



LEADERSHIP FAILURES AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN SELECTED OMANI ORGANIZATIONS

An Exploratory Multi-Perspective Study

Rajiha Salim Said Al Abrawi

Public Management

University of International Business and Economics, Beijing, China

Abstract: Employee engagement is highly significant in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) where limited managerial capacity and close interaction between leaders and employees increase the impact of daily leadership behavior. This exploratory study examines perceived relationships between leadership practices and employee engagement in selected organizations in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, and whether managers and employees have similar perceptions of such practices. The study used an exploratory cross-sectional survey design incorporating employee and manager perspectives. It combined structured Likert-type questionnaires with open-ended answers from managers. The final sample consisted of 37 respondents, including 26 employees and 11 managers across three organizations. Descriptive plus thematic analyses were performed. Employees reported relatively high awareness of the mission (69.2%), frequent feedback on performance (74.4%), and enjoyment and engagement in their duties (65.4%). The comparison of the two perspectives reveals a gap in implementation: Leaders tend to evaluate supportive practices more positively than employees perceive concrete results, specifically development support and recognition. Qualitative evidence suggests five perceived mechanisms through which leadership failures may weaken engagement: poor communication, lack of support, failure to model expected conduct, micromanagement, and lack of empathy. The study adds to the context-specific evidence from Oman and redefines engagement as an operational leadership system rather than a periodic survey outcome. It details structured listening cycles, role clarity, development plans, recognition standards, and leader accountability. The small purposively bounded sample limits the statistical generalizability of the results to the participating organizations, and these are therefore presented as exploratory.

Index Terms - employee engagement; leadership failure; leadership behavior; small and medium-sized enterprises; Oman; communication; recognition.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is defined as the degree of physical, cognitive, and emotional energies that employees invest in their work roles. Kahn's original conceptualization identified psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability as the preconditions of engagement, whereas subsequent scholarship has distinguished engagement from satisfaction or organizational commitment and conceptualized it as an active, work-related state (Kahn, 1990; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Engagement is not an abstract human-resource indicator for SMEs; With low managerial specialization, a small workforce, and reliance on individual knowledge, disengagement can quickly affect service quality, innovation, customer relationships, and continuity. Employee engagement has been associated with employee performance, satisfaction, retention, and broader organizational outcomes (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Harter et al., 2002).

Leadership is one of the most immediate organizational influences upon those conditions. Leaders clarify priorities, allocate funds, recognize contributions, provide feedback, model acceptable behavior, and determine the degree of voice and autonomy employees are given.

According to social-exchange theory, supportive treatment is expected to be reciprocated through stronger involvement and discretionary effort, whereas inconsistent, controlling, or dismissive behavior undermines trust and results in withdrawal (Saks, 2006). Transformational leadership provides an alternative explanation: leaders can create meaning by connecting individual work to a shared purpose, offering individualized consideration, and encouraging initiative. But leadership can also fail through everyday failures—not just clear abuse—unclear expectations, lack of feedback, insufficient recognition, insufficient development, micromanagement, and lack of empathy.

The Omani SME context needs focused attention. In the national policy, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are assigned a role in economic diversification, innovation, and employment, and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority supports their development and market participation (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, n.d.). This is policy-relevant; however, empirical work on daily leadership and engagement in Omani SMEs is limited. Much of the international evidence is based on large organizations and consists of studies that tend to rely on either manager self-reports or employee perceptions alone. The present study addresses this gap in context and perspective by comparing the two perspectives.

The research poses the following questions: (1) What leadership practices are perceived to be associated with employee engagement in the participating Omani organizations? (2) How do employees and managers characterize communication, feedback, recognition, resources, development, and approachability? (3) What common leadership failures seem to erode engagement? Its contribution is intentionally exploratory. Instead of asserting population figures based on a limited sample, the study employs descriptive trends and qualitative themes to highlight mechanisms, inconsistencies, and actionable management priorities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Employee engagement as a relational resource

