

A review on impact of leadership style on employee engagement

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Abstract

The 21st century knowledge-based organizations are working in altogether a fast-changing competitive environment and among most of the organizational goals is employee engagement which is gaining vast importance. It is known that engaged employees are productive and more motivated. The motivation of such employees is contagious within the organization. It is accepted that Satisfied employee may not be the best employee in terms of loyalty and productivity, but an engaged employee is intellectually and emotionally bound to the organization with a passion for goals and values would go an extra mile beyond the basic job. Money is definitely a good motivation for employees, but this becomes an external motivation and for employees to be constantly motivated it is the intrinsic motivation that matters, and a committed employees efficiency is measured in term of the level of engagement. Employee engagement is an intrinsic factor in driving organizational success as engaged employees are inherently motivated, aspire to achieve organizational goals and are focused towards one vision. It should also be noted that forcing employees to be engaged may bring productivity to the organization in the short-term but would be detrimental over a long-term as the as employee loyalty for the organizational values is lost. The best way is to inspire the employees to be engaged which must and should be driven through individual aspirations and this is where leadership proves to be crucial. Employees are the important asset of an organization as they are the ones that determine the success or failure of the organization. Organizations that realize the importance of their employees have come out with various strategies and policies to ensure that their well-being is taken care of and they become engaged in their work. Apart from this consideration, leadership style is also expected to play a significant role in affecting employees' attitudes. This research review is intended to review the secondary data available on the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement and the impact of the former on the later.

Introduction

Every organization has a vision of being a successful organization through its business operations and strive to be a leader in the industry. Human resource is a major factor in achieving the organizational goal and so become the most important indicators of achieving the expected success effectively and efficiently. To accomplish this, it is important that each employee performs well and be engaged with the organizational drivers and beliefs. At the same time, it is very critical for any organization to hire and retain employees who are engaged in working towards the mission and vision. Employee engagement has become a very important aspect of every organization in this modern competitive world of fast changing business scenario due its impact on employee performance, organizational performance and long-term sustainability of the organizations' business. Organizations of the 21st century knowledge-based economy deeply recognized that Employee engagement is an intrinsic factor in driving organizational success as engaged employees are inherently motivated, aspire to achieve organizational goals and are focused towards one vision. It should also be noted that forcing employees to be engaged may bring productivity to the organization in the short-term but would be detrimental over a long-term as the as employee loyalty for the organizational values is lost. The best way is to inspire the employees to be engaged which must and should be driven through individual aspirations and this is where leadership proves to be crucial. In a constantly changing environment, Leadership is crucial at every level to facilitate engagement among the employees for the organization because it is the leadership that inspires and transforms ordinary people into extraordinary achievers converting convincing impossibilities to plausible possibilities. Effective leadership accompanied with managerial skills is a combination that can excel employees in performing at a higher level (Goldbach, 2005).

Leaders with loyal followers have a greater chance of attaining exceptional outcomes with employees focused towards one vision (Brown, 2006). For an organization to succeed in today's work environment it must foster employee engagement and leaders will need to create an environment so that each individual employee buys in and takes ownership in the organization and themselves (Baumruk, 2006).

Organizations these days have recognized the importance of employee engagement and implemented initiatives to capture the hearts and minds of their most valuable asset; the employee. But the problem is that, organizations face numerous challenges while aligning employee towards engagement and must look inward to identify the root cause to improve the overall engagement. Employee engagement is increasingly becoming an initiative among many organizations. The thought of engaging employees is not a new concept recently placed on the doorsteps of businesses, but one of many motivational factors that we have known for years (Esty & Gewitz, 2008). The question is how does an organization engage their employees, how is it measured and above all what is the role of leaders in achieving complete engagement?

There are several studies and research publications examining the relation between employee engagement, leadership style and the components of leadership styles that exist to promote employee engagement. This research review attempts to discuss and explore employee engagement and the role of leadership style in achieving employee engagement.

