CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement in the Current UAE Infrastructure Market for Engineering Consultancies: An Analysis of Employee Perspectives

Master of Business Administration (MBA) Advanced Entry Dissertation

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I would also like to thank everyone who has participated in this research for their valuable inputs which helped me to successfully complete this dissertation.
DECLARATION

This work is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MBA and has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is the result of my own work and investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

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SUPERVISOR DECLARATION FORM

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I acknowledge that the above named student has regularly attended the planned meetings and actively engaged in the dissertation supervision process. They have provided regular timely draft chapters of the dissertation and followed given guidance.

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ABSTRACT

The impact of leadership styles on employee behaviour and performance have been widely researched over the years by multiple researchers. The changing economic conditions and market scenarios in the Middle East due to drop in oil prices have contributed to a decline in infrastructure projects in the UAE. This has led to job insecurity among employees working in the engineering consultancies in the UAE which has affected the engagement of employees. Therefore, it has become necessary for the leaders to ensure that the employees are effectively engaged so that the performance of the organization can be maintained.

This dissertation focuses on investigating the impact of various leadership styles on employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies. Using both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis procedures, this dissertation aims to understand the employee perspectives on the behaviour of their team leader or manager and how it affects their engagement and its work-related factors and also determine the leadership style which is best-suited for such engineering consultancies according to the employees.

The findings of this dissertation show that transactional leadership is the best-suited leadership style for effectively engaging the employees in infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE. This research also discusses how autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, situational, transactional and transformational leadership styles affect work-related factors of employee engagement such as employee performance, productivity, motivation, retention etc.

As a part of this research, it is also recommended that if the team leaders of these organizations focus on certain factors such as training needs of the employees, employee ownership, motivation etc., the workforce can be engaged more effectively.
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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an insight to this dissertation titled “Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement in the Current UAE Infrastructure Market for Engineering Consultancies: An Analysis of Employee Perspectives” and discusses the background of the research, the rationale behind the research, the research aims and objectives and the scope of the research.

1.1 Background to the Research

The impact of leadership styles on employee behaviour and performance have been widely researched over the years by multiple researchers. The changing economic conditions and market scenarios in the Middle East due to drop in oil prices have contributed to a decline in infrastructure projects in the UAE. This has led to job insecurity among employees working in the engineering consultancies in the UAE which has affected the engagement of employees (Kausto et al., 2005).

In these difficult times for engineering consultancies in the UAE, it has become necessary for the leaders to ensure that the employees are effectively engaged so that the performance of the organization can be maintained.

As highlighted by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), employee engagement is mainly influenced by work-related factors such as job security, leadership, employee performance etc. According to Schalkwyk et al. (2010), leadership behaviour contributes significantly to employee engagement and therefore it has become the duty of leaders today to empower the employees by adopting leadership styles which allows for the same as the organizations are becoming more dynamic. With changing business environments, the definition of a good leader has also changed. A good leader not only directs his/her subordinates and gets the work done in time, but also influences them to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization and motivates the employees to make the right decisions and manage the available resources effectively (Northouse, 2012).
However, in order to engage the employees efficiently, the leaders today are required to adopt certain leadership styles which would work the best for the particular organization or the particular business environment. Yao et al. (2017) mentioned that certain leadership styles have stronger association to employee engagement and performance whereas certain leadership styles have a weaker association based on the industry in which the organizations are operating. Yao et al. (2017) suggested that in order to have effectively engaged employees who are dedicated and well absorbed in their work, it is important for the leaders to be more communicative, honest and fair. However, it is important to know whether the employees working in engineering consultancies in the UAE have a different perspective regarding a leader who would be best-fit for the business environment of the organization. Therefore, this dissertation will investigate the impact of the various leadership styles on the employee engagement on the basis of certain work related factors for infrastructure engineering consultancies in the UAE as per the perspectives of the employees and will aim to determine the best-fit leadership style which if and when implemented will promote employee engagement and provide the employees with the much needed motivation to sail through the uncertain economic conditions of the market. This would also help the infrastructure consultancies to strengthen their internal factors which can enhance the competitive advantage of the organization and also efficiently manage and lead the human resources of the organization (Maghviroh, 2014).

1.2 Rationale
Leadership styles and the impact that these cause on the behaviour of the employees in engineering consultancies in the UAE has not been given the required importance. However, due to the onset of changing economic conditions and market scenarios in the UAE, employee behaviour, performance and productivity has become one of the prime concerns for the management of these organizations. This dissertation topic has been selected based on the personal experience of working in an infrastructure engineering consultancy for 4 years, where it has been observed that the UAE infrastructure market have similar practices in terms of
leadership and management and also show certain typical patterns which places high importance on employee performance and productivity with no consideration to the well-being of the employee.

These harsh policies have a negative effect on the employee behaviour and leads to demotivation which ultimately impacts their engagement (Khan and Yadav, 2016). An example of a scenario from an infrastructure engineering consultant is provided in order to understand the situation of the employees better. In this scenario, the engineering director called for a meeting with all engineers and consultants regarding a big tender with a reputed infrastructure developer. It was a well-known fact that any company which would win this tender would have a strong market reputation and this would add to their project experiences immensely. Therefore, all the employees were quite excited to prepare the most competitive bid for the tender. However, the director began the meeting in a negative tone highlighting the negative impacts of winning the tender on the employees such as working more than the normal working hours mentioned in contract without pay, working on weekends without pay, stricter office hours etc. It was also mentioned that any employee not willing to follow the rules will be fired. The meeting was then concluded by stressing how important it was to provide competitive bid and win the job and therefore everyone was instructed to provide the minimum man-hours to complete the job. It was observed that after the meeting, all the employees were highly demotivated and agreed that it is better to not win the tender at all rather than working under so much pressure. As a result the employees provided much higher man-hours than required to complete the job in an attempt to buy in more time which affected the estimated bid value. The company ended up losing the tender by a big margin and the work flow of the company was also affected. The company management faced a lot of difficulty in engaging the workforce effectively and had to terminate multiple employees which created job insecurity among the others. This scenario highlighted multiple work related factors that affected the engagement of employees due to the behaviour of the leader. Therefore it is necessary to understand the perspectives of the employees on how their engagement is affected by the leadership styles of their leader.
This dissertation aims to fill the research gap by investigating the employee perspectives on the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement in current UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies which has not been given much importance as necessary. Due to low oil prices, there has been a sudden drop in infrastructure engineering projects in the UAE which has affected all of the engineering consultancies in the region. Therefore, it has become a challenge for the engineering consultancies operating in this region engage their employees effectively as human resources are considered as one of the most important factors of competitive advantage of an organization (Maghviroh, 2014).

This MBA dissertation will be aimed to investigate how the leadership styles of an engineering consultancy’s managers or team leaders can impact the factors affecting employee engagement such as employee productivity, retention and performance.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The main aim of this dissertation is to investigate and understand employee perspectives on the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure market for engineering consultancies.

As discussed above, understanding the perspectives of the employees on the behaviour of their leaders and how it affects their engagement is one of the main concerns for infrastructure engineering consultancies in the UAE. Therefore, the research question – “How do leadership styles affect the employee engagement in an engineering consultancy in the current UAE infrastructure market according to its employees?” is of vital importance.

However, in order to determine the answer to the research question, it is important to study the various theories of leadership and employee engagement and to identify the work-related factors that affect employee engagement in an organization. Employee engagement and leadership are both well researched topics and various researchers have their own findings regarding the correlation of both frameworks (Shuck and Herd, 2012). Therefore it is essential to understand the concepts through
literature review and explore the challenges that are faced by organizations while implementing various leadership styles and also while engaging the employees effectively.

In order to understand the employee perspectives on leadership and employee engagement, primary data is required to be collected, analysed and critically evaluated to identify the best-fit leadership style which will promote employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies.

Therefore, keeping the above aim in mind, the following are the research objectives for this dissertation:

i. To examine the key theories and concepts of leadership styles and employee engagement.

ii. To explore the challenges for implementing leadership styles and engaging the workforce.

iii. Evaluate the impact of leadership styles on work related factors of employee engagement such as employee productivity, employee performance and retention with particular focus on the perspectives of employees working in the infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE.

iv. Critically evaluate which leadership style is best suited in engineering consultancies to promote employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure market based on employee perspectives.

1.4 Scope
The scope of this dissertation will be to investigate the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure market for engineering consultancies.

In this dissertation, only the work related factors affecting employee engagement will be focused on as the external factors are many and can vary based on the particular
industry in which the organization is operating which have already been highlighted by multiple researchers (Rice et al., 2012).

As there are many engineering consultancies in the UAE region who carry out infrastructure works, the dissertation will focus on obtaining only the employee perspectives regarding the subject and not the management perspective. Also, the data will be mostly obtained from the employees in the major multi-national engineering consultancies operating in the UAE. The focus in this dissertation will rather be on the employees and their perspectives and not the companies itself. To keep the dissertation realistic and consistent, the data will be obtained from engineers who have completed at least 1 year of service in an engineering consultancy working in the UAE infrastructure market. It shall also be ensured that the employees are from cross-functional departments and project teams so that the dissertation is realistic.

1.5 Outline of the Dissertation
The dissertation contains the following chapters –

Chapter 1 – Introduction
This chapter comprises of the background to the research title with specific reference to the infrastructure engineering market in UAE and explains the rationale behind this dissertation. This chapter also highlights the research aim which cultivates into the research question which is to be achieved by meeting the research objectives. The scope of the dissertation is also highlighted in this chapter in order to have a realistic research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review
This chapter covers the key theories and concepts of leadership, the various leadership styles, the key concepts of employee engagement, the factors contributing to employee engagement, the challenges faced by organizations while implementing different leadership styles and the challenges faced by leaders to
engage the workforce effectively. This chapter covers a critical review of the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement.

**Chapter 3 – Methodology**

This chapter comprises of the research approach, the research strategy, methods of collection of primary and secondary data, the sampling techniques used for collection of data, the sample frame and the sample size. This chapter also includes the data analysis methods (qualitative and quantitative) used in order to analyse the data obtained from the employees and the various ethical considerations while obtaining the data. The chapter also highlights the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

**Chapter 4 – Research Findings**

This chapter comprises of the findings and analytics obtained by applying the methodology of data analysis on the collected primary data and highlights the results obtained in order to meet the research objectives of the dissertation without any non-validated assumptions. The results are summarized and analysed in relation to the research objectives and discrepancies if any are highlighted.

**Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations**

The conclusions of this dissertation are derived based on the research findings to be in line with the research objectives such that the research question is ultimately answered. The recommendations of future research is provided and the limitations of this research is highlighted.
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
This chapter will introduce and critically examine the key theories of leadership and various leadership styles which have been developed by multiple researchers. This chapter will also investigate the key theories of employee engagement and evaluate employee engagement strategies. The relationship of leadership styles and leader behaviour with employee engagement and its work related factors such as employee performance, productivity, turnover etc. will be discussed and critically evaluated to form a strong basis for this dissertation.

According to Taylor (2012), the success of a company is dependent on the quality of its leaders as the leaders set the business strategies as well as form the basis of the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the organization. Therefore the behaviour of the leader with his/her employees largely affect the employee behaviour, performance, productivity and eventually turnover.

The leaders who show constructive leadership patterns are able to motivate the employees, build their trust and make them feel more empowered whereas leaders showing destructive leadership patterns lose the trust of their employees and often the employees feel disengaged from their work (Prooijen and Vries, 2016).

In order to understand the employee behaviour, it is first important to analyse the behaviour of the leader and the different leadership styles that the leader follows (Sarti, 2014).

2.2 Key Theories of Leadership
Over the years multiple researchers have developed rich leadership theories and therefore according to Bass (1990), there is no one definition of leadership. Lewis (1974) stated that a leader is the one who initiates action in a group whereas Bogardus (1934) defined leadership as a combination of elements to make it both a personality as well as a group condition. House and Dressler (1974) defined the path-goal theory of leadership which identified four leadership styles, namely,
supportive leadership, directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership and participative leadership.

However, for the purpose of this dissertation, some of the most popular and relevant leadership theories are discussed.

2.2.1 Kurt Lewin’s Theory of Leadership

Lewin et al. (1939) conducted multiple studies and found that there are majorly three types of leadership – autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and laissez-faire. While autocratic leaders ensured that they have a dominant control over their group and monitored the members of the group strictly while keeping the control of decision making to himself/herself, democratic leaders ensured that all group members participate and take a decision that is accepted by the majority. The democratic leaders did not have a dominant control over the group, however ensured that the group met with the goals and objectives of the tasks given to them. The laissez-faire leaders had very low activity within their groups and the group members took most of the decisions by themselves.

Prooijen and Vries (2016) found that while autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles are considered to be destructive forms of leadership, democratic leadership is considered as constructive.

According to Kiazad et al. (2010), employees who work under an autocratic leader feel dominated and controlled and perceive that their leader is insensitive and that his/her supervision is abusive. This type of leaders offer no freedom at all to their employees and therefore have less acceptance amongst employees in engineering industry as engineers require freedom to some extent to design innovatively. However, some employees also prefer these types of leaders as they generally tend of reward if a job is well done (Yao et al., 2017).

According to DeRue et al. (2011), laissez-faire leadership also has a negative effect on the employee behaviour as it leads to insecure work environment. As laissez-faire leaders prefer to let the employees make their own decisions, they are known to provide more freedom to their employees (Yao et al., 2017). This type of leadership, therefore, can be considered beneficial for employees to foster creativity
and innovation which is important for employee engagement. However, in engineering consultancies where the protocols of engineering design are required to be followed and the timelines for deliverables are to be maintained strictly, this type of leadership may cause mismanagement.

Bavelas and Lewin (2010) stated that the democratic leaders were often liked and favoured by all groups as these leaders did not impose their ideas on the group members but knew how to lead. Since democratic leaders are participative and values the opinions of all team members, they are generally appreciated in the engineering industry as it is a common saying that engineering is not a one man task and requires multi-disciplinary inputs from everyone in the team.

2.2.2 Situational Leadership Model

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) developed the situational theory of leadership which states that the behaviour of the leader is based on the situation in the organization. According to Peretomode (2012), situational theory states that an autocratic or task-oriented leader can change into a democratic leader, if the situation demands. Hersey and Blanchard (1969) derived four leadership styles based on leadership behaviour of initiating structure and consideration. These four styles were telling, selling, participating and delegating. The other category was maturity level of the employees in terms of their ability to manage and perform in the task. Bass (1990) highlighted that the maturity of the employees depend on their education or training experience rather than their age. If the maturity of the employee is low, the leader should follow the telling approach. If the maturity of the employee is moderate, the leader should follow the selling approach. However, if the maturity of the employee is high or very high, the leader should follow the participating or delegating approach respectively. According to Tortorella and Fogliatto (2017), situational leadership may be used as a combination of multiple leadership styles such as laissez-faire to promote innovation, transactional leadership to provide rewards and recognitions and transformational leadership to build commitment of employees. This type of leadership is difficult to implement in engineering consultancies, as most of the
employees follow a systematic procedure of their day to day activities and therefore the leader faces only a standard set of situations.

### 2.2.3 Transactional Leadership

Burns (1978) identified the transactional leadership style and mentioned that transactional leaders consider themselves to be the manager or transactions of services between the employees and the organization. If the employee is able to perform as per the company expectations and meets the goals and objectives set by the leader, then the leader rewards the employees and provides the agreed compensation. However, if the employee does not meet the objectives and does not perform in accordance with the leader’s expectations then the leader does not reward him/her, but takes charge to handle the problem (Taylor, 2012).

Bass (1990) further stated that transactional leadership is characterized by multiple leadership behaviours – “contingent reward, management by exception (passive and active) and laissez faire” (Bass, 1990, p22). Contingent reward is based on the exchange of services between the leader and his/her subordinates as desired by the leader which is the main motivation for the employees. Management by exception happens when the leader takes charge or steps in to take control of the situation and handle the problems when the employee is incapable of doing so himself/herself. Management by exception can be considered as passive when the leader only takes charge when the situation is critical. The laissez-faire leadership style is similar to Lewin’s theory where the leader is casual and avoids taking any responsibilities (Taylor, 2012). According to Afsar et al. (2017), transactional leaders exchange the outcome of the employee performance with the expectations of the employees and therefore both are rewarded. This type of leadership may have positive effects in sales and marketing industry where the rewards are based on the targets achieved by the employees. In engineering consultancies, while this type of leadership is appreciated due to high concentration on the efficiency of the employee and time constraints, it inhibits the employee from being innovative and creative which is highly necessary for employee engagement and also recommended to have a suitable engineering design.


2.2.4 Transformational Leadership

Burns (1978) identified the transformational leadership and mentioned that transformational leaders ensure that the employees have a strong bond with their work and have strong commitment towards their own future goals as well as the objectives of the company. The employees working under a transformational leader feel that their work is contributing to their organization. Bass (1998) also highlighted that a transformational leader motivates the employees by making them understand the vision, mission and objectives of the organization. Bass (1998) identified four leadership behaviours that are a part of transformational leadership style, namely – intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and idealized influence. Intellectual stimulation corresponds to the behaviour of the leader wherein the leader challenges the employee mentally in order to encourage innovation, creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. Individualized consideration corresponds to the behaviours of the leader wherein the leader considers his/her employee’s skills and interests and coaches and mentors them accordingly by providing individual attention towards their development. Inspirational motivation corresponds to the behaviour of the leader wherein he/she is able to share the mission and vision of the organization with the employees and motivate them to achieve the shared goals which help both the employees as well as the organization to grow. Idealized influence focuses on the leader’s capability to attain loyalty from his/her employees by having ethical and effective working relationships with them (Rothfelder et al., 2013). According to Sahu et al. (2017), a transformational leader has a vision and therefore inspires employees to engage in their work effectively by showing integrity, dedication and vigour towards their work which are all related factors for employee engagement as highlighted in the next sub-section and directly affects the employee performance and retention. This could be one of the most ideal leadership styles for engineering industry as it promotes the perfect balance of employee innovation and creativity as well as employee performance and productivity.
2.3 Key Theories of Employee Engagement

According to Bakker et al. (2003), employee engagement is extremely important for any organization as it has a direct connection with the employee productivity, job security and satisfaction, employee retention, motivation and loyalty. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p295) defined employee engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption”. Schalkwyk et al. (2010) stated that in order to have vigour, an employee must have a strong mental resilience and be willing to invest his/her efforts towards the work. Dedication of an employee is derived from the employee feeling proud and enthusiastic about his/her work and absorption is to be immersed in his/her work willingly.

Rice et al. (2012) developed a model of five levels of employee engagement based on four quadrants with the axes as individual, organization, and success in terms of values, goals and strategy as shown in the figure below. The four quadrants are high-high, high-low, low-high and low-low. Further the high-high quadrant is divided into two – high on contribution and high on satisfaction.

The theory states that every team and its members are scattered in the four quadrants where the individual and organizational interests intersect. This gives rise
to five scenarios: Engaged – High contribution, high satisfaction; Disengaged – Low contribution, low satisfaction; Honeymooners and Hamsters – Low contribution, high satisfaction; Crash and Burners – High contribution, low satisfaction; Almost Engaged – Relatively high contribution and satisfaction.

Seijts and Crim (2006) suggested the ten Cs of employee engagement to be followed by the leaders in order to effectively engage the employees –

i. Connect – The leaders should show that they value the employees and have employee-focused initiatives such as work-life balance as the relationship between the leader and the employees have a huge effect on the engagement.

ii. Career – Leaders should provide the employees challenges and opportunities to grow their career by doing innovative jobs. If the leaders do not provide the employees the necessary tools and training to be successful, the employees get stressed which directly affects their engagement.

iii. Clarity – Leaders should communicate the vision, mission and objectives of the organization and the individual goals and targets set for the employees with clarity. The employees are required to understand the organizational objectives and how they are required to contribute in attaining them.

iv. Convey – Leaders should establish clear processes that help the employees to perform the important tasks efficiently and make it easier for the goals to be achieved. The leaders should also provide feedback to the employees about their job.

v. Congratulate – Leaders should recognize the hard work put in by the employees and reward good performance.

vi. Contribute – Leaders should ensure that the employees are aware of their contributions towards achieving the organizational objectives and implement performance indicators.

vii. Control – Leaders should be flexible towards the need of the employees and involve the employees in the decision-making processes and ensure that the employees are able to voice their concerns freely.
viii. Collaborate – Leaders should be team builders and should create environments for the employees which fosters collaboration without any self-interests.

ix. Credibility – Leaders should be credible and maintain high ethical standards while never comprising on the company’s reputation. Such leaders are highly admired and respected by the employees and the employees draw inspiration from them.

x. Confidence – Leaders should help the employees in developing their confidence and as a result boost the overall confidence of the company.