Kahn (1990) defined personal engagement as the concurrent utilization and demonstration of the self in task activities. Meaningfulness pertains to the perception of work as valuable; safety relates to the ability to express oneself without fearing adverse outcomes; and availability refers to whether individuals have the necessary physical and mental resources to participate. This framework is particularly significant for SMEs since leaders have a direct impact on all three conditions. Defined objectives and acknowledgment enhance significance, courteous dialogue and compassion boost security, while proper resources, assistance, and development opportunities strengthen psychological availability. Work engagement is commonly conceptualized through the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Engagement is connected to, yet different from, job satisfaction, commitment, and involvement. Macey and Schneider (2008) outline the trait, state, and behavioral components of engagement, whereas Saks (2006) employs social-exchange theory to clarify how job and organizational engagement react to perceived support and equity. The practical takeaway is that motivation cannot solely create engagement through language. Workers assess if the commitments made by leadership result in reliable resources, opportunities for input, acknowledgment, and equitable treatment.

2.2 Leadership behavior and engagement

Transformational leadership is anticipated to promote engagement by using vision, personalized attention, intellectual stimulation, and serving as a role model. When workers can link their everyday duties to a legitimate organizational mission, they are more inclined to find their jobs meaningful. Supportive leaders foster psychological safety by actively listening, addressing concerns constructively, and viewing mistakes as chances for learning. Empirical studies connect transformational leadership to employee well-being and highlight trust in the leader as a key mechanism (Kelloway et al., 2012). Empowering leadership also fosters employee creativity by providing autonomy while ensuring guidance and responsibility (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Transactional leadership is not naturally detrimental. Defined expectations, conditional rewards, and regular performance feedback can be beneficial, especially in small companies where job roles intersect. Issues emerge when exchanges are solely punitive, when objectives take the place of constructive feedback, or when incentives are unreliable. Passive or avoidant leadership is harmful as it provides employees with neither guidance nor assistance. The key concern is not the title held by a leader but the observable behaviors exhibited and whether employees perceive them as clear, fair, supportive, and reliable. Evidence indicates that transformational leadership can strengthen daily engagement by increasing meaningfulness, trust, support, and access to job resources (Breevaart et al., 2014; Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2020; Ghadi et al., 2013).

Cross-national evidence also suggests that leadership style is associated with work engagement and employee outcomes across different institutional and cultural settings (Gemed & Lee, 2020).

2.3 Leadership failure mechanisms

The empirical evidence and previous research indicate five interrelated failure mechanisms. Initially, unclear or inconsistent communication diminishes role clarity and disconnects personal effort from the organization's objectives. Second, insufficient support limits the resources and guidance employees require to excel. Third, a failure to model appropriate behavior leads to perceived hypocrisy and cynicism when leaders insist on actions they themselves do not practice. Fourth, micromanagement diminishes independence and indicates a lack of trust. Fifth, a lack of empathy diminishes psychological safety, especially when leaders overlook workload, feelings, or individual limitations. These mechanisms reinforce each other: a micromanaging leader might communicate often but still stifle voice, while a verbally encouraging leader may undermine their credibility if acknowledgment and growth do not occur.

Destructive leadership includes repeated leader behaviors that undermine employees, organizational objectives, or both, and its adverse outcomes have been demonstrated across numerous organizational studies (Einarsen et al., 2007; Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

2.4 Analytical propositions

Due to the exploratory nature of the available dataset, which lacks a supported multi-item scale for confirmatory hypothesis testing, the original research hypotheses are rephrased as analytical propositions instead of being stated as statistically supported causal claims. P1: Workers who receive clear communication, sufficient support, acknowledgment, feedback, growth opportunities, independence, and compassion will demonstrate higher engagement levels. P2: Failures in leadership will manifest in risks associated with withdrawal, such as decreased motivation, diminished commitment, and lesser inclination to endorse the organization. P3: Self-evaluations by managers will tend to be more positive than the related experiences reported by employees in certain leadership areas, indicating a gap in implementation or perception. P4: Transparent communication and responsible actions will lessen the adverse engagement effects of leadership shortcomings.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and setting

The study adopted an exploratory cross-sectional survey design incorporating descriptive quantitative evidence and qualitative manager responses. It merged numerical analysis of structured questionnaire answers with qualitative insights from open-ended manager replies. The study covered three organizations located in Muscat, Oman, representing architectural and retail services, private education, and the energy sector. Participants were selected from three organizations that represent architectural and retail services, private education, and the energy industry. The organizations were selected to reflect diversity in work context while preserving a common emphasis on leader-employee dynamics.

