

**LEADERSHIP intellectual stimulation's catalytical influence on employee
extra-role behaviours in the automotive industry**

Omphemetse Keepile

Student Number: 11232405

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Abstract

Automotive original equipment manufacturers are undergoing a new era of disruption where recent shifts in OEM strategies challenge long-standing norms and beliefs. As a result, leaders must be equipped to navigate these uncertainties to articulate a new vision for the future. Despite the extensive body of literature, there is still a limited understanding on intellectual stimulation's (as a dimension of transformational leadership) influence on extra-role behaviour, specifically in a transforming automotive industry setting. Therefore, this qualitative study aims to provide an integrated model that articulates the mechanisms through which intellectual stimulation influences extra-role behaviour in the context of disruptive change in the automotive OEM industry.

Keywords

Transformational leadership, intellectual stimulation, extra-role behaviour, Transformational leadership theory, social exchange theory.

Plagiarism 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.

Omphemetse Keepile

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1. Contextual Background

Transformational leaders, through intellectual stimulation, encourage employees to challenge their assumptions, apply critical thinking and adopt new perspectives to solve problems creatively (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022). It is regarded as a leadership style that establishes high-quality social exchanges between leaders and employees, essential to influencing the emotions, attitudes and behaviours of employees (Pattnick & Sahoo, 2021; Lim & Moon). As a result, employees are motivated to act beyond their self-interests to engage in voluntary behaviours such as increased creativity, innovation, and proactive engagement (Kao et al., 2023; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Nasir et al., 2022), fundamental to sustaining organisational competitiveness.

Employee extra-role behaviours are discretionary behaviours that exceed job performance expectations (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Kao et al., 2023). Extra-role behaviours are triggered by the quality of the social exchanges between leaders and employees and reflect employees' experiences towards leadership (Khaole & Rambe, 2020; Kao et al., 2023). Most notably, these voluntary exchanges are essential for highly competitive business environments (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Weller et al., 2020) such as the automotive industry.

1.2. The Automotive Industry-Context

Automotive original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are undergoing a new era of disruption where recent shifts in OEM strategies, aimed at reducing distribution costs to drive profitability (Hasenberg, 2021), have introduced a new direct-sales distribution model, known as an agency model. This model further aims to enhance customer experiences, by engaging with them directly (Grungtes et al., 2021), which replaces the traditional dealership sales distribution model. This shift has disrupted the industry, challenging long-standing norms and beliefs. Therefore, leaders must be equipped to navigate these uncertainties to articulate a new vision for the future in the automotive industry.

1.3. The Research Gap

Automotive OEMs transitioning to a new business model require OEMs to go beyond their conventional norms to co-ordinate innovative customer experiences to remain competitive. Extant literature highlighted transformational leaderships effectiveness in driving increased creativity and innovation in problem solving, through intellectual stimulation as well as essential antecedents that form the basis of extra-role behaviour. Despite the extensive body of literature, there is limited understanding on intellectual stimulation's (as a dimension of transformational leadership) influence on extra-role behaviour, specifically in a transforming automotive industry setting.

Therefore, this study aims to provide an integrated model that articulates the mechanisms through which intellectual stimulation influences extra-role behaviour in the context of disruptive change in the automotive OEM industry.

1.4. Problem Statement and Significance

The research problem is concerned with the structural changes within the business model of the automotive industry that have created a much more complex environment for automotive OEMs, requiring them to pull together their transformation capabilities (Brown et al., 2024; Cavazotte et al., 2020) to drive superior customer experiences from all areas of the business (Gruntges et al., 2021). In the automotive industry, this needs to be the mainspring for every individual and not just a duty driven by a single department (Gruntges et al., 2021).

1.5. Purpose of the study

This study aimed to provide an integrated model that articulates the mechanisms through which intellectual stimulation influences extra-role behaviours in the context of disruptive change in the automotive OEM industry.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to answer the overarching research question:

Overarching question:

How does intellectual stimulation from leaders catalytically influence employee extra-role behaviours?
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1.6. Scope of the review

This review prioritises intellectual stimulation (as leadership that encourages creative problem solving) and emergent extra-role behaviour (related to intellectual stimulation as the main catalyst) as its focal point of examination in the context of the automotive manufacturing industry. It adopted the theoretical frameworks of transformational leadership theory and social exchange theory. For this study, only the relevant aspects of extra-role behaviour, influenced by leader's intellectual stimulation, were explored.

The next chapter provides a critical review of the current literature that forms that basis to this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the automotive industry, the new battleground for sustainable competitive advantage is creating elevated customer experiences and no longer on hardware engineering alone (Grungtes et al., 2021). This is demonstrated by recent shifts in automotive OEM strategies aimed at reducing distribution costs (driven by online focused sales channels) to drive profitability, efficiencies and overall customer experience (Hasenberg, 2021). This sales distribution model, known as an agency model, implies that OEMs engage directly with their customers, replacing the conventional dealership sales model (Hasenberg, 2021; Heuser et al., 2023). Therefore, this disruptive sales model signals the continuous evolution of the automotive industry as OEMs continue to adapt to customer preferences and market competitiveness. This requires OEMs to upend their traditional boundaries of organisational thinking and skills (McPherson & Liebermann, n.d.) to an innovative perspective that supports enhanced competitiveness (Lancefield & Rangen, 2021; Brown et al., 2024).

Transformational leadership, through intellectual stimulation, emphasises the importance of encouraging employee creativity and innovation through the adoption of critical thinking, embracing multiple perspectives and challenging assumptions to solve problems (Shafi et al., 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Lim & Moon, 2022; Iddris et al., 2023). Studies have found that this leadership style positively influenced the emotions, attitudes and behaviours of employees to achieve organisational competitiveness (Shafi et al., 2020; Iddris et al., 2023; Barkat et al., 2024), a current issue for OEMs. Therefore, this study explores the the role of intellectual stimulation in cultivating extra-role behaviours, specifically innovative work behaviours, essential for OEMs to effectively adapt to this disruptive industry shift.

Employee extra-role behaviours emphasises discretionary behaviours that are beyond the employee's formal job to enhance firm efficiencies, productivity, quality and innovation (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Kao et al., 2023). Extra-role behaviours are triggered by the quality of the social exchanges between leaders and employees and reflect employees' experiences towards leadership (Khaole & Rambe, 2020; Kao et al., 2023). Most notably, these voluntary exchanges are essential for highly

competitive business environments (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Weller et al., 2020)

2.2 Purpose of the literature review

This chapter presents a critical review of extant literature related to intellectual stimulation, a dimension of transformational leadership and employee extra-role behaviours. From a theoretical perspective, it sheds light on the topic through transformational leadership theory and social exchange theory as the mainspring of its analysis. Furthermore, it comprehensively examines the attitudinal, behavioural and relational themes that emerged from literature.

2.3 Literature review model

The diagram below illustrates the sequential flow of the literature review:

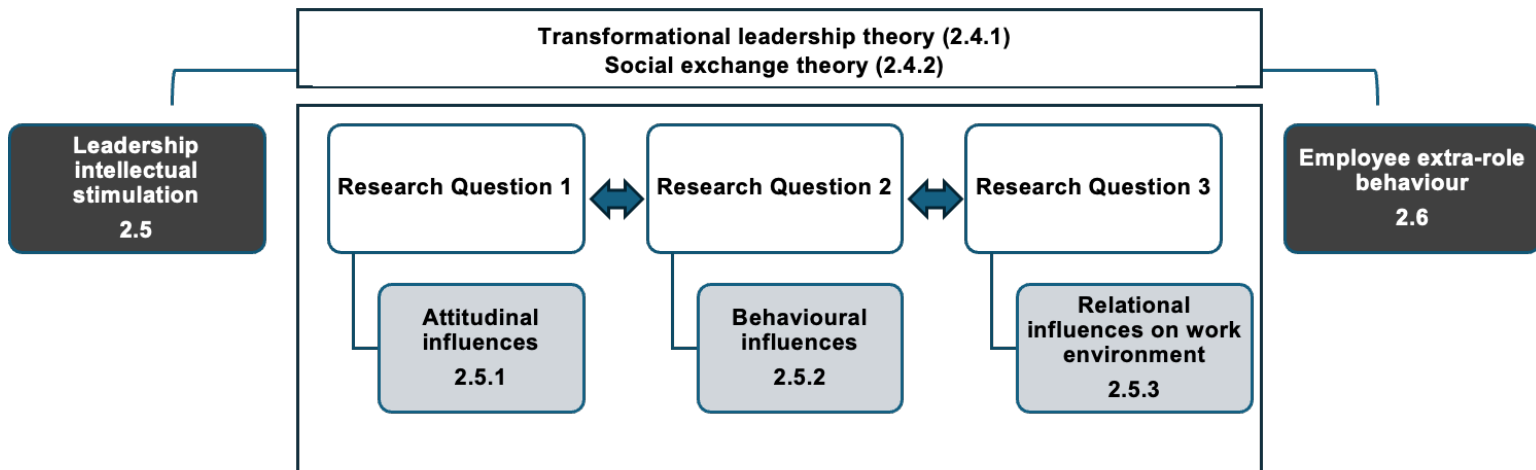


Figure 1

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership can be understood from the four different dimensions of idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Bass, 1985). Idealised influence refers to leaders who act as role models that specify a clear vision, mission and purpose for the organisation (Shafi et al., 2020; Cavazotte et al., 2020). Inspirational motivation is where leader motivate and engender a collective enthusiasm and commitment towards organisational goals (Shafi et al., 2020; Cavazotte et al., 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022; Iddris et al., 2023). Intellectual stimulation encompasses leaders who encourage new ideas, challenging formerly held beliefs to stimulate innovative and creative problem solving and solutions (Shafi et al., 2020; Cavazotte et al., 2020; Saira et al., 2021; Iddris et al. 2023; Barkat et al., 2024). Individualised consideration is where leaders help employees self-actualise, playing a supportive and empowering role through the close attention of their individual needs, strengths and concerns while ensuring their individual development (Cavazotte et al., 2020; Iddris et al. 2023; Lee et al., 2024)

Transformational leadership theory was originally coined by sociologist, Downton (1973) and then, later elaborated by scholars Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) to describe how leaders can appeal to the emotions of their subordinates to gain their trust and commitment in support of organisational goals. Transformational leadership relies on motivating employees to rally behind a unified mission and purpose for the organisation (Azila-Gbettor, 2023) by encouraging employees to look beyond their own self-interests towards the good of the organisation (Chan et al., 2020). This leadership style has been found to be highly effective when compared to other leadership styles as it has been found to espouse positive employee behaviour, attitudes and social outcomes (Chan et al., 2020; Budur & Poturak, 2021; Azila-Gbettor, 2023; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023)

2.4.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory provides another theoretical lense from which the relationship between employees and leaders can be explored in certain settings (Saira et al., 2021). This theory's implication relates to making sense of reciprocal exchanges between individuals, whether positive or negative, to understand the quality of these relationships (Lee et al., 2024). This provided a useful and dynamic way to make sense of transformational leaders, who engaged in social exchange relationships with employees through the provision of meaningful connections with them (Saira et al., 2021). Saira et al. (2021) stated that employee's response to these exchanges were driven by a sense of obligaton to reciporate, aiming to equalise the overall exchange.

