

Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement: A Field Study at a Qatari Public Corporation

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Abstract: The current study explored the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement in the case of a Qatari public corporation. Survey research method was used in the research. In order to meet the research objectives, an online survey questionnaire was developed and distributed to a simple random sample of 294 employees. Descriptive and analytical statistical techniques available in SPSS were used to analyze the data of the 125 returned surveys. The results of the current study revealed that: (1) about 75% of the respondents are engaged in their work, (2) employees perceive their supervisors as transformational leaders rather than transactional leaders. Nonetheless, employees perceive their supervisors as neither pure transformational leaders nor pure transactional leaders, (3) there is strong and positive correlation between employee engagement and both transformational and transactional leadership styles. However, the correlation between transactional leadership and employee engagement was stronger than the correlation between transformational leadership and employee engagement. Based on that it is recommended to: (1) encourage supervisors to mix both transformational and transactional leadership styles by considering the situation and the nature of the task assigned to employees, (2) take action to develop leadership skills and behaviors, (3) show recognition for employee contributions and efforts, (4) strengthen the relationships between employees and their supervisors. In conclusion, it is important to develop strategies and practices to enhance employee engagement. One of the key factors in doing so is the development of leadership styles and behaviours.

Keywords: Leadership. Transformational leadership. Transactional leadership. Employee engagement. Public corporation.

الأنماط القيادية وتأثيرها على الانغماس الوظيفي: دراسة ميدانية في مؤسسة عامة قطرية

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وزارة التنمية الإدارية والعمل والشؤون الاجتماعية || دولة قطر

المستخلص: هدف البحث إلى الكشف عن تأثير الأنماط القيادية للمشرفين على الانغماس الوظيفي لموظفي مؤسسة عامة بدولة قطر، وتحديد علاقة وتأثير كل من النمط القيادي التحويلي والنمط القيادي التبادلي على الانغماس الوظيفي للموظفين في المؤسسة العامة محل البحث. تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي التحليلي من خلال تصميم استبانة وتوزيعها على عينة عشوائية بسيطة من موظفي المؤسسة العامة. بلغ عدد الاستبانات المسترجعة 125 استبانة، تم تحليلها إحصائياً بالأساليب المناسبة المتوفرة ضمن برنامج SPSS. كشفت نتائج التحليل عن: (1) وجود علاقة إيجابية وقوية ودالة إحصائية بين كل من النمط القيادي التحويلي والنمط القيادي التبادلي من جهة، والانغماس الوظيفي للموظفين في المؤسسة العامة محل البحث من جهة أخرى. (2) كانت العلاقة أقوى بين النمط القيادي التبادلي والانغماس الوظيفي للموظفين. تم تقديم عدة توصيات منها: (1) تشجيع المشرفين على المزج بين النمط التحويلي والنمط التبادلي وفقاً لمعطيات الموقف. (2) بناء علاقات أقوى بين المشرفين والموظفين. (3) زيادة الاهتمام بتشجيع وتحفيز الموظفين. ومن هنا، ولتحسين مستويات الانغماس الوظيفي للموظفين لا بد من تطوير سلوكيات وممارسات المشرفين القيادية نظراً لأن تلك الممارسات لها دور مؤثر على الانغماس الوظيفي للموظفين.

1. Introduction

Nowadays organizations face huge challenges due to different factors, such as globalization, fierce competition, information technology, stakeholder pressure, and rapid changes in customer expectations (Masood et al., 2016). These factors and others are threatening all types of organizations, small and big, local and international, private and public. In order to respond to such challenges, organizations need to invest heavily in human resource, the most valuable resource for all organizations. Based on this notion, it is essential that organizations set strategies, plans, and actions to meet the challenges they face and maximize the contributions of human resources on their performance (Gubman, 2019). One key action to maximize the contributions of human resource is enhancing and developing employee engagement. Organizations should simultaneously seek strategies to enhance engagement because of the direct and indirect relationships between engagement, productivity, and performance (Zhang, 2018).