2.4 Challenges of Employee Engagement

According to Bakker and Sanz-Vergel (2013), engaged employees are connected to their work emotionally, intellectually and are enthusiastic about their work. These employees generally flourish in their career and develop their potential. According to LePine et al. (2005), there are generally two types of job demands that can affect the engagement of the employees, namely challenge demands and hindrance demands. While challenge demands are considered as challenges to be overcome by employees to achieve their goals, hindrance demands are often considered to have a negative impact on employee engagement. Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) suggest that emotional demands of the job are challenging for the employees and may act as a hindrance demand for some. McVicar (2003) suggested that work pressure is a major hindrance demand for most employees and also act as a major stress factor. It was found that the higher the work pressure, the lower the competence of the employee and higher the employee turnover.

Seijts and Crim (2006) found that a majority of employees in an organization are not engaged and just sail through their day by investing time but not passion into their work. It was also found that the dis-engaged employees often show their unhappiness towards the organization and undermine the accomplishment of the engaged employees.

Baker and Demerouti (2008) highlighted the reasons of employee dis-engagement – negative emotions about their ability of utilize the resources effectively, no support or feedback from colleagues or leader, no autonomy at work and lack of other
personal resources such as optimism, self-esteem, vigour and resilience. According to Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2014), destructive leadership plays a detrimental role in employee engagement as it breaks the trust between the employee and the leader which leads to poor psychological well-being of the employee.

One of the other challenges faced by the leaders to engage the employees are the changes to the working practices. It was observed that the changes that took place in workplaces without any employee involvement or communication garnered negative approaches from the employees which led to the employees being disengaged from their work (Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage, 2014).

Pace (2013) found that the real challenges of employee engagement are intrinsic to the organization as a majority of the organizations do not provide any formal engagement programs for their employees due to which the employees do not have an understanding of their goals and often lack accountability. It was also found that organizations feel that having a diverse and multi-cultural workforce acts as a barrier for employee engagement. Pace (2013) suggested that in order to engage the employees effectively, the organizations must conduct training and development programs which are correlated with the objectives of the organization.

Vestal (2009) highlighted that one of the major challenges of employee engagement is that the organization should find ways of building a sense of belonging in the employees in order to increase employee retention. The organization must keep the employees motivated and stress-free and should measure employee satisfaction through surveys to determine the current conditions of engagement. It was also suggested that discussing employee engagement with the employees themselves more openly can lead to positive results.

2.5 Challenges in Implementing Leadership Styles

Employees are often so engrossed in their daily work-life routine that they fail to understand the position of their leaders and the challenges that the leaders face in order to engage the workforce effectively every day. It has been found that there is a factor of difference called the dissonance factor between the perceived and desired styles of leadership. The lower the dissonance factor, the lesser internal conflicts
between the employees and the leader. It has been argued that if the difference between the perceived and the desired styles of leadership is huge, it leads to lower level of job satisfaction among the employees and has a negative impact on employee attitudes thereby affecting the employee engagement (Savery, 1993). This is one of the biggest challenges for any leader to ensure that the dissonance factor is low whenever he/she implements a leadership style.

Breevaart and Bakker (2017) stated that transformational leaders need to change their behaviour from day to day basis based on the performance of their subordinates and even the emotional levels of their subordinates. The leaders are required to adjust their behaviour according to the needs of the employees which means that when the employees are engaged, there is not much need to motivate them (Dvir and Shamir, 2003). This change in behaviour is quite difficult to adopt for the leader and acts as one of the challenges in implementing transformational leadership in any organization.

Strom et al. (2014) found that maintaining organizational justice while implementing any leadership style is another challenge for the leaders.

Xu, Liu and Chang (2017) found that employee psychological capital and team collectivism impacts the leadership psychological capital to a great extent. This means that in order to implement any leadership style effectively, the leader must also focus on the employee’s psychological well-being and ensure that the employee is optimistic, confident and resilient. The leader must ensure that the subordinates have the shared values and roles and follow the norms that are required to work in teams. This can be quite difficult for the leader as the employees’ personal situations could affect their psychological capital which are not under the control of the leader.

Viinamaki (2012) stated that two of the major challenges that leaders face are the inability to overcome their own mistakes and also the inability to handle the consequences of employee disengagement such as bad employee performance, high employee turnover etc. Morison and McMullan (2013) suggested that lack of strategic focus and awareness and lack of commitment from the leader are major challenges that are faced while implementing leadership styles. Barnwell (2015)
suggested that most of the leaders made common leadership errors which were previously highlighted by many researchers, such as misjudging the strength of employee engagement, neglecting the consequences of fear amongst the employees and not giving enough importance to employee trust. Maurer (2011) stated that the leaders often have to pay a heavy price for making these major mistakes. Taking actions after considering these factors is a challenge for the leaders.

2.6 Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement

According to Khan and Yadav (2016), leaders have the ability to impact effectiveness of the organization through their subordinates. While transactional leaders are limited to use rewards and recognitions to obtain higher performance from the employees, transformational leaders fosters development of employee engagement by changing the point of view of the employees from singular interest to shared interests of the group as a whole. Transformational leaders are capable of motivating and inspiring the employees to focus on the goals and objectives of the organization. According to multiple researchers such as Bakker and Demerouti (2008) and Batista-Taran et al. (2009), transformational leaders directly impact the engagement levels of the employees by increasing their commitment towards the company and job satisfaction. Cartwright and Holmes (2006) also stated that leaders who build good trustworthy relationships with their employees are able to increase their engagement levels.

Multiple studies have been conducted by researchers and the definition of employee engagement have now been blended with leadership styles as a “heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his/her organization that influences him/her to exert greater effort to his/her work” (Padmanathan, 2010, p16).

According to Padmanathan (2010), the key factors of leadership that affect employee engagement are trust and integrity, having a clear correlation between organization performance and employee performance, intellectual stimulation, career opportunities for the employee, leader-employee relationship, pride about company reputation and team collectivism.
Popli and Rizvi (2015) found that the perceived leadership style has a direct effect on employee engagement which in turn affects service orientation of employees in service based industries which means that employees who perceived their leaders as transformational are more engaged and service oriented.

Bass (1990) stated that transformational leaders motivated their employees by changing their attitudes and belief into a common vision for the organization. Transformational leaders ensure that their employees are confident, their individual needs are met, and they are intellectually stimulated and are interested in the organizational problems by solving them through innovative solutions all of which promote employee engagement (Hansen et al., 2014).

Yao et al. (2017) developed a conceptual framework which linked Kurt Lewin’s three leadership styles with employee engagement as shown below:

![Conceptual Framework of Leadership and Employee Engagement](image)

Figure 2 – Conceptual Framework of Leadership and Employee Engagement (Yao et al., 2017, p985)

The conceptual framework stated that though autocratic leaders are more likely to obtain high efficiency from the employees, the employees do not have job satisfaction. Due to work stress and no rights in decision making, the employees have low morale and the organization suffers from high turnover (Goethals et al., 2004). Democratic leaders on the other hand allow the employees to be part of the decision making and therefore the employees feel more responsible and accountable for their actions. The employees under a democratic leader focuses on high quality of work (Bhatti et al., 2012). Employees under Laissez-Faire leaders are apathetic, have low motivation levels and have negative impression of the leader.
and the organization as a whole which leads to low productivity (Van Eeden et al., 2008).

Wiley (2010) highlighted that the behaviours of the leaders and managers from a driver for employee engagement and thus the leaders must inspire the employees, respect and recognize their efforts, provide them with innovative works and must have a genuine concern for the employees.

According to Hseih and Wang (2015), leadership is one of the biggest contributors to employee engagement and authentic leadership is conceptualized as the style which inspires the employees the most as these leaders have strong values and ensure that there is trust and openness in their relationships with their employees. In such scenarios, employee trust forms the mediator for the relationship between leadership and employee engagement. In today’s world, the business environment changes on a day to day basis with new cases of financial frauds emerging everyday where the leaders of the reputed organizations are primarily involved. Many reputed companies have also faced severe consequences due to environmental damages caused by them even though they have committed to being environmental friendly on paper for years. Therefore, it is important that the leaders of today are authentic and hold high ethical and moral values so that their employees are able to trust them as trust is a strong force which connects the employees, the processes and the environment and can promote the success of the organization. The consistency of the leader’s words and actions and his/her moral perceptions has a positive influence on the employee engagement as employees draw inspiration and are motivated from those leaders who have high ethical and moral considerations (Wang and Hseih, 2013).

Based on studies conducted by multiple researchers, Carasco-Saul et al. (2015) derived the framework for defining the relationships between transformational leadership and employee engagement which highlighted that transformational leadership boosts employee engagement through optimism, responsibility, meaningfulness and innovative behaviour which directly impacts the employee’s
knowledge, relationship with customer, career satisfaction, performance positively and intention to leave negatively.

Figure 3 – Relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015, p57)

Popli and Rizvi (2016) established that not only is there a strong positive association between transformational leadership and employee engagement, there is also a positive association between transactional leadership and employee engagement, especially for young employees who are in the beginning stages of their career.

According to Shuck and Herd (2012) leaders who want to produce engaging work environments need to develop self-awareness and develop emotional intelligence to provide attention to the basic needs of the employees and respond to those needs willingly. It is a challenge for leaders who do not focus on personal development to manage the performance and engagement of the employees.

2.7 Summary
While a lot of research on employee engagement is carried and many models suggest leadership as a crucial factor in developing employee engagement, there is a gap in investigating which leadership behavioural factors affect engagement and which processes related to leadership behaviours can result in higher employee engagement levels (Soieb et al., 2013). The multiple leadership styles discussed in this chapter can have both positive as well as negative impacts on the engagement
of employees in engineering consultancies. Therefore, it is important to find out which leadership style is most accepted by the employees in this industry to promote the work related factors of employee engagement such as performance, productivity, job satisfaction, retention, innovation, creativity etc. These work-related factors of employee engagement and leadership styles form the basis of data collection and analysis for the next chapter in order to critically evaluate which leadership style is regarded as the best-fit by employees of infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE.
CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

This dissertation follows a positivist and interpretivist research philosophy which focuses on taking multiple viewpoints and perceptions in order to answer the research question and using mixed methods of data analysis (Saunders et al., 2009).