Employee Engagement

An engaged employee is emotionally attached to the organization, is passionate about his or her work, and cares about the success of the organization (Seijts and Crim, 2006). When employees are deeply engaged with an organization, there will be heightened sense of positive and intense feelings among them to exert their best effort for the success of the organization. It is more than just feeling satisfied with the work-related factors in the organization. Macey and Schneider (2008) defined employee engagement as a desirable condition among employees that encompasses the following attributes (1) has an organizational purpose, (2) connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort and energy, and (3) involves both attitude and behavioral components. While work engagement involves employees' optimistic vibes towards their work, employee engagement deals with employees' positive feelings towards the organization. Satisfied employee may not be the best employee in terms of loyalty and productivity, but an engaged employee is intellectually and emotionally bound to the organization with a passion for goals and values would go an extra mile beyond the basic job. When employees are effectively and positively engaged with their organization, they form an emotional connection with the company. Bakker et al. (2011) stated that contemporary organizations' needed employees who were psychologically connected to their work, willing and able to invest themselves fully in their roles and who were committed to high performance standards. Kahn termed engagement as the "harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally during role performances". In other words, engaged employees put a lot effort into their work because they identify with it. Engaged employees are fully present and draw on their whole selves in an integrated and focused manner to promote their role performance. Apparently, employee engagement and work engagement are often used interchangeably in the literature partly due to the indistinct psychological needs and satisfaction that are associated with both constructs (Schaufeli, 2013). Nevertheless, engagement is theoretically distinguishable from other often overlapping constructs; namely, organizational commitment, citizenship behavior and job involvement (Saks, 2006). Among the factors that are expected to lead to employee engagement is leadership style.

Leadership style

The Style of Leadership is the way the leader acts and influences the team members to achieve certain goals. Experts judge that each person's leadership style is different (Edison, Anwar, and Komariyah, 2016: 93). The notion of leadership style according to Hersey and Blanchard is a behavioral pattern when someone tries to influence others and they accept it. Robins (2006) identifies four types of leadership styles including: Charismatic leadership style, Transactional leadership style, Transformational leadership style, Visionary leadership style. Ideal leadership perspectives have been discussed since 1939 by renowned strategist Kurt Lewin and his colleagues through experiments that culminate on three common points of leadership style: Autocratic, Democrat, and Laissez-Faire. Early research on leadership styles date back 1973, there are three styles of leadership: Authoritarian (Autocratic), Participative (democratic), Delegative (free reign). Good leaders tend to integrate all three styles with one style being primary. Apparently, a clear and precise consensus of leadership does not

exist. There is no single accepted universal definition or theory of leadership (Gill, 2011). Nevertheless, transformational leadership is among the most discussed leadership style in the modern literature. Burns (1978) described transformational leaders as individuals who inspire and challenge subordinates to go beyond their personal interests to achieve goals or benefits to the wider group or organization. In contrast, transactional leadership explains the relationship between leader and follower as an exchange of well-defined transactions. Although transformational leadership is a fervent approach to visionary leaders and empowered followers among academicians and practitioners alike, the prominent theory has its own limitations. The crux of the problem lies within the insufficiency of the transformational leadership theory in addressing political, social and economic issues from the organizational context (Malloch, 2014).

There is huge secondary data related to engagement and the roles of leaders must understand to engage a workforce through clear, consistent leadership that facilitates full engagement. Organizations succeed due to its workforce working towards the same vision. It is the leaders who pull the team in one direction for exceptional results. Without leadership the organization would fail. Influence in today's organization is critical as leaders communicate expectations, align the person with the task, and create an environment where teams excel through mutual respect and cooperation. The empowered employee allows individuals to move forward without fear to solve problems, make decisions and accept responsibility. Organizations reach excellence through the combination of effective leadership and engaged employees who are empowered at every level (Brown & Harvey, 2006).