Social exchange theory was originally coined by Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) then later developed by Emerson (1976). Blau's (1964) contribution to this theory involved making a distinction between social exchange and economic exchange relationships, where social exchange relationships related to the exchange of intangible resources (such as trust and emotional engagement) whereas economic exchange relationships related to tangible resources (such as material assets). Therefore, social exchange theory has its foundations in the field of social psychology and is widely used in management literature to explore relationships between employees and leaders (Saira et al., 2021)

2.5 Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation is an important contributor to transformational leadership. It involves leaders who encourage employee creativity and innovation by way of critical thinking, adopting various perspectives and challenging assumptions to solve problems (Shafi et al., 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Lim & Moon, 2022; Iddris et al., 2023). These transformational leaders also encourage employees to embrace risks and take initiative (Nguyen et al., 2022; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021), thereby elevating their knowledge and learning (Wang et al., 2020; Iddris et al., 2023). Therefore, these leaders encouraged new intellectual avenues for success to steer organisational competitiveness (Shafi et al., 2020; Lim & Moon,

2022; Iddris et al., 2023), a mutual benefit for both employees and the organisation.

This can be demonstrated through social exchange theory which argued that as leaders addressed the needs and expectations of employees then, in response, employees were likely to respond with reciprocal behaviours towards the leader as well as the organisation (Saira et al., 2021; Kao et al., 2023). Therefore, the positive transformative influence of these leaders on employees is largely dynamic and complex, which processes of mutual influence foster motivation and trust (Asgari et al., 2020). Therefore, extant literature suggested that the transformative influence of leaders, particularly through intellectual stimulation, fostered positive attitudinal, behavioural and relational dynamics that operated through fundamental processes that motivated employees to perform in support of organisational goals (Saira et al., 2021; Lim & Moon, 2022; Kao et al., 2023).

2.5.1 Attitudinal influences

2.5.1.1 Motivational mechanisms

Intrinsic motivation relates to employees' keen interest to engage in individual tasks owing to their inherent satisfaction, and not because of external factors (Shafi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Iddris et al., 2023). Researchers found that employees were significantly more creative when their intrinsic motivation was amplified (Shafi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Barkat et al., 2024) as it later influenced how employees applied their domain-specific skills with creativity-related skills to foster increased innovative behaviours (Iddris et al., 2023). As a result, transformational leadership was found to be effective in initiating intrinsic motivation through its supportive and empowering leadership approach (Chen et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022). Moreover, intrinsic motivation played an important role in increasing employee creativity and innovativeness, compelling employees to perform beyond their formal roles (Shafi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023). Khaola and Rambe (2020) further elaborated that the motivational mechanism that drove employee job performance was largely driven by work engagement and self-efficacy.

On work engagement, other scholars have agreed with Khaola and Rambe (2020) that work engagement played a significant role in fortifying an employee's

commitment to the organisation and boosted their experienced sense of pride in their work (Cavazotte et al., 2020; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Kao et al., 2023; Barkat et al., 2024). Work engagement was defined as an employee's positive and satisfying physical, cognitive and emotional outlook towards their work as characterised by vigour (mental fortitude and confidence), dedication (commitment and meaningful involvement in the work environment) and absorption (full immersion into the workplace) (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Barkat et al., 2024). For example, it was found that engaged teams led by transformational leaders helped them feel more connected and responsible for the organisation, which improved their work efficiencies and on average, resulted in a lower absenteeism (Cavazotte et al., 2020; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023). Therefore, by addressing the psychological needs of employees, transformational leaders were found to reinforce physical, cognitive and emotional connections with employees (Barkat et al., 2024), strengthening the employee's attachment towards the organisation.

On self-efficacy, various studies argued that it played a significant role in driving transformational leaders' propensity to drive employee creativity and innovativeness (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Iddris et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024). Through the leader's emphasis on self-development and overcoming challenges creatively, employees were motivated to perform beyond their formal roles to overcome obstacles (Cavazotte et al., 2020; Iddris et al., 2023, Lee et al., 2024). Self-efficacy related to the employee's self-belief to independently and successfully accomplish job tasks and further related to the employees ability to navigate challenges in their work environment (Cavazotte et al., 2020; Iddris et al., 2023; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023), which also reinforced the employee's competence and confidence in their job (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023).

This supports Khaola's and Rambe's initial claim that work engagement and self-efficacy worked together to strengthen an employee's intrinsic motivation. This was demonstrated through transformational leadership's ability to establish high performance expectations for employees by endorsing their confidence in employees to achieve high performance standards, which inspire intrinsic motivation and foster employee creativity and innovative behaviour (Shafi et al., 2020; Iddris et al., 2023). Iddris et al. (2023) added that self-efficacy also

empowered employees to delve deeper into their field of work to generate innovative ideas and solutions that support organisational change.

From the literature, psychological empowerment induced by transformational leadership was also found to exhibit some shared features with the motivational mechanism above, strengthened by work engagement and self-efficacy. Psychological empowerment was characterised by the perceived meaningfulness that individuals attributed to their work, their perception of their ability to exercise autonomy over their actions and work processes as well as the extent to which their individual contributions influenced the strategic and operational outcomes of the business (Nguyen et al., 2022). Nguyen et al. (2022) and Kloutsiniotis (2023) both argued that psychologically empowered employees were more intrinsically motivated and satisfied with their work, which also enhanced their engagement in creative work processes. Saira et al. (2021) further reiterated that transformational leaders significantly positively influenced employee psychological empowerment by involving employees in decision-making processes (through creative problem solving), which was found to increase organisational efficiencies, provided a positive work environment that compelled employees to perform with enthusiasm and confidence as well as significantly reduced employee turnover intentions.

2.5.1.2 Affective mechanisms

Extant literature suggested that motivational mechanisms (such as intrinsic motivation, work engagement, self-efficacy and psychological empowerment) were influential determinants of affective mechanisms. Common affective mechanisms included in recent literature were job satisfaction and affective commitment. Job satisfaction is the outcome related to an individual's objective and affective assessment of the job-related tasks as well as other contributing factors within the work environment (Cavazotte et al., 2020) and stimulates an employee's enthusiasm towards their job (Nurjanah et al. (2020)). On the other hand, affective commitment related to an employee's affective attachment and involvement with the organisation (Khaola & Rambe, 2020). Both job satisfaction and affective commitment related to the employee's identification with their job and the organisation in which they perform it.

Therefore, researchers found that affective mechanisms were fundamental to driving transformational leadership's ability to intellectually energise teams towards a common purpose, which was found to promote increased job satisfaction and performance (Cavazotte et al., 2020). Similarly, Kloutsiniotis et al. (2023), Asgari et al. (2020) and Barkat et al. (2024) all supported this claim by corroborating the interlinkages between motivational mechanisms and affective mechanisms wherein satisfied employees were more engaged, focused, productive, co-operative, and had fewer turnover intentions.

2.5.1.3 Identification mechanisms

Literature agreed that as employees tend to identify themselves with leaders, a significant part of transformational leadership's effectiveness is attributable to its ability to foster trust amongst individuals and teams (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021). This trust encouraged employees' willingness to demonstrate co-operative behaviours, formal and informal communication and workplace conflict avoidance (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022; Kao et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024). Similarly, this trust was also found to facilitate critical thinking and encouraged employees to take risks (Nasir et al., 2022), a proponent of intellectual stimulation.

However, Lee et al's (2024) recent contributions significantly expanded on the trust literature and provided a more nuanced approach by clearly differentiating between trustworthiness and trust (in the leader). Trustworthiness was characterised by high ability, benevolence and integrity whereas trust in the leader emerged after employees cognitively assessed leaders on these three trustworthiness characteristics. More specifically, transformational leaders were found to exhibit all three characteristics which justified employees' perception and judgement towards the leader's credibility (Lee et al., 2024). This contribution further justified the high-quality social exchanges between leaders and employees, especially in the context of trust.

2.5.2 Behavioural mechanisms

The behavioural influences presented herein contain interlinkages with some of the attitudinal influences (of motivational, affective and identification mechanisms) examined in 2.5.1.

2.5.2.1 Job autonomy

Employees with greater autonomy in their roles are able to use their own judgement and responsibility in decision-making, which further promotes their intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction and creativity (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022). Job autonomy exhibited similar qualities to psychological empowerment, which suggested that autonomous employees are also psychologically empowered (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022). Similarly, such autonomy was found to be perceived by employees as support from the organisation (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021). Therefore, autonomy has strong association with facilitating increased employee creativity and innovative behaviour.

2.5.2.2 Employee creativity and innovative work behaviour

As reflected earlier, transformational leadership was found to influence creativity and innovative work behaviours by way of enhancing the motivational, affective and identification mechanisms expressed through attitudinal influences. Innovative work behaviour emphasised the conception of new approaches to improve performance (Lim & Moon, 2022) and is behaviour that is beyond an employee's formal role (Kuo et al., 2022). Therefore, through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders encourage individuals to use their creativity to explore various perspectives and overcome barriers (Shafi et al., 2020; Saira et al., 2021).

