

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

**The impact of different leadership styles on
employee engagement in an organisation
undergoing change**

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ABSTRACT

In recent history, economies have undergone increasingly frequent and consequential fluctuations due to numerous internal and external forces. This has resulted in an environment where organisations have to continuously adapt in order to remain sustainable.

One of the most significant impacts of organisational change is its detrimental effect on employee engagement. This study investigates the impact of various leadership styles in influencing employee engagement specifically within the organisational change context. The aim of the study is to inform management of the importance of ensuring suitable leadership styles when undergoing organisational change, in order to drive the agenda of employee engagement whilst simultaneously executing successful organisational change.

The study was conducted using a quantitative design with a survey tool consisting of questions related to both leadership styles and employee engagement; and the survey was performed within a multinational organisation which has recently undergone significant change.

It was found that transactional and transformational leadership were the only two styles suited to drive both the agenda of employee engagement and organisational change. Whilst transactional leadership showed success in this regard, transformational leadership was found to have had a considerably higher influence on employee engagement in comparison.

It was also found that transformational leadership is the single biggest lever that can be used within an organisation in order to promote employee engagement.

KEYWORDS

Employee Engagement, Organisational Change, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1. Introduction and Background

In recent history, economies have undergone significant fluctuations due to numerous internal and external forces. This, in addition to enhanced competition, enhanced information availability, increasing global trade, fluctuating supply of resources, and other market dynamics has resulted in an environment where organisations have to continuously adapt in order to remain sustainable. As a result of the pace of these external dynamics, the frequency at which organisations have to undergo change is ever-increasing (Seo, et al., 2012).

This change ranges from incremental and continuous change to significant organisational change – the common aim between both types being to achieve product or service innovation, business optimisation or to improve the competitive advantage. The consequences of these changes are numerous: changes to work processes, organisational structure, social processes, direct and indirect costs of change, and other factors (Carter, Armenakis, Feild, & Mossholder, 2013).

Since organisational change has been topical in recent history, there is much research surrounding the factors necessary to successfully execute organisational change. The literature spans the topics of content-related issues (the factors which comprise both successful and unsuccessful change initiatives), contextual issues (the forces existing in an organisation's internal and external environment), and process issues (the specific actions undertaken during a change initiative) (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

One of the primary focal areas in research within the “content” theme is the importance of suitable leadership styles as a key driver for successful organisational change.

There are numerous theories surrounding leadership styles in literature, with each having its own advantages and drawbacks; as well as differences and

similarities (Piccolo, et al., 2012). The most encouraged leadership styles in recent literature include transformational leadership and transactional leadership, with most recent literature appearing to favour transformational leadership as the style of choice for organisational change (Paulsen, Callan, Ayoko, & Saunders, 2013).

The literature surrounding suitable leadership styles for change management largely focuses on identifying the behavioural traits necessary to achieve the strategic objectives of the change. These include articulating of the new, compelling vision; enabling and inspiring employees to accomplish the goal of institutionalising the change; encouraging the transcendence of self-interests for the team goals; and the like (Carter, Armenakis, Feild, & Mossholder, 2013).

However, the changes which occur within the work environment as a result of organisational change often leads to much stress, uncertainty and low morale amongst employees (Dahl, 2011). The direct consequence of this is a negative impact on employee engagement and consequently on employee performance (Carter, Armenakis, Feild, & Mossholder, 2013).

The impact on employee engagement as a result of organisational change has been described in literature as one of the major consequences of most change initiatives. Employee engagement has been identified as a key success-driver for any organisation regardless of whether it is in a stable state or undergoing change (Song, Kolb, Lee, & Kim, 2012). Since a change initiative actively and directly impacts employee engagement, the management of employee engagement in organisations undergoing change requires greater emphasis than it would need in normal everyday operations.

Given the importance of employee engagement, there is substantial research available which describes the factors that influence employee engagement. These range from the creation of an enabling environment by provision of the necessary tools, resources and support, to the creation of “energy” whereby employers support employees’ physical, social and emotional wellbeing (Towers Watson, 2015; Crawford, 2015; Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013; Fuchs & Edwards, 2012).

In promoting employee engagement, there is a general acceptance that leadership styles of an organisation can have either a positive or negative influence. In this regard, various leadership theories have been explored in literature with many different leadership styles resulting in varying degrees of success in promoting employee engagement (Song, Kolb, Lee, & Kim, 2012).

Whilst there is substantial research on the effect of leadership styles on employee engagement (Breevaart, et al., 2014; Redman, 2011; (Wang & Hsieh, 2013; Popli & Rizvi, 2015; Ghafoor, Qureshi, Khan, & Hijazi, 2011); and there is substantial research on the leadership styles best suited to drive the strategic objectives of organisational change (Elving, 2005; Stumpf, Tymon Jr, Favorito, & Smith, 2013; Chiaburu, Lorinkova, & Van Dyne, 2013; Batista-Taran, Shuck, Gutierrez, & Baralt, 2009; Smit & Carstens, 2003), there is very little research available which links the two concepts, i.e. understanding the impact of various leadership styles in influencing employee engagement, specifically within an organisation undergoing change. This gap is depicted in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Gap in Literature

Since employee engagement with its consequent impact on employee productivity is one of the key drivers of organisational performance; and organisational change has such a significant (and often detrimental) effect on employee engagement, it is important to ensure that the leadership style used to drive the strategic objectives of the change simultaneously drives the agenda

of employee engagement. As shown in Figure 1, this is not well understood in literature currently.

1.2. Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to address the gap in literature by investigating the relationships between leadership style and employee engagement; and the context of the study is within a multinational corporation with its headquarters in South Africa which has recently undergone a major organisational change initiative.

In particular, it aims to provide insight into the following within the change context:

- i) Of all the contemporary leadership styles, which are the most relevant to employee engagement within an organisation undergoing change?
- ii) Is there is a significant difference in employee engagement depending on the dominant style of leadership?
- iii) To what extent do the relevant leadership styles predict a strong level of employee engagement?

The overall aim is therefore to ascertain which leadership styles are best suited to promote employee engagement, specifically within an organisation undergoing change.

In addition to the gap in literature which this study aims to address, it is also highly relevant to the current business context of increasingly widespread and frequent change. The outcomes of this research will inform business of the relevance and importance of implementing specific leadership styles to enhance productivity (through improving employee engagement) when executing a change initiative.

1.3. Scope of Study

The scope of this study is limited to organisations currently undergoing, or recently having undergone major change. As the study was conducted at a

large organisation based in South Africa, the findings may not be universally applicable to all organisations in all contexts.

Additionally, there are numerous factors which influence employee engagement, with leadership style being only one of them. The scope of this study is therefore limited to the influence of leadership style on employee engagement and no conclusions can be made regarding the prevalence or absence of other influencing factors.

Lastly, the success of the change initiative within the organisation under study was not investigated, and thus no conclusions can be drawn on the effectiveness of the change initiative in relation to employee engagement.

1.4. Introduction to Document

In the following chapter, a literature review is provided which presents a critical engagement with contemporary research in this field, and highlights the gap in research in more detail. This is followed by a chapter describing the specific research questions and hypotheses. A chapter describing the research methodology is then provided followed by the results, a discussion of the results, and a conclusion. The document is concluded with a list of all references used.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter, a gap in literature was highlighted in the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement within the context of an organisation undergoing change.

This chapter presents a literature review of existing work within the field in order to discuss the gap in further detail. The content of this chapter describes the three concepts in detail, namely organisational change, employee engagement and leadership styles; and highlights the link between the concepts and the relevance thereof.

Through the review of current literature, both the academic and business needs for this study are highlighted; and this forms the basis for the content of the following chapters.

2.1. Defining Organisational Change

Literature surrounding organisational change repeatedly reiterates the high prevalence of this phenomenon and motivation for its importance as an area of research (Glensor, 2010; Seo, et al., 2012). A shrinking global market and increasingly discerning consumer means that companies have to adapt their strategies regularly in order to remain competitive and relevant in their fields.

“Traditional Organization Theory” describes an organisation as the deliberate coordination of people and their activities to achieve explicit and shared objectives or goals (Robbins, 1990).

Change, in its simplest form, is seen to be in effect when “there is an alteration to the status quo” (Safferstone, 2005). More specifically, organisational change refers to a situation where a different course of action is taken with respect to the goal-directed coordination of members within the organisation.

Whilst there are numerous definitions for organisational change in literature, the attributes of the change which would constitute it as “significant change” are not clear. Earlier research studies in the field define organisational change as “any significant alteration of the behaviour patterns of a large number of individuals

who constitute the organisation” (Dalton, Lawrence, & Lorsch, 1970) – this definition implies that the magnitude of the alteration of behaviour patterns together with the large number of affected parties constitutes organisational change, i.e. the absence of the former would invalidate the use of the term “organisational change” in its entirety. Within this context, there is no difference between the definitions of “organisational change” and “significant organisational change”, and thus the terms are used interchangeably throughout this study.

More contemporary definitions view organisations as “inherently multi-layered and multi-faceted.” They take cognisance of the organisation as influenced by both internal and external factors and describe the make-up of an organisation as “flexible, dynamic and competitive” (Iedema, Rhodes, & Scheeres, 2005). Simply put, it is in the very nature of organisations to change constantly. In his paper titled “The role of communication in organisational change,” Elving (2005) found that the axiom, “The only thing constant within organisations is the continual change of these organisations” presents itself repeatedly in literature pertaining to management and organisational structure.

Speaking on organisational change, Van Tonder (2004) observed that there are probably “as many perspectives as texts” on the subject. Broadly, organisational change can be understood as a shift in the organisational strategy of an entity (Stiles, 1999). It involves the alteration of any number of organisational levels, including but not limited to behaviour, strategy, technology, processes and structures (Robbins, 1990).

2.2. Types of Organisational Change

Mária, Barizsné, & Kun (2015) found that organisations adapt in one of three different ways: Reactive change is said to have occurred when an organisation adjusts to a new situation once that situation has come into effect. Most organisations do not wait for a situation to arise before they react to it, however. More organisations are likely to anticipate changes in their environment and begin to plan for the new situation to the extent that they are ready with a response when the situation presents itself. This method of change is referred

to as pre-active change. The final and most desirable form of change to organisations is called pro-active change. This describes a situation where organisations do not wait for changes in the environment to occur at all. Rather, they actively work to influence the environment in which they operate, in order to make it conform to their own pre-planned objectives.

Van Tonder (2004) found that whilst more than 90% of initiatives aimed at organisational change are planned changes or rational purposive change, other categories of change also exist which could potentially have an impact on the organisation. One such paradigm is “unconscious” organisational change which is inherently present within any organisation. This results from changes that arise from learnings that take place within the organisation such as organisational learning and other operating-context-based learnings.