Leadership style and Employee engagement

Leadership has been identified as a key driver of employee engagement. Previous studies were conducted to investigate the influence of various factors that might contribute to employee engagement. Among these factors, leadership styles have been found to be significant predictors of employee engagement. Among the leadership-related predictors are transformational leadership (Breevaart et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2009), authentic leadership (Giallonardo et al., 2010), leadership position and 'team-supportive' leadership (Xu and Cooper, 2011) and charismatic leadership (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010). Furthermore, 'employee-engagement' competency of leaders in terms of respect for others and concern for their development and well-being are found to be a good predictor of employees' job performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Alimo-Metcalf et al., 2008). However, the findings of these studies are not consistent as some studies have discovered mixed results. There is a notable missing link between 'good management and mentoring' leadership style and employee engagement among entrepreneurial CEOs' subordinates (Papalexandris and Galanaki, 2009). Theoretical work has suggested a key role for transformational leadership in engagement (Macey and Schneider, 2008). The concept of transformational leadership has four components: Idealized influence, with followers trusting and identifying with their leader; inspirational motivation, by which leaders provide meaning and challenge in followers' work; intellectual stimulation, whereby leaders invigorate followers' ingenuity in a pressure free context; and individualized consideration, in which leaders support followers' specific needs for achievement and growth (Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 2003). These leadership behaviours have clear links with engagement constructs. Trust in the leader, support from the leader, and creating blame-free environments are components of psychological safety which enable employee engagement (Kahn, 1990). Leadership research shows consistent links between transformational leadership and constructs that are debated by some to be part of engagement, such as motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, proactive behaviors, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Xu and Thomas (2011) investigated the relationship between leadership and engagement among 414 employees in New Zealand They found that leadership behaviors overlap considerably in their relationship with employee engagement. Aryee and Walumbwa (2012) studied the extent to which transformational leadership contributes to employees' work engagement among 193 subordinate-supervisor participants in China. Outcome revealed indirect effects of transformational leadership on work engagement i.e., responsibility, meaningfulness, and innovative behavior. One of the more recent conceptual articles in the engagement literature (Bakker *et al.*, 2011) argues that the direct relationship between transformational leadership and engagement has different intensities under different conditions. The role of front line managers in both the public and private sectors as pivotal to employee engagement is documented in both the practitioner and research literatures (Alimo Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalf, 2002, 2006; Frank *et al.*, 2004). Employees will stay if they have a good relationship and open communication with their immediate manager. However, there is evidence that many of our leaders are not successful in this endeavor. Employees need leaders that care about them and will help them achieve their goals and much of that engagement must be done by first line managers (Bates, 2004).

Research review and discussion

Ni Nengah Rupadi Kertiriasih et al. conducted a research study on 53 employees over 'The Effect of Leadership Style to Job Satisfaction, Employee Engagement and Employee Performance' PT. Interbat Bali Nusra Ambon, through interviews documentation and questionnaires. The overall effect for each relationship was calculated and a recapitulation of direct effects, indirect effects, and total effect as presented:

Calculation of Direct, Indirect and Total Effects:

No	Relationship Variable	Effect Directly	Effect Indirect	Effect Total
1	Leadership style (X) → Job satisfaction (Y1)	0.828 ^S	-	0.828
2	Leadership style (X) → Employee engagement (Y2)	0.106 ^{NS}	-	0.106
3	Leadership style (X) → Job satisfaction (Y1) → Employee performance (Y3)	-0.354 ^{NS}	0.341 (0.828*0.413)	- 0,013
	Leadership style (X) → Job satisfaction (Y1) → Employee engagement (Y2) → Employee performance (Y3)	-0.354 ^{NS}	0.457 (0.828*0.794*0.696)	0.103
4	Job satisfaction (Y1) → Employee performance (Y2)	0.794 ^S	-	0.794
5	Job satisfaction (Y1) → Employee performance (Y2)	0.413 ^S	-	0.413
6	Employee engagement (Y2) → Employee performance (Y3)	0.696 ^S	-	0.696

These findings provided guidance that good leadership style will increase job satisfaction and increase employee engagement increasing employee performance according to company goals. The result indicated that, leadership style will improve the work of employees if employees feel satisfied in the work increasing employee engagement that is able to produce optimal employee performance.