2.5.2.3 Volunteer participation and helping behaviour

According to Lim and Moon (2022), both innovative work and helping behaviours demonstrate the willingness by an employee to perform beyond their formal duties for the benefit of the organisation to enhance its performance and

competitiveness. Preceding innovative work behaviours is volunteer participation where employees consider multiple perspectives (through inquisitiveness, attentive listening and keen observation) to acquire new knowledge for creative solutions (Kao et al., 2023). Kao et al. (2023) further reiterated that volunteer participation was a virtue of helping others. Helping and innovative work behaviours were driven by employee's perception of fairness towards the organisation where if positive, compelled them to volunteer their efforts through innovative work and helping behaviours (Lim & Moon, 2022).

2.5.3 Relational influences on work environment

The behavioural influences presented herein contain interlinkages with some of the attitudinal influences (of motivational, affective and identification mechanisms) and behavioural influences examined.

In line with social exchange theory, transformational leadership demonstrated that the high-quality relationships between leaders and employees highlighted a mutual concern for achieving organisational goals by fulfilling and elevating the expectation of employees which was translation to attitudinal influences (through motivational, affective and identification mechanisms) and behavioural influences (of job autonomy, employee creativity and innovativeness and volunteer participation and helping behaviours. According to Lee et al. (2024), these behaviours were characterised by a high degree of trust, respect, honesty and communication between leaders and employees. Therefore, transformational leaders fulfill the expectations of employees and in return, employees act devotedly towards exceeding the expectation for their formal roles.

As such, transformational leaders create a supportive work environment where they are motivated to take ownership of solutions to drive organisational change, even if it means working longer hours (Shafi et al., 2020). Studies have also shown that its leadership endorses a creative environment, of taking risks, where innovation was stimulated and encouraged (Shafi et al., 2020) and also enhanced employee self-efficacy by enabling employees to overcome obstacles (Cavazotte et al., 2020; Azila-Gbettor, 2023). This, according to Yang et al.

(2021), reinforced a developmental culture where new learnings could take place.

Studies have found that transformational leaders support organisational learning (Asgari et al., 2020), through perspective sharing (as demonstrated through the behavioural influences). This orientation towards learning enriches innovative thinking and encourages an environment of derived creativity, which supports job performance (Nasir et al., 2022). Similarly, Shafi et al. (2020) reiterated that intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation are both essential for driving organisational innovativeness. Adding to this, the perceived supportive work environment cultivated by transformational leadership played a critical role in driving positive employee attitudes and behaviours to drive firm competitiveness (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Kao et al., 2023).

2.6 Employee extra-role performance behaviour

The employee extra-role performance behaviour presented herein contains only the aspects linked to employee responses to intellectual stimulation and also contains some interlinkages with the altitudinal influences (of motivational, affective and identification mechanisms), behavioural influences and relational influences on the work environment as examined earlier.

Employee extra-role behaviours, also known as organisational citizenship behaviour, are discretionary behaviours that are beyond the employee's formal job description, obligations or rewards structures and are necessary to enhance firm efficiencies, productivity, quality and innovation (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Kao et al., 2023). These behaviours include maintaining workplace coherence by avoiding conflict, having genuine intentions to help others, performing job-related tasks meticulously and exceeding performance expectations (Nurjanah et al., 2020). Therefore, research has asserted that this type of behaviour is highly essential for highly competitive business environments (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Weller et al., 2020).

The proliferation of extra-role behaviour suggested that this behaviour was catalysed by employee's responsiveness to their leaders and organisation by way of their consequential attitudes, behaviours and perceived work

environment (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023). Even so, extra-role behaviour was not easily formalised under traditional business management systems (Kao et al., 2023). Therefore, these behaviours were informally induced and represented an employee's willingness to go above and beyond their formal roles for the benefit of the overall functioning and wellbeing of the organisation, transcending their own self-interest (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Weller et al., 2020).

Despite voluntary efforts to perform above expectations, literature also presented an alternative perspective where employees were overburdened by excessive workloads, unrealistic deadlines, promotional incentives that were perceived to be unfair, lack of role specificity and working longer hours (Nasir et al., 2022). These work stressors were found to inhibit positive motivational mechanisms (such as lowered intrinsic motivation and work job satisfaction from lack of confidence), affective mechanisms (such as increased turnover intentions that reduce overall organisational commitment) and behavioural mechanisms (such as reduced volunteer participation motivation) (Saira et al., 2021; Nasir et al., 2022; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022; Iddris et al., 2023; Kao et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024) and the overall perception of unfair organisational procedures and policies (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022).

Researchers have mechanically explored extra-role behaviour antecedents, citing the effectiveness of leadership as an essential catalyst (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021). There was extensive literature to suggest that transformational leadership, when compared to other leadership styles, acted as a catalyst in driving employee effectiveness by providing valuable social exchanges (Saira et al., 2021). This was established through the leader's ability to inspire action, commitment and encourage critical thinking (Lim & Moon, 2022). As such, transformational leadership in particular was found to be one of the most popular antecedents to employee extra-role behaviour (Khaola & Rambe, 2020).

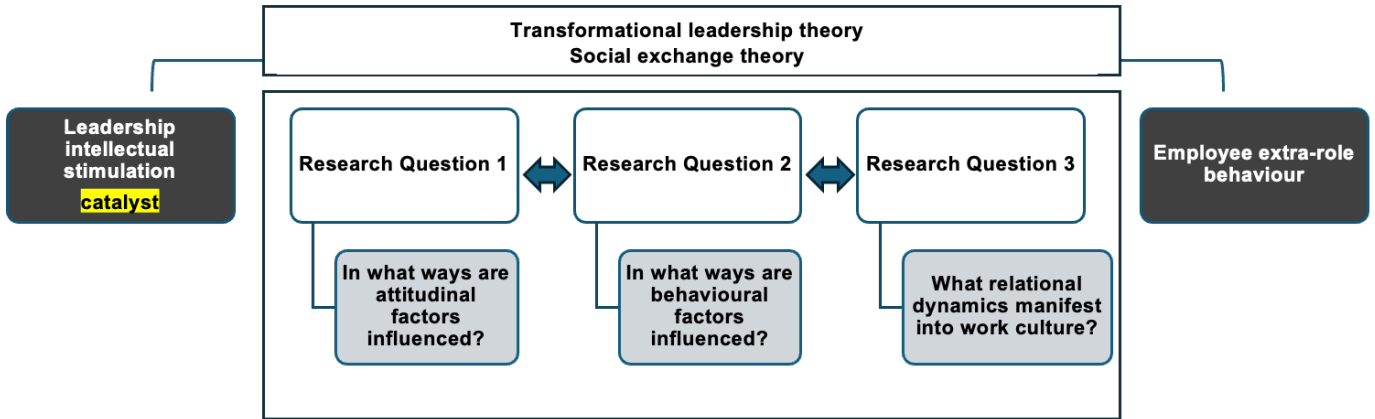
Extra-role behaviour is a complex and dynamic process that is best understood from a social exchange perspective as employees who experience positive emotions and attitudes towards their jobs and the organisation were more likely to respond with high job performance outcomes. The aspects from which extra-role behaviour can be understood is through attitudinal, behavioural (Saira et al., 2021) and relational dynamics that act as essential antecedents. Previous

studies have demonstrated the importance of strengthening employee extra-role behaviour through various aspects through motivational mechanisms (such as intrinsic motivation (Shafi et al., 2020), work engagement (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2022), self-efficacy (Iddris et al., 2023; Kao et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024) and psychological empowerment (Saira et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022)), affective mechanisms (such as job satisfaction (Shang et al., 2024)), behavioural mechanisms (such as job autonomy (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021) and volunteer participation motivation (Kao et al., 2023)), supportive management (perceived as the extent to which leaders demonstrated concern and assistance in job performance, signalling consideration and respect for employees) (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Nasir et al., 2022), perceived organisational support (Kao et al., 2023; Lim & Moon, 2022), organisational commitment (Nurjanah et al., 2020) and procedural justice (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022) that corroborated leadership's efforts and acted to strengthen employee extra-role behaviour.

2.7 Conclusion of the Literature Review

There was an extensive body of knowledge that highlighted transformational leadership's effectiveness, through intellectual stimulation, in appealing to the emotions, attitudes and behaviours of employees. Consequently, literature on intellectual stimulation provided for attitudinal influences (that include motivational, affective and identification mechanisms), behavioural influences and relational influences on the work environment.

In terms of employee extra-role behaviour, social exchange theory demonstrated that effective leadership (through high-quality social exchanges, such as with transformational leadership's intellectual stimulation) empowered employees to respond with work behaviours that went over and above their formal roles, which included employee creativity and innovative work behaviours as well as volunteer participation and helping behaviours. These responses demonstrated heightened creativity, innovation and leadership's ability to encourage employee creativity in solving problems by challenging existing norms. The illustration below demonstrates the lense through which the research questions are addressed.



The next chapter outlines the research questions addressed in this study.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature on intellectual stimulation and employee extra-role behaviour was reviewed in the previous chapter. Despite the extensive body of literature, there is still a limited understanding on intellectual stimulation's (as a dimension of transformational leadership) influences on extra-role behaviour, specifically in a transforming automotive industry setting. For this study, only the relevant aspects of extra-role behaviour, influenced by leader's intellectual stimulation, were explored.

Intellectual stimulation was considered to challenge existing workplace assumptions to establish newly conceived creative solutions that accomplish organisational objectives (Lim & Moon, 2022). This is particularly important in addressing the current shift in OEM strategies, specifically relating to changed sales models that raise expectations for OEMs to deliver superior solutions.

Therefore, this study addressed the overarching question.

Overarching question:

How does intellectual stimulation from leaders catalytically influence employee extra-role behaviours?
--

The sub-elements to this question were explored through the lense of transformational leadership theory and social exchange theory. Examination under both lenses aimed to provide comprehensive findings that supported the research purpose to provide an integrated understanding on the topic.