Whilst unconscious organisational change is a natural and common occurrence, it is not the focus of this study, i.e. this study is focused on planned and purposive change within organisations.

2.3. Motivations for Organisational Change

Research suggests that over the past twenty years, external, more than internal factors have increased the rate of change within organisations (Marks, 2006). Such factors include a shrinking global economy and the resultant decreased revenues, increased competition, and customer dissatisfaction with products and services over time. Organisational change is undertaken for a variety of reasons including but not limited to the need to improve productivity and revenue growth, attempts to reduce costs, and attempts to alter employee attitude.

Whilst organisational change is most prevalent as a consequence of mergers and acquisitions within the corporate sector, organisations that are motivated to alter strategy and personnel at particular intervals also range across the public and non-governmental sectors.

Studies have found that despite the frequency with which change is undertaken, it seldom achieves the desired objectives (Dahl, 2011). There is

no doubt that several factors may potentially contribute to the failed attempts at organisational change. Several studies point to the crucial role of the “human element”, which forms the basis of this study (Seo, et al., 2012). Van Tonder (2004) argues that there is a clear link between organisational change and individual change. He suggests that successful organisational change necessarily implies successful change within the individual employee.

Researching the human response to change, Glensor (2010) found that effective change management requires getting all of the affected stakeholders involved to understand and accept the intended changes; having them believe in the intended outcomes of the change process; and navigating potential resistance to change in a diplomatic manner. Change cannot be successful without employee support. It is therefore critical that the leadership within the organisation places particular emphasis on addressing employee concerns at times of change (Sharif & Scandura, 2014).

The human element of organisational change is thus one of the most important factors in determining a positive outcome for organisational change. In this regard, the following sections present an in-depth review of the literature surrounding the two primary facets of the human element of organisational change, namely the employees of the organisation and its leadership.

2.4. The Human Cost of Organisational Change

While many theorists point out the financial motivations for initiating organisational change, few have taken into account the toll that it takes on employees – both psychologically and physically. Dahl (2011) argues that since an organisation’s performance rests on its employees’ productivity, it is crucial that the emotional state of the employees be taken into consideration when the decision to initiate change is made; as well as throughout the process of the implementation of the change. Some theorists cited in Dahl (2011) believe organisations to be inherently resistant to change, making any change risky, costly and likely to fail. The uncertainty that results from change initiatives lowers morale amongst employees, thus negatively affecting employee performance.

Gratton and Hope-Hailey (cited in Safferstone, 2005) argue that organisational change typically results in one of three behavioural responses from employees. These include: “Get Safe”, where employees, motivated by a fear of redundancy, will obey any orders put forward by management. The second possibility is “Get Out”, when employees become disillusioned with the direction that the organisation is headed in and decide to leave the organisation. The third option is “Get Even”, when employees significantly disengage and reduce their contributions to the firm.

It is the third phenomenon which results in lower employee performance that proves to be detrimental to the organisation undergoing change. Bhola (2010) points out that the reason for employee disengagement is that organisational change in the form of restructuring, downsizing, or mergers and acquisitions, forces employees to have to take on more responsibility and work longer hours whilst having to tolerate the ambiguity that comes with the processes of change.

2.5. Employees and Employee Engagement

One of the preliminary observations in literature on employee engagement is the absence of a generally accepted definition for the term. An authority in the field, Kahn (1990), defined employee engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (p. 694). By “cognitively”, Kahn refers to the beliefs that employees hold about the organisation; their role within the organisation; the working conditions; the organisation’s leaders; and other factors. The “emotional” aspect relates to how employees feel about the beliefs that they hold of these factors – that is, do they display a positive or negative attitude to their work environment, the organisation and its leaders? The extent to which employees exert themselves physically to fulfil their tasks is alluded to in the “physical” aspect. Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss (2008) sum up Kahn’s definition for employee engagement to “be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organisational role” (p. 3).

Other recent definitions of employee engagement as cited in Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss (2008) emphasize commitment to the organisation at both an emotional and intellectual level. The most succinct definition however, is put forward by Truss, et al (2006) who suggests “passion for work” as a characterisation of employee engagement. Cascio (2011) believes that engagement is “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption.” Despite the lack of a singular definition for the term, theorists agree that employee engagement is not just an attitude but the extent to which an employee pays attention to their work and is committed to their role within the organisation.

In a widespread analysis of research surrounding employee engagement, Kular et al (2008) found that overall, there are more disengaged or not engaged employees in the workforce than engaged employees. The deficiency in employee engagement is a point of concern given the fact that most organisations attribute competitive advantage to levels of engagement within their organisations (Piersol, 2007).

Citing several studies, Cascio (2011) points out that the levels of employee engagement affects employee behaviour and consequently the performance of the organisation as a whole. Employees that harbour negative attitudes towards the organisation are more likely to stay away, be late, quit or be unproductive. Engaged employees on the other hand display high energy levels and a willingness to go the extra mile to get the job done. They take a sense of pride in their work and the organisation; and are persistent when faced with challenges thereby increasing levels of productivity.

Another point highlighted in the literature is the misleading nature of the term. Employee engagement is a misnomer in that it appears to place the responsibility for engagement solely at the feet of the worker. Optimal employee engagement, however, is achieved through a reciprocal relationship throughout the organisation and involves management taking the primary responsibility (Piersol, 2007).

2.6. Factors influencing Employee Engagement

Robinson (2006) mentions that there is considerable evidence which indicates a link between lower employee engagement and a lack of employee involvement in decisions affecting their work. This point is reiterated by Marchington and Kynighou (2012) who stated that a general consensus exists in research that employees should be involved by management in the decision making process to some extent. Even if the extent of involvement only entails the disclosure of information and involves a limited amount of consultation in the workplace, the benefits of employee inclusion far outweigh potentially negative outcomes – the latter including a compromise to confidentiality, dissatisfaction with particular ideas not being implemented by management, and others. The positive impact of employee consultation and the consequent perception of inclusion amongst employees, is thus of high importance.

Very often, the lack of communication that permeates during the change process whilst decisions are still being formalised, creates a climate of uncertainty which lowers morale amongst employees. Other consequences include a perceived threat to job security and an uncertain future amongst employees; employees becoming unsure of the value that will be placed on their contribution to the organisation, and how they will fit into the “new” organisation going forward; employees no longer feeling “valued” by the company and enabling a hostile environment to be created where employees view the situation in an “us” versus “them” light; and others. It has also been observed that in such instances, perceived differences on the grounds of culture, corporate identification, etc. are magnified and treated with suspicion (Bhola, 2010).

It is important to note that most of the available empirical evidence surrounding employee engagement deals with North America and Europe and is conducted by Gallup (Crawford, 2015). Cross national comparison and extrapolation of data should be done with caution, given the cultural differences and variations in the definition of the term (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008).

Notwithstanding the above, the large number of potential negative outcomes on employees that result from change initiatives makes it crucial that organisational change be properly managed and planned for from an employee perspective (Van Tonder, 2004).

2.7. Change Management and getting employees to view change favourably

Burnes, cited in Glensor. (2010), defines change management as a firm's ability to identify and implement the necessary actions that are required to steer an organisation effectively into the future. Moran and Brightman (2001) believe that change management is the process by which an organisation continually renews its direction, capabilities and structure in order to address the constantly changing needs of its internal and external environment.

Large amounts of money are spent on designing and implementing change initiatives in organisations. The aim is usually to find a way to align limited resources to an organisation's strategic goals; and cut costs in order to gain maximum benefit from those resources. The intended outcome, it is argued, is to build a competitive advantage in the industry whilst delivering greater value to stakeholders. Research shows that whilst a great deal of time and resources are put into the design and implementation phases of change initiatives, the evaluation of the success of such initiatives is done to a considerably lesser degree.

In navigating change management, Stumpf, Tymon Jr, Favorito, & Smith (2013) highlighted the link between change initiatives and employee rewards. Employees are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards are usually administered by the organisation and are not within the control of the employee themselves. These include, but are not limited to pay and promotion, employee benefits, the location of the job, working conditions, and other factors. Intrinsic rewards are those that result from an employee having a positive experience from their work and feeling a sense of value and purpose, amongst other intrinsic factors.

Whilst it is known that employees are driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, the trend is that organisational change usually results in a minimisation of the costs associated with the organisation's extrinsic rewards system (Stumpf, Tymon Jr, Favorito, & Smith, 2013). Employees are thus subjected to a decrease in the rewards that they receive, which consequently makes them instinctively resistant to change.

One method to combat this, they argue, is to design the change initiative in such a way that it increases the employee's perceived value to the organisation, thereby causing the employee to experience an increased sense of self-worth and personal motivation (Stumpf, Tymon Jr, Favorito, & Smith, 2013). Research surrounding the factors that influence employees towards pro-change behaviour highlight that perceptions of justice within the organisation carry a high weighting in motivating employees to not only be accepting of change, but also become involved in the active promotion thereof (Fuchs & Edwards, 2012). These types of justice include distributive, interpersonal, informational and procedural justice. An additional and equally important factor in promoting pro-change behaviour is the fostering of a sense of organisational identification amongst employees – when employees view themselves and the organisation as a single unit, a characteristic of organisational identity is achieved (Gioia, Patvardhan, Hamilton, & Corley, 2013). That is, the employees themselves become a factor that distinguishes the organisation from other organisations – this results in employees volunteering to undertake work efforts at their own discretion.

Organisational identity also causes employees to feel a sense of loyalty to the organisation and subsequently become much more trusting of the decisions that are undertaken by their superiors. They are more likely to stay in the organisation in times of uncertainty, and go the extra mile to implement strategies that are required to advance the organisation. Such a stance is not achieved easily and requires a long track record of perceived ethical and trustworthy behaviour; as well as open communication and transparency within the organisation across its different levels (Sharif & Scandura, 2014).

The above discussion highlights the fact that employee engagement is a multidimensional process involving various stakeholders within the organisation. It cannot be considered the sole responsibility of the employees to foster. Rather, it is to a much greater extent an operational function of the leadership structure of the organisation wherein they are required to set the tone and implement inclusive strategies that will foster a sense of engagement amongst employees. The goal of this function is to increase the chances of the organisation gaining a competitive edge in the industry through its employees; as well as enhancing the ability of the organisation to weather the volatility that has come to characterise the global economy.

Thus far, a discussion has been put forward on the pervasiveness of change in the current economic climate and the crucial role that employees play in the success or failure of an organisation, particularly within an organisation undergoing change. The discussion also highlighted the importance of employee engagement, together with the importance of the leadership role on the influencing thereof.

Following on from the above, the discussion in the following sections aims to introduce the topic of leadership and the various styles which have been described in literature.