3.2 Participants and data collection

Information was gathered online via Google Forms. Two tools were utilized: a questionnaire from the employee's viewpoint and a questionnaire from the manager's viewpoint. The completed sample included 26 employees and 11 managers ($N = 37$). Participation was optional; participants were made aware that their responses would stay confidential, and any personal or organizational identifiers were omitted from the report. The employee instrument evaluated mission awareness, resources, acknowledgment, training, feedback, accessibility, career development, work enjoyment, contentment with leadership style, and readiness to recommend the organization. The manager instrument addressed parallel leadership practices and featured two open-ended questions regarding engagement strategies and effective initiatives.

Table 1. Study Design and Evidence Base

Component	Description
Purpose	Explore how leadership behavior and leadership failures shape employee engagement in selected Omani organizations.
Design	Exploratory cross-sectional survey.
Setting	Three organizations in Muscat, Oman, spanning services, education, and energy-related work.
Respondents	26 employees and 11 managers; total $N = 37$.
Instrument	Separate online questionnaires using Likert-type and open-ended items.
Core domains	Communication, resources, recognition, feedback, development, approachability, autonomy, empathy, and engagement.
Ethics	Voluntary participation, informed participation statement, anonymity, and confidential reporting.
Inference boundary	Exploratory patterns only; no population-level causal or inferential claims.

The employee questionnaire generated structured Likert-type responses. The manager questionnaire generated structured responses and answers to two open-ended questions. Consequently, the qualitative findings represent managers' accounts unless otherwise indicated.

3.3 Analysis

Closed-ended answers were consolidated using frequencies and percentages documented in the original research record. Considering the sample sizes, percentages should be interpreted with caution: one manager accounts for roughly 9.1 percentage points, while one employee accounts for around 3.8 percentage points. No regression, structural equation model, or significance test was incorporated retrospectively because the original respondent-level dataset and supported composite measures were absent. Incorporating those estimates would create false precision. Open-ended manager responses were analyzed thematically by identifying recurring patterns concerning communication, participation, recognition, feedback, development, autonomy, and workplace support (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The two evidence streams were subsequently combined by comparing perspectives: claims from managers regarding practices were analyzed alongside employee accounts of related experiences.

The aggregate percentages and visualizations were reconstructed from the results documented in the original research record because the respondent-level dataset was no longer available.

3.4 Quality and limitations of measurement

Utilizing distinct tools for staff and supervisors minimizes common-source reliance and offers valuable triangulation. Responses that are open-ended provide contextual information to percentages. Nonetheless, a number of measurement constraints are significant. Certain reported percentages merge agreement with neutral responses, while others only reflect strong agreement; these figures cannot be directly compared. Multiple employee items lack complete category distributions in the available research record. The tools were not recorded as supported psychometric scales, internal-consistency assessments were not provided, and the study design is cross-sectional. Thus, the research recognizes trends and possible mechanisms but is unable to determine causality or assess effect sizes.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE

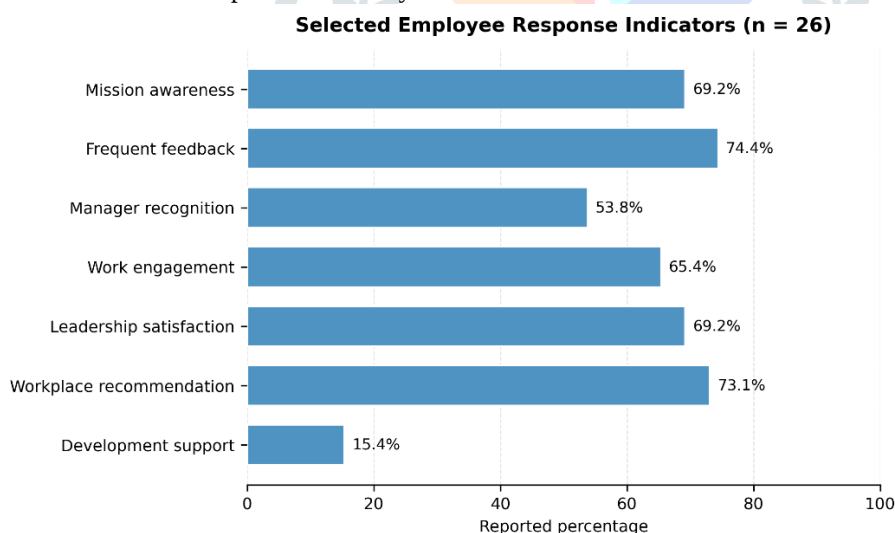
Employee feedback indicates a varied engagement atmosphere instead of consistent disengagement. Mission awareness was quite high: 69.2% concurred or strongly concurred that they comprehended the organizational mission and objectives. Regular feedback from managers garnered the most positive response from employees, with 74.4% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Most respondents indicated that their supervisors often acknowledged and rewarded their contributions (53.8%), and they felt they enjoyed their tasks and were engaged in their responsibilities (65.4%). Simultaneously, just 15.4% strongly agreed that their manager facilitated professional advancement and growth, while 34.6% chose a neutral option concerning organizational acknowledgment and rewards. These patterns indicate that engagement exists alongside ambiguity regarding how reliably organizations transform positive managerial interactions into evident development and recognition systems.