Nevertheless, it has been established that many organizations globally suffer from low levels of employee engagement. For example, according to the results of a study by Gallup (2019), more than 50 percent of employees in the USA were not engaged, while 17 percent were actively disengaged, which cost the USA economy between \$450 and \$550 billion a year in low productivity, low quality, absenteeism, and high employee turnover. Therefore, it is crucial to find factors that influence employee engagement, and take actions to drive employee engagement.

Leadership is one of the key factors that could influence and contribute to enhancing engagement (Wang & Walumbwa, 2017). Meere (2019) argued that leadership could play a key role in encouraging employees to work with passion and feel a profound emotional and intellectual connection to their organization. In addition, Attridge (2019) argued that leadership style is crucial for encouraging employee engagement. Overall, the issue is not whether leadership influences or does not influence employee engagement, but to what degree leadership style influences engagement, and which leadership style influences engagement.

2. Problem Statement

Public corporations in Qatar seek to develop their performance to be able to meet the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030. To be able to reform and develop their performance, public corporations in Qatar need to carry out different strategies and initiatives. One such strategy should seek to enhance employee engagement and develop leadership, mainly because leadership and employee engagement are becoming two important factors that influence organizational performance and success in achieving sustainable competitive advantage in today's era of global competition (Hughes & Rog, 2018).

Recognizing that leadership is a key driver of employee engagement, many studies have explored the relationship between leadership style (transactional and transformational) and engagement (Reddy (2011), Saeed (2011), Baloch (2013), Kesteren (2019), Ghadi (2019) Tims et al. (2017). The literature review revealed that there is debate regarding which leadership style influences effectively employee engagement. In simple words, under which style of leadership employees tend to be positively engaged. The literature reviews also revealed that there is a need for more research to explore how transactional and transformational leadership styles influence employee engagement, and such efforts are of significant importance to developing countries. This is mainly because most previous researches have taken place mainly in developed countries; there is little such research in emerging countries. Therefore, the current research examines the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement at a Qatari public corporation. The research seeks to answer the following research questions.

- 1- What is the level of employee engagement at a Qatari public corporation?
- 2- How do employees at the selected Qatari public corporation perceive the leadership style of their supervisors?
- 3- What is the relationship between perceived leadership styles and employee engagement at the selected Qatari public corporation?

3. Research Objectives

The research seeks to:

- 1- Explore level of employee engagement at a Qatari public corporation.
- 2- Explore employee perceptions of their supervisors' leadership styles at a Qatari public corporation.
- 3- Investigate the relationships and impact of leadership styles and employee engagement at a Qatari public corporation.
- 4- Come up with recommendations to enhance employee engagement at a Qatari public corporation.

4. Significance of the Research

The current research is important for many reasons. On one hand, it is important to explore the level of employee engagement because this engagement is related directly and indirectly to employee attitudes, behaviour, and performance (Luthans & Peterson, 2017). Notwithstanding its importance, the field of employee engagement contains several large gaps in knowledge. Therefore, studying employee engagement has both academic and practical benefits to heighten employee engagement levels.

On the other hand, it is important to explore how employees perceive leadership styles and how such styles influence their engagement. This is because leadership could enhance or hinder engagement based on leadership style and behaviour (Wang & Walumbwa, 2017). However, the leadership–employee engagement relationship has been explored little in the published literature. Exploring the leadership–

employee engagement relationship could help to clarify which style can foster employee engagement and which style can negatively influence employee engagement.

5. Justification

This research takes place due to many reasons. On one hand, it helps to identify level of employee engagement, and employee perceptions of their leadership styles. This will help the management of the selected public corporation to develop actions to foster employee engagement and develop supervisors' leadership styles. On the other hand, the research helps to understand the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement. This in return helps the management of the selected corporation to understand how leadership styles influence employee engagement. Based on that, actions could be taken to develop leadership in the selected public corporation. By enhancing employee engagement and developing leadership styles, the performance of the selected public corporation will be developed.

6. Research Hypothesis

The research seeks to test the following two hypotheses:

- 1- There is a statistical significant relationship between transformational leadership style, and employee engagement.
- 2- There is a statistical significant relationship between transactional leadership style, and employee engagement.