2.8. The role of Leadership in Organisational Change

In discussing the challenges faced by leaders in dealing with change in the contemporary world, Van Tonder (2004) suggests that organisational change is no longer motivated by a search for stability but rather that it has become a natural functional component of organisations operating in the current economic environment. Thus, the challenge faced by the heads of organisations is how to create a robust culture in the workplace that is open to change and subsequently conducive to growth (Ortlepp, Kinnear, & Karadis, 2003).

According to Smit and Carstens (2003), the central role of leadership at times of organisational change is rooted in the fact that the decision to initiate and implement change comes from them, and they are inevitably tasked with evaluating the change.

Whilst the importance of good leadership as a driver for change is not disputed, there exists no universally accepted definition for term “leadership”. A common thread throughout the many definitions, however, is the *influence* element of leadership. In a study conducted on the twelve models of leadership, eight models described leadership as “motivation by persuasion” (Smit & Carstens, 2003). In the current context, leadership is best described by Kerfoot (1999), who refers to it as the “art and science of leading change effectively”.

Whilst organisational change is highly prevalent, the extent to which it is successful is questionable. The role of leadership in steering the process is thus “absolutely essential and incredibly difficult” (Ortlepp, Kinnear, & Karadis, 2003).

2.9. Different styles of Leadership

Leadership is a popular area of research. There are over two dozen different styles of leadership mentioned in literature; each varies distinctly from the next, and has different fields of application including in health, commerce, the public sector, and others. In business particularly, the most prominent leadership styles include: authoritarian, transformational, Laissez-faire, servant, transactional and democratic (Rubin, 2013).

It is particularly notable, however, that no one style of leadership is universally applicable. Each has its own positives and negatives; and successful organisational operation is dependent upon using particular styles at appropriate times (Renko, El Tarabishy, Carsrud, & Brännback, 2015).

Within the context of this study, therefore, the suitability of the leadership style should be determined in accordance with the famous American management consultant Peter Drucker’s observation that, “*The art of leadership is to preserve order amid change and change amid order.*”

The following sections describe each of the above leadership styles relevant to the business context.

2.9.1. Authoritarian Leadership

Authoritarian leadership, also referred to as autocratic leadership, is a form of leadership where the head of the organisation takes control of all decisions and dictates processes and tasks to the organisation. Authoritarian leadership is heavily reliant on discipline within the organisation. Characteristics of an authoritarian leader include that they make decisions based on their own judgements and ideas. They rarely accept the advice of their subordinates (Redman, 2011).

Fontyn, as quoted in Smit & Carstens (2003) points out that authoritarian leadership is an old model of leadership (it was a prominent style of leadership a hundred years ago) where authority is seen as a result of holding a higher-level position rather than an outcome of innate leadership traits within the head of the organisation.

Authoritarian leadership seeks total control over a project or group. This is achieved through the manifestation of following characteristics (Bass & Stogdill, 1990):

- The leader orders and implements decisions affecting any aspect of organisational operations
- Little input is sought from subordinates
- This results in an atmosphere where members of the organisation at lower levels feel that they are not trusted to successfully complete tasks and achieve objectives. There is no sense of empowerment
- The ultimate aim of the leader is to just get the job done. There is no empowerment-enabling climate; and thus if exercised over a long period of time, authoritarian leadership will cause low morale in the organisation.

Based on the above, it is evident that over the long term, implementing an authoritarian leadership style will result in more losses to the organisation than benefits.

It is useful, and is most often implemented in situations where an urgent deadline needs to be met; situations where there is a shortage of skills and the leader is responsible for guiding members of the organisation through a task with a clearly-articulated plan of action; and conditions that are potentially dangerous or with little room for error where authoritarian leadership with its climate of strict rules enables people to be kept safe from harm.

2.9.2. Laissez Faire Leadership

The laissez faire leadership style is also called the delegative, or “hands off” approach; and describes an environment where the leader of an organisation provides little or no direction to the members of the organisation (Quintana, Park, & Cabrera, 2015).

It is the opposite of authoritarian leadership in many ways. A laissez faire leader allows followers complete freedom to make decisions that concern their work and how it is to be completed. The leader takes on the responsibility of providing the resources required by employees.

Research shows that whilst the leader shapes the goal and takes ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the task, allowing employees to make decisions on how to realise the goal allows empowers them with a sense of ownership over their work. This results in greater motivation to complete tasks (Rubin, 2013).

The success or failure of the laissez faire leadership style is dependent on the level of skill and motivation of members of the organisation. It is particularly effective when group members are more knowledgeable in their field than the group leader. In such cases, the absence of rules set by the leader allows members to work independently and display their in-depth knowledge and expertise (Quintana, Park, & Cabrera, 2015).

The potential disadvantage of laissez faire leadership is that leaving employees with little or no guidance may make them feel uncertain of the expectations that the leader has of them, and leave them unsure of the work that they are supposed to do. In a situation of inadequate communication, employees feel hesitant to approach the leader with questions and this creates the possibility of

employees being under-productive at work. The leader may be perceived as aloof and uninvolved in the day to day workings of the organisation and may cause members to feel unsure of their role and consequently disconnect from the organisation (Redman, 2011).

2.9.3. Servant Leadership

The servant leader is one who is primarily concerned with his/her team members and their needs. Servant leaders believe that meeting the needs of employees will lead to the success of the organisation. Such leaders facilitate the sharing of ideas within the organisation and offer support to employees to realise their goals. Employees are often involved in the decision-making process by servant leaders (Simmons & Striley, 2014).

Organisations under servant leadership develop a strong sense of community over time, and this environment results in a greater level of engagement on the part of team members who feel more invested in the future of the organisation (Rubin, 2013). There are stronger relationships and deeper levels of trust amongst members of the organisation, making them less likely to leave. Servant leaders are committed to the growth of the people they are involved with.

Servant leadership is different from other forms of leadership in that it is not immediately identifiable – rather, it is a pattern of behaviour that is developed over time. This method of leadership is dependent on the environment in which it is implemented. It can be potentially counterproductive in situations where the established work culture is hierarchical and leaders are expected to hand down all decisions. In such an environment, a servant leader may appear indecisive or incompetent and will have difficulty earning the respect of her/his colleagues (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

2.9.4. Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership, as the name suggests, is an open and transparent notion of leading where the decision-making powers are shared amongst the members of the organisation; and inputs from all members are valued and

contribute to formulating the vision of the organisation (Cangemi, Davis, Sand, & Lott, 2011).

Some of the benefits of democratic leadership include that it facilitates open discussion and the sharing of views and opinions, thereby increasing the potential for innovation within the organisation. It creates an organisation that is built on consensus, and fosters commitment from members of the organisation since they all contribute to its collective vision. Benincasa (2012) summarises this form of leadership with the phrase, “What do you think?”

Democratic leadership has many positive characteristics which promote it as a beneficial style of leadership. It is difficult, however, to get the balance right which is required for successful implementation. It is limited in that it does not lend itself to quick decision making which is often necessary in an organisation. In the pursuit of consensus, time may be lost and productivity affected (Simmons & Striley, 2014).

Other drawbacks include the need to invite new, unconfident or inexperienced members to participate in decision-making processes for the organisation – this may not add value, and may also be unwelcomed by the respective members. Also, by implementing this style of leadership, the leader of the organisation runs the risk of being perceived as not leading but instead passing on the responsibility of the position to team members (Rubin, 2013).

2.10. Suitability of Leadership Style to Organisational Change

The previous section summarised four leadership styles commonly found within the business context together with their advantages and disadvantages.

A common thread that can be observed across all styles is that whilst each has a domain to which it is well suited, none of them are suited to leading organisational change. This is because organisational change requires leadership which can take the organisation from a certain status quo to a new, different status quo – the very nature of this process is top-down, with leadership making employees believe in the long-term vision and tolerate the

temporary discomfort. This position is further justified when taking into consideration that there is no literature which juxtaposes these styles of leadership with organisational change.

Given that these leadership styles are not suited to organisational change, a study of the impact of these leadership styles on employee engagement in the context of organisational change would be counterproductive.

To illustrate this, the following can be considered:

In the case of authoritarian leadership, we find that employees are disengaged and disempowered under normal circumstances. Should the organisation undergo change, it is likely that the feeling of disengagement will be exacerbated (Rubin, 2013).

In the case of laissez faire leadership, the hands-off approach would likely mean that the change in the organisation would come as a surprise to the group, making them suspicious of the move and more likely to reject the proposed changes (Rubin, 2013). Additionally, all change management strategies that have been reviewed in this study require a high level of commitment from the leadership that is simply not provided by the laissez faire style (Simmons & Striley, 2014).

In the case of servant leadership, leaders would be averse to change given the negative impact that it has on employee engagement (Rubin, 2013).

In the case of democratic leadership, the inability to make decisions quickly renders this leadership style inadequate for situations requiring change management (Glensor, 2010).

Given the discussion above, this study focuses on leadership styles which are primarily suited to driving the agenda of organisational change, and then narrowing this down to styles which are particularly well-suited to driving the agenda of employee engagement within the change context.

In this regard, the following sections describe the two leadership styles of interest: Transactional and Transformational Leadership.

2.10.1. Transactional Leadership and a Discussion on Managers versus Leaders

The transactional style of leadership is often attributed to managers. Weathersby (1999), summarises the distinction between management and leadership as follows (p. 5):

“Management is the allocation of scarce resources against an organisation’s objective, the setting of priorities, the design of work and the achievement of results. Most important, it’s about controlling. Leadership, on the other hand, focuses on the creation of a common vision. It means motivating people to contribute to the vision and encouraging them to align their self-interest with that of the organisation. It means persuading, not commanding. “

Whilst differences between management and leadership are highlighted in the literature, it should be noted that these categories can overlap and are not mutually exclusive. Leaders do not need be managers or possess or display any managerial traits. A manager, however, must exercise leadership over his/her group and therefore has to possess some leadership traits in order to carry out this task successfully (Weathersby, 1999).

Breevart et al. (2014) point out that transactional leadership comprises of various characteristics that differ in their effectiveness.

The most effective characteristic of transactional leadership is contingent reward. This is when members of the organisation receive material incentives upon the successful completion of a task with the intention of increasing the member’s motivation to complete tasks in the future (Breevaart, et al., 2014); there is thus a transaction between the leader and the members of the organisation. Any benefit to the organisation borne from efforts of the members results in reward to the members; and any harm to the organisation similarly results in punishment. Essentially, this characteristic of transactional leadership encapsulates the aim of this style of leadership: to direct the behaviours of members of the organisation by appealing to their own self-interest (Liu, Liu, & Zeng, 2011). Transactional theory assumes that employees are not self-motivated and rely on systems of reward and punishment.