Research Question 1:

In what way does intellectual stimulation, provided by transformational leaders, manifest into attitudes adopted by employees?
--

According to Saira et al. (2021), attitudinal mechanism define the processes that influence employees attitudes which ultimately translate to extra-role behaviours. For example, employees who experience positive attitudes as a result of their interactions with leaders, are more likely to exceed the

expectations for their formal roles, triggering extra-role behaviours (Asgari et al., 2020; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023). Therefore, the purpose of research question 1 (above) was to understand these attitudes'

Research Question 2:

In what way does intellectual stimulation, provided by transformational leadership, manifest into employee behaviours?

Research has demonstrated that leaders are key proponents to employee behaviour (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021). The purpose of research question 2 was to understand how, intellectual stimulation specifically, manifested into employee behaviours. These behaviours would help address the overarching research question. However, these behaviours are motivated by certain attitudes, as addressed in the first research question.

Research Question 3:

In what ways do the relational dynamics between leaders and employees, encouraged through intellectual stimulation from leaders manifest into the work environment?

According to Iddris et al. (2023) transformational leadership provides an understanding from new learnings can develop and employees are flexible towards new approaches. Similarly, studies have found that Intellectual stimulation specifically, stimulate a supportive and creative environment (Saira et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022; Shafi et al., 2020). Therefore, the purpose of research question 3 is to explore intellectual stimulation's influence on the work environment.

The following chapter outlines the research design and methodology that was used to address the research questions detailed in this chapter.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology that was used to address the research questions detailed in Chapter 3 above. The research methodology addresses the population, unit of analysis, sampling method and size, measurement instrument, data gathering process, analysis approach as well as quality controls. In addition, this chapter specifies the limitations of the methods as well as the ethical considerations employed in the data gathering process.

4.2. Choice of Research Design and Methodology

This study aimed to provide an integrated model that articulates the mechanisms through which intellectual stimulation influences extra-role behaviours in the context of disruptive change in the automotive OEM industry. In support of this objective, the main research question to this study was related to how intellectual stimulation provided by leaders catalytically influenced extra-role behaviours in employees. Therefore, to address the research questions, a qualitative study was undertaken to deeply understand how managers in the automotive industry, specifically OEMs, interpreted their experiences and ascribed meaning to these experiences in a transforming environment.

Therefore, this study followed an interpretivism philosophy, which is commonly used in qualitative studies in the business context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). This philosophical approach places emphasis on the intricacy and complexity of social phenomena as well as the plurality and subjectivity of these socially constructed realities (Acharya, 2024). It denounces the notion of universal law (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020) and instead, allowed the researcher to contextually explore and understand the in-depth meaning that humans ascribe to their lived experiences. This was particularly important for the researcher as individual values, perspectives, motivations and reasoning processes were taken into consideration (Archarya, 2024). Therefore, this philosophy provided a more nuanced way of exploring the multiple realities that may exist within the automotive OEM segment.

In line with this interpretivist paradigm, inductive reasoning is commonly applied to qualitative studies as it is more exploratory and open-ended in its approach. In this study, aimed to establish an integrated model of understanding, an inductive approach was applied to the empirical data of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This approach is particularly useful where the existing theory on the phenomenon fails to adequately explain its mechanism (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). As a result, this open-ended and exploratory process was valuable for the researcher as it led to the identification of emergent patterns to assist with theory-building (Myers, 2020).

Similarly, an exploratory, mono-method approach was used in the data collection and analysis process (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The researcher found that this concentrated focus was necessary to maintain flexibility while gaining a deep understanding of how individual social actors interpreted their experiences and derived meaning from those experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). This was particularly useful for the researcher to use this empirical evidence to develop theory on the human behaviours and interactions ascribed (Myers, 2020). Therefore, being in the automotive sector, where the context is highly dynamic and nuanced, this enabled the researcher to inductively gain rich and comprehensive insights to gain clarity on the mechanism of the phenomenon.

As a result of time constraints imposed on the research project, the researcher was only able to conduct interviews at a single period, providing only a snapshot of the phenomenon from the perspectives of study participants. As a result, the study was cross-sectional and representative of perceptions at a single point in time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018), which in this case, took place in 2024. Therefore, the findings of this study made no presumptions about any other period.

In addition, the study included diversity in opinion and thoughts (from managers at various levels of the organisation), in order to collect data from a variety of perspectives (Myers, 2020). Myers (2020) suggests that this approach can alleviate the progression of elite bias, where study participants who are of a high status within the organisation, such as executives, may fail to adequately provide the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of the broader situation under analysis (for example, from the perspective of a team leader). Therefore, within this study, data was collected from individuals at different management levels, diverse departments and various automotive OEMs.

4.3. Population

South Africa's automotive industry's OEM segment directly formally employs about 116 000 individuals across its various tiers of activity (which includes component manufacturing and vehicle assembly of passenger, light and heavy commercial vehicles) (NAAMSA, 2024) ("direct industry employees"). This number excludes other tiers of activity such as non-OEM distribution, servicing and maintenance of vehicles and components (International Trade Administration, 2024) which, if included, increases the employment number to about 498 000 formal jobs (NAAMSA, 2024). However, the population in regard to this study was only inclusive of direct industry employees.

This population of direct industry employees is driven by more than 20 OEM companies involved in vehicle production, wherein the business model is mainly driven by 7 key OEMs who significantly drive the performance of the industry (Brand South Africa, 2024).

4.4. Unit of Analysis

The parameter to be investigated under this study were the individual managers as a fundamental unit of analysis to exploring their experiences of leadership styles and employee behaviours as well as the identification of emergent themes cultivated from intellectual stimulation and extra-role behaviours within their teams.

4.5. Sampling Method and Sample

Purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling, was applied to ensure that selected study participants possessed the relevant knowledge and experience from which the most could be learned about the specific area of inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). This was specifically crucial for the researcher whose intention was to discover information-rich insights that captured specific context-driven actions, thoughts and feelings. Therefore, Merriam & Tisdell (2017) suggested that purposive sampling is one such powerful method to gain an in-depth understanding for qualitative studies.

The researcher, in this instance, employed the following criterion for managers who were employed on a full-time basis by automotive OEM companies and whose role and responsibilities reflected core activities fundamental to the internal functioning of the overall business:

Leadership criterion	Rational for selection criterion
Executive-level	Experienced in leading teams of senior managers, establishing organisational vision and strategy and knowledgeable about high-level strategic decision-making OEM dynamics
Senior manager	Experienced in leading teams of mid-level managers or specialists and drive the implementation of strategy into actionable plans
Middle manager	Experienced in overseeing daily operations, liaising between operational teams and senior managers
Team leader	Leads operational teams with direct oversight on an assigned production line
Area specialist	A subject matter expert with in-depth knowledge and insights in a specific professional field

These managers were employed by major automotive OEMs in South Africa with roles in core support functions that contributed to fundamental internal activities such as strategy, risk, human resources, process and service engineering, supply chain, product design, vehicle assembly and other core activities that support the administration, production and sale of vehicles. The sample size comprised of 4 out of 7 of the major vehicle OEMs where 10 employees from these major OEMs were interviewed in total.

The researcher obtained the contact information of study participants from existing contacts. Where it was deemed useful, a snowballing technique was employed to gain access to new study participants within the studied sample. This technique was employed where the researcher required additional participants in the same organisation, as Saunders and Lewis (2018) suggest that a snowballing technique can be a useful approach to enlisting additional potential participants from prior sample members.

4.6. Measurement Tool

The study followed an interpretivist perspective, it sought to obtain primary data from participants through interviews. These comprised real-time (synchronous) online semi-structured interviews (facilitated by a video conferencing platform that supports remote interactions) with each interview a duration of about an hour long. Semi-structured interviews are an effective measurement tool for conducting exploratory studies in a structured manner that also enable room for further, unstructured exploration to gain deeper insights (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

This measurement tool, of open-ended questions, equipped the researcher with the necessary structure and flexibility to probe and adaptively respond to certain datapoints as well as to remain open to new ideas that emerged (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). Therefore, this measurement tool was useful as the main purpose of the study was to develop theory from the empirical evidence that emerged from these semi-structured interviews in order to establish an integrated model of understanding of the phenomenon.

4.7. Data Gathering Process

Supporting the purpose of the measurement tool, it sought also to address various facets of how study participants interpreted their experiences and derived meaning from them by addressing questions about experience, behaviour, feelings, opinion and background (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). As such, an interview guide (of pre-formulated open-ended questions) was prepared by the researcher to ensure consistency across interviews. At the same time, the researcher was open to new lines of questioning prompted by valuable insights that emerged during the interview. For example, the researcher used a mirroring technique where the researcher used the participant's own words and phrases to formulate a new line of questioning or comment (Myers, 2020). Consequently, the researcher found that this, together with context-specific probing, contributed towards the natural flow of the conversation and yielded detailed and descriptive data.

Critical to the above, Merriam and Tisdell (2017) suggested that the researcher, as the primary instrument to the data gathering process, must be an actively

engaged participant in order to follow a coherent line of questioning to gain information-rich responses. Even so, the researcher was aware that data gathering through interviews could present itself with certain challenges and biases. Nonetheless, to support the effectiveness of the data gathering process, techniques (in addition to the above) were employed, such as:

4.7.1 Pilot test interview

A pilot test interview was conducted prior to engaging the targeted sample of individuals. The purpose of the pilot test was to ensure that the questions to the interview guide were easily understood, were not suggestive of certain responses (i.e. not leading questions), achieved the intention and purpose of the study as well as adhered to the allocated time constraints (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The pilot test was conducted with a peer who was knowledgeable about the subject matter itself, whilst not an employee of the automotive industry. Therefore, the data from this pilot test interview was not included in the data analysis process.

Nevertheless, the feedback was used to make some modifications to the interview guide such as the elimination of ambiguity (for example, eliminating the use of complex academic terms to describe a situation) which enabled more conversational prose and consistent responses. The researcher was also able to test the audio recording functionality of the video conferencing platform.