E.Sevinç ÇAĞLAR conducted a research study on Work engagement, empowerment and leadership styles in hotel management. The sample consisted of employees in 4 or more-star hotels and a total of 42 hotels were interviewed. Leadership Styles Scale used was Transactional, transformational, laissez-faire, ethical, paternalist and servant leadership styles. Work engagement was measured by Schaufeli and his colleagues (2002) 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). It consisted of three sub dimensions: Vigor, dedication and absorption. A correlation and regression analysis were performed.

Correlation analyses: Engagement was found to be significantly correlated with all of the independent variables. It had the strongest correlation with PE ($r=,366$; $P<0,01$). Leadership styles and external empowerment factors showed the highest correlation of all ($r=,759$; $p<0,01$); When the relationship among leadership styles and empowerment was examined in detail; it was found that nourishing leadership style was highly correlated with all factors of empowerment except role ambiguity. On the other hand, role ambiguity is found to be correlated with laissez faire at the 0,609 level. Leadership and empowerment correlations in detail are presented in the table below

Correlation Matrix of Leadership Styles and Empowerment

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Participative climate	1							
2. Support/opportunity	,577**	1						
3. Emp. cult.& practes	,682**	,549**	1					
4. Role ambiguity	,105*	,078	,240**	1				
5. Resource	,518**	,560**	,513**	,091*	1			
6. Nourishing	,681**	,621**	,591**	-,003	,510**	1		
7. Laissez faire	,137**	,004	,191**	,609**	,024	-,103*	1	
8. Authoritarian	,438**	,399**	,431**	,063	,434**	,589**	,067	1

**p<0,01; *p<0,05

Regression Analyses Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Work Engagement

All the variables including the demographics were regressed to test their predictability on the dependent variable (work engagement). First the weakest relation with the dependent variable was tested. Next; leadership

styles, PE and empowerment were included respectively in regression. For none of the variables, the VIF value exceeded 10, meaning that multi-collinearity does not pose a problem. Detailed regressions for all factors of variables are also conducted. Nourishing and authoritarian styles are found to have significant impact on both factors and the whole of engagement. The results of the analyses are presented below

Table 1. Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Work Engagement

Model	R ²	R ² _{adj}	ΔR ²	ΔF	p ΔF	F	P _{model}		T	p	
1	,205	,141	,205	3,217	,000	3,217	,000				
								Hotel(1)	,152	2,099	,037
								Female	,129	2,069	,039
								Age(3)	-.236	-2,748	,006
								VocationHK	-.202	-2,775	,006
2	,458	,411	,070	38,763	,000	9,693	,000				
								Istanbul	,140	2,456	,015
								Age(2)	-.186	-2,412	,016
								Age(3)	-.228	-3,203	,002
								VocationHK	-.162	-2,677	,008
								Leadership	,307	6,226	,000
3	,558	,518	,100	67,194	,000	13,896	,000				
								Hotel(1)	-.120	-2,095	,037
								Hotel(2)	-.143	-2,482	,014
								Female	,117	2,479	,014
								Age(3)	-.148	-2,281	,023
								VocationHK	-.163	-2,988	,003
								Leadership	,232	5,100	,000
								PE	,481	8,197	,000
4	,564	,523	,006	4,179	,042	13,693	,000				
								Hotel(1)	-.142	-2,453	,015
								Hotel(2)	-.160	-2,771	,006
								Female	,128	2,707	,007
								Age(3)	-.160	-2,465	,014
								VocationHK	-.167	-3,074	,002
								Leadership	,144	2,319	,021
								PE	,460	7,745	,000
								Empowerment	,141	2,044	,042

Independent variables: Demographics, Leadership Styles, PE, Empowerment
Dependent variable: Work Engagement