Table 2. Selected Employee Response Indicators (n = 26)

Survey indicator	Reported category	Percent
Engagement survey every six months	Selected frequency	32.0
Never participated in engagement survey	Selected frequency	12.0
Aware of organizational mission and goals	Agree or strongly agree	69.2
Organization recognizes and rewards contributions	Neutral	34.6
Manager provides frequent performance feedback	Agree or strongly agree	74.4
Manager frequently recognizes and rewards contributions	Agree or strongly agree	53.8
Manager supports professional growth and development	Strongly agree only	15.4
Enjoy work and feel engaged in job duties	Agree or strongly agree	65.4
Satisfied with manager's leadership style	Agree, strongly agree, or neutral	69.2
Would recommend organization as a good workplace	Agree, strongly agree, or neutral	73.1

Note: Response categories differ across indicators because the thesis reported selected summaries rather than complete distributions. Percentages should therefore be read individually, not ranked as if they used an identical favorable-response definition.

Percentages are reproduced from the original research. The overall employee sample was 26, but the valid response count for each questionnaire item was not preserved. Consequently, some reported percentages cannot be converted reliably into respondent frequencies and should be interpreted cautiously.



Percentages reproduce aggregate values reported in the original thesis; valid item-level denominators were not preserved.

Figure 1 Selected employee indicators reconstructed from percentages reported in the thesis

Figure note: Percentages reproduce aggregate values reported in the original thesis. The overall employee sample was 26, but valid item-level denominators were not preserved. The results should therefore be interpreted descriptively.

4.2 Manager perspective

Managers typically portrayed leadership practices in a more favorable light. The majority indicated that they provided essential tools for employees (81.8%) and personally fostered professional development (81.8%). Significant majorities indicated organizational commitment to training (72.7%), fostering an approachable work environment (72.7%), acknowledging employees (63.6%), and offering regular feedback (63.6%). Nonetheless, just 45.5% concurred or strongly concurred that they made certain team members understand the organization's mission and objectives. Measurement of engagement was also inconsistent: 54.5% indicated annual surveys, 18.2% indicated surveys every three to six months, and 9.1% indicated that surveys were never performed.

Table 3. Selected Manager Response Indicators (n = 11)

Leadership practice	Reported category	Percent
Organization conducts engagement survey annually	Selected frequency	54.5
Organization conducts survey every three to six months	Selected frequency	18.2
Organization never conducts engagement survey	Selected frequency	9.1
Ensures awareness of mission and goals	Agree or strongly agree	45.5
Ensures employees have tools needed	Agree or strongly agree	81.8
Ensures organizational recognition and reward	Agree or strongly agree	63.6
Provides frequent performance feedback	Agree or strongly agree	63.6
Ensures investment in development and training	Agree or strongly agree	72.7
Creates an approachable environment	Agree or strongly agree	72.7
Personally recognizes and rewards contributions	Agree or strongly agree	63.6
Supports professional growth and development	Agree or strongly agree	81.8