4.7.4 Interview formalities

Before each interview began, the researcher detailed the purpose and intention of the study, provided an estimate of the duration of the interview and assured participants that participation was voluntary, all responses would be treated with confidentiality. The researcher also briefed participants on what to expect during the interview process, such as potentially asking follow-up questions for further probing and allowed the participants to ask questions prior to commencement of the interview. Prior to recording the interview, the researcher ensured that consent was obtained each time. During the interview, the interview guide was

followed and adapted (within the boundaries of the research objectives) in accordance with the dialogue progression.

4.7.3 Recording of virtual interviews

All interviews for this study were conducted through an online video conferencing platform. This provided convenience for the both the participants and the researcher's distance between geographic locations. Similarly, the platform audio recorded all interactions between the researcher and study participants which enabled the researcher to easily transcribe the interviews as a word-processed document verbatim for detailed data analysis. This approach, Merriam and Tisdell (2017) suggested is the most effective.

4.8. Data Analysis Approach

The purpose of the study is to provide an integrated model that articulates the mechanisms through which intellectual stimulation influences extra-role behaviours in the context of disruptive change in the automotive OEM industry. In support of this, the researcher, through an interpretivist philosophy, sought to inductively derive meaning from the insights that emerged from the data collection process for theory-development. The data collection process comprised 10 semi-structured interviews that were all audio recorded and transcribed as a word-processed document for analysis. Similarly, the purpose of the data analysis process was to address the research questions detailed in Chapter 3 of this study, through the lense of the lived experiences of leaders in the automotive OEM industry.

The steps below capture Merriam's and Tisdell's (2017) approach, and the researcher's followed approach, to analysing textual data.

Step 1: Take into account the purpose of the study, as was mentioned before.

Step 2: Consideration of the epistemological framework lense. In this case, the researcher sought to phenomenologically develop theory by focusing on how managers in the automotive OEM industry consciously experienced the phenomenon of intellectual stimulation and how their experiences manifested in attitude, work environment and behavioural outcomes.

Step 3: Coding of data, known as open coding, through the prioritisation of insights related to the purpose of the research as well as the research questions. These codes sought to meaningfully describe the data (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). To do this, Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. This also required a high level of familiarity with the data prior to coding.

Step 4: Identification of key themes or patterns that emerged from the existing list of codes that address the research questions.

Step 5: Compare the list of codes with the key themes or patterns that emerged and evaluate whether they are related.

Step 6: Establishment of categories by merging the codes from the open codes into fewer, more encompassing categories.

In addition to the steps above, it is further emphasised by Merriam and Tisdell (2017) that between steps 4 and 5 as well as steps 5 and 6, that the researcher carefully consider any biases beyond their epistemological lense. This follows the authors' assertion that the researcher acts as the primary instrument to the data analysis process. As such, the researcher took into consideration personal factors (such as beliefs, perceptions and previous experiences) that may be unintentionally projected onto the analysis process.

4.9. Techniques for Enhancing Quality

Lincoln and Guba (1985) established the Four-Dimensions Criteria ("FDC") of a qualitative study in order to ascertain its trustworthiness. These include credibility (the extent to which the study's findings exhibit plausible truth and logic), transferability (the extent to which the study can be applied to different contexts), dependability (the replicability of the study), and confirmability (detailed and objective linkages between data and findings). Based on the FDC, the following techniques were employed to enhance its trustworthiness of this study:

4.9.1. Prolonged observation

The researcher spent five years in the automotive industry, in the retail distribution segment, engaging with multiple leaders in varying functions. This prolonged engagement within the industry enabled the researcher to understand its social setting, where the researcher was able to establish relationships and build trust amongst study participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Even so, the researcher was aware of biases during the data collection and analysis process.

4.9.2. Persistent observation

Persistent observation entails a detailed exploration of the phenomenon to the extent that the researcher is able to evaluate relevance of the emergent insights, enhancing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This ensures an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. In this study, the semi-structured interviews provided the researcher with in-depth perspectives. Albeit a small sample, it covered a variety of angles from leaders at varying seniority levels within varying areas of activity (departments) within the business. This provided a rich and dynamic approach to exploring the complex nuances of the automotive OEM industry.

4.9.3. Thick description of the phenomenon

As demonstrated by the detailed complexity of the researcher's findings, a comprehensive account of the phenomenon was explored. Even though the study took place in the automotive manufacturing industry, it provided a detailed contextual account of the mechanisms of the phenomenon, which may be beneficial for leaders in the automotive manufacturing industry, at varying leadership levels.

4.9.4. Sufficient engagement in data gathering

The researcher's intention was to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. As a result of this phenomenological approach, the researcher gathered data until no new information emerged from

subsequent interviews (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). That is, until data saturation was reached, which was the 10th interview.

4.9.5. Positionality of the researcher and biases

The positionality of the researcher, such as prolonged observation, persistent observation, thick description of the phenomenon and sufficient engagement in data gathering was considered to address the researcher's biases, dispositions and assumptions and to clarify to readers how these may have influenced the analysis.

4.10. Research Ethics

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Gordon Institute of Business Science prior to collecting data. Additionally, study participants were asked to complete an Informed Consent form, were informed of interview procedures prior to its commencement and were assured of their confidentiality. Participants were also assured of their anonymity in terms of the report's findings. Lastly, the researcher obtained the contact information of study participants from existing contacts. Where it was deemed useful, a snowballing technique was employed to gain access to new study participants within the studied sample.

4.11. Research Limitations

4.11.1. Researcher bias

As the primary instrument to the data analysis process, the researcher was aware of the possibility of personal biases imposed during the data analysis process, limiting its trustworthiness. However, the researcher adopted prolonged observation (through time spent working in the field) and persistent observation during interviews (supported by a piloted interview guideline), which contributed to the thick descriptions of the phenomenon.

4.11.2. Generalisability of findings and conclusions

This explorative, qualitative study took place in a automotive manufacturing industry context and may not be generalisable to other industry contexts, Even though this study may not be generalisable to other industry contexts, this lack thereof may not necessarily threaten the trustworthiness of the study but rather, as with many qualitative studies, a necessity to understand certain phenomenological interpretations for specific contexts (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, it is further understood that the research context and assumptions surrounding the phenomenological interpretations of this particular study, should at best, be clearly detailed to enhance transferability.

4.11.3. Time horizon

The study was cross-sectional and representative of perceptions at a single point in time, which in this case, took place in 2024. Therefore, the findings of this study made no presumptions about any other period.

4.11.4. Data collection strategies

While the study collected data from managers at various seniority levels and departments, who provided in-depth and nuanced observations, adding depth to insights, it relied on qualitative data from semi-structured interviews.

5. FINDINGS/RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 objectively presents and describes the key findings obtained from the qualitative analysis process of the 10 semi-structured interviews with the leaders. The purpose of these interviews was to address the three research questions in Chapter 3 of this report. As a result, this chapter is clustered around the framework of the research questions with verbatim quotations and textual evidence cited, the overarching models as well as a review of emergent themes, to support the description of the findings.

The research problem for this study was concerned with structural changes within the business model of the automotive industry that have created a much more complex environment for automotive OEMs, requiring them to pull together their transformation capabilities (Brown et al., 2024; Cavazotte et al., 2020) to drive superior customer experiences from all areas of the business (Gruntges et al., 2021).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to provide an integrated model that articulates the mechanisms through which intellectual stimulation influences extra-role behaviours in the context of disruptive change in the automotive OEM industry. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the researcher adopted an interpretivist philosophy, aiming to inductively explore and understand the in-depth meaning that managers ascribed to their lived experiences in the automotive manufacturing industry. This approach was particularly important as individual values, perspectives, motivations and reasoning processes were considered invaluable to gaining rich, comprehensive insights and clarifying the nuanced mechanism of the phenomenon.

5.2. Background of Participants and Research Context

The study took place within the automotive manufacturing industry, where semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders of varying levels of seniority. The intention of this heterogenous sample was to acquire in-depth insights from

various core activities within the business' value chain to gain clarity and dynamism of responses. This in-depth understanding was achieved, and contextually included the two following nuanced aspects to the sample:

5.2.1. Multinational automotive manufacturing companies

The companies under investigation have a global presence with the parent organisation located outside of South Africa. The findings to this study indicate that this had an influence on the dynamics pertaining to the execution of overall strategy.

5.2.2. Unionisation of production workers

The unionisation of workers in South Africa has a significant influence on advocating for labourer working conditions, rights and wages. The findings in this study reflect the importance of OEMs maintaining strong relations with these unions.

5.3. Results: Research Question 1

Research Question 1:

In what ways does intellectual stimulation from leadership manifest into attitudes adopted by employees to go beyond their formal roles?