7. Scope of the Research

The following points clarify the scope of the research:

- 1- The current research explores the impact of employee perceptions of their supervisors' leadership style on their engagement in case of only one Qatari public corporation. Based on that, the study explores the issue of employee engagement and leadership styles in the case of a single organization, no other organizations were included.
- 2- Data was collected on February 2021. The results of the study are based on the results of data collected from a relatively small random sample of employees and did not include all employees who work for the selected corporation.
- 3- The study explored the effects of leadership styles (transactional and transformational), and did not include all factors that might affect employee engagement.

8. Literature Review

8.1 The Concept of Leadership

As the current research is about leadership styles, it is important to identify the meaning of leadership and how the concept of leadership is explored in the academic literature. A review of the literature reveals that leadership is one of the most popular topics to have attracted the interest of management scholars and researchers. Thus, it can be said that the area of leadership has been more widely studied than any other aspect of human resource management (Chandan & Devi, 2014). In spite of the huge body of literature related to leadership, it is noteworthy to find that there is no consensus on what leadership is. Simply, there is no universal accepted definition of leadership. On the contrary, there are hundreds of attempts to identify what leadership is. There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people attempting to define it (Stogdil, 1974).

Recognizing the need for a specific definition, many attempts have been made to provide an acceptable definition of leadership. After reviewing tens of definitions, Yukl (2019) found that leadership is a process of influencing the behaviour of individuals and groups through guiding, structuring, and facilitating activities and relationships in a group or organization. Northouse (2019) identified four key elements in defining leadership: process, influencing, group contexts, and goal achievement. Based on that, leadership was defined by the author as the process of influencing behaviour of a group of individuals to meet and achieve goals.

8.2 Transactional and Transformational Leadership Styles

Although there are many leadership theories, two have dominated the literature since the 1980s: transformational and transactional leadership (Timothy & Piccolo, 2014). Burns (1978) played a critical role in presenting the role of transactional and transformational leadership styles, as he argued that leaders in organizations might behave in transactional or transformational ways.

Transactional leadership is very close to bureaucratic style. There is high degree of dependence on procedures, formal agreements and relationships, rewards, authority, work standards, and task-oriented goals. Therefore, transactional leaders depend mainly on rewards to influence the behaviour of employees (Bass & Avolio, 1999). Transactional leadership depends on rewards, formal roles, and punishments. The two main dimensions of transactional leadership are: (1) contingent reward, which is about the rewards provided to employees in the case of accomplishment and good performance, (2) and management-by-exception, which is about taking actions to correct performance to the required standard (Bass, 1990). Based on this understanding, transactional leaders pay attention to followers' work in order to find faults and deviations.

Transformational leadership depends not on rewards but on the charisma of the leader. Such leadership has a vision and communicates such vision to employees. In this case, employees consider

leaders as models and find them to have a high degree of morality and acceptance. Therefore, transformational leadership empowers employees, creates positive change in them, and focuses on both individual and team needs and interests (Warrilow, 2018). Transformational leadership motivates employees and improves their performance through a variety of mechanisms. Bass & Avolio (1990) proposed that transformational leadership comprises four dimensions as follows: (1) idealized influence or charisma, that is, a type of behaviour that results in follower admiration, respect, and trust; (2) inspirational motivation, which is reflected in behaviour that provides meaning and challenge to followers' work; (3) intellectual stimulation through providing followers' with opportunities for creative solutions to problems, and encouraging new approaches to job performance; and (4) individualized consideration by listening attentively and paying special attention to follower's achievements and growth needs.

8.3 The Concept of Employee Engagement

Although there has been ongoing growth in the concern with and interest in employee engagement over the last few years, the lack of a universal definition of employee engagement is noteworthy. Welch (2019) concluded that the definition of employee engagement is not stable, but is dynamic and changing owing to changes in organizations, relationships, and communications patterns. One approach to define employee engagement is to focus on the dimensions of employee engagement. For example, Kahn (1990, p. 694) defined employee engagement as the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. This definition presents three main dimensions of engagement: (1) physical dimension, which is about making more efforts to achieve the objectives of the organization, (2) cognitive dimension, which is about belief in organization and its missions and vision, and (3) emotional dimension, which is about attitudes towards work, organization, and relationships (Baumruk, 2014).