Abdul Kadir Othman et al, (2017) conducted research among the employees of Johnson Controls Automotive Sdn. Bhd. located in Shah Alam, Alor gajah, Pekan and Kulim, Malaysia. The total number of population is 693 and the sample size is 126. The instrument used in the study is a survey questionnaire, Items for leadership styles were adopted from Ekvall and Arvonen (1991) that comprise 36 items measuring change orientation (10 items), employee orientation (14 items) and production orientation leadership styles (12 items) Employee engagement was measured using Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) 9-item of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9). Managerial communication styles were measured using Management Communication Scale, which was developed by Abdul et al. (2013) based on the conceptualization of the construct by Richmond and McCroskey (1979). The findings indicate potential moderating effects of employee engagement on the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement. This finding indicates that leaders can successfully use production orientation in their leadership style provided that they also implement joining communication style; getting the employees involved in the decision-making process. This discovery is in consistent with previous reported findings. Employees whose voices are equally heard allow them to feel valued, and thus contributing to their increased engagement towards their job (Rees et al., 2013; Reissner and Pagan, 2013).

Research conducted by Nwokolo, Ifeanacho and Anazodo (2016) found leadership style predicted significant employee engagement among teachers and several studies with outcomes performed by Vidyakala (2014) show that the results of leadership styles affect employee engagement and have a significant relationship with all factors in employee engagement, Jun NI (2016) showed that Leadership style positively affects employee engagement and management performance, Khuong and Yen (2014) reported that leadership style results have a positive effect on employee engagement.

Employee engagement positively and significantly influenced employee performance according to research conducted by Mariza (2016) the research is in line with similar research conducted by Allameha, Barzoki, Naeini, Khodaeid and Abolghasemian (2014) that showed employee engagement has positive and significant value influencing performance, Jagannathan (2014) shows that engagement is significant in terms of performance. Different results show some studies conducted by Ali, Hussain, and Azim (2013) using regression analysis showing employee engagement to direct relationships Organizational social capital investment and employee performance negative.

Conclusion and recommendation

The research studies discussed in this research article to understand the role of leadership style on employee engagement indicate that there is definitely a relation between leadership style on the employee engagement. An engaged employee, team and leadership has direct impact on the organizational success. To align employees with the vision, mission and goals of the organization it is important that leadership understand what they must do and how they must behave to accomplish full employee engagement. Organizations understand that it is the engaged employees in the workforce that keep them cutting edge and competitive and for this it is equally important for employees to match their own personal purpose with the organization's vision and goal.

Research conducted by Ni Nengah Rupadi Kertiriasih et al. concluded that Whatever style of leadership is applied then it is not able to improve employee performance, but the style of leadership will be able to improve the work of employees if employees feel satisfied in working so that will cause a sense of employee engagement that can improve employee performance, the higher employee job satisfaction will increase employee engagement in work. The higher the job satisfaction of employees will increase employee engagement in work. The more satisfied employees in the work it will encourage the achievement of higher work. In improving employee performance leaders are expected to give more attention to the type of leadership style that will be applied in leading employees to pay attention to promotion in employee satisfaction, and also pay attention to the spirit of Vigor, absorption, Dedication in engagement so as to produce maximum employee performance in accordance with company objectives.

Research conducted by E.Sevinç ÇAĞLAR revealed that Empowering environmental factors as organizations' culture, climate, or management practices all contribute to the levels of work engagement. So, the psychological aspect of empowerment is agent through the stated effect. The nourishing leadership style, consists the emic texture of paternalistic behavior, has found to be the most contributing to work engagement among other styles. Authoritarian followed nourishing, but laissez-faire has not found to be significantly effective on engagement.

The studies studied confirmed that leadership style, in particular, employee-oriented leadership style contributes in ensuring the high levels of engagement among the employees in the organization. These studies also discovered that join communication style moderates the relationship between production-oriented leadership style and employee engagement. Production oriented leadership style can be used to enhance the levels of employee engagement when leaders also involve employees in the decision-making process. To ensure that the employees are fully engaged, managers or leaders must practice employee-oriented leadership style. They can implement this leadership style provided that they practice joining communication style whereby employees are involved in setting the target and deciding how to achieve the target.

We can say that a proper leader is required for the organization today without which it becomes difficult for the employees to be engaged in the organization. So much attention must be given to the in making them as a contribution to the organization which in turn leads to the employee engagement. Employees in the organization much focus on the leaders and the peers support. But it is more important to have a good leader who can create the good, healthy ,friendly, supportive and developing environment.

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