Research question 1 aimed to explore the emergent attitudes of employees influenced by leaders who intellectually stimulated employees through creative problem-solving, curiosity and creativity. Key themes from this inductive thematic approach were related to responses in attitude based on the higher-order category of individual development, relational dynamics and commitment to work. The figure below provides a high-level illustration of these findings:

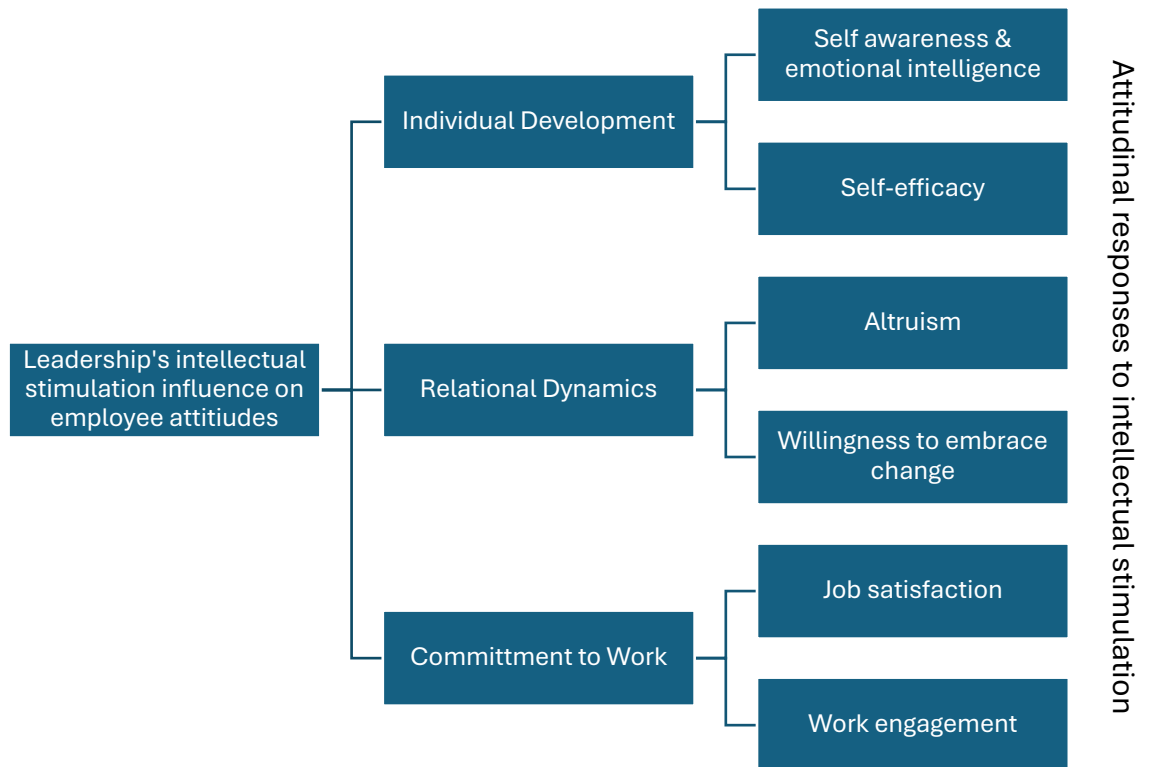


Figure 2

5.3.1. Individual development

5.3.1.1. Self-awareness

Participants who reflected on intellectual stimulation encouraging creative problem solving indicated that their ability to manage their own emotions helped them to build stronger relationships with others, especially under circumstances of conflict or uncertainty, where creative problem solving was necessary. In the context of the production line, this was important to ensure the efficient production of vehicles. For example, it was highly important for a production line to remain functioning with efficiency, maximum productivity and the least downtime as possible. Significantly affecting this workflow would be insufficient assembly line workers from absenteeism. This absenteeism required other members of the team to act as their replacements, leading to conflict, frustration and low morale. It emerged that this type of negative work environment typically leads to even higher levels of absenteeism. However, participants reflected that

the self-awareness of emotions could foster meaningful dialogue and empathy where mutually agreeable solutions could be identified to resolve conflict.

“Emotional intelligence...changes the behaviour of many people and helps them gain perspective of how people see things and how they see one another.” - Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

“As a leader, I think it's more about your emotional intelligence rather than your technical intelligence. You very seldom use your technical ability. Well, I'm talking about my specific role and my specific experience, but it becomes less of a technical role and more of an emotional intelligence kind of role where you need to understand your people and how to get the best out of your people.” - Participant 7, Service Engineering Training & Recall Manager

Similarly, on the supply chain side, self-awareness through emotional intelligence was also found to foster more meaningful relationships within the workplace environment by not taking rejection (of new ideas or solutions) personally but engaging more actively on the justification for rejection.

“So, learn to understand why a person is saying ‘no’ to you. This type of emotional intelligence [for me] is working within my job and outside my work. It has taught me to be resilient. Not to take things personally. It has taught me to have better relationships with other people within the organisation” – Participant 2, Senior Procurement Manager

5.3.1.2. Self-efficacy

Participants reflected that their self-belief to perform challenging tasks was encouraged through intellectual stimulation. This was influenced by leaders who encouraged employees to autonomously lead challenging tasks and make decisions. This self-belief was evident in the way that they viewed challenges and uncertainty as an opportunity.

“It [intellectual stimulation from a leader] has changed me a lot, because now I can see things in a very different perspective. Everything that is thrown to me, I don't see it as a bad thing. I look around it and look how I may make it a challenge and improve it.” – Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

“I always look at things and say, there is a better way of doing it. And there is always an opportunity.” - Participant 4, Head of Human Resources

Similarly, self-belief to perform challenging tasks also emerged because of the leaders trust in the employee, which motivated them even more.

“It has pushed me to the next limit, because I know this person [the leader] said, “No, I'm trusting you to do this””. – Participant 2, Senior Procurement Manager

5.3.2. Relational dynamics

5.3.2.1. Altruism

It emerged that intellectual stimulation encouraged employees to have an attitude of assisting with tasks over and beyond their formal roles, without expectation of financial compensation. Participants reflected that an exchange of financial reward was not the impetus of their propensity to challenge problems with creativity. Instead, intellectual stimulation fulfilled their propensity to be impactful and to engage in meaningful work even if it meant working longer hours.

“Do you create the type of environment where someone is willing to work beyond extra? Sometimes it doesn't even have to be about money. It's not even about money, most of the time it's about self-fulfillment.” - Participant 2, Senior Procurement Manager

"We had project bonuses, so that was something that encouraged the participation and the thinking differently. But for me, honestly, I wasn't even driven by that, I was driven by the need to make an impact.... And for me, the money was never the motivator. " - Participant 8, Head of Aftersales & Network Development)

5.3.2.2. Willingness to embrace change

It emerged that employees responded differently to intellectual stimulation, which challenged them to think outside conventional boundaries. The way in which employees responded to intellectual stimulation was related to their willingness to embrace change. Employees resistant to change were less likely to embrace new ideas whereas those whose attitudes were supportive of new and improved approaches were likely to engage more positively. Supporting this, it also emerged that management was a key proponent to driving change and age dynamics within the organisation influenced an individual's willingness to accept change.

"We still do things the way we've been doing it 25 years ago. And I say 25 because there's a colleague that I work with who, says, "No, this is how we did things when we started", and I had to learn from him, but we're 25 years down the line, and there's so many ways that we could improve on this, but obviously that would be investment of certain resources that we don't have access to such as data management tools or analytics tools that we don't have in our system yet." - Participant 6, Product Strategy Specialist

"Now, when you say I must change...it must not be a problem. I must be able to see it as a new challenge, as a new learning curve, and then be able to work on that new change. I must accommodate it and give it a chance so that they can see if it works for us." - Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

“There was a lot of change in the management team... more managers who were open minded were starting to appear, because [before] there was a lot of resistance to promoting people that were open minded and willing to learn or willing to change the culture in the organization.” - Participant 4, Plant Process Engineer

5.3.3. Commitment to work

5.3.3.1. Job satisfaction

It emerged that intellectual stimulation elicited positive emotional states towards work-related tasks, contributing towards employee job satisfaction. This, to the participants, was a motivating factor to respond positively to intellectual stimulation, considering that employees spend an average of eight hours a day at their workplace. Conversely, in instances where participants were not engaged in intellectual stimulation leadership, this elicited feelings of boredom and dissatisfaction towards the work-related tasks, that may even be contradictory to the intended purpose of the job.

“I wake up motivated to go to the organization without a doubt, because of the style that they are using to lead our teams and myself. I feel motivated to go to work. I don't have to wake up and ask myself, why am I going there? I don't need to even ask myself a question. I just wake up, go to work, and then I perform my functions.” - Participant 5, Chassis Plant Maintenance Manager

“I could be manually sifting through big chunks of data, and feeling bored with it, or feeling like this is the most tedious thing, and I came here for strategy [role], and now I'm here doing data analytics and feeding into other people who are making the strategic decisions. So, I've been scammed into this position, maybe, but, if we do things differently, we could actually end up having a job that is a lot more fulfilling than it is.” - Participant 6, Product Strategy Specialist

5.3.3.2. Work engagement

It emerged that intellectual stimulation influenced an employees rigour and dedication towards their job, contributing to work engagement. From the findings, it was evident that participants engaged under intellectual stimulation leadership were prompted to take a proactive approach in addressing the issues faced in their work processes as well as to critically evaluate the quality of their work.

"In terms of the actual work itself, when you've been given a space to apply yourself, it means that instead understanding the problem on a surface level, now I have to go into the details and understand the problem to the fullest extent. What I have learned to do is to understand the problem to the fullest extent. If not, let me rather go and do a bit of research. Let me rather go and consult with other people within the organization to understand how this process affects them in the area...as well as consulting to industry leaders or experts outside of the company as well. So, this is what I've been doing so far, is to go into the details of a certain problem to understand how it affects the entire process within the company." - Participant 2, Senior Procurement Manager

"I must be able to look at my product when I pass in the street and say, "that's my making. That's my hands there." Even when I see the mistake, I must be able to see a car in the parking lot and say "Here, I didn't perform well. How did this mistake go past me up until it reached the customer? Up until I must be able to evaluate myself from outside the plant, being proud [or not] about what I did." - Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

5.3.4. Conclusion to the findings of research question 1

The findings to this research question, which aimed to explore the attitudes of employees influenced by leaders who intellectually stimulated them, reflected notable influence of their individual development (and emotional intelligence), the relational dynamics between the leader and employees as well the employee's overall commitment to work

From an individual development standpoint, participants commonly highlighted self-awareness (and emotional intelligence) as well as self-efficacy as attitudinal responses towards resolving conflict, which helped them foster meaningful dialogue and empathy towards others as well as through self-efficacy, instilled in them the self-belief that could overcome obstacles. More positively, participants highlighted that their leaders trust in them also motivated them to develop this self-belief. Additionally, it was found that positive attitudes at an individual-level were also fostered by viewing these challenges as opportunities, enhancing their self-belief to solve them.

Relational dynamics that emerged related to altruism and the willingness to embrace change, where employees typically performed above their formal roles in order to engage in meaningful work, which they believed was impactful for the business whereas the willingness to embrace change was necessary to cultivate creativity and innovative ways of thinking. It also emerged that managers (responsible for driving change) and their age influenced their willingness to embrace new ways of approaching problems.