Yet another approach to defining engagement is to focus on the characteristics of engaged employees. Ellis & Sorenson (2020) argued that an engaged employee knows what to do at work and wants to do the work. Thus, engagement is not only about perceptions and attitudes; it is also about behaviour and actions to improve productivity. Thus, engagement should always be defined and assessed within the context of productivity (Ellis & Sorensen, 2020). Meere (2019) described three levels of engagement: (1) engaged – employees who work with passion and feel a profound connection to their organization; (2) not engaged – employees who attend and participate in work but are time serving and put no passion or energy into their work; and (3) disengaged – employees who are unhappy at work and who act out their unhappiness at work.

8.4 Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement

Recognizing that leadership is a key driver of employee engagement, many studies have explored the relationship between leadership style (transactional and transformational) and engagement. For the United Arab Emirates' banking sector, Reddy (2011) concluded that transformational leadership style of bank supervisors rather than transactional leadership style increased employee engagement. Saeed (2011) carried out a study in Yemen and concluded that both transformational and transactional leadership styles are related to and have positive impacts on employee engagement. Baloch (2013) carried out a study to measure employee engagement as outcomes of leadership styles – transformational and transactional. Multiple regressions indicated that transactional leadership had a 31% impact on employee engagement while transformational leadership had a 49% impact on employee engagement. In other words, that transactional leadership style is a stronger predictor of engagement than transformational leadership style is. According to the results of a study carried out by Kesteren (2019), employee engagement is positively related to transformational leadership but is not related to transactional leadership.

The results of many studies concluded that there is positive relationship between transformational leadership style and employee engagement. Ghadi (2019) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement and concluded that transformational leadership style influences followers' attributes of work engagement. This is because transformational leadership gives meaning to the work and the contributions of employees. Hayati et al. (2018) concluded that transformational leadership is positively related to engagement. Tims et al. (2017), who asked whether transformational leaders enhance their followers' daily work engagement, concluded that transformational leadership is positively related to employee daily engagement.

Other studies focused on situational and moderate factors. Colbert (2015) concluded there is no one best leadership style related to engagement all the time in all situations. The best style depends on the circumstances related to the situation, the organization, employees, and leaders. Avolio et al. (2004) found that although there was a positive correlation between transformational leadership and engagement, psychological empowerment was a mediator in this relationship. Thus, the relationship between transformational leadership and engagement is not linear and direct, but is influenced by other factors, mainly empowerment.

In conclusion, it is clear from the literature review that there is a need for more research to explore how transactional and transformational leadership styles influence employee engagement, and such efforts are of significant importance to developing countries. This is mainly because most previous researches have taken place mainly in developed countries; there is little such research in emerging countries. The present research aims to fill this research gap.

9. Research Methodology

9.1 Method

The current research utilized the survey research method. This method is very popular in managerial studies and has been widely used in studies exploring the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement. Recognizing the advantages of the survey research, it is decided to use an online survey, because it is easy to collect data within a short time and to do so at low cost.

9.2 Research Tool

As it was decided to use survey research, it was important to develop a survey that helps to meet the research objectives and with a high degree of validity and credibility. For this purpose, a literature review was undertaken on leadership styles and employee engagement. It is found that many studies have used a two-part survey: the first part measures leadership style and the second part measures employee engagement. As the current research explores transactional and transformational leadership styles, it was decided to use the MLQ of Bass & Avolio (1990). The MLQ is a well-established instrument. It has been used in a variety of settings and has a broad range of sample population, such as industry, military, primary and secondary schools, marketing, and higher education organizations in different countries (Erkutlu, 2008). The full range MLQ measures transformational leadership from specific aspects of idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1990). It measures transactional leadership from the aspects of contingent reward and management-by-exception (Bass & Avolio, 1990). For employee engagement, it was decided to use the survey developed by Wilson (2019). The survey included eight items to measure engagement. This survey was used because it was developed based on an extensive literature review and was widely used to measure engagement in many organizations worldwide. A 5-point scale is used as follows: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Different actions were taken to ensure reliability and validity of the survey. A pilot study of 20 respondents was carried to test the usability and simplicity of the survey. SPSS was used to measure the survey reliability, using the Cronbach's alpha technique. The Cronbach's alpha value was (0.91).