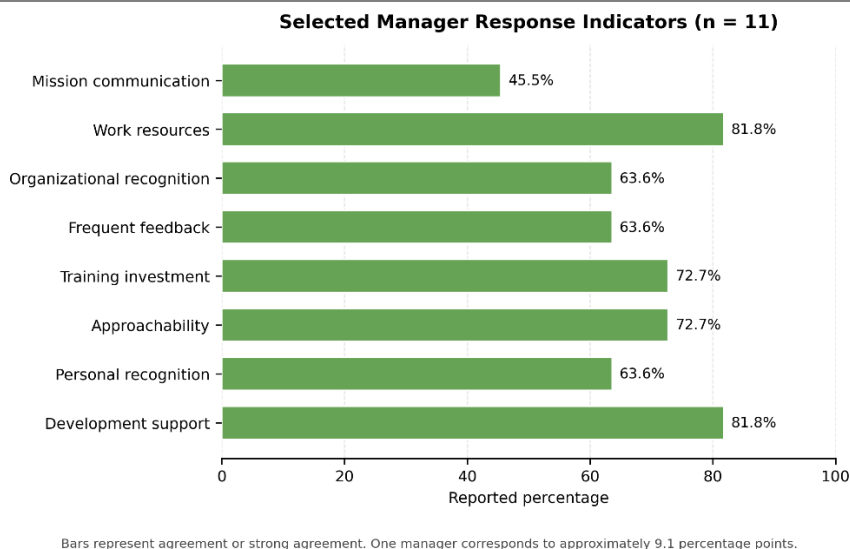


Figure 2. Selected manager indicators reconstructed from percentages reported in the thesis

Figure note: Bars represent agreement or strong agreement. Because n = 11, one manager corresponds to approximately 9.1 percentage points. The results should therefore be interpreted descriptively.

4.3 Perspective comparison

The gathered evidence suggests a gap between perception and practice instead of just a straightforward contradiction. Managers might sincerely engage in supportive actions, yet employees may perceive those actions inconsistently, receive them unevenly, or interpret them based on varying expectations. For instance, 81.8% of managers indicated they backed professional development, whereas 15.4% of employees selected “strongly agree” regarding manager support for professional development. Because the employee figure includes only “strongly agree,” while the manager figure combines “agree” and “strongly agree,” these percentages are not directly comparable and should not be interpreted as the numerical size of a perception gap. This does not provide a straightforward percentage-point estimate of disagreement due to differing response categories; however, the comparison is analytically significant. In a similar vein, managers indicated strong support for training and recognition, whereas employee feedback exhibited considerable neutrality regarding organizational acknowledgment and more tempered approval of manager recognition.

Table 4. Cross-Perspective Interpretation of Key Domains

Domain	Manager-side evidence	Employee-side evidence	Interpretation
Mission clarity	45.5% positive self-report	69.2% positive awareness	Mission knowledge may also flow through organizational channels beyond direct supervisors.
Feedback	63.6% positive self-report	74.4% positive experience	Feedback is a relative strength, although quality and developmental value were not measured.
Recognition	63.6% positive self-report	53.8% positive manager recognition; 34.6% neutral on organizational recognition	Recognition may occur informally but lack visible, consistent organizational standards.
Development	81.8% positive self-report; 72.7% report training investment	15.4% strongly agree on manager support	Strongest indication of an implementation or expectation gap; category differences prevent direct subtraction.
Approachability	72.7% positive self-report	Employee questionnaire evidence did not directly measure approachability using an equivalent item	Formal openness requires credible follow-through to become psychological safety.
Engagement monitoring	54.5% annual; 18.2% every 3-6 months	32% prefer/experience six-month cycle; 12% never participated	Survey cadence is inconsistent and may not be connected to action planning.

4.4 Qualitative themes

The managers' open-ended responses generated five themes concerning how leadership practices may influence employee engagement. The first theme was communication clarity. Managers emphasized the importance of communicating a clear vision, organizational objectives, performance expectations, and regular updates. The second theme concerned adequate support. Managers identified coaching, constructive feedback, appropriate resources, and recognition as important practices for maintaining engagement. The third theme was behavioral integrity. Managers highlighted the importance of leaders modelling the standards and conduct expected from employees, as inconsistency between leaders' words and actions may weaken trust. The fourth theme concerned autonomy and micromanagement. Managers recognized that employees require sufficient autonomy and trust to perform their responsibilities, whereas excessive monitoring may restrict initiative and ownership. The fifth theme was empathy and relational security. Managers emphasized that respectful listening, sensitivity to employee circumstances, and appropriate responses to workplace concerns may promote psychological safety and employee voice. These findings represent managers' interpretations of employee engagement rather than direct qualitative accounts from employees (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 5. Leadership Failure Themes and Managerial Responses