A less effective and sometimes counter-productive aspect of transactional leadership is management by exception. This is a method of ensuring compliance by members of the organisation by allocating resources to curb any action falling outside preconceived parameters (Batista-Taran, Shuck, Gutierrez, & Baralt, 2009). Management by exception is said to be applied actively when managers closely monitor their subordinates and take corrective action when any deviation from the rules is observed. When leaders intervene only in the event that performance is below expectation and goals are not being met, it is known as passive management by exception (Rubin, 2013).

Transactional leaders are typically action-orientated and focused on achieving predetermined results (Batista-Taran, Shuck, Gutierrez, & Baralt, 2009), by facilitating the proper exchange of resources (Quintana, Park, & Cabrera, 2015). For this reason, employees are susceptible to feeling disempowered under this style of leadership.

Transactional leadership is a constant exchange between leader and group member with the aim of achieving goals determined by the leader. It is a routine pattern of behaviour that is suited to personalities that value security and routine in their work. In the case that one is not of that personality type, though, there would be little one could do to increase job satisfaction under this form of leadership.

Whilst some argue that leaders who can effectively use the contingent reward system will be able to keep employees suitably engaged (Breevaart, et al., 2014), others find that having the rewards dependent on individual achievements may cause employees to prioritise individual goals over collective goals; and that employees' competence are only displayed when outperforming peers, negatively affecting cooperation amongst teams (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014).

The above discussion describes the benefits and drawbacks of transactional leadership from the perspective of effectiveness of the leadership style, and indicates that when implemented successfully it has the potential to drive the agenda of employee engagement.

In addition to the above, research also shows that transactional leadership may be a viable style of leadership to steer the organisation through a change management strategy (Miller, 2011). This is because transactional leadership is highly focused on achieving short term goals. Whilst organisational change might be motivated by a long term vision, change management is achieved by reaching a series of short-term goals. In this respect, transactional leadership may be a useful style of leadership to ensure a smooth transition.

The success of transactional leadership during a period of organisational change is dependent on organisation members' endorsement of the plans proposed by the leadership (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014). This reality is however true for any kind of organisational change that may be implemented.

Literature dealing with transactional leadership almost always includes a discussion on the contrast between transactional and transformational leadership (Deichmann & Stam, 2015; Breevaart et al., 2014; Quintana, Park, & Cabrera, 2015; Garg & Ramjee, 2013; Rowold, 2014; Hamstra et al., 2014; Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015). This supports Burns' (cited in (Quintana, Park, & Cabrera, 2015)) theory that transactional and transformational leadership are not two distinct concepts, but rather they are on opposite ends of a single spectrum. He argues that good leaders should possess both transactional and transformational skills. This reinforces the position mentioned previously that no one style of leadership is universally applicable.

2.10.2. Transformational Leadership

A transformational leader seeks to inspire members of the organisation and actively engages with them in order to motivate them into outperforming their expectations (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). According to this theory, effective transformational leadership comprises of four aspects, namely

- **Charisma:** They embody an ideal role model for members of the organisation and act on the values they advocate, thereby earning the respect of their subordinates;

- **Consideration:** They display a sincere concern for the needs of their team and offer personal attention to each member as a means of achieving their potential;
- **Inspiration:** Transformational leaders have the ability to inspire their team and motivate them to achieve personal and professional goals;
- **Intellectual Stimulation:** Under transformational leadership, employees are challenged to go beyond the expectations that they have of themselves and be innovative in their approach (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Rowold, 2014).

Transformational leaders focus on the individual needs and competencies of their employees; on their intellectual development; and on formulating and achieving a common organisational goal (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014).

It has been found to increase productivity and facilitate employee engagement. By taking a personal interest in the well-being of their employees, transformational leaders inspire a sense of ownership of the organisation amongst its members, thereby making them more invested in its success (Ghafoor, Qureshi, Khan, & Hijazi, 2011). Tims et al (cited in Breevaart et al., 2014) studied employee engagement on a daily basis and found that on days when leaders displayed transformational leadership behaviour, employees were inspired to feel more optimistic and were more engaged. Breevaart et al. (2014) found similar results in their study into leadership styles and employee engagement.

Transformational leadership has been defined as a leadership approach that prompts a change in individuals and social systems (Jordan, Werner, & Venter, 2015). Transformational leaders recognise the need for change. They are found to be the best suited to inspire members of the organisation to share their vision for the future, and navigate the difficult task of implementing change for the better of the organisation (Carter, Armenakis, Feild, & Mossholder, 2013).

In a study into organisational change within the private health care sector (where negative outcomes would have detrimental real world effects), Jordan,

Werner, & Venter (2015) found a positive and significant relationship between organisational change and transformational leadership.

This is attributed to the fact that transformational leaders are seen to demonstrate high levels of moral and ethical conduct. They are able to create and communicate a vision for the organisation which employees are inspired to adopt as a collective. The team spirit that transformational leaders foster within the organisation leads to knowledge-sharing, which facilitates innovation within the organisation. This consequently increases the competitive advantage of the organisation in the market, thereby making the organisation better able to navigate the challenges that come with implementing change (Garg & Ramjee, 2013).

2.10.3. Summary of Suitable Leadership Styles

The discussion in the previous section highlights that literature alludes to transformational leadership as an effective leadership style to drive the agenda of organisational change, as well as promote employee engagement. As a result, much of the literature presents transformational leadership as a “single solution to all problems”. However, as mentioned previously, different leadership styles have been found to have different levels of effectiveness in different contexts.

The literature review as summarised in the previous section also indicates that transactional leadership is a style of leadership which has the potential to drive organisational change and promote employee engagement.

The discussion above thus addresses research objective (i) in Chapter 1, as repeated below:

“Of all the contemporary leadership styles, which are the most relevant to employee engagement within an organisation undergoing change?”

The assessment of the available literature indicated that transactional and transformational leadership appear to be the only two styles amongst all the contemporary styles, which have the ability to successfully drive both the agendas of organisational change and employee engagement.

This study therefore focuses specifically on these two types of leadership and their influence on employee engagement, within an organisation undergoing change.

2.11. Conclusion

The literature review as summarised within this chapter defines the concepts of organisational change, employee engagement and leadership within the business context in order to contextualise the contents of the literature review and the rest of the study.

It was found that organisational change is topical in literature due to the current economic climate and the need for businesses to remain competitive amidst the various challenges in the market and the economy. Organisational change was found to be becoming the norm rather than the exception; the pace of which has been increasing in recent history.

One of the notable consequences of organisational change is a potentially negative impact on employee engagement and productivity as a result of lower employee morale. The management of employee engagement was found to be critical to ensure the sustained competitiveness of the business, and thus any initiative which impacts employee engagement needs to place particular emphasis on sustaining employee engagement.

Whilst many forms of leadership can promote employee engagement if implemented well, only two types of leadership were found to be particularly well-suited to driving the agenda of organisational change. These include transactional and transformational leadership.

Although literature has documented the effectiveness of each of the above leadership styles in separately driving organisational change and employee engagement, there is a distinct gap in literature observed in the investigation of all three concepts simultaneously, i.e. the impact of the different leadership styles on employee engagement in an organisation undergoing change.

This study investigates this link, with the aim of informing the choice of leadership style to drive organisational change with a keen focus on its impact on employee engagement.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the research objectives described in Chapter 1 together with the literature review presented in Chapter 2, the following research questions and hypotheses were developed.

At a high level, research question 1 seeks to determine whether or not a leader's specific leadership style results in a more engaged employee. Research question 2 seeks to determine the exact extent to which the style leads to a strong level of employee engagement.

3.1. Research Question 1:

This question investigates if a significant difference in employee engagement can be observed based on the relevant dominant leadership style of the employees' managers. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, the relevant styles to organisational change include transactional and transformational leadership.

This question therefore aims to address objective (ii) as described in Section 1.2 of this document, and thus provide an intermediary step between (i) as investigated in the literature review, and (iii) as answered by research question 2.

Hypothesis 1 is used to answer research question 1 as follows:

3.1.1. Research Question 1: Hypothesis 1

Investigates if a significant difference can be observed in employee engagement between employees whose managers exhibit either transactional or transformational leadership as their dominant style.

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in employee engagement between groups with transactional or transformational leadership.

H_{01A} : There is a significant difference in employee engagement between groups with transactional or transformational leadership.

3.2. Research Question 2:

This question investigates if the specific relevant leadership style (transactional and/or transformational) is a positive predictor of/has a positive contribution on employee engagement, and describes the extent thereof. Hypotheses 2 and 3 used to answer this question as follows:

3.2.1. Research Question 2: Hypothesis 2

Investigates the significance of the relationship between transactional leadership and employee engagement.

H₀₂: Transactional leadership is not a positive predictor of employee engagement.

H_{02A}: Transactional leadership is a positive predictor of employee engagement.

3.2.2. Research Question 2: Hypothesis 3

Investigates the significance of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement.

H₀₃: Transformational leadership is not a positive predictor of employee engagement.

H_{03A}: Transformational leadership is a positive predictor of employee engagement.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the research questions posed in Chapter 3, this chapter describes the way in which the research was conducted. In particular, it describes the research setting and method, the population and unit of analysis, the sampling technique, the data collection method, the analysis method, as well as the assumptions and limitations of the process.

4.1. Research Setting

The research was conducted within a large South African company in the oil and gas industry. Through its diverse portfolio of product offerings, the organisation is spread across multiple geographical regions both within South Africa and abroad.

The organisation was recently subjected to significant organisational change wherein the business operating model was redesigned, together with a revision of the organisational structure and the resizing of the workforce.

The research was conducted within a specific business unit of this company which offers professional services to other business units within the company. In particular, it offers engineering and project services, capital project execution and research and technology. Geographically, most of the employees within this business unit are situated in South Africa; however, there are a small number of employees located outside the borders.

There are 1600 employees within the business unit, all of whom were subjected to the organisational change initiative implemented by the company. Due to the nature of the business unit (professional services), the change initiative had a greater impact on this unit as compared to other business units within the company in the operations environment. This is because the latter is perceived as more core and critical to the continuous operation of the revenue generating industrial plants.

It is due to the above reason that this business unit was chosen for this study – in particular, the business unit presents a valuable population of employees who were individually affected by the change initiative.

4.2. Research Method

As the aim of the research was to describe the relationships between leadership styles and employee engagement, the research methodology used was of a descriptive nature. The research design was therefore a quantitative design in order to investigate whether the relationships are statistically significant for a given population, i.e. the data obtained was numerical in nature (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.3. Population and unit of analysis

The population for this study was every employee within the business unit as the entire business unit was subjected to the organisational change initiative. This included employees at various levels within the operating structure, with each employee reporting to a respective line manager who displays a certain leadership style.

Access was granted to conduct a survey amongst the entire population. The unit of analysis were the perceptions of each employee with regards to his/her own engagement and the leadership style of his/her line manager.