9.3 Research Sample

Simple random sample was selected. According to the official statistics, there are more than 1250 employees working at the selected public corporation. A computerized online system (Creative Research Systems) was utilized to identify the size of the sample. The size was 294 employees at a confidence level of 95%. Although 294 surveys were distributed, 125 surveys were returned. This could be attributed to the restrictions due to Covid 19. The survey questionnaire included four questions related to age, gender, educational qualifications, and work experience.

Table (1) Characteristics of the sample

Question	Answers	Percentage
Age	20-29 years	22%
	30-39 years	41%
	40-49 years	23%
	50-plus years	13%
Gender	Male	38%
	Female	62%
Educational qualifications	High school	3%
	Diploma	5%
	Bachelor's degree	55%
	Master's or Doctoral degree	36%
Work experience	Less than 2 years	4%
	2-5 years	39%
	5-10 years	30%
	More than 10 years	26%

Source: Data analysis of SPSS 26.0

For age, analysis showed that the average age of all respondents was 37 years, indicating they represent youth. For gender, the analysis showed that 62% of the respondents were female, while 38% were male. For qualifications, the analysis showed that 55% held a bachelor's degree, and 36% had a master's or doctoral degree. The results indicate that the respondents had high educational qualifications. Finally, for work experience, the analysis indicates that respondents had different levels of work experience.

10. Data Analysis and Findings

10.1 Transactional and Transformational leadership styles

Results of data analysis showed that employees perceived their supervisors as transformational leaders rather than transactional leaders. This is because the overall average for the statements related to transactional leadership dimensions was 3.61, indicating that employees somewhat agree that their supervisors tend to be transformational leaders. Nevertheless, the overall average of the statements related to transactional leadership style was 3.26. Although this average is less than the average of transformational leadership style, it nonetheless indicates that employees perceive their supervisors as neither pure transformational leadership nor pure transactional leadership. In other words, although supervisors at the selected corporation tended to be transformational leaders, they sometimes still were transactional leaders.

Table (2) Descriptive statistics of leadership style at the selected public corporation

Leadership style	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transformational	125	1.00	5.00	3.6120	.90796
Transactional	125	1.00	5.00	3.2693	.81038
Valid N	125				

Source: Data analysis of SPSS 26.0

Regarding the dimensions of the transactional and transformational leadership style, the results of the data analysis revealed that the means of the four dimensions related to transformational leadership style (idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration) were higher than that of the two dimensions related to transactional leadership style (contingent reward and management-by-exception). The average dimension of idealized attributes was highest (3.82), which indicates that employees felt proud to be associated with their supervisors and had complete faith in them. Moreover, employees believed that their supervisors made employees feel good to be around them. The average of the dimension of contingent reward was 3.17, ranked last. Despite this rank, employees somewhat agreed that their supervisors told them what to do if they wanted to be rewarded for their work, and provided recognition/rewards when employees reached their goals. In addition, employees somewhat agreed that their supervisors called attention to what employees can gain for their accomplishments.

Table (3) Dimensions of transactional and transformational leadership styles

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Idealized Attributes	125	3.8213	1.04859	1
Inspirational Motivation	125	3.5840	.97611	2
Intellectual Stimulation	125	3.4880	.92607	4
Individual Consideration	125	3.5547	.92064	3
Contingent Reward	125	3.1787	.97967	6
Management-by-Exception	125	3.3600	.77089	5

Source: Data analysis of SPSS 26.0

10.2 Employee Engagement

The results showed an overall mean for the statements of 3.76 out of 5.00, indicating that employees who work for the selected public corporation are engaged in their work. As a percentage, 3.76 out of 5.00 indicate that about 75% of the respondents are engaged in their work. Analysis of the statements related to employee engagement show there is only one mean above 4.00, which is for the statement 'I have friends at work'. The averages for the other statements were between 3.2 and 3.9. This

indicates that respondents somewhat agree with the statements. This indicates that one of the key indicators of engagement is working with peers and building social relationships with them. Employees ensure that they have friends at work, and consider that their peers do a good job. Such good work relationships with peers prevent employees from considering quitting their jobs at the corporation. Therefore, they will still be employed at the corporation 2 years from now.