Failure mechanism	Likely engagement effect	Recommended management response
Unclear communication	Role ambiguity, weak purpose, frustration	Translate strategy into team goals; hold short, regular two-way meetings; document decisions and owners.
Inadequate support	Lower capability, perceived neglect, stalled development	Provide tools, coaching, feedback, and individual development plans with review dates.
Failure to lead by example	Cynicism, reduced trust, weaker norm compliance	Set observable leadership standards; review promises and actions; invite upward feedback.
Micromanagement	Reduced autonomy, initiative, and ownership	Agree outcomes and boundaries, delegate decisions, and use milestone-based rather than constant monitoring.
Lack of empathy	Low psychological safety and reluctance to speak	Train leaders in listening and fair response; include workload and well-being checks in one-to-one meetings.
Inconsistent recognition	Perceived unfairness and invisible contribution	Use transparent criteria; combine timely informal appreciation with equitable formal recognition.

4.5 Assessment of Analytical Propositions

Proposition	Assessment	Interpretation
P1	Evidence consistent	Communication, support, recognition, feedback, and development were consistently identified as engagement-related conditions.
P2	Limited evidence consistent	Lower motivation and commitment emerged from the qualitative evidence, but absenteeism and turnover were not measured directly.
P3	Descriptive pattern consistent	Manager assessments were more favorable than employee experiences in development, recognition, and related domains.
P4	Insufficient evidence to assess P4 statistically	Communication and accountability emerged as protective mechanisms, but their moderating effects could not be statistically tested.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings provide descriptive support for the proposition that employee engagement appears to be associated with recurring leadership practices. Mission clarity, feedback, recognition, development, autonomy, and empathy strongly align with Kahn's conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Workers can stay motivated in their jobs even while recognizing shortcomings in leadership support. The 65.4% positive engagement outcome should not be interpreted as proof that leadership systems need no improvement. Engagement results from various factors, and individuals may appreciate their job, coworkers, or the influence on clients despite inconsistent management practices. The most valuable contribution of the study is the contrast between different perspectives. Manager self-assessments were very favorable in areas such as resources, development, training, accessibility, recognition, and feedback. Employee reports were more varied. This pattern aligns with an implementation gap: a leader's intention or sporadic action does not ensure a reliable employee experience. Development demonstrates the problem. A manager might see endorsing a course or giving guidance as developmental assistance, while employees might anticipate a discussion about their careers, fair access, designated learning time, and a clear route to increased responsibilities. Both narratives can be genuine while depicting distinct realities.

Recognition indicates a comparable difference between interpersonal and organizational practice. Slightly more than half of employees indicated regular acknowledgment from their managers, while over a third felt neutral regarding recognition from the organization. Informal recognition might thus occur without clear criteria, uniform attention, or meaningful organizational consequences. SMEs frequently depend on judgment due to the constraints of formal human-resource systems. That adaptability is beneficial, but it also renders employee experience significantly reliant on specific supervisors. A straightforward acknowledgment protocol—prompt, precise, connected to input, and verified for fair allocation—can maintain adaptability while minimizing randomness. Feedback seemed relatively robust from the employees' viewpoint, but frequency by itself does not determine quality. Constructive feedback must be precise, centered on actions, directed towards the future, and linked to resources or growth. It must also be psychologically secure: workers should feel free to challenge expectations and bring up issues without fear of punishment. This clarifies why communication and empathy arose as key themes together with feedback. A leader may frequently communicate yet remain unclear, one-sided, or inattentive. The results also refine oversimplified comparisons of transformational and transactional leadership. SME leaders require inspiration as well as operational rigor. Vision and personalized attention generate significance, whereas explicit expectations, milestones, and conditional acknowledgment foster predictability. The danger exists in a skewed system: motivation without means turns into mere words; goals without input lead to dominance; independence without understanding results in neglect. Effective SME leadership integrates purpose, organization, flexibility, and relationship building. From a governance viewpoint, the document proposes that engagement ought to be handled as a closed-loop system. Numerous organizations carry out surveys, yet the measurement holds minimal worth unless the outcomes lead to clear actions. A reliable cycle consists of listening, setting priorities, assigning action owners, establishing deadlines, providing progress updates, and conducting follow-up assessments. Closing the loop embodies leadership behavior as it shows responsibility and enhances trust in future involvement. Omani SMEs operate under distinctive resource, capability, regulatory, and workforce constraints that may increase their dependence on effective daily management practices (Alqassabi, 2020; Bilal & Al Mqbali, 2015).