4.4. Sampling

The sampling technique employed was probability sampling (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). By the nature of the data collection, the request to participate in the survey was sent to every member within the sampling frame (all employees within the business unit). As a result, the probability of each case being selected from the sampling frame was equal and known, making the sampling technique a probability sampling technique (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

The probability sampling technique was suited to this particular investigation, as the aim of the research was to make an inference about the population from the sample in order to confirm or reject the research hypotheses (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

Table 1 shows details regarding the response rate achieved from the survey.

Table 1: Response Rate to Survey

Number of People approached	Number of Responses Received	Response Rate
1600	328	20.5 %

The low response rate can be largely attributed to refusal to respond due to survey fatigue, as many surveys have been completed by the population in recent history.

4.5. Data Collection Method

Data was collected by means of emailing a questionnaire to all members of the sampling frame. This method was selected due to the fact that respondents were geographically dispersed – the method therefore enabled a higher response rate than would have been possible if an alternative method such as face-to-face interviews were conducted. The questionnaire was sent to 1600 recipients, and the recipients were given a period of two weeks to respond.

4.6. Data Collection Tool

Data was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 32 questions. The questions addressed three separate constructs, including “Transformational Leadership”, “Transactional Leadership” and “Employee Engagement”. Details of the questionnaire and process are given in the following subsections.

4.6.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed using a combination of questions used by other researchers in the relevant fields. These questions were tested for both validity and reliability, and shown to have presented good results for the relevant constructs.

Table 2 shows a breakdown of the questions used in the questionnaire, together with the references for the relevant constructs and the number of questions in the questionnaire related to the relevant construct.

Table 2: Questionnaire Details

Q#	Construct	Abbreviation	Article	# Items
1	Transformational Leadership	TransfL	(Ismail, Mohamad, Mohamad, Rafiuddin, & Zhen, 2011)	10
2	Transactional Leadership	TransaL	(Ismail, Mohamad, Mohamad, Rafiuddin, & Zhen, 2011)	5
3	Employee Engagement	EE	(Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006)	17

The full questionnaire used is provided in Appendix A.

4.6.2. Questionnaire Scales

As per the sources in literature from which the questions were obtained, all questions were answered on a Likert scale. The “Transformational Leadership” construct was tested on a 5-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”; the “Transactional Leadership” construct was tested on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”; and the “Employee Engagement” construct was tested on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Always”.

4.6.3. Questionnaire Reliability and Validity

Questionnaire reliability refers to the consistency of a measure, i.e. ensuring that multiple attempts to measure the same thing converge to the same point.

This is usually a consequence of using short, clear and unbiased questions within the questionnaire (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2003).

Questionnaire Validity relates to the accuracy of a measure, i.e. ensuring that the measure that is being taken accurately reflects the concept which is being tested (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2003).

In order to ensure both reliability and validity, questions were used from sources in literature which indicated a thorough testing process for both aspects. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire used for this study was therefore ensured.

4.6.4. Survey Instrument

Electronic self-administered questionnaires present a cheap, quick and easy method to collect data from a large population (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2003).

The questionnaire used for this study was created on Google Forms; which allowed the creation of a single URL for respondents to use in order to populate the form. The form was constructed such that all questions were required – this ensured that there were no incomplete submissions.

The questionnaire was formatted on a single web page in order to encourage the respondent to complete it without losing interest after scrolling through multiple pages. Each question only allowed a single response as per the Likert scale – this ensured the integrity of the data collected.

4.6.5. Pre-testing

The questionnaire was sent out to three individuals before the official data collection process was initiated. The purpose of this was to perform pre-testing, whereby spelling, grammar, ease of understanding and use, as well as functionality of the system was tested. Once these issues were addressed, the questionnaire was sent out to the entire population.

4.6.6. Data Collection Method

The survey was administered using the online survey tool called Google Forms. The questionnaire was created on this system, and a URL was generated for respondents to use to access the form.

A database containing the email addresses of all employees within the respective business unit was obtained from the company of interest. An email was then sent to the entire business unit (the sampling frame) requesting participation in the survey, together with the URL.

4.7. Data Analysis

The raw data was downloaded from Google Forms in Microsoft Excel format. This data followed the format shown in Table 3, where all three constructs comprised of questions with ordinal data using Likert type scales. This is as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Format of Data for use in Analysis

Construct Number	Construct Name	Questions	Scale	
1	Transformational Leadership	1-10	1	Strongly Disagree
			2	Disagree
			3	Uncertain
			4	Agree
			5	Strongly Agree
2	Transactional Leadership	11-15	1	Strongly Disagree
			2	Disagree
			3	Disagree Somewhat
			4	Undecided
			5	Agree Somewhat
			6	Agree
			7	Strongly Agree

Construct Number	Construct Name	Questions	Scale	
3	Employee Engagement	16-32	1	Never
			2	Almost Never
			3	Rarely
			4	Sometimes
			5	Often
			6	Very Often
			7	Always

Microsoft Excel 2013 was used to plot all descriptive data for visual interpretation, and IBM SPSS v24 was used for all statistical data analysis.

Since this study is concerned with the three constructs in Table 3 at a high level, the responses to each question within the construct was averaged using an arithmetic mean. This provided a single score/rating per construct for each employee within the sample. To facilitate ease of comparison, the ratings of transactional and transformation leadership were then normalised. A typical example of this process is illustrated in Table 4.



Table 4: Data Normalisation for a typical questionnaire response

Construct	Question Number	Response to Question	Rating for construct (arithmetic mean)		Normalised rating (used for all analysis)	
			Scale	Rating	Scale	Rating
Transformational Leadership	1	2	1-5	3	1-10	6
	2	3				
	3	5				
	4	4				
	5	1				
	6	3				
	7	5				
	8	4				
	9	1				
	10	2				
Transactional Leadership	11	2	1-7	4.6	1-10	6.6
	12	5				
	13	6				
	14	7				
	15	3				
Employee Engagement	16	1	1-7	3.82	1-7	3.82
	17	3				
	18	4				
	19	7				
	20	6				
	21	5				
	22	2				
	23	4				
	24	2				
	25	4				
26	3					

	27	2				
	28	5				
	29	3				
	30	4				
	31	4				
	32	6				

4.7.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were provided to summarise and describe the data which was collected (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2003). In particular, frequency distributions were plotted for each construct, showing the percentage of responses within the sample for each point along the Likert scale.

In addition, the data were described using standard statistical measures such as minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation and number of samples.

4.7.2. Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were used to analyse the collected data in order to make inferences about the population (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2003). The aim of this was to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3.

Since the questionnaire consisted of questions which required responses according to a Likert scale, the data collected can be described as ordinal - categorical data with ranking (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). From a strict statistical point of view, this requires the use of non-parametric testing, as parametric testing is reserved for interval or numerical data. However, Norman (2010) has cited numerous researchers who have tested the validity of parametric testing on a Likert-type of dataset and has found that parametric testing can be used without any significant impact on the outcome. This is particularly applicable when the underlying concepts behind the Likert-scale are continuous as opposed to categorical.

For the purposes of this study, parametric testing methods were used for all inferential statistics. A significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was used for all tests, corresponding to a 95 % confidence interval.

Research Question 1

This question requires a comparison between two independent categorical groups (transactional and transformational leadership). In order to execute this test, the dominant leadership style of the specific leader was determined by comparing the normalised ratings for each leadership construct per respondent. The respondent's leader's dominant style was then used for the analysis, whereby a leader could be deemed as either transactional or transformational, but not both.

An independent samples t-test was then performed to compare the means of employee engagement for each category of leadership, taking into account the following six assumptions:

- i. Employee Engagement as a dependent variable was measured on a continuous scale.
- ii. Dominant Leadership Style as an independent variable consisted of two categorical groups (Transformational and Transactional).
- iii. Independence of observations.
- iv. No significant outliers exist in the dependent variable for either group.
- v. The dependent variable is normally distributed for both groups.
- vi. There is homogeneity of variances.

Assumptions i-iii are ensured based on Section 5.10.2. Assumption iv is ensured by restricting data input to values present on the Likert scale. Assumption vi was tested as part of the t-test conducted.

Research Question 2

This question is aimed at determining the extent to which the leadership style of the leader can be considered to be a predictor of employee engagement. In order to achieve this, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted, with the leadership styles (transactional and transformational leadership) as the two

continuous independent variables and employee engagement as the continuous dependent variable.

A linear regression model was produced, indicating the extent to which each leadership style is a predictor of employee engagement, and whether or not each style is a significant predictor of employee engagement at a 95 % confidence interval.

This approach is more in-depth than that used in Research Question 1, in that it accounts for a single leader to exhibit both leadership styles simultaneously, i.e. it is not based on defining a dominant style and neglecting secondary styles.

4.8. Assumptions and Limitations

Probability sampling was used in that every member of the sampling frame was contacted and offered to participate in the survey. The purpose of this approach was to make statistical inferences about the population based on the results from the sample.

In order for the inferences to be representative of the population, there was a minimum sample size required to achieve a 95 % confidence interval. Whilst this sample size can be calculated fairly accurately using statistical software, standard tables are available indicating typical sample sizes required given a population size. Specifically, for a population of 2000, 322 samples are required to obtain a 5 % margin of error (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Given that the population in this case consists of 1600 members, with a total number of samples obtained at 328, the inferences which can be made based on the sample can be accepted as statistically representative of the population with a 95 % confidence interval.

Whilst the probability sampling method does reduce some of the biases introduced by non-probability sampling, there are a few assumptions and limitations which were realised during this process.

The most significant bias introduced was that of non-response bias primarily due to refusal to respond in this case (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The

non-respondents could represent a portion of the population which could skew the results; and thus could result in a type I error.

Similarly, there is a risk of self-selection bias, whereby it is possible that the people who chose to respond are those who felt strongly about the subject, thereby skewing the result (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Other biases may have been introduced as a result of the collection procedure, whereby the order of questions on the questionnaire could have resulted in certain questions having influenced the responses to other questions.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

The previous chapter discussed the methodology for the research which was undertaken in order to verify the hypotheses posed in Chapter 3. In this chapter, the results of the research are provided.

5.1. Descriptive Results

The three constructs which were explored included “Transactional Leadership”, “Transformational Leadership” and “Employee Engagement”. An arithmetic mean of the answers to each of the individual questions within the constructs was calculated to create a single score through which to rate the overall response to the respective construct.

Since the Likert scale ranges for transactional and transformational leadership constructs differed, these scales were normalised for ease of comparison.

Figure 1 shows the percentages of the sample which rated their leaders at different levels on the transactional leadership scale. A visual observation of this data indicates a fairly normal distribution, thereby highlighting a good spread within the sample.

The distribution however, is asymmetric with a negative skew – this is indicative of the mode being greater than the median. Physically, this translates to a distribution whereby a greater number of responses reflected a higher level of transactional leadership as compared to the responses indicating a lower level of transactional leadership.

