	56
Minimum	1.5	1.2	1.8
Maximum	4.6	4.3	4.5
Mean	3.998	3.971	3.925
Std. Deviation	0.2976	0.2946	0.3123
Skewness	0.087	-0.041	0.283
	0.319	0.319	0.319
Kurtosis	-0.876	-1.077	-1.004
	0.628	0.628	0.628

The results from Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics that indicates central tendency and dispersion of all the measures of international procurement practices. The total number of respondents in each measured was 56. The results for self-regulation had a mean of 3.998 and the standard deviation of 0.2976 showed that the members of the group differed from the mean value of 3.998 for the group in the observation. Kurtosis results showed that leadership style had -0.876. Thus, we can conclude that the values were platykurtic since they are less than 3 and thus had a broad tail distribution and no outliers. The results for self-awareness had a mean of 3.971 and the standard deviation of 0.3123 showed that the members of the group differed from the mean value of 3.971 for the group in the observation. Kurtosis results showed that leadership style had -1.077. Thus, we can conclude that the values were platykurtic since they are less than 3 and thus had a broad tail distribution and no outliers. The results for organizational development had a mean of 3.925 and the standard deviation of 0.2946 showed that the members of the group differed from the mean value of 3.925 for the group in the observation. Kurtosis results showed that leadership style had -1.004. Thus, we can conclude that the values were platykurtic since they are less than 3 and thus had a broad tail distribution and no outliers.

#### 4.4 Normality Test

Shapiro–Wilk test was used as it has the highest power among all tests for normality. The hypothesis was tested at a critical value at 0.05, where the rule is that reject  $H_0$  if the probability (P) value is less than 0.05 or else do not reject.

**Table 5: Test for Normality**

	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
		df	Sig.
Organizational Development	0.935	56	0.005
Self-Regulation	0.950	56	0.021
Self-Awareness	0.948	56	0.017

Table 5 indicates that using the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, the data is normal since the p-values are above 0.05 for all the variables and thus we do not reject the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). The study concluded that organizational development, self-regulation and self-awareness are normal in distribution and hence subsequent analysis can be carried out.

#### 4.6 Test for Heteroscedasticity

To test for heteroscedasticity, the Breusch-Pagan/Godfrey test was used. Heteroscedasticity test was run using Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test in order to test whether the error terms are correlated across observations in the cross sectional of the data (Long & Ervin, 2000). The hypothesis was that;

$H_0$ : Data does not suffer from Heteroscedasticity.

If the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Results are presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 6: Heteroscedasticity Results**

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity		
Ho: Constant variance		
Variable: fitted values of Organizational Development		
chi2(1)	=	0.30
Prob > chi2	=	0.8527

Results in Table 6 show that the p-value is greater than the 5%. Then the alternative hypothesis was rejected at a critical p value of 0.05 since the reported value was  $0.8527 > 0.05$  and thus the data did not suffer from heteroscedasticity.

#### 4.5 Inferential Statistics

Inferential analysis was conducted to generate correlation results, model of fitness, and analysis of the variance and regression coefficients.

##### 4.5.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables as presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Correlation Matrix**

Variables		Organizational Development	Self-Regulation	Self-Awareness
Organizational Development	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Self-Regulation	Pearson Correlation	.722**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
Self-Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.804**	.607**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

The results in Table 7 indicated that self-regulation was positively and significantly associated to organizational development ( $r= 0.722, p=0.00<0.05$ ). Self-awareness was positively and significantly associated to organizational development ( $r=0.804, p=0.00<0.05$ ).

#### 4.5.2 Regression Analysis

The results presented in Table 8 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena.

**Table 8: Model Fitness**

Model Summary					
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.856a	0.734	0.724	0.1642		
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.936	2	1.968	72.967	0.000
Residual	1.429	53	0.027		
Total	5.365	55			
Unstandardized Coefficients					
	B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients		
			Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-0.069	0.333		-0.208	0.836
Self-Regulation	0.389	0.094	0.371	4.157	0.000
Self-Awareness	0.614	0.095	0.579	6.49	0.001

The coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.734 indicated the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory at 73.4%. The findings further confirm that the regression model of is significant and supported by  $F=72.967 p<0.000$  since p-values was 0.000 which is less than 0.05. The regression of coefficients results show that Self-Regulation and organizational development is positively and significantly related ( $\beta=0.389, p=0.001$ ). The results further indicated that self-awareness and organizational development are positively and significantly related ( $\beta= 0.614, p=0.001$ ). The multiple regression model was laid as below.

$$Y= -0.069 + 0.389X_1 + 0.614X_2$$

Thus, both the research hypotheses that Self-regulation and self-awareness as a measure of leadership assertiveness has no significant effect on organizational development Kenya Power and Lighting Company were rejected since their p-values were below the critical 0.05. Leach, Liu and Johnston (2015) on their study on the role of self-regulation training in developing the motivation management capabilities found that self-regulatory training could enhance salesperson self-regulation capabilities, decrease role ambiguity, and thereby aid sales performance. Sullivan (2017) on the other hand found that self-awareness results in implicitly creating a feedback loop that is critical to monitoring and controlling behavior. This runs deep into our identity, allowing sensitive and appropriate reaction to the perceptions of others. This is in line with the self-

awareness theory postulating that at a given moment, people could focus attention on the self or on the external environment. Focusing on the self enables self-evaluation. When self-focused, people compare the self with standards of correctness that specify how the self ought to think, feel, and behave (Walumbwa, Christensen & Hailey, 2011). The process of comparing the self with standards allows people to change their behavior and to experience pride and dissatisfaction with the self.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that regulation and organizational development is positively and significantly related as was the case for self-awareness, which was also positively and significantly related to organizational development. This is depicted in the self-awareness theory where individuals must function as contributors to their own motivation, behavior, and development within a network of reciprocally interacting influences. On the other hand, self-awareness guides on comparing the self with standards allows people to change their behavior and to experience pride and dissatisfaction with the self. When people focus attention on the self, they compare the self with standards, try harder to meet standards, and show stronger emotional responses to meeting or failing to meet a standard. Lastly, the study concludes that the assertive leadership draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate; it fosters greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, the balanced processing of information, and the relations on the part of the leaders working with their subordinates, thus fostering positive self-development.

## **6.1 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study recommends on management of the public sector institutions on managerial confidence and assertiveness leadership as it command the respect of their employees and superiors, helping them stand out for promotions and other career development opportunities. The leadership should maintain good relationships with other staff members as an assertive leadership concept. This can be enhanced by embracing the self-regulation aspect on behavior regulation, self-control, cognitive reappraisal and self-discipline.

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