Lastly, the findings reflected that an individual's commitment to their work was related to job satisfaction and work engagement, where satisfied and engaged employees were more prone to addressing problems creatively and with an open-mind. As a result, a lack of intellectual stimulation in leadership was found to lead to boredom (in administrative tasks) or team conflict (in the production line), where both aspects reduced an employee's job satisfaction and work engagement.

5.4. Results: Research Question 2

Research Question 2:

In what way does intellectual stimulation, from transformational leadership, manifest into employee behaviours?

Research question 2 aimed to explore the behaviours of employees influenced by leaders who intellectually stimulated them through creative problem-solving, curiosity and creativity. Key themes from this inductive thematic approach were related to responses in behaviour based on the higher-order category of individual empowerment, relational dynamics and innovative work. The figure below provides a high-level illustration of these findings:

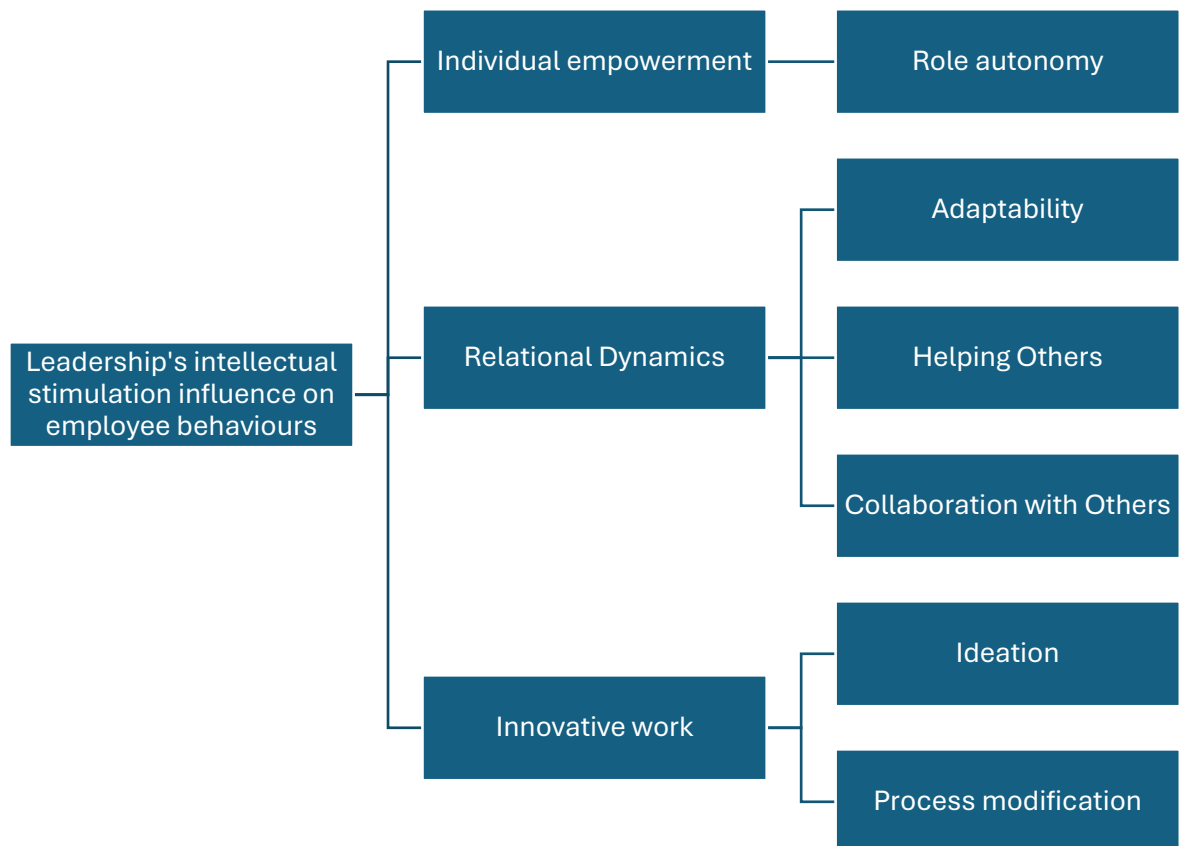


Figure 3

5.4.1. Individual empowerment

5.4.1.1. Role autonomy

The findings revealed that participants, under intellectual stimulation leadership, demonstrated autonomous behaviour as they were allowed the freedom to use their own judgement to make decisions (especially in the production environment), as well as to present new ideas. This autonomy also meant that

the leader was not required to intervene in all instances of challenges, as employees were empowered to take the necessary action.

"Through learning, I realized that if you give the team power to be able to come up with ideas. The more you going to be more innovative, the more you going to learn new things. And then the more you going to create that environment of open communication." - Participant 9, Chief Risk Officer

"I used to be on the floor all the time. I used to be called all the time. For the past eight months, it's been only a few times when I'm called for breakdowns. With the stoppages, they have now learned a lot from those breakdowns. Now they can run the line on their own, and when they see that they are struggling, they can escalate. ... Previously I couldn't do my job." - Participant 5, Chassis Plant Maintenance Manager

5.4.2. Relational dynamics

5.4.2.1. Adaptability

The findings revealed that employees needed to engage with unfamiliar task environments, which went beyond their formal roles. As such, employees reflected on the importance of being amenable to embracing this unfamiliarity and to use it as a learning opportunity.

"Our plant is two years old, so the majority of the issues require us to learn as we go. So as part of that, I had to forget my formal role [job title] and play the role of learning with the team. So basically, in order for me to help my team to creatively come up with solutions or innovate in terms of problems that we have encountered in the past two years, it was not easy because some of the challenges were fairly new to us." - Participant 5, Chassis Plant Maintenance Manager

"You need to understand the people that you are talking to and express things in a different way. Be the type of leader who changes the situation [be impactful] and based on who you're talking to, the situation that you are in, change how you would do things. So be adaptable." - Participant 4, Process Engineer for Plant

5.4.2.2. Helping others

The findings revealed employee helping behaviours positively benefited the efficiency of the overall area of activity and encouraged useful knowledge-sharing.

"Its about how are we going to help one another when we see that they gave this team member a job that is [physically] impossible for her or him... It [intellectual stimulation] will impact the team very much, because the team won't be co-operating to help you with anything" – Participant 1, Team leader of Operations Unit

"The feedback was that the way I communicated with the team actually assisted the team to understand what this project is about." Participant 4, Process Engineer for Plant

5.4.2.3. Collaboration with others

The findings highlighted the importance of collaboration as a means to get the job done. Participants regularly collaborated with other departments or geographical locations to execute of tasks or projects.

"Collaboration is unbelievably important because it's not just you and your immediate team that's doing it. You need to work with finance and purchasing and procurement, and you may be the engineering department, but you're just a portion. You've got the idea, but the execution needs to be done by cross-functional teams." - Participant 7, Service Engineering Training & Recall Manager

"In my department, we work with other departments." - Participant 4, Process Engineer for Plant)

5.4.3. Innovative work

5.4.3.1. Ideation

Findings revealed that when leaders were intellectually stimulating, this motivated employees to develop new ideas even if those ideas were not materialised into the business.

"We did learn something about that, that if something is not right, we can maneuver around ideas of how to make it simple for us." - Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

"They will come up with ideas and that makes them also to enjoy their work." - Participant 9, Chief Risk Officer

"I always like say, when you come up with the idea, please go and work with it. It's just that drive that makes them to go the extra mile to feel proud to say 'I'm working on this idea'. Sometimes people come up with an idea that not even in their department" - Participant 5, Chassis Plant Maintenance Manager

5.4.3.2. Process modification

Findings indicated that intellectual stimulation typically resulted in changed processes. In this context, it was found that materialised ideas typically led to modified processes.

"Sometimes you have to think beyond your own process, and think about, what otherwise can we do to improve on this process. If needed, then we go above the process to manage other things that we cannot foresee within the process." - Participant 2, Senior Procurement Manager

"When you see that something is workable to make it official, our superiors need to go back to the process department with paperwork,

because without paperwork, everything is invalid.” - Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

5.4.4. Conclusion to the findings of research question two

The findings to this research question, which aimed to explore the behaviours of employees influenced by leaders who intellectually stimulated them, reflected notable influence of their individual empowerment, the relational dynamics between the leader and employees as well the employee’s overall engagement in innovative work.

From an individual empowerment standpoint, participant’s role autonomy, which allowed them to take charge of problems (or solutions) and empowered them to use their own judgement in making decisions related to the problem. By empowering employees in this way, the findings revealed that leaders were not required to intervene in problems as frequently.

Relational dynamics that emerged related to adaptability, helping others and collaboration with others. The findings revealed that employees exposed to unfamiliar task-environments, beyond their formal roles, cited adaptability as important and as a way to learn new things. Similarly, collaboration was viewed as a critical means to executing on tasks, requiring employees to engage with other departments regularly. As such, helping behaviours were considered as a way to be more effective in the job.

Lastly, the finding on an individual’s innovative work related to ideation and process modification, where new ways to solving problems typically emerged as a consequence of intellectual stimulation, even if these ideas were not materialised into the business. However, where such ideas were materialised, these typically led to modifications to processes which increased process efficiencies.

5.5. Results: Research Question 3

Research Question 3:

In what ways do the relational dynamics between leaders and employees, encouraged through intellectual stimulation from leaders manifest into the work environment?