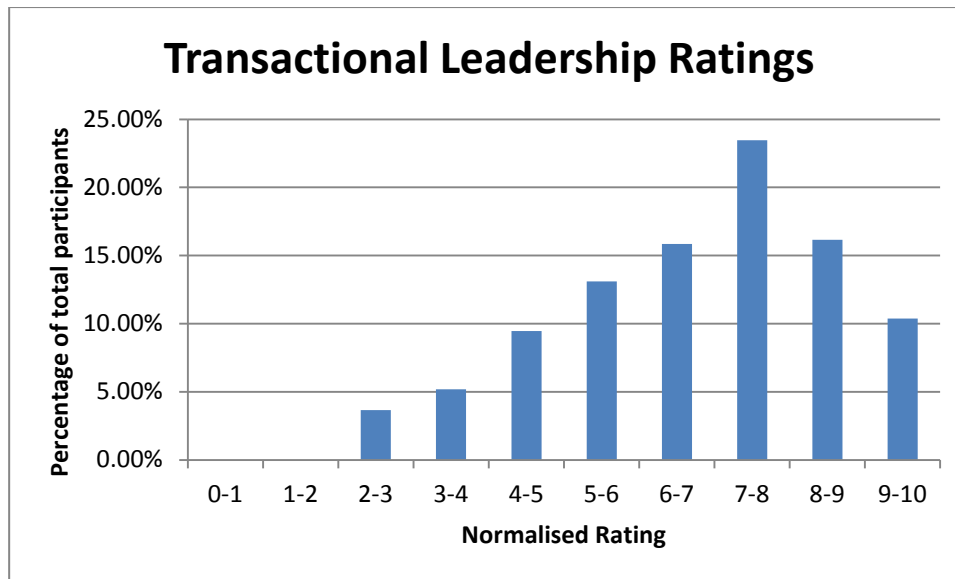


Figure 2: Ratings of Transactional Leadership across sample

Figure 2 shows the percentages of the sample which rated their leaders at different levels on the transformational leadership scale. A visual observation of this data indicates a fairly normal distribution, thereby highlighting a good spread within the sample.

Similar to the previous distribution, this distribution is asymmetric with a negative skew – this is indicative of the mode being greater than the median. Physically, this translates to a distribution whereby a greater number of responses reflected a higher level of transformational leadership as compared to the responses indicating a lower level of transformational leadership.

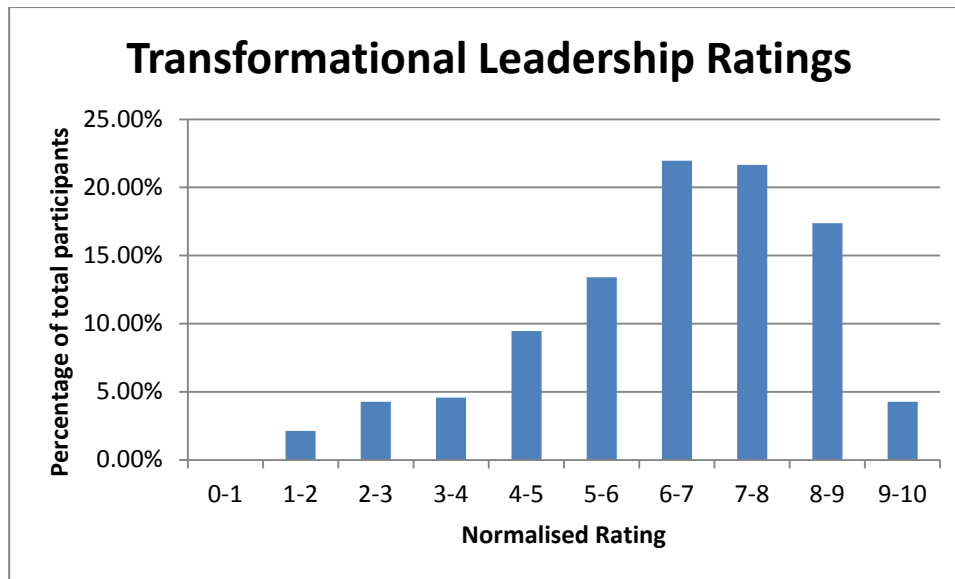


Figure 3: Ratings of Transformational Leadership across sample

Figure 3 shows the percentages of the sample which rated their level of engagement at different levels on the scale. A visual observation of this data indicates a fairly normal distribution, thereby highlighting a good spread within the sample.

Unlike Figure 2 and Figure 3 however, the distribution in Figure 4 appears to be asymmetric with a positive skew – this is indicative of the mode being lower than the median. Physically, this translates to a distribution whereby a greater number of responses reflected a lower level of employee engagement as compared to the responses indicating a higher level of employee engagement.

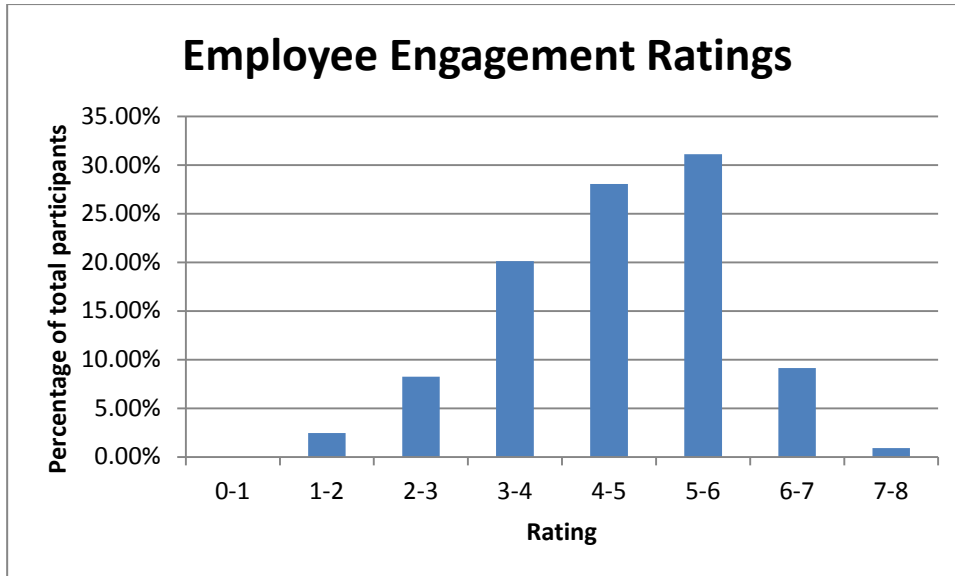


Figure 4: Ratings of Employee Engagement across sample

A summary of the descriptive statistics underlying Figure 1 to Figure 3 is shown in Table 4. This includes the number of samples (328 for each construct as there was no incomplete data), together with the maximum, minimum and standard deviations.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NormTransFL	328	2.00	10.00	6.74	1.90
NormTransAL	328	1.43	10.00	6.42	1.89
EE	328	1.35	7.00	4.55	1.18

5.2. Research Question 1

Research question 1 is aimed at determining whether or not a statistically significant difference could be observed in means of employee engagement depending on the style of leadership of the leader. In order to achieve this, the

independent samples t-test was conducted using a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ for all tests.

Since leaders generally possess both transactional and transformational leadership traits, the dominant style of the leader was used as a categorical, independent variable to independently distinguish between the two styles of leadership. The dominant style was determined by comparing the normalised means of the leadership style of each sample member, and considering the higher value as the dominant style. A summary of the group's statistics is shown in Table 5.

Table 6: Group Statistics for Dominant Leadership Style

DominantStyle	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TransFL	213	4.56	1.20
TransAL	115	4.53	1.15

Table 5 shows the number of samples per independent group (i.e. per dominant leadership style). The sum of the two groups (213 + 115) is 328, which is the total number of samples obtained.

In order to conduct the t-test, the assumption of homogeneity of variances had to be tested for validity. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was conducted and the results shown in Table 6.

Table 7: Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

F	Sig.
.967	.326

Based on the results of Table 6, the sig. value is greater than the chosen level of $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance holds, and the t-test can be conducted with this assumption in place.

Using the groups described above, the t-test was conducted, whereby the dominant leadership style was the categorical, independent variable consisting of two groups, and employee engagement was the continuous, dependent variable.

The results of this test are provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Independent Samples T-Test

	t-test for Equality of Means					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Employee Engagement	.219	326	.827	.030	-.239	.299

The output shown in Table 7 indicates that the mean difference in the engagement of employees between the two groups of leaders was 0.030; however, within the 95 % confidence interval this difference ranged from -0.239 (lower end) to 0.299 (upper end).

The primary output of the test conducted is the 2-tailed Sig. value shown in Table 7. Since this value is greater than the chosen level of $\alpha = 0.05$, this indicates that the mean difference is not statistically significant at the chosen confidence level. In other words, there is no statistical difference in employee engagement between employees whose managers exhibit a dominant leadership style of either transactional or transformational leadership.

Based on this test, the alternative hypothesis can be rejected, whilst the null hypothesis has failed to be rejected,

In terms of the hypotheses referred to in Chapter 3, this result is as follows:

H_{01} : Fail to Reject

H_{01A} : Rejected

5.3. Research Question 2

Research question 2 is aimed at determining the extent to which the leadership style of the leader can be considered to be a predictor of employee engagement. In order to achieve this, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ for all tests. The independent variables used were the leadership style variables – in particular the transactional and transformational leadership ratings; whilst the dependent variable was employee engagement. This is as shown in Table 8.

Table 9: Variables Entered

Model	Variables Entered	Method
1	TranFL, TransAL	Enter
Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement		

Using the variables shown in Table 8, a multiple regression test was executed. The summary of the model is shown in Table 9.

Table 10: Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.634 ^a	.402	.915	.402	109.124	2	325	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), TranFL, TransAL

It is clear from Table 9 that the Pearson correlation coefficient (R) indicates a good degree of correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that 40.2 % of the variability of the dependent variable can be explained by the proposed model.

As part of the multiple regression procedure, an ANOVA test is performed in order to determine whether or not the model proposed is a good fit for the data. The results of this test are shown in Table 10.

Table 11: ANOVA test for regression model

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	182.827	2	91.413	109.124	.000 ^b
	Residual	272.253	325	.838		
	Total	455.080	327			

a. Dependent Variable: EE

b. Predictors: (Constant), TranFL, TransAL

Based on Table 10, the Sig. value indicates a number less than the chosen $\alpha = 0.05$ – this indicates that the regression model proposed is a statistically valid model for the data.

The co-efficients for the regression model are shown in Table 11.