The approach of this dissertation is both deductive and inductive as it is focusing on testing the various key theories of leadership and employee engagement and the relationship between them as identified in Literature Review to investigate the impact of leadership styles on the employee engagement in infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE by collecting the primary data through questionnaires as well as exploring how the best-fit leadership style promotes employee engagement through structured interviews (Burney, 2008), therefore following a mixed method of data collection and analysis.

This dissertation is an exploratory case study on the infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE focused on the employee perspectives on leadership styles that are already existing in these companies and assess the impact of these leadership styles on the engagement of the employees. There is already a lot of literature in this topic, however, research has not been carried out on this topic in infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE.

The data has been collected from employees who are working in infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE for more than a year as these employees are able to understand the working styles and patterns of their leaders and have also developed a working relationship with their leaders.

3.2 Research Strategy

The research strategy is shown in the below flow chart which shows the research design:
The key theories of employee engagement, factors affecting employee engagement and leadership styles have been already examined in literature review. The challenges for implementing leadership styles and having effective employee engagement is also explored through literature review. As shown in the above diagram, the work-related factors that affects employee engagement is already identified through review of literature, journals, books and other academic resources as discussed in Chapter-2. All of these is used as secondary data for the research. A questionnaire with three parts (Appendix-B) is developed and circulated to the employees in different engineering consultancies for primary data collection. Part-A
of the questionnaire requests the participant to identify the work-related factors affecting employee engagement and then rank these factors based on relevance to their organization. Part-B of the questionnaire requests the participant to identify the leadership characteristics of the employee’s team leader or manager. Part-C of the questionnaire requests the participant to analyse how the selected work-related factors affecting employee engagement is influenced by the team leader / manager. Quantitative analysis will be carried out on the collected primary data and the leadership styles of the team leaders will be identified. Through further quantitative analysis, the “best-fit” leadership style according to employees for infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE will be identified.

Selected employees whose team leaders have been identified to be matched with the best-fit leadership style will be interviewed to further qualitatively analyse how leadership styles can promote or has promoted employee engagement.

Selection of samples, data collection and data analysis is discussed in the next sub-sections.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

For selecting the sample size for this dissertation, the total population was identified, that is, all the employees working in engineering consultancies in the UAE which is possibly around 5000 (company profiles of some of the major engineering consultancies in UAE are attached as Appendix-E). Out of the total population, the target population for this study were the employees who are working in infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE which is around 2000 (as highlighted in Appendix-E).

Since this dissertation is focused on obtaining employee perspectives only, the samples are selected such that accuracy of the data collected can be maintained. It is not feasible to collect the data from the entire target population and reach a census due to the limited time frame of the dissertation. Therefore, Non-Probability sampling with the Self –Selection sampling method (Saunders et al., 2009) where the scope of the dissertation is limited to only employees who have completed at least one year of service in infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE. Self-Selection
sampling allows the participant to decide whether or not they would like to be a part of the research after the researcher publicises the need for the research. This is very important because many engineering consultancies in UAE have strict compliance regulations and therefore the employees do not have the right to provide any data. A sample size of 50 is determined for this dissertation to analyse dominant leadership patterns in the infrastructure engineering industry by collecting the data through questionnaire. However, since this sample size is relatively small, it can be considered as only a snapshot and may not be totally representative. Therefore, the data obtained from the samples will be triangulated with the findings of other researchers (secondary data) who have carried out similar research such as Popli and Rizvi (2016).

After the first round of data analysis, samples whose perceived leadership styles have matched with the Best-Fit leadership style is considered as the sample frame for elaborative interviews. Purposive sampling is carried out to have a sample size of 5 based on the researcher’s judgement after analysing the data and selecting only the samples dominant match. Elaborative structured interviews are conducted for these samples to further analyse how the Best-Fit leadership style can promote employee engagement (Best and Kahn, 2006).

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

As highlighted in the research approach, following methods of data collection is used:

- **Secondary Data**: Literatures such as existing academic journals, books, and other academic resources to identify key theories of leadership and employee engagement, challenges of employee engagement and implementation of leader styles and the impact of leadership styles on the work related factors of employee engagement.

- **Primary Data - Questionnaire**: Questionnaires (Appendix-B) consisting of three parts are circulated both in hard copy and online using Google Forms for ease of data collection. Part-A of the questionnaire requests the participant to identify the work-
related factors affecting employee engagement and then rank these factors based on relevance to their organization. Part-B of the questionnaire requests the participant to identify the leadership characteristics of the employee’s team leader or manager. Part-C of the questionnaire requests the participant to analyse how the selected work-related factors affecting employee engagement is influenced by the team leader / manager. While Part-A of the questionnaire utilizes the concept of Ranked Data, Part-B and Part-C of the questionnaire contains Likert Scale arrangement (Allen and Seaman, 2007).

- **Primary Data – Interviews:** Structured interviews (Appendix-D) are set-up for 5 selected samples by contacting them and taking prior appointments. During the interview, the participant is explained that the interviews are held as a continuation of the data collection that was previously done through questionnaire for the elaborative content of the dissertation to elaborate further on how the Best-Fit leadership style can promote employee engagement as per employee perspectives (Best and Kahn, 2006). The approximate duration of the interviews is 30 minutes. The interviews are recorded (subject to permission from the interviewee) (Appendix-C) and transcribed for further qualitative analysis.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis is carried out after collection of the data in the following manner:

#### 3.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

- The data obtained from Part-A of the questionnaire regarding the work-related factors affecting employee engagement in the organization according to the employees is quantitatively analysed using Pivot Tables in Microsoft Excel and then are ranked according to their relevance using the Ranked Data format.

- The data obtained from Part-B of the questionnaire regarding the various leadership styles and traits are quantitatively analysed through scoring patterns in Likert Scale (Allen and Seaman, 2007) in Microsoft Excel to determine the leadership style of each team leader / manager as perceived by the employee.
The data obtained from Part-C of the questionnaire is quantitatively analysed using Pivot Tables (Jelen and Alexander, 2016) to determine which leadership style focuses on the work related factors that impact employee engagement and these are depicted in graphical form through bar charts. Mathematical correlation is used to analyse the variables – ranked work-related affecting employee engagement according to employee and ranked work-related factors affecting employee engagement for each leadership style as perceived by the employee. Line charts are prepared to show the correlation and determine which leadership style is the “Best-Fit” to promote employee engagement as per employee perspectives.

Since the findings obtained may not be much significant statistically due to small sample size, triangulation is done with the findings of other researchers (secondary data) who have carried out similar research such as Popli and Rizvi (2016).

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis
After the Best-Fit leadership style is determined, samples whose data correspond to that leadership style is reviewed and 5 samples are selected to conduct the elaborative interview. The interviews are transcribed into word format and is analysed qualitatively by identifying the key themes and then categorically arranging the themes in a hierarchical order by considering each statement in the interview as a separate units of data. A count is taken of the repeating categories in all of the 5 interviews and inter-relationships are suggested with the statements which can be considered as more than one category (Saunders et al., 2009) to elaborate further on the ways that the Best-Fit leadership style can promote employee engagement.

3.6 Validity and Reliability
In order to ensure that the dissertation is both valid and reliable the following approaches are taken (Best and Kahn, 2006):
Secondary data which is being used for this research are obtained from reliable and academically peer reviewed journals and books. These articles, journals and books are searched and found on Cardiff Met Search or Google Scholar, both of which are academically trusted sources to ensure the external validity of the data.

Pilot-testing of the questionnaire is done with a few employees in order to ensure that the questionnaire does not have any loop holes and there are no unexpected errors and the findings are presented in the next chapter. Based on the pilot test findings, the questionnaire is revised to make it more easily understandable for the participant and to improve the reliability of the primary data obtained.

Internal validity is ensured as the primary data is collected only from employees who have at least 1 year of experience in working for infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE.

Since the sample size is small and therefore the quantitative data obtained may not have much statistical significance, but is a useful snapshot which can be triangulated with the findings of other researchers (secondary data) who have carried out similar research such as Popli and Rizvi (2016).

Further reliability will be ensured by choosing the appropriate sample frame and sample size and also by ensuring that the quantitative analysis is carried out correctly and all the data is entered, analysed and interpreted correctly without any errors and is consistent to maintain the content validity.

3.7 Access

For this dissertation, the dissertation subject was discussed with the network of employees working in different engineering consultancies and feedback was obtained from all. Since most of the employees showed interest in the dissertation topic and agreed that this topic is of high importance in the current market scenario. All employees providing the primary data were requested to fill in the participant consent form (Appendix-B – Questionnaire including Consent Form and Appendix-C – Interview Consent Form) prior to participating in the research. The employees
were also provided an option to keep the name of their company as anonymous in the questionnaire due to any compliance issue.
Since this dissertation is focused on the employee perspectives on the leadership style of their team leader or manager, it is not company specific, rather it is more market specific. Therefore, no access was required to any company specific material. However, it was the requirement of one of the companies to obtain permission from the management allowing their employees to participate in the research which was obtained and the E-mail is attached as Appendix-F.

3.8 Ethical Consideration
The participation of the employees in this research is entire voluntary and the employees has the right to withdraw at any time from the research. This is informed to them through the participant information sheet and participant consent form. The consent is also taken during the elaborative interviews. The data collection and analysis is carried out in an ethical manner without any manipulation. All data obtained from the employees is stored securely.
The dissertation also received the Ethics Approval from Cardiff Metropolitan University (Ethics No. 2016D5490).
CHAPTER 4 - RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Findings of Pilot Testing

Pilot testing of the draft questionnaires were carried out by collecting data from 4 employees as mentioned in the Methodology. The 4 participants were requested to attempt to fill the questionnaire independently and comment on the understanding of the questions and to mention any ambiguities or sensitive issues faced while completing the questionnaire. They were also requested to mention the amount of time taken to complete the questionnaire.