Table (4) Employee engagement at the selected public corporation

Statement	Average	S. Deviation
I have received recognition for doing my job well.	3.2800	1.23524
My supervisor seems concerned about my welfare.	3.5360	1.15384
The mission of the corporation makes me feel that the work I do matters.	3.8720	1.09968
I have friends at work.	4.1760	.83342
While on the job, my ideas and opinions are taken seriously.	3.7280	1.05016
The materials, tools, and equipment that I need to do my job are supplied and made readily available to me.	3.6880	1.08818
The employees I work with do a good job.	3.9760	.90218
I will still be employed here in the corporation 2 years from now	3.8960	1.12037
Overall	3.7690	.70336

Source: Data analysis of SPSS 26.0

10.3 Leadership Style and Employee Engagement

The results showed positive correlation between employee engagement and both transformational and transactional leadership styles. The correlation was strong and significant at 0.000. Nevertheless, the correlation between transactional leadership and employee engagement was stronger than the correlation between transformational leadership and employee engagement. This indicates that although leadership style is correlated with employee engagement, the correlation with transactional leadership style was stronger. In other words, employees at the selected public corporation preferred leaders who focus on contingent reward (contingent positive reinforcement) or contingent penalization (contingent negative reinforcement) to enhance their engagement. Although transactional leadership is very close to bureaucratic style, in which there is high degree of dependence on procedures, formal agreements and relationships, rewards, authority, work standards, and task-oriented goals, it nonetheless could enhance engagement of employees.

Regarding the correlation between dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership styles and employee engagement, the results reveal strong and positive correlation between employee engagement and all dimensions of leadership styles: idealized attributes, inspirational motivation,

intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward, and management-by-exception. The correlation values were above 0.500 and significant at 0.000 for all dimensions. This indicates strong and positive correlation. Nevertheless, the strongest correlation was found with contingent reward. This indicates that employees care deeply about rewards and recognition, which are important for enhancing the engagement of employees.

Table (5) Correlation between leadership style and employee engagement

Correlation between employee engagement and:	Pearson Correlation	Significant
Idealized attributes	.597	0.000*
Inspirational motivation	.587	0.000*
Intellectual stimulation	.520	0.000*
Individual consideration	.594	0.000*
Transformational leadership style	.613	0.000*
Contingent reward	.632	0.000*
Management-by-exception	.557	0.000*
Transactional leadership style	.846	0.000*

Source: Data analysis of SPSS 26.0

Regression was used to explore to what degree leadership style influences employee engagement.

Table (6) Regression between leadership style and employee engagement

Leadership style	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
Transformational leadership style	.613	.376	.371	.55788
Transactional leadership style	.647	.419	.414	.53843
Over leadership	.655	.429	.424	.53373

Source: Data analysis of SPSS 26.

The results revealed that the value of R square for transformational leadership style was .376, which means that transformational leadership style justifies 37% of the differences in employee engagement. In other words, about 37% of employee engagement is attributed to transformational leadership style, while 63% is attributed to other factors. The value of R square for transactional leadership style was .419, which means that transactional leadership style justifies 41% of the differences in employee engagement. In other words, about 41% of employee engagement is attributed to transactional leadership style, while 59% is attributed to other factors. For overall leadership, the value of R square was .429, which means that overall leadership justifies 42% of the differences in employee engagement. In

other words, about 42% of employee engagement is attributed to overall leadership style, while 48% is attributed to other factors. This indicates that leadership is a key factor that influences employee engagement.

10.4 Discussion of the Findings

The results of the current study reveal that about 75% of the respondents are engaged in their work. Analysis of the statements related to employee engagement show that employees ensure they have friends at work, and consider that their peers do a good job. Such results corroborate the viewpoints of Yoon et al. (2018), Ramjee (2019), and Lipman (2012), who argued that friendly relationships lead to high levels of engagement. Such relationships positively influence employee morale, satisfaction, and well-being, because such relationships fulfil employee needs for social relationships and friendly work climate. This result is in accordance with the list of drivers of engagement of Robinson et al. (2014), who identified work relationships with colleagues as a main source of engagement.