Table 12: Co-efficients for Regression Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.843	.190		9.694	.000	1.469	2.217
	TransAL	.200	.070	.224	2.841	.005	.061	.338
	TransFL	.537	.098	.434	5.487	.000	.345	.730
a. Dependent Variable: EE								

Based on Table 11, the model proposed is as follows:

$$\text{Employee Engagement} = 1.843 + 0.2(\text{Transactional Leadership}) + 0.537(\text{Transformational Leadership})$$

The results also indicate that all three factors in the model are statistically significant at the chosen $\alpha = 0.05$, as the Sig. values are all less than this number. The 95 % confidence interval lower and upper bounds for each variable and constant are also provided.

Based on this test, the null hypotheses can be rejected, whilst the alternative hypotheses have failed to be rejected,

In terms of the hypotheses referred to in Chapter 3, this result is as follows:

H_{02} : Rejected

H_{02A} : Fail to Reject

H_{03} : Rejected

H_{03A} : Fail to Reject

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the statistical tests performed on the sample, from both a descriptive and inferential approach. The specific inferential statistical tests completed were informed by the research questions and methodology as described in previous chapters.

In the following chapter, the analysis of these results is provided in order to draw specific conclusions from the statistical tests and highlight the implications to the research questions posed earlier in the document.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results from the statistical analysis are provided in the previous chapter. This chapter provides a discussion of those results in answering the research questions posed in Chapter 3. The discussion is provided within the context of the literature review in Chapter 2.

6.1. Discussion of Descriptive Statistics

It was highlighted in Section 5.1 that based on the frequency distribution plots there is an apparent asymmetry in the sample with a positive skew. This is indicative of a sample whereby, on average, the members of the sample are more disengaged than engaged.

Since the sample was taken within the context of organisational change, this result presents good agreement with literature, whereby it was found that one of the main costs of organisational change is the impact on its employees (Dahl, 2011).

An analysis of the descriptive results shown in Table 5 shows that the sample appears to show a similar level of transactional and transformational leadership styles, with both the means and standard deviations not too far apart. A preliminary conclusion which can be drawn based on this is that the organisation does not appear to favour one style above the other in the choice of its leaders.

6.2. Research Question 1: Employee Engagement in relation to dominant leadership style

Research Question 1 investigates if a significant difference in employee engagement can be observed based on the relevant dominant leadership style of the employees' managers. In particular, it aims to discover if a difference can be observed in employee engagement between employees whose managers exhibit either a dominant transformational leadership style or a dominant transactional leadership style.

The result of the t-test performed, as described in Table 8, indicated that at a 95 % confidence interval, no statistical difference exists between the means of employees belonging to the two groups of leadership styles.

This shows agreement to literature, in that both styles of leadership have been found to be capable to drive the agenda of employee engagement.

Transactional leadership, based on effective implementation of its contingent reward system, can result in engaged employees (Breevaart, et al., 2014). This is because employees are incentivised to perform through a rewards system, effectively creating a transaction between employees and their managers. The achievement of this reward motivates employees to perform better, thus enhancing their engagement.

It is however noteworthy based on the discussion in Chapter 2, that this leadership style is best suited to employees who value security and routine in their work. For employees who do not possess this personality type, this leadership style would not be well-suited to promote employee engagement.

Based on the above, the fact that transactional leadership was found to result in employee engagement as part of this study therefore not only reflects on the effectiveness of implementation of the leadership style, but also on the personality types of the employees which were surveyed. Since the latter was not specifically investigated as part of this study, no conclusion can be drawn as to the significance of its contribution to the result.

Similar to transactional leadership, transformational leadership has been shown to promote the agenda of employee engagement in literature (Deichmann & Stam, 2015).

By taking a personal interest in the well-being of their employees, transformational leaders inspire a sense of ownership of the organisation amongst its members, thereby making them more invested in its success (Ghafoor, Qureshi, Khan, & Hijazi, 2011). Transformational leaders also display an increased focus on the individual needs and competencies of their employees and on their intellectual development (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014), thereby increasing employee engagement.

The result of Research Question 1 therefore shows agreement with literature to the extent that both transactional and transformational leadership can result in employee engagement.

The test which was performed, however, specifically tested the difference between transactional leadership and transformational leadership in driving employee engagement. This means that it cannot be concluded in absolute terms that leaders who exhibited either of the leadership styles, exhibited it effectively and this resulted in increased employee engagement; but rather it can be concluded that relative to the other leadership style, the effectiveness was of a similar magnitude. Written differently, each leader exhibited their dominant style as effectively as the next leader with the other leadership style – as a result little difference could be observed in the engagement of employees between the groups.

Whilst the test conducted indicated that no statistical difference could be observed, the test was conducted based on a fundamental assumption which could have contributed significantly to the result. This assumption was as a result of the process of grouping the sample into two categorical groups of transactional and transformational leadership styles by choosing the dominant style as the style of the leader – this process implicitly neglects the secondary leadership style whilst a leader may exhibit the secondary style quite strongly.

This is particularly evident from the similar mean values shown in Table 6, indicating that on average, the two groups exhibited very similar ratings in both transformational and transactional leadership. Written differently, for each sample point, the levels of transactional and transformational leadership were comparable, i.e. leaders exhibited similar levels of transformational and transactional leadership.

In a situation such as the above, choosing the dominant leadership style as the signature style of the leader when the secondary style is present at a comparable level, it can be expected that it will be difficult to observe a statistical difference in the engagement of employees between the two groups. It is possible that a difference may have been observed had the two groups been more distinctly separate within the sample obtained.

Thus, whilst the hypothesis testing did not indicate a difference in employee engagement based on leadership style, the following conclusions can be drawn: In a population where the leadership style is a combination of both transactional and transformational leadership in similar quantities, a specific style present in a slightly higher proportion to the secondary style does not result in a more, or less engaged employee.

The result of Research Question 1 thus answers research objective (ii) as presented in Chapter 1, which is repeated as follows:

“Is there is a significant difference in employee engagement depending on the dominant style of leadership?”

The conclusion which can be drawn based on the study is that there is no significant difference observed in employee engagement depending on the dominant style of leadership. It is however suggested that this test would possibly yield a different result if secondary leadership styles are not comparably prominent within the leader to the dominant style.

6.3. Research Question 2: The extent that leadership style plays a role in employee engagement

Research Question 1 answered the question of whether or not a significant difference could be observed in employee engagement depending on the dominant style of leadership. It was concluded that this difference could not be observed, and one of the possible reasons cited for this was that the prevalence of the dominant leadership style of leaders within the sample was comparable to the prevalence of secondary leadership styles of those leaders.

Research Question 2 is a refinement of Research Question 1, in that it investigates if the specific relevant leadership style (transactional and/or transformational) is a positive predictor of/has a positive contribution on employee engagement (taking into account the possible prevalence of both styles within a leader), and describes the extent thereof.

As mentioned in the previous section, literature has shown both styles of leadership to have the potential to be effective at promoting employee

engagement when implemented successfully. Most recent literature however, has favoured transformational leadership as the superior style as its approach of leaders exhibiting high levels of moral and ethical conduct, knowledge-sharing, innovation, employee inspiration, employee-focus, and others, have been identified to be key drivers of employee engagement (Breevaart, et al., 2014). These drivers present a far more holistic approach to promoting employee engagement than the single contingent-reward driver of transactional leadership.

In order to verify this, a linear regression model was proposed in Chapter 4 to predict employee engagement based on leadership style. According to Table 10, this model indicates that 40.2 % of employee engagement can be predicted by the independent variables chosen. The magnitude of this number highlights the importance of leadership as a significant influencing factor to promote employee engagement. This concurs with literature whereby it has been stated that employee engagement can only be achieved through a reciprocal relationship throughout the organisation and involves management taking a primary responsibility (Piersol, 2007).

The remaining 59.8 % contribution towards employee engagement which is not explained by the leadership styles represents other factors which influence employee engagement. This also shows agreement to literature, in that literature has shown that numerous factors play a role. These include communication, the ability to express oneself physically, cognitively and emotionally during the execution of work, and other factors (Kahn, 1990). These variables, however, were out of the scope of this study.

The parameters of specific interest from the regression model are replicated in Table 13.

Table 13: Key parameters from Regression Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	
		B	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.843	.000
	TransAL	.200	.005
	TransFL	.537	.000

According to Table 13, the Sig. values indicate that both variables (Transactional and Transformational leadership) as well as the constant are significant predictors of employee engagement at a 95 % confidence interval. This shows agreement with literature, whereby both leadership styles have been shown to be effective at promoting employee engagement (Breevaart, et al., 2014). The “Constant” value, which encapsulates other drivers of employee engagement, also shows a Sig. value of less than 0.05 – indicating that these factors are also statistically significant drivers of employee engagement in agreement with the discussion above.

Table 13 presents the following expression for the linear regression model describing employee engagement:

$$Employee\ Engagement = 1.843 + 0.2(Transactional\ Leadership) + 0.537(Transformational\ Leadership)$$

The above equation indicates that employee engagement can be measured at a constant value of 1.843 with the independent variables (Transactional and Transformational Leadership) being zero. Whilst this may not necessarily make sense when considered in isolation, it shows agreement with the analysis above in that other factors additional to transformational and transactional leadership also play a role in promoting employee engagement

Whilst both transactional and transformational leadership styles are shown as significant predictors of employee engagement in Table 13, the coefficients of

the variables in the expression above present key insight into how the significance of each leadership style compares with the other.

In particular, the magnitudes of the coefficients in the expression indicates that transformational leadership contributes to employee engagement 2.5 times more than transactional leadership, i.e. it is a considerably more significant predictor of employee engagement than transactional leadership. This shows very good agreement with literature, whereby the transformational leadership style is considered to be the style of choice for leadership within organisations currently (Breevaart, et al., 2014).

This highlights that whilst transactional leadership does indeed contribute to employee engagement, transformational leadership has a far greater impact on it within the context of organisational change.

Using a similar approach to the above, a comparison of the magnitudes of the constant value in the expression to the coefficient of transformational leadership results in additional conclusions. The maximum possible rating that could be achieved on the transformational leadership scale is a rating of 10, which would translate to a value of 5.37 in the regression model. Comparing this to the constant value of 1.843, it is can be concluded that based on this model, transformational leadership, when executed perfectly, can have a 2.9 times greater impact on employee engagement than any factor encapsulated within the constant.

Combining both outcomes above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- i) Leadership style is of crucial importance to promote employee engagement;
- ii) Transformational leadership, when used in an organisation undergoing change, is the most impactful leadership style to drive employee engagement;
- iii) When implemented to perfection, transformational leadership is the single most significant lever to promote employee engagement within an organisation undergoing change – not only when compared to

other leadership styles but also to all other factors which affect employee engagement.

The factors list above thus answers research objective (iii) as presented in Chapter 1, which is repeated as follows:

“To what extent do the relevant leadership styles predict a strong level of employee engagement?”