The feedback received from the participants were quite valuable, which indicated that around 10 minutes on an average was required to complete the questionnaire. Based on the feedback, changes were made to the draft questionnaire which are mentioned below:

- The question regarding the work-related factors affecting employee engagement was changed such that the employees were required to only rank all the factors from 1 to 11 based on relevance (1 being most relevant and 11 being irrelevant) instead of first ticking the relevant factors and then ranking them.
- Since some of the participants indicated that they do not want to disclose their exact age, the age was categorized broadly in terms of 10 years period.
- The question related to the team leader/manager’s behaviour and employee engagement was modified for better understanding.
- Participant's position in the organization was changed to participant’s department in the organization.
- The scoring for question regarding the influence of team leader on the employee engagement factors were changed such that the higher value corresponded to the positive attributes instead of negative attributes.

Based on the above, the questionnaire was finalized.
4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis – Questionnaire

4.2.1 Design of the Questionnaire
As discussed in the Methodology, the questionnaire was designed in accordance with the research aims and objectives and with the help of the secondary data collected through Literature Review. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts – Part-A, Part-B and Part-C and also included the participant consent form as the first page.

Part-A of the questionnaire contained the following:
- Name of the Participant
- Name of the organization in which the participant was working (which was not mandatory to be filled in due to compliance issues)
- Participant’s department in the organization
- Age group of the participant
- Gender of the participant
- Question 1 – Participant was requested to rank the factors which affect employee engagement in his/her organization based on relevance (1 being Most Relevant and 11 being Highly Irrelevant)

Part-B of the questionnaire contained Question 2 in which 18 statements were provided to the participant regarding the behaviour of his/her team leader and the participant was requested to highlight the extent up to which the statements were applicable to his/her team leader from “Never” to “Always”.

Part-C of the questionnaire contained Question 3 which requested the participant to indicate how his/her team leader’s behaviour affects the factors related to his/her engagement.

The findings from the questionnaire is triangulated with the findings of other researchers who carried out similar research in Section 4.2.8 in order to improve the validity and reliability of the research.
4.2.2 Questionnaire Distribution and Response

As highlighted in the Methodology, a sample size of 50 was considered for the questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed to a total of 57 employees in different engineering consultancies. A positive response was received from 50 employees who showed genuine interest to participate in the research and provided the data diligently. However, due to the hectic schedule of the participants, the data collection took a longer period of time than expected. Therefore, a response rate of 87.71% was obtained for the questionnaire.

4.2.3 Demographics

The 50 samples obtained through the data collection were coded from serial numbers 01 to 50 and the types of the participants were categorized to understand the demographics of the research. Since Self-Selection sampling was conducted, the demographics of the 50 samples are represented in the pie-charts shown below. It was observed that majority (56%) of the participants belonged to the Engineering department followed by 24% for project management. This is generally the usual case in any engineering consultancy - the number of engineers are much higher than the project management, designing/drafting or administrative staff as the engineers are the sole producers of engineering deliverables.
It was also observed that the data was collected from a good mix of different age groups, which ensured that different employee perspectives are obtained which are not generation specific.

It was observed that majority (78%) of the participants are male as it is a fact that the infrastructure engineering industry in UAE is male dominated which was also
supported by research conducted in UAE which stated that UAE has less female engineers compared to males (Mahani and Molki, 2011).

![Gender of Participants](image)

**Figure 7 – Participant’s Department in their Organization**

### 4.2.4 Ranking of Factors affecting Engagement according to Employees

The first question requested the employees to rank the work-related factors (which were listed through literature review) affecting their engagement in their organization based on relevance, that is, 1 being Most Relevant and 11 being Highly Irrelevant. The data collected from the 50 samples were analysed using Pivot Table shown below through which the average rankings for each factor affecting employee engagement was obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors affecting Employee Engagement (Average rankings of 50 samples)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average of Employee Performance in projects</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Employee Productivity while carrying out any task</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Employee Job satisfaction</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Employee Motivation</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Appropriate appraisal and evaluation of employees</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Employee Job Security</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Average Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Employee dedication and loyalty towards his/her work</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Appropriate training and development provided to employees</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Adequate staffing</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Innovation and creativity of employees</td>
<td>6.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of Ability of the organization to maintain high employee retention</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Pivot Table showing Average Rankings of 50 samples for Factors Affecting Employee Engagement

Based on the average rankings in the pivot table above, the factors affecting employee engagement were then ranked from 1 to 11 such that the highest average ranking was ranked 1 and the lowest average ranking was ranked 11 as indicated in the bar chart below:
4.2.5 Identifying the Leadership Style of the Team Leaders (as per Employee Perceptions)

Part-B of the questionnaire requested the participants to mark the extent up to which 18 statements regarding their team leader's / manager's behaviour applied to their respective team leaders/managers using Likert's scale. The 18 statements in this question represented 6 different leadership styles – namely, Autocratic Leadership, Democratic Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Situational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Transformational Leadership such that each leadership style had 3 statements corresponding to it. The participants were requested to mark the extent up to which each statement applied to their team leader's behaviour on a range of 0 - Never to 5 – Always.
For every sample, a total score for each leadership style was obtained and the leadership style which obtained the highest score was determined to be the dominant leadership style of the participant’s team leader. An example for the same is shown in the table below (indicated as Sample No.1).

However, in certain cases, it was observed that 2 or more leadership styles obtained the same score. In these cases, it was also noted that the Situational Leadership score was also quite high and very close to the highest score. Therefore, in such cases the dominant leadership style was determined to be Situational Leadership in which the team leader / manager may change his/her leadership styles based on the situation as already discussed in Literature Review. An example for such a case is also shown in the table below (indicated as Sample No.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement No.</th>
<th>Sample No.1</th>
<th>Sample No.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Style</td>
<td>Score (Statements)</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic Leadership</td>
<td>1+6+13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Leadership</td>
<td>10+14+18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire Leadership</td>
<td>3+9+16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional Leadership</td>
<td>4+8+15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>2+7+12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Leadership</td>
<td>5+11+17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 – Identification of Leadership Style of the Team Leader (Based on Employee Perceptions)**

After analysing the 50 samples as per the above methodology, it was observed that majority (42%) of the team leaders followed Situational Leadership as per employee perceptions as shown in the figure below. This is understandable as most of the leaders or managers in the engineering consultancies in the UAE change their leadership styles based on the situations due to fluctuating market conditions, varied work pressures, job demands etc.
4.2.6 Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement

Part-C of the questionnaire requested the participants to mark how their team leader’s behaviour impacts the factors affecting their engagement using Likert’s scale on a range of 1 - Strongly Affects Negatively to 5 – Strongly Affects Positively.

The data collected from the 50 samples were analysed using Pivot table to indicate the average scores for each factor affecting employee engagement for each type of leadership style identified in the previous section as shown in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Average of Your Performance in projects</th>
<th>Average of Your Productivity while carrying out any task</th>
<th>Average of Your Motivation</th>
<th>Average of Your Job Security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8333333333333</td>
<td>3.833333333</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.888888889</td>
<td>3.2222222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>3.761904762</td>
<td>3.571428571</td>
<td>3.4285714</td>
<td>3.285714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.16666666667</td>
<td>3.833333333</td>
<td>3.3333333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.833333333</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Average of Adequate staffing in your organization</th>
<th>Average of Your Job satisfaction</th>
<th>Average of Your appraisal and evaluation</th>
<th>Average of Your training and development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>3.1666666667</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6666666667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>3.3333333333333</td>
<td>3.111111111</td>
<td>3.111111111 11</td>
<td>3.3333333333333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>3.571428571</td>
<td>3.52380952</td>
<td>3.666666666 67</td>
<td>3.428571429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.166666667</td>
<td>3.833333333 33</td>
<td>2.83333333333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.83333333333</td>
<td>4.166666666 67</td>
<td>3.6666666667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Labels</td>
<td>Average of Ability of the organization to maintain high employee retention</td>
<td>Average of Your dedication and loyalty towards your work</td>
<td>Average of Your Innovation and creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>3.111111111111</td>
<td>3.4444444444</td>
<td>3.5555555556</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>3.714285714</td>
<td>3.619047619</td>
<td>3.571428571</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>3.1666666667</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1666666667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8333333333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 – Average Scores of Impact of Team Leader’s Behaviour on Factors affecting Employee Engagement

Based on the average scores shown in the table above, it can be deduced that the employee engagement factors which have an average score below 3 are negatively impacted by the particular leadership styles, whereas employee engagement factors which have an average score above 3 are positively impacted by the particular leadership style. Employee engagement factors which have an average score of 3 are not impacted at all by the particular leadership style.

4.2.7 Identifying Best Fit Leadership Style as per Employee Perceptions

Based on the average scores of impact of team leader’s behaviour on employee engagement factors (as shown in Table-3), the factors are ranked from 1 to 11 for each leadership style such that higher the average score higher the ranking. The rankings for the employee engagement factors for each leadership style are indicated in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors affecting Employee Engagement</th>
<th>Rankings (as per Employee Perceptions of their Leaders)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autocratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Performance in projects</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Productivity while carrying out any task</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Job satisfaction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Motivation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate appraisal and evaluation of employees</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Job Security</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee dedication and loyalty towards his/her work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate training and development provided to employees</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The rankings of factors affecting employee engagement for each leadership style as indicated in Table 4 is correlated with the ranking of factors affecting employee engagement according to employees (Figure 8) using mathematical correlation and the correlation values obtained are indicated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Correlation Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>0.727652808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>0.545135896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>-0.72201083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>-0.028246634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>0.811982319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>0.229365855</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 - Correlation with the Employee Rankings of Factors Affecting Employee Engagement for Each Leadership Style
From the above table, it is understood that the highest positive correlation with the employee rankings of factors affecting employee engagement is achieved by the Transactional Leadership style which is further confirmed by the Line Charts depicted below for all leadership styles.