VI. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Owners and managers of SMEs can convert the outputs into a streamlined engagement operating system. Initially, define objectives and responsibilities. Every team must be capable of articulating the organization's priorities, its own objectives, and how personal efforts contribute. Secondly, create a consistent communication pattern: short weekly team meetings and monthly one-on-one discussions are more effective than infrequent, extended gatherings. Third, distinguish performance correction from development. Employees require explicit responsibility and a recorded chance to develop their skills. Fourth, establish recognition adequately to guarantee equity without generating bureaucracy. Fifth, establish delegation limits so that employees understand which decisions they are responsible for and when they need to escalate issues. Sixth, assess leaders in part based on employee experience instead of relying solely on self-reports.

Table 6. Proposed Managerial Framework

Period	Leadership action	Evidence of completion	Suggested indicator
1-30 Days	Run a short confidential pulse survey and structured listening sessions; identify two priority gaps.	Published summary of themes and named action owners.	Response rate; percentage receiving results within two weeks.
31-60 Days	Clarify goals and roles; begin monthly one-to-one meetings; create individual development actions.	Team goal map, meeting log, and development commitments.	Role-clarity pulse item; one-to-one completion rate.
61-90 Days	Introduce recognition criteria and delegation boundaries; review leader follow-through.	Recognition record, delegation agreements, and progress update.	Recognition reach; development action completion; psychological-safety pulse item.
End of day 90	Repeat pulse survey and discuss results with employees.	Before-and-after descriptive comparison and next-cycle plan.	Change in selected items; number of actions closed on time.

These indicators are intentionally straightforward. The purpose is not employee surveillance or ranking but proof that leadership commitments are experienced by employees. The team should review the results periodically, ensuring that small cell sizes are safeguarded to maintain anonymity. When possible, future assessments should utilize supported tools like the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for measuring engagement and a verified leadership scale, while also disclosing reliability, construct validity, and full response distributions.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research presents four primary limitations. The sample is limited in size and taken from three organizations; thus, the findings are not representative of Omani organizations or the wider Omani SME sector. Secondly, the cross-sectional design hinders causal inferences. Third, self-report answers might be affected by social desirability and variations in the interpretation of questionnaire phrasing by managers and employees. Fourth, the original tools and thesis report lack supported composite scales, individual-level data, full distributions for each item, or estimates of statistical reliability. The current paper thus refrains from using retrospective significance tests and presents the evidence openly as exploratory. A more robust follow-up investigation should utilize a larger, stratified sample across governorates and sectors, link employees to work units without disclosing identities, and gather repeated observations.

Verified multi-item assessments would enable confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. A multilevel approach could distinguish personal perceptions from the leadership climate at the team level. Longitudinal pulse data may examine if alterations in communication, recognition, autonomy, and development occur before shifts in engagement and turnover intentions. Qualitative interviews ought to investigate why managerial intentions do or do not translate into uniform experiences for employees.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Leadership practices in the participating Omani organizations were perceived to be related to employee engagement via routine, consistent practices instead of one-off motivational efforts. The exploratory evidence highlights clarity in communication, support, role modeling, autonomy, empathy, recognition, and development as the essential mechanisms. Workers highlighted significant strengths, especially awareness of the mission, frequent performance feedback, and job enjoyment, whereas supervisors noted elevated levels of supportive behavior. The difference between these accounts highlights the paper's main insight: leadership intention does not necessarily translate into a consistent employee experience. SMEs can bridge that gap by turning engagement into a closed-loop operational practice: listen, act, communicate, verify, and repeat. The results are preliminary, yet they offer a useful and conceptually consistent basis for more extensive longitudinal and multilevel studies in Oman.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author reports no financial or other conflict of interest. This article is derived from the author's earlier graduate research. Aggregate numerical results and visualizations were reconstructed from the documented research record because the respondent-level dataset was no longer available. Consequently, the analysis is limited to descriptive and thematic interpretation.

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