Regarding the level of employee engagement, the results are contrary to those of Gallup (2019). In the case of the selected Qatari public corporation, 5% of the respondents were not engaged in their work. This relatively low rate is because employees have friends at work, and feel that their peers perform well. This could be attributed to the collectivist national culture in Qatar. Collectivism represents a preference for a tightly knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 1980).

Regarding the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement, the results of the data analysis reveal strong and positive correlation between employee engagement and both transformational and transactional leadership styles. The correlation was strong and significant at 0.000. Nevertheless, the correlation between transactional leadership and employee engagement was stronger than the correlation between transformational leadership and employee engagement. This indicates that although leadership style is correlated with employee engagement, the correlation with transactional leadership style was stronger. The results of the current study regarding the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement are in accordance with the results of Darby (2014), Xu (2013), Lipman (2012), and Ayers (2017) who argued that leadership is one of the key drivers of employee engagement. The results are not in line with those of Kurland (2010), Alloubani (2014), Avci (2015), and Komer (2015), who found that transformational leadership was associated with higher commitment than transactional leadership was. Nonetheless, the results concur with those of Chaudhry (2012), Ayoubi (2015), and Gupta (2016), who concluded that transactional leadership style has a greater impact on employee satisfaction than does transformational leadership style.

11. Limitations

There are different issues related to the limitations of the current research. One of the key issues related to restrictions due to Covid 19. Such restrictions forced the researcher to use online survey. Although 294 surveys were distributed, 125 surveys were returned. This could be attributed to the restrictions due to Covid 19. One more limitation related to the size of the sample. The research did not include all employees who work for the selected public corporation. Simple random sample of employees was selected. Adding to that, the current research investigates the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement in the case of only one Qatari public corporation. It did not include many corporations. Besides, the survey did not include any open-ended question and as such context is missing from this data with which to better understand the responses.

12. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, and in order to improve leadership behaviours to enhance employee engagement, it is recommended that public corporations show recognition for employee contributions and efforts. It is important that supervisors recognize and appreciate employee efforts in order to enhance employee engagement. At the same time, public corporations should strengthen the relationships between employees and their supervisors. This is because the dimension of idealized attributes was highest, indicating that employees felt proud to be associated with their supervisors and had complete faith in them. This good indicator should be enhanced by taking actions to strengthen the employee-supervisor relationship. Moreover, public corporations should reward employees based on their performance and contributions to agreed objectives. Currently employees somewhat agree that their supervisors provide recognition/rewards when employees reach their goals. Still, there is a need for more effort and activities to reward employees and enhance their engagement. Besides, public corporations should clarify supervisors' expectations of their employees and adopt participation in decision making. Although employees stated that their supervisors sometimes told them what to do if they wanted to be rewarded for their work, there was still a need for more effort to clarify expectations and link performance and rewards to enhance engagement.

For the leadership, public corporations should encourage supervisors to mix both transformational and transactional leadership styles by considering the situation and the nature of the task assigned to employees. In other words, supervisors should be encouraged to use a leadership style based on the situation and its impacts on relationships with employees. At the same time, public corporations should take action to develop leadership skills and behaviours. This is because leadership development is crucial to improve the behaviour of supervisors and relationships between supervisors and their employees.

There is substantial potential for future research to investigate other factors that might influence employee engagement, such as human resource management practices, work relationships, job satisfaction, and compensation. Future studies could also investigate other leadership styles, such as visionary, charismatic, and autocratic leadership.

13. Conclusions

It is vital to develop strategies to enhance employee engagement. One of the key factors to enhance employee engagement is the development of leadership styles and behaviours. This is because there is strong and positive correlation between employee engagement and leadership. Regarding leadership style, both transformational and transactional leadership styles are associated with employee engagement. Nevertheless, the correlation between transactional leadership and employee engagement was stronger than the correlation between transformational leadership and employee engagement. In this regard, we should not consider transformational/transactional leadership as overly conflicting concepts; on the contrary, both leadership types complement each other, are interdependent, and can be viewed as existing on a continuum. In this way, a mix of both transformational and transactional leadership styles should be implemented with due consideration to the situation and nature of the task assigned to employees/followers.

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