![Correlation with the Employee Rankings of Factors Affecting Employee Engagement for Each Leadership Style](image)

**Figure 10 – Line Chart showing Correlation with the Employee Rankings of Factors Affecting Employee Engagement for Each Leadership Style**

Based on the above, Transactional Leadership can be regarded as the leadership style which is “Best-Fit” with the employee perceptions to promote employee engagement in infrastructure engineering consultancies in the UAE. However, it is noted that Autocratic Leadership is the second most suitable leadership style matching with the employee perceptions, which is a surprising outcome.
4.2.8 Triangulation of Findings with Other Research

As highlighted in the Methodology, since this sample size is relatively small, it can be considered as only a snap shot and may not be totally representative. Therefore, the data obtained from the samples are triangulated with the findings of other researchers (secondary data) who have carried out similar research.

Popli and Rizvi (2016) collected data from 329 samples across five different service based organizations in NCR region in Delhi and found that Transactional Leadership had the highest positive correlation with the Employee Engagement which indicated a strong positive relationship between them. Since infrastructure engineering consultancies are also service based organizations, it can be said that the results obtained by this research is similar to the results obtained by Popli and Rizvi (2016) and therefore the results obtained by this research is valid and reliable.

Rast et al. (2013) also collected data from 215 employees in UK and found that during times of uncertainty, employees supported and trusted autocratic leadership more than any other type of leadership as autocratic leaders were perceived to be more prototypical. Since the current UAE infrastructure market conditions are fluctuating and uncertain due to sudden drop in oil prices, it is only natural for the employees to feel uncertain about their job and this is one of the reasons that autocratic leadership is found to be the second most suitable leadership style as per employee perceptions in the current infrastructure engineering consultancies.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis – Structured Interviews

As discussed in the Methodology, the samples of questionnaire whose data correspond to the “Best-Fit” leadership style which is found to be Transactional leadership style was filtered and 5 samples out of them were selected for the elaborative interview to discuss how their team leader can further promote employee engagement in their organization. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using the Categorization technique (Saunders et al., 2009) which are provided in the Portfolio of Evidence.
4.3.1 Question 1 – Team Leader’s Behaviour

The interviewees were asked to describe the behaviour of their team leader in their organization.

Multiple interviewees mentioned that their team leaders “recognized their good work and also ensured that their bad performance was corrected”.

Monitoring of performance was a key point mentioned by multiple interviewees. Interviewee 4 mentioned that the team leader ensured that the employees “regain confidence in their tasks” which indicated that the team leader also motivated the employees.

Multiple interviewees suggested that efficiency was a key factor of importance to their team leaders and their team leaders set goals for the employees and ensured that they were achieved.

The responses of the interviewees when compared to the secondary data collected during Literature review, further confirmed that their team leaders followed Transactional style. Therefore, characteristics of the team leaders described by the interviewees are broadly categorized and depicted in the figure below.

Figure 11 – Leadership behaviour of Team Leaders (Transactional Leadership)
4.3.2 Question 2 – Positives of Leadership Behaviour of the Team Leader

The interviewees were asked what they liked the most about their team leader in order to understand which qualities of the transactional leadership was perceived positively by the employees.

Interviewee 3 highlighted that his/her team leader has “helped a lot in improving bad performance and pointing out where it is lacking” which indicated that the team leader coached and mentored his/her employees.

Multiple interviewees mentioned that the ability of the team leader to communicate the tasks clearly was a huge positive.

Interviewee 4 mentioned that his/her team leader “always ensured that productivity and efficiency is maintained even in tough times”.

Interviewee 5 highlighted that his/her team leader “steps in whenever it is required” which indicated that the team leader follows management-by-exception.

The main categories for the positives of the team leader are depicted in the figure below.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 12 - Positives of Leadership Behaviour of the Team Leader (Transactional Leadership)*
4.3.3 Question 3 - Areas of Improvement of the Team Leader

The interviewees were asked about the areas of improvement for their team leaders in order to understand which qualities of the transactional leadership style were perceived negatively by the employees and what the leaders can further do to improve their leadership.

Interviewee 1 mentioned that his/her team leader “need to give more attention to training needs of the employees”.

Interviewee 2 mentioned that the team leader “needs to provide more motivation to all employees”.

Interviewee 3 highlighted that the team leader “should not be so commanding” whereas interviewee 5 highlighted that his/her team leader was “a bit too dominating” both of which indicated that the team leaders in general are dominating the employees.

Interviewee 4 mentioned that his/her team leader “should be transparent” which indicated that the employees appreciate transparency and fair decision making.

However, the key point highlighted by many interviewees was that the team leaders need to understand the employee problems and build a good working relationship with the employees.

The main categories of areas of improvement for the team leaders are depicted in the below figure.
4.3.4 Question 4 - Importance of Employee Engagement in the current Infrastructure Engineering Consultancy Market in UAE

The interviewees were asked how important was employee engagement in the current infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE according to them. Multiple interviewees highlighted that “the current market scenario is very bad, so it is important for employees to be engaged for the jobs to be secure”. It was also highlighted that the employees need to be engaged in order to maintain work quality so that the clients are satisfied with the work.

The interviewees also highlighted that if the employees are not engaged then there will be no appraisals and no career growth for them and also that there will be no motivation or morale.

Interviewee 5 mentioned that the employees need to be more engaged because “there is a lot of competition in the market and cheaper resources are available”.

The main factors of importance of employee engagement is highlighted in below figure.
4.3.5 Question 5 - Work-Related Factors Affecting Employee Engagement

The interviewees were asked about the factors that are affecting their engagement in their organization. The interviewees highlighted different factors that are affecting their engagement, however the major factors discussed were job security due to the current uncertain market conditions, the performance and productivity of the employees, job satisfaction and growth in career or appraisals.

One of the other major factor highlighted by multiple interviewees was the stress factor or the work load which indicated that the staffing of the organization was affecting the engagement as the employees cannot be engaged properly if the work allocated to them is too much or too less.

The factors affecting employee engagement in infrastructure engineering consultancies are mentioned in the figure below.

Figure 14 – Importance of Employee Engagement in current UAE Infrastructure Engineering Consultancy Market
4.3.6 Question 6 – Steps Taken by Team Leader to Promote Employee Engagement

The interviewees were asked how their team leaders promoted employee engagement in their organization. Multiple interviewees mentioned that their team leaders recognized and monitored their performance and motivated and appraised them accordingly.

Interviewee 3 highlighted that his/her team leader “ensures that the employees are maximum utilized and are not sitting idle”.

Interviewee 4 highlighted that his/her team leader “wants the employees to fully commit to their work and be responsible”.

Interviewees also highlighted that the proper resources and tasks allocation are done by their team leaders to ensure that they are engaged.

The various steps taken by team leaders who follow transactional leadership to promote employee engagement according to the interviewees are depicted in below figure.
4.3.7 Question 7 – Further Steps that should be taken by Team Leader to Promote Employee Engagement

The interviewees were asked what further steps should be taken by their team leaders to promote employee engagement.

Interviewee 1 highlighted that “the team leader should focus on training needs of the employees”.

Interviewee 2 mentioned that “the team leader should understand the key problems that the employees are facing and understand them”.

Multiple interviewees highlighted that the team leaders should motivate the employees and ensure that the employees take ownership of their work. Interviewees also mentioned that the team leaders should ensure that the appraisals are done in a correct manner and also focus on team building to promote good working relationships.

The steps that should be taken by team leaders who follow transactional leadership to promote employee engagement according to the interviews are highlighted in the figure below.
4.3.8 Discussions on Qualitative Analysis of Interviews

The interviews conducted with the 5 participants focused on the following:

- Leadership style of the participant’s team leader
- Positives of the team leader’s leadership style
- Areas of improvement of the team leader’s leadership style
- Importance of employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies
- Factors affecting employee engagement
- Steps taken by team leaders to promote employee engagement
- Further steps that should be taken by team leaders to promote employee engagement
The key points highlighted about the leadership behaviour of the team leaders in Section 4.3.1 confirmed that the team leaders followed transactional leadership as identified previously through the questionnaire as the leadership behaviour mentioned by the interviewees were similar to the leadership behaviour of transactional leaders as discussed in the literature review of existing literatures. The positives and areas of improvement of the team leaders as mentioned by the interviewees indicated both the employee perceived positives and the negative characteristics of the transactional leadership style.

The importance of employee engagement was highlighted by the interviewees as the market situation in UAE is currently uncertain. The responses of the interviewees regarding the factors affecting employee engagement when compared to the secondary data collected for literature review was found similar which further reinforced the validity and reliability of the research. The steps taken by transactional leaders to promote employee engagement were discussed and further steps that should be taken to promote employee engagement was also highlighted by the employees which would ensure that the leadership style of the team leaders truly become “Best-Fit” to the employee perceptions in infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE.

4.4 Summary
The data collected from the employees in different infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE and further quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data have helped to achieve the research objectives of this dissertation as stated in Chapter-1 which will be also discussed in detail in the next chapter. Through this research, it was found that transactional leadership is the “Best-Fit” leadership style according to employees to promote employee engagement. This finding was also triangulated with the findings of other researchers who carried out similar research in order to improve the validity and reliability of the research. The interviews conducted with the participants focused on the steps required to be taken by their team leaders to further improve employee engagement in their organization highlighted the importance of focusing on training needs, being empathetic and
motivating, promoting ownership, being fair and transparent in decision making, focusing on team building and conducting frequent appraisals. It can be thus regarded that if the team leaders of infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE try to inculcate these ways of promoting employee engagement, they will have a more engaged and focused workforce. However, this research can only be considered as a snap shot and the limitations of this research along with the recommendations for further research will also be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As highlighted in the Introduction chapter, the aim of this dissertation was to investigate and understand employee perspectives on the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure market for engineering consultancies. The research was conducted based on the objectives set for fulfilling the aim. This chapter will discuss in detail how the research objectives have been met and will provide recommendation for future research.

5.1 Conclusions

The employees working in infrastructure engineering consultancies in the current market situation in UAE are required to be engaged in their more than ever in order to sustain their jobs as well as for the company to have competitive advantage. Leadership of the team leaders or managers of the employees plays a huge role in their engagement and these leaders have the power to bring a positive or negative change in the employee engagement.

Detailed literature review was carried out on the research subject which investigated the various theories of leadership and employee engagement and discussed existing studies and literature in which a strong relationship between leadership and employee engagement has been proved. The dissertation therefore focused on having both a deductive and inductive approach of research by testing these existing theories as well as collecting primary data from the employees to understand the employee perceptions. The research objectives of this dissertation was also met as discussed below.