Whilst the above conclusions highlight the importance of transformational leadership as a lever to promote employee engagement, it must be noted that the varying definitions in literature for transformational leadership; as well as the various ways of measurement thereof, means that it cannot be implemented to “perfection” despite the statistical models indicating the theoretical possibility thereof.

Notwithstanding the above limitation, the outcome highlighting the importance of transformational leadership to drive employee engagement in an organisation undergoing change is a significant outcome; and can have practical implications on management decisions within these organisations.

In the concluding chapter which follows, these recommendations are documented within the context of the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This chapter consolidates the findings of the previous chapters in order to highlight implications for management, avenues for future research, and the limitations of the research.

7.1. Principal Findings

7.1.1. Context

In the previous chapters the concept of organisational change was defined together with its variations, motivations, and consequent impact on the human element of the organisation. It was highlighted that the concept is topical due to the increasing prevalence, frequency and need for organisational change in the current economic climate.

The literature review highlighted that despite employee engagement having been identified as a critical success factor for a company to sustain its competitive advantage, the impact of organisational change on employee engagement is significant. The consequence of this finding is that the management of employee engagement within organisations undergoing change is of considerable importance as the success of the change initiative and the organisation as a whole depends on it.

The investigation further highlighted that whilst there are numerous factors which influence employee engagement, the leadership style implemented within an organisation can have a significant impact on it.

The literature review into the contemporary leadership styles revealed that whilst many styles have the potential to positively impact employee engagement, there are only two styles which appear to be well-suited to executing the agenda of organisational change. These two styles are the transactional leadership style and the transformational leadership style.

This led to the identification of a gap in literature, whereby much research has been done on the effect of leadership styles on employee engagement; and much research has been done on the leadership styles best suited to drive the

strategic objectives of organisational change; but very little research investigated the link between the two concepts, i.e. understanding the impact of various leadership styles in influencing employee engagement, specifically within an organisation undergoing change.

7.1.2. Outcomes

The literature review revealed that given the nature of transactional and transformational leadership, these styles appear to be the only two styles amongst all the contemporary styles described in literature, which have the ability to simultaneously drive both the agendas of organisational change and employee engagement.

The above observation represents the first outcome of this study – this outcome is a theoretical outcome based solely on a review of literature, i.e. the statistical testing thereof was out of the scope of this study. The outcome was used a basis for the remainder of this study, and is summarised below.

Outcome 1: The most relevant leadership styles for the promotion of employee engagement within organisations undergoing change appear to be transactional and transformational leadership.

The study therefore focused specifically on these two styles of leadership and their influence on employee engagement, within an organisation undergoing change.

By application of the above outcome as a basis, a quantitative study was performed within a large multinational organisation which has recently undergone organisational change. Using a survey tool with a random sampling technique, the population was asked questions relating to the leadership style of their direct manager as well as their level of employee engagement. The results of each questionnaire within the survey was processed in order to determine a single score for the levels of both transactional and transformational leadership present within the employee's manager; as well as a score describing the level of engagement of the employee.

Inferential statistics were used on the results of the survey in order to draw conclusions of the population based on the sample obtained, and assess these conclusions in comparison to the findings of the literature review.

In this regard, two research questions were presented. The first question investigated whether or not a statistically significant difference could be observed in employee engagement based on the dominant style of leadership present within the employee's manager.

It was found that in this study, leaders who presented a dominant style of transactional leadership did not result in a statistically different level of engaged employees as compared to leaders who presented a dominant style of transformational leadership.

This outcome showed good agreement to the theory presented in the literature review whereby both leadership styles were found to have the ability to promote the agendas of organisational change and employee engagement. The outcome of research question one was thus a practical validation of the theory presented in the literature review, and captured in Outcome 1 above.

In summary, research question one led to Outcome 2, as described below:

Outcome 2: No significant difference was observed in employee engagement depending on the dominant style of leadership.

It was highlighted, however, that the process of execution of the statistical analysis to answer research question 1 led to limitations within the result, as described in Section 6.2.

Following on from research question 1, research question 2 investigated the extent to which the leadership style of the manager predicted a strong level of employee engagement.

Using an inferential statistics process, Outcome 3 was concluded as summarised below:

Outcome 3: Transformational leadership is the single most significant lever to promote employee engagement within an organisation undergoing change –

not only when compared to other leadership styles but also to all other factors which affect employee engagement.

7.1.3. Summary of Findings

A concise summary of the findings described in the previous section and previous chapters is provided below:

Employee engagement is critical to the success of any organisation, and requires much greater emphasis within organisations undergoing change as the latter often has a direct and detrimental impact on it.

Whilst there are many factors which influence employee engagement, the leadership styles present within the organisation is one of the greatest influences.

Amongst all contemporary leadership styles described in literature, transactional and transformational leadership are the only two styles which are suited to promote the agenda of employee engagement whilst simultaneously executing organisational change.

Between transactional and transformational leadership, transformational leadership is the strongest predictor of employee engagement, and thus is the leadership style of choice.

7.2. Implications for Management

This research study highlights numerous implications for management of organisations. These implications are discussed below:

- i) Employee engagement is critical to sustaining the competitive advantage of an organisation whether or not the organisation is undergoing change. Engaged employees display high energy levels and an increased willingness to get the job done, which results in them being more persistent when faced with everyday challenges. Disengaged employees on the other hand are more likely to stay away, be late, quit and be unproductive, which endangers the sustainability of the organisation. Given the importance of employee

- engagement, management needs to place particular emphasis on the promotion of employee engagement.
- ii) Whilst organisational change is mostly driven by strategic objectives to promote organisational sustainability, the costs of such change on other aspects of the organisation should not be neglected. In particular, the human cost of organisational change in the form of reduced employee morale, engagement and productivity cannot be ignored, and needs to be managed with a considerable degree of emphasis.
 - iii) There are multiple factors which can influence employee engagement. A significant portion of these, however, lies within the control of the leadership of the organisation and management should ensure that these factors are addressed to the extent that it is possible.
 - iv) One of the most significant factors which affect employee engagement is the leadership style of leaders within the organisation. Management should place particular emphasis on ensuring that suitable leadership styles are present to achieve the current objectives – not all styles are suited to all occasions.
 - v) In order to drive the agenda of employee engagement simultaneously with organisational change, the only suitable contemporary leadership styles include transactional and transformational leadership. Management needs to ensure that other styles are minimised as these would be detrimental within this context.
 - vi) The transformational leadership style is the single biggest lever which management can use to promote employee engagement within an organisation undergoing change – as compared to both transactional leadership as well as other factors affecting employee engagement. Management needs to recognise the importance and impact of implementing the correct leadership styles to achieve the current objectives; and in the case of organisational change, much emphasis needs to be placed on developing the transformational leadership qualities of leaders within the organisation.

7.3. Limitations of the Research

The limitations of the study which resulted from the process in which the study was conducted is discussed within the contents of the previous chapters.

At a higher level, one of the main limitations results from the broad nature of the concepts used in this investigation, namely organisational change, leadership styles and employee engagement. This study focused on a specific link between these three concepts as per definitions provided within the study; however, much insight can be gained by executing a similar study from different perspectives of the three concepts.

7.4. Suggestions for Future Research

It is suggested that further research focuses on broadening the scope of this study. In particular, the following can be investigated:

- i) A study across multiple organisations, sectors and countries in order to develop more generally applicable conclusions.
- ii) A study which takes into account other factors influencing employee engagement.
- iii) A study which focuses on the particular aspects of the individual leadership styles specifically suited to the promotion of employee engagement, as opposed to considering a leadership style in its entirety. This study would inform management of the particular behaviours to develop within its leadership structure.
- iv) A study on the behaviours of leadership which are detrimental to employee engagement.

7.5. Conclusion

Recent history has shown us that organisational change is here to stay. The question is, “How do we execute it successfully from all dimensions?” Employee engagement can no longer be considered to be a peripheral area of focus in undergoing such change initiatives, but rather, it needs to be addressed as a matter of priority.

Organisational leadership needs to place a considerable emphasis on developing suitable leadership styles within organisations if this objective is to be achieved.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Consent Form

My name is Yusuf Mahomed and I am doing research under the guidance of Karl Hofmeyr towards a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) Degree at the Gordon Institute of Business Science.

I am conducting research on the effect of different leadership styles on employee engagement. To that end, you are asked to complete this questionnaire which aims to determine the leadership style of your immediate line manager, and the level of your engagement in the workplace.

This will help us better understand the relationship between the two, and should take no more than 30 minutes of your time.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.

All data will be used without any personal identifiers, and hence your anonymity is assured. By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research.

If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher Yusuf Mahomed
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Research Karl Hofmeyr
Supervisor
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List of tests to be used

Q#	Construct	Abbreviation	Article	# Items
1	Transformational Leadership	TransfL	(Ismail, Mohamad, Mohamad, Rafiuddin, & Zhen, 2011)	10
2	Transactional Leadership	TransaL	(Ismail, Mohamad, Mohamad, Rafiuddin, & Zhen, 2011)	5
3	Employee Engagement	EE	(Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006)	17

Articles:

Ismail, A., Mohamad, M. H., Mohamad, H. A.-B., Rafiuddin, N. M., & Zhen, K. W. (2011). Transformational and Transactional Leadership Styles as a Predictor of Individual Outcomes. *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, 89-104.

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Q1: TranfL

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Question					Answer
TransfL					
1	My leader instils pride in me				_____
2	My leader spends time teaching and coaching				_____
3	My leader considers moral and ethical consequences				_____
4	My leader views me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations				_____
5	My leader listens to my concerns				_____
6	My leader encourages me to perform				_____
7	My leader increases my motivation				_____
8	My leader encourages me to think more creatively				_____
9	My leader sets challenging standards				_____
10	My leader gets me to rethink never-questioned ideas				_____

Q2: Transal

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Undecided	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Question			Answer			
Transal						
11	My leader makes clear expectations					_____
12	My leader will take action before problems are chronic					_____
13	My leader tells us standards to carry out work					_____
14	My leader works out agreements with me					_____
15	My leader monitors my performance and keeps track of mistakes					_____



Q 3: EE

Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Question						Answer
EE						
16 At my work, I feel bursting with energy.						_____
17 I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.						_____
18 Time flies when I am working.						_____
19 At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.						_____
20 I am enthusiastic about my job.						_____
21 When I am working, I forget everything else around me.						_____
22 My job inspires me.						_____
23 When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.						_____
24 I feel happy when I am working intensely.						_____
25 I am proud of the work that I do.						_____
26 I am immersed in my work.						_____
27 I can continue working for very long periods at a time.						_____



28 To me, my job is challenging.

29 I get carried away when I am working.

30 At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.

31 It is difficult to detach myself from my job.

32 At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well.