Objective 1 - To examine the key theories and concepts of leadership styles and employee engagement.

The key theories and concepts of leadership styles were discussed in detail in the Literature Review with the help of the secondary data collected from existing literatures and research papers. The theories of key researchers in the field of
leadership such as Bass (1990) and Lewin (1974) were discussed and also some of the major styles of leadership such as Democratic Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Situational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Transformational Leadership was discussed and critically analysed with reference to the current UAE infrastructure engineering market. The multiple definitions of employee engagement as defined by key researchers such as Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) was discussed and the employee engagement models such as the Five Levels of Engagement (Rice et al., 2012) and Ten Cs of Engagement (Seijts and Crim, 2006) were also discussed in detail with a critical evaluation of its importance in the current UAE infrastructure engineering market scenario.

**Objective 2 - To explore the challenges for implementing leadership styles and engaging the workforce.**

The challenges of implementing leadership styles and engaging the workforce in today’s organizations are many and especially in the UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies. These challenges faced by the leaders were discussed through review of existing literatures and research papers by multiple researchers. One of the main challenges of implementing leadership styles was found to be the dissonance factor between the perceived and desired styles of leadership (Savery, 1993) which was actually addressed in this dissertation as it focused on how the employee perceived best-fit leadership style promoted employee engagement and it can be further promoted as desired by the employees. Some of the challenges faced by leaders in implementing the leadership styles which were discussed in literature review were also highlighted by the participants of the interviews when they were asked to mention how their team leaders can further promote employee engagement. One of the major challenges for the leaders in implementing employee engagement is the failure to understand or connect with the employees emotionally and build a relationship with them which was highlighted by multiple interviews who mentioned that their leaders were not empathetic enough which hampered their
engagement. Some of the interviewees also highlighted that transparency and fairness in decision making is also of vital importance to them and affects their engagement which are also one of the challenges in employee engagement as discussed in the literature review as often this is not feasible due to company policies.

**Objective 3 - Evaluate the impact of leadership styles on work related factors of employee engagement such as employee productivity, employee performance and retention with particular focus on the perspectives of employees working in the infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE.**

The primary data collected through the questionnaires was analysed as depicted in Table-3 to evaluate the impact of different leadership styles on work related factors of employee engagement. Eleven work-related factors of employee engagement were identified through literature review – Employee Performance in projects, Employee Productivity while carrying out any task, Employee Job satisfaction, Employee Motivation, Appropriate appraisal and evaluation of employees, Employee Job Security, Employee dedication and loyalty towards his/her work, Appropriate training and development provided to employees, Adequate staffing in the organization, Innovation and creativity of employees and Ability of the organization to maintain high employee retention.

Elaborating the quantitative results depicted in Table-3, the following can be concluded regarding the impact of each leadership styles on the above mentioned factors of employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies:

- **Autocratic Leadership** has a negative impact on most of the factors of employee engagement. However, autocratic leadership does not have any impact on the employee’s dedication or loyalty towards his/her work as it is an inherent quality of the employee.
Democratic leadership has a positive impact on all the work-related factors of employee engagement as is expected which is also in line with the existing theories. Laissez-Faire leadership has a negative impact on employee motivation, and has no impact on employee performance and productivity. However, it has a slight positive impact on the other work related factors of employee engagement such as employee dedication and loyalty, innovation and creativity etc.

Situational leadership has a positive impact on all the work-related factors of employee engagement which is understandable due to the uncertainty and fluctuation the current UAE infrastructure market.

Transactional leadership has a strong positive impact on all the work-related factors of employee engagement especially performance and productivity with the exception of training and development. This was also highlighted during the interviews by multiple interviewees where they mentioned that their team leaders need to focus on the training needs of the employees.

Transformational leadership also has a positive impact on the work-related factors of employee engagement except on adequate staffing in the organization where the employees perceived that transformational leadership has no impact at all.

**Objective 4 - Critically evaluate which leadership style is best suited in engineering consultancies to promote employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure market based on employee perspectives.**

As depicted in the Research Findings, Transactional leadership was found to be the “Best-Fit” leadership style to promote employee engagement as per the employee perspectives in the current UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies as it had the highest positive correlation between the rankings of employee engagement factors for the leadership style and the rankings of employee engagement factors according to employees as indicated in the figure below.
5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, it can be suggested that though transactional leadership is considered to the “Best-Fit” leadership style to promote employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure engineering consultancies, the team leaders can also focus on certain areas of improvement which will help them to further promote employee engagement in their organization and also overcome the challenges faced by them on day-to-day basis which are recommended below:

Attention to Training Needs: The team leaders should focus on the training needs of the employees and ensure that the employees are able to develop their skills and use them for their personal benefit as well as the benefit of the organization. Properly trained employees will be more engaged and focused in their work and this will help to improve the overall quality of the deliverables.
Motivation: Even though transactional leaders are known to provide rewards and recognitions to their employees, they are also known to be strict towards non-performing employees which sometimes affects their morals. In these scenarios, verbal motivation from the team leaders helps the employees to boost their morale and be enthusiastically engaged in their work which would lead to better performance.

Building Good Working Relationships with the Employees: In order to further promote employee engagement, the team leaders should focus on building strong working relationships with the employees based on trust. The team leaders should also understand the challenges that the employees have to go through for their daily activities and help the employees in overcoming them. By doing so, the team leaders would be able to foster a good working environment for the employees which would naturally lead to a better engaged workforce. The team leaders can improve the working relationships in their organization by conducting team building activities focusing on active participation from all employees and working together as a team.

Transparent and Fair Decision Making: When team leaders are transparent and make fair decisions which are ethically right, the employees develop trust and respect for their leaders which provides them the enthusiasm to perform better for the benefit of the team and therefore promote engagement.

Systematic Appraisals: The team leaders should ensure that the appraisals and evaluations conducted for the employees are systematic and are carried out in regular intervals so that it acts as a constant motivating factor for the employees and helps them to improve their productivity.

Focus on Employee Ownership: The team leader should promote employee commitment and work responsibility so that the employees take full ownership of their work. When the employees own their work, they will be focusing on being more productive and avoid the common mistakes which would improve the work quality and also reduce conflicts arising within the team, all of which will lead to a better engaged workforce.
5.3 Limitations and Further Research

Every research has certain limitations which are required to be acknowledged by the researcher and these limitations form the base of future studies. This research conducted on the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement in the infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE also has some limitations which are discussed below.

One of the main limitations of this research is that since this sample size is relatively small, it can be considered as only a snapshot and may not be totally representative. Future research on the same subject can be considered with a larger sample size and a wider population.

Another limitation for this research is that it focuses on only some of the major infrastructure engineering consultancies in the UAE and does not consider the smaller engineering consultancies. Future research can consider preparing a database of all the infrastructure engineering consultancies in the country and conducting similar research.

This research focuses only on the employee perceptions of impact of leadership styles on the employee engagement. Further research can be conducted by considering both the employee as well as leader or management perceptions on the same subject and then analysing the best-fit leadership style.

Due to the current fluctuating market conditions in UAE due to drop in oil prices, a lot of employees may have different perceptions towards their leaders than they would have had if the market conditions were stable. Future research on the same subject may be considered for during more economically stable market conditions.
REFERENCES


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Bogardus, E.S., 1934. Leaders and leadership.


APPENDIX – A – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement in the Current UAE Infrastructure Market for Engineering Consultancies: An Analysis of Employee Perspectives**

**Cardiff Metropolitan University Protocol Number: 2016D5490**

**Project summary**

The purpose of this research project is to establish the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement of engineering consultancies operating in the UAE infrastructure market according to employees. Your participation will enable the collection of data which will form part of a study being undertaken at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

**Why have you been asked to participate?**

You have been asked to participate because you fit the profile of the population being studied; that is you have more than 1 year of experience in working for infrastructure engineering consultancies in UAE. As part of this research, you will have to provide your consent to participate in the research during the first stage of data collection using questionnaires, followed by interviews if necessary, during the second stage of data collection. However, your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw from filling the questionnaire or the interview at any time.

**Project risks**

The research involves the completion of a questionnaire and participation in structured interview and which will be recorded for later analysis. We will not be requiring any sensitive information from you and you can wish to remain anonymous during the interview and may not disclose your organization. We believe that there are no significant risks associated with either the questionnaire or the interview. However, in case of any issues with the questions you can withdraw at any time.

**How we protect your privacy**

All the information that you provide will be confidential. It shall be ensured that you will not be able to be identified from the information that you provide. The consent form signed by you will be stored securely and all the data provided by you will be highly secured and destroyed at the end of the research except the consent form which will be saved for 10 years for records. The data provided by you in the questionnaire and recording of the interview will also be saved securely and destroyed after 10 years. As mentioned before, you may wish to keep your name
and organization anonymous and also mention if you do not want your interview to be recorded.

YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET TO KEEP

If you require any further information about this project then please contact:

Ria Mandal, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Cardiff Metropolitan University email: R.Mandal@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk
APPENDIX – B – QUESTIONNAIRE (INCLUDING CONSENT FORM)

QUESTIONNAIRE (INCLUDING CONSENT FORM)

School of Management, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement in the Current UAE Infrastructure Market for Engineering Consultancies: An Analysis of Employee Perspectives

This project has received the approval of Cardiff School of Managements’ Ethics Committee, Cardiff Metropolitan University (Ethics No. 2016D5490)

I understand that my participation in this project will involve completing a questionnaire about investigating the employee perspectives on the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement in the current UAE infrastructure market for engineering consultancies which will take approximately 15 minutes of my time.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason or I can discuss my concerns with Ria Mandal (R.Mandal@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk).

I understand that any identifying information provided by me will be held confidentially, such that only the PI (Ria Mandal) can trace this information back to me individually.

I understand that my data will be stored on password protected computers, anonymized after completion of the survey and that no one will be able to trace my information back to me. The raw data will be retained for ten years when it will be deleted/destroyed.

If you are 18 years of age or over, understand the statement above and freely consent to participate in this study please tick the consent box to proceed.

[ ] consent box

Thank you very much for helping us with this project and participating in the research.
PART-A

Your Name:

Name of the Organization:
(*This is not mandatory, please leave it blank if you wish the organization’s name to be anonymous)

Your Department in the Organization:

☐ Engineering
☐ Designing / Drafting
☐ Project Management
☐ Administrative Staff

Age:

☐ < 20 years
☐ 20 to <30 years
☐ 30 to < 40 years
☐ 40 to < 50 years
☐ 50 to ≤ 60 years

Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female
Rank the following factors which affect employee engagement in your organization in order to relevance (1 being Most Relevant and 11 being Highly Irrelevant):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Performance in projects</th>
<th>Rank :</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Productivity while carrying out any task</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Motivation</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Job Security</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate staffing</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Job satisfaction</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate appraisal and evaluation of employees</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate training and development provided to employees</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability of the organization to maintain high employee retention</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee dedication and loyalty towards his/her work</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and creativity of employees</td>
<td>Rank :</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART-B**

Below are a list of statements regarding the behaviour of your team leader/manager. Mark the extent up to which these statements apply to your team leader / manager according to you as per the below scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>0 Never</th>
<th>1 Very Rarely</th>
<th>2 Rarely</th>
<th>3 Occasionally</th>
<th>4 Very Frequently</th>
<th>5 Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My leader believes that his/her team members are lazy and will not do their work unless supervised closely.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader always focuses on the self-development of his/her subordinates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader gives his / her team full freedom to work in their own ways.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader ensures that the team members get recognized and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>1 Very Rarely</td>
<td>2 Rarely</td>
<td>3 Occasionally</td>
<td>4 Very Frequently</td>
<td>5 Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>rewarded when they achieve their goals or targets.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader is good at adapting to different situations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader believes that he/she is the main reason of any success or achievements of the team.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader ensures that challenges are set for all team members in order to help them grow.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader ensures that poor performance of any team member is corrected.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader does not provide any guidance to his / her team members unless extremely necessary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My leader believes that all his team members want supportive communication from him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My leader is able to analyse any situation from many different perspectives.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader helps everyone to understand his vision through personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>0 Never</td>
<td>1 Very Rarely</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiences and motivational examples.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader always gives orders and expects us to follow them without question.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader believes that his/her team members are competent to do a good job provided they are under his/her guidance.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My leader sets standards for the team which all team members agree with and appraises us accordingly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My leader is satisfied as long as the work is going on smoothly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My leader’s behaviour changes based on the person or group he/she is trying to influence.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leader wants his/her team members to be a part of the decision making process, however takes the final decision himself/herself.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PART-C

According to you, how does your team leader / manager’s behaviour affect the following factors related to your engagement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>1 Strongly Affects Negatively</th>
<th>2 Affects Negatively</th>
<th>3 Neutral (Does not Affect Positively or Negatively)</th>
<th>4 Affects Positively</th>
<th>5 Strongly Affects Positively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Performance in projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Productivity while carrying out any task</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Motivation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Job Security</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate staffing in your organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Job satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your appraisal and evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your training and development</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability of the organization to maintain high employee retention</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your dedication and loyalty towards your work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Innovation and creativity</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your response has been recorded.
APPENDIX – C – INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Ethics Committee

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (FOR INTERVIEW)

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number: 2016D5490
Participant name or Study ID Number:
Title of Project: Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement in the Current UAE Infrastructure Market for Engineering Consultancies: An Analysis of Employee Perspectives
Name of Researcher: Ria Mandal

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

[ ]

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

[ ]

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

[ ]

4. I agree to the interview being recorded

[ ]
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

[ ] [ ]

6. I would like my organisations’ name to be anonymised in all publications

[ ] [ ]

_______________________________________   ___________________
Signature of Participant                        Date

_______________________________________    ____________________
Name of person taking consent                   Date

__________________________________________
Signature of person taking consent
### APPENDIX – D – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of interview questions</th>
<th>Discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ask interviewee approval to record the interview and ensure that interviewee signs the consent form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Confirm:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• name of interviewee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• name of the organization he / she is working for (Not Mandatory)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• total years of experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3) Discuss about The Leadership Style of the Interviewee’s Team Leader / Manager
   Probes                     |           |
| • How would you describe the leadership behaviour of your team leader? |           |
| • What do you like the most about his leadership style? |           |
| • In your opinion, what are some areas of improvement for your team leader? |           |
| 4) Discuss about Employee Engagement
   Probes                     |           |
| • In your opinion, how important is employee engagement for any infrastructure engineering consultancy in this current market? |           |
| • Which work-related factors are affecting your engagement in the current scenario? – Performance, Productivity, Job Satisfaction, Job Security? |           |
| 5) Discuss how the interviewee’s team leader / manager promotes employee engagement
   Probes                     |           |
| • In your opinion, how does your team leader promote employee engagement for your organization? |           |
| • What steps should your team leader take to further promote successful employee engagement for your organization? |           |
APPENDIX – E – COMPANY PROFILES

Key Data
- over 25 years of experience in the region
- about 800 staff members
- over 42 billion AED construction amounts managed, planned and supervised
- about 2,000 domestic projects to date

WHY ALTORATH?
- (100%) UAE National.
- (25) Years in Consultancy & PMC Services.
- More than (500) Professional Team Members (Design & PMC).
- Staff with Security Pass Requirements.
- Multidisciplinary Arch., Engineering Consultancy & PMC Firm.

- Architectural
- Planning & Urban Design
- Civil & Structural
- Electro- Mechanical
- Infrastructure & Transportation
- Land Surveying
- Project Management
- Site Supervision
Areas of Specialization

Infrastructure Works
- desalination plants
- water treatment
- waste water treatment
- water storage, pumping and transmission schemes
- water distribution systems
- wellfield systems
- sewerage systems
- electrical distribution systems
- substations
- environmental engineering
- hydraulic studies
- flexibility analysis
- roads
- all utilities
- irrigation system
- bridges

Oil & Gas
- oil/gas/water separation
- oil/gas pipelines onshore / offshore with pigging facilities
- oil and gas production networks
- gas treatment plants
- oil/gas terminals, jetties and platforms
- storage facilities and tank farms
- gas compression and gas receipt stations
- cathodic protection systems
- wellhead & flowline
- manifold & separator
- utility & offsites
- offshore structural design
- asset integrity

Our offices continued

Tebodin & Partners Saudi for Engineering Consultancy (Jeddah)
2705 Rawdat Street
Al Badriyah Tower, Unit 27
Jeddah 23422-7490, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
P.O. Box 54305
Jeddah 21514, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Tel. +966 12 000 60 40
Fax + 966 12 000 65 54
e-mail: haytham.elrez@tebodin.com

Tebodin & Partners Saudi for Engineering Consultancy (Al Khobar)
6253 Prince Turki Street
Office no. 7 & 5, 5th Floor
Gulf Center Commercial & Residential Complex
Al Khobar 34414-2004, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
P.O. Box 30042
Al Khobar 31952, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Tel. +966 13 321 53 00
Mob. +966 50 571 44 47
e-mail: abert.volenda@tebodin.com

Permanent Staff

Total personnel employed in the regional offices amounts to approximately 1,650, split over the offices excluding STS - Tebodin Pltd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi, UAE</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubai, UAE</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manama, Bahrain</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscat, Oman</td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sohar, Oman</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doha, Qatar</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

During the course of a distinguished 46-year track record, ECG has successfully undertaken a substantial list of landmark, mega-scale projects.

An outstanding 46-year record of accomplishment testifies to ECG’s supremacy in the engineering consultancy market. With a total construction value surpassing US$100 billion, multiple key projects have been concluded in Egypt and the MENA region covering all key engineering fields. Our multidisciplinary portfolio of specializations includes civil engineering and architectural; urban planning, transportation, and environmental engineering.

ECG is dedicated to the development of its engineering consultancy services. This includes the implementation of comprehensive and efficient project management systems, coupled with the highest standards of quality and service. ECG’s Quality Assurance System is ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004 and OHSAS 18001:2007 certified by Bureau VERITAS.

ECG harnesses the expertise and talent of over 2,700 permanent full-time professionals. Our unique brand of engineers have the capacity to deliver almost the full range of professional engineering services. These encompass project identification, pre-feasibility/feasibility studies, properties and site appraisals, site selection, design and detailed engineering, construction management and supervision, procurement, inspection, quality control, and personnel training.
APPENDIX – F – PERMISSION E-MAIL

Mandal, Ria (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.)

From: Mandal, Ria (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.)
Sent: 19 November 2017 11:24
To: Hasan, Amir (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.)
Cc: Maasland, Lone (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.)
Subject: RE: Request for Permission to Collect Data from Colleagues for MBA Dissertation

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the permission.

If the participant wishes, he/she can choose the name of the company to be anonymous. The consent form for every participant is mandatory requirement from my university as well, so I will ensure that it is obtained from all.

From: Hasan, Amir (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.)
Sent: 19 November 2017 11:17
To: Mandal, Ria (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.) <ria.mandal@tebodin.com>
Cc: Maasland, Lone (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.) <lone.maasland@tebodin.com>
Subject: RE: Request for Permission to Collect Data from Colleagues for MBA Dissertation

Ria

I am ok with the approach subject to maintain the privacy of employees and company. Secondly, have employees (MU 514) show their interest and/or consent to participate in the survey. I suggest to have it in writing and/or thru email.

From: Mandal, Ria (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.)
Sent: 19 November 2017 11:15 AM
To: Hasan, Amir (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.) <amir.hasan@tebodin.com>
Cc: Maasland, Lone (Tebodin Middle East Ltd.) <lone.maasland@tebodin.com>
Subject: Request for Permission to Collect Data from Colleagues for MBA Dissertation

Dear Sir,

I am currently pursuing my MBA dissertation on the topic “Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Engagement in the Current UAE Infrastructure Market for Engineering Consultancies: An Analysis of Employee Perspectives”. For this purpose, I need to collect some primary data from the employees through questionnaire. However, since my dissertation is based on team leader and employee relationship, the name of the company can be anonymous, if required.

I have already checked with Ms. Lone (HR) regarding this and she mentioned that as long as I am collecting data from the colleagues of my market unit (514-Infrastructure), it is ok. However, she asked me to get permission from you regarding this.

Kindly grant me permission to circulate the questionnaire to my colleagues in 514.

Total Word Count (From Introduction up to Conclusions and Recommendations) – 14561 Words