Research question 3 aimed to explore the relational dynamics between leaders and employees, as encouraged by intellectual stimulation. Key themes from this inductive thematic approach were related to mutual trust and respect, collective agency and open communication and feedback. The figure below provides a high-level illustration of these findings:

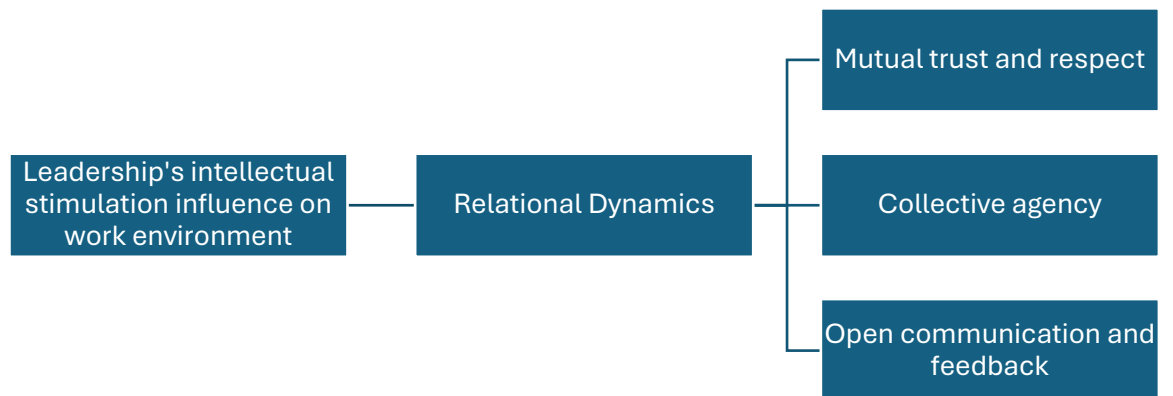


Figure 4

5.5.1. Relational dynamics

5.5.1.1. Mutual trust and respect

The findings revealed that harmonious and productive engagement between leaders and staff were founded on trust and respect. Participants noted this strongly as a proponent to facilitating meaningful dialogue between leaders and employees and helped in maintaining harmony amid tension, such as through the rejection of a new idea, disagreement of an issue or productivity issues on the production line. It was revealed that the leader's trust in the employee motivated the employee to perform above formal roles.

"So, I think that approach has really worked well for me, and it has pushed me to the next limit, because I know this person said, "No, I'm trusting you to do this". So, it boils down to the level of trust that a leader would have towards their employee. So, trust and respect. If you trust and respect the person, and you give them room to grow and then to make mistakes.... If one of the leaders say no to me, I feel I need to understand the detail on why they're saying that. That builds up the next level of trust with a person, because the person will appreciate that actually, you asking me why I said no, or you asking me why I said yes, you're interested in what I'm saying. You're interested in what I'm thinking." - Participant 2, Senior Procurement Manager

"That is why it's very important for a leader to respect employees as much as they respect you, because as a leader, you need your subordinates, and they also need you. You need one another to be able to push the production to flow as it should to be able to reach the targets." - Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

"And even if we agree to disagree, he would still say, come, let's go have lunch. And that, for me, just solidified the fact that you can separate the actual work side of things and still having that respect for each other." - Participant 10, Head of Aftersales & Network Development

5.5.1.2. Collective agency

It emerged that intellectual stimulation facilitated how the actions taken by individuals (employees) were positively able to address the objectives of the organisation (for which leaders were accountable) by resolving conflict in effective ways, especially in a highly unionised worker environment.

"It's making everyone's job easy. And in that way, employees, when they got new ideas that can help you reach your goals as an organisation, they are not afraid to participate, because...you have made an open door so that they can speak to you about anything, about continuous improvement every time, and it helps." - Participant 1, Team Leader of Operations Unit

"You're working towards a common goal, and you're not working for yourself. You're working for a customer. Without the customer, we don't have a business." - Participant 7, Service Engineering Training & Recall Manager

"So, with production, it's basically having to deal with people that are absent, people with restrictions, maternities as well as long term illnesses. This also includes dealing with a unionized staff and the Union itself. So, with that, you have to make sure that all parties are happy. Understand what is making people not to be at work, engage with the union to understand the people, what they are complaining about, the team members, and also engage with the process coaches, my supervisors, to understand their day-to-day struggles and what support do they need from my side." - Participant 5, Chassis Plant Maintenance Manager)

5.5.1.3. Open communication and feedback

The findings revealed that the ongoing flow of communication between leaders and employees provided a positive work environment for openly presenting novel approaches, concerns and performance evaluation. It also emerged that communication and feedback facilitated the coaching led by leaders as well as creating a psychologically safe environment, where mistakes could be made and learned from.

"His feedback made me learn more from each project...I walked away with more understanding of what the systems that I'm implementing are doing for the departments..." - Participant 4, Process Engineer for Plant

"Some people are reactive by nature. You can't change that, but you will give them feedback to say, when there is a problem like this, I am expecting you to be on this level, to be thinking this way... it's continuous coaching that you will need to impart into those type of individuals... In this new organization, there are more open discussions... to sit with someone, and then you listen, you don't say anything, you just let them speak. And then after listening, that's when now you can give feedback. In my previous roles, when you speak trying to solve a problem, immediately you get cut." - Participant 5, Chassis Plant Maintenance Manager

"It is actually a psychologically safe environment where you are allowed to express your ideas freely. And I think because of that, that in itself, motivated others to think about things that the leadership team wouldn't ordinarily think about." Participant 8, Talent Specialist

5.5.2. Conclusion to the findings of research question three

The findings to this research question, which aimed to explore the relational dynamics between leaders and employees as encouraged by intellectual stimulation reflected the dynamics of mutual trust and respect, collective agency and open communication as well as feedback.

Firstly, mutual trust and respect were seen to facilitate meaningful dialogue between leaders and employees. The findings also revealed that this helped in maintain workplace harmony amid tension. Even more, participants mentioned the leader's trust in them as motivating force to perform above their formal roles.

Secondly, collective agency was viewed to align the efforts of employees and leaders where intellectual stimulation encouraged employees to perform above their formal roles in support of organisational objectives, where necessary. This was seen to alleviate conflict and address problems more efficiently and made employees aware of their contribution towards the organisation.

Lastly, open communication and feedback was revealed as necessary to encourage employees to share new ideas, and even provided a means to evaluate the quality of these ideas through engagement with leaders. It was also seen as a means to coach employees as well as provide the psychological safety necessary to make mistakes and learn from them.

5.6. Conclusion to the overall findings

The findings addressed the three research questions related to the attitudes, behaviours and work environment encouraged through intellectual stimulation provided by leaders. More specifically, the findings reflected attitudinal responses, behavioural responses and the work environment established through the relational dynamics between leaders and employees. As such, the findings reveal [5 key] aspects to the overarching research question about how intellectual stimulation, provided by leaders, influenced employee conscientiousness.

Firstly, on an individual level, the findings revealed key aspects on the attitudes and behaviours of employees. From an attitudinal response perspective, employees demonstrated an increased self-awareness, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and role autonomy. More specifically, the findings revealed that a leaders trust motivated employees to perform beyond their formal roles (viewing challenges as opportunities), fostered meaningful dialogue and empathy and enhanced the employees self-belief to perform challenging tasks. Behaviourally, autonomy was found to empower employees by allowing them to take charge of organisational problems. This gave employees the opportunities to use their own judgement in making-decisions and reduced the need for managerial intervention when problems arose.

Secondly, the relational dynamics between leaders and employees revealed key aspects on the attitudes and behaviours of employees. From an attitudinal response perspective, employees demonstrated increased altruism and relied on their willingness to embrace change. More specifically, employees who exceeded their formal roles, typically did so to engage in impactful work even it meant working longer hours. Similarly, willingness to embrace change was seen as important for fostering creativity and innovative thinking. The findings on

attitudes also revealed that the manager's age could influence this willingness. Behaviorally, adaptability, helping others and collaboration with others was found. Adaptability was seen as important for accomplishment and learning in unfamiliar task environments. Similarly, collaboration and helping others, beyond formal roles was found to creatively and efficiently support the execution of tasks.

Thirdly, employee commitment was found to be influenced by employee job satisfaction and work engagement. It was found that a lack of intellectual stimulation led to boredom and team conflict, which had a poor influence on job satisfaction and work engagement. As such, it was found that satisfied and engaged employees were more open to solving problems creatively.

Fourthly, innovative work was found to be influenced by novel problem-solving ideas which also contributed to process modifications that increased efficiencies.

Fifthly, some relational dynamics between leaders and employees were found to influence the workplace environment, as encouraged by intellectual stimulation. These were mutual trust and respect, collective agency and open communication (and feedback). It was found that mutual trust and respect facilitated meaningful dialogues and workplace harmony, which motivated employees to perform beyond their formal roles. Similarly, intellectual stimulation facilitated aligned efforts between employees and leaders, which assisted in achieving organisational objectives. Lastly, open communication and feedback encouraged the sharing of new ideas, the evaluation of the quality of such ideas, coaching from leaders to employees and the psychological safety necessary to make mistakes and learn from them.

The next chapter provides a discussion on these findings as related to the theory.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings derived from the data analysis of the semi-structured interviews outlined in Chapter 5. As a result, this chapter is structured according to the research questions and provides consolidated insights into leadership's intellectual stimulation influence on employee extra-role behaviour. It focuses on comparing the findings from Chapter 5 to the literature critically reviewed in Chapter 2, addressing the extent to which findings confirm, extend or contradict the body of research.

6.2. Discussion: Research Question 1

In what ways does intellectual stimulation from leadership manifest into attitudes adopted by employees to go beyond their formal roles?

The first research question explored the attitudinal disposition of employees in response to intellectual stimulation from leaders. Extant literature revealed that intellectual stimulation fostered heightened intrinsic motivation (Shafi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Iddris et al., 2023), work engagement (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Cavazotte et al., 2020; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Kao et al., 2023; Barkat et al., 2024) and self-efficacy (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Iddris et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that intellectual stimulation from leaders enhanced the attitudinal disposition of employees at three levels: individual development (through self-awareness and emotional intelligence as well as self-efficacy), relational dynamics (through altruism and willingness to embrace change) and commitment to work (through job satisfaction and work engagement).

6.2.1. Literature comparison

6.2.1.1. Individual Development: Self-awareness and Emotional Intelligence

The literature suggested that under intellectual stimulation, employees were encouraged to use their creativity to explore various perspectives to overcome barriers (Shafi et al., 2020; Saira et al., 2021). According to the literature, taking in unique perspectives promoted creativity (Saira et al., 2021), volunteer participation (Kao et al., 2023) and perceived organisational support (Kao et al., 2023).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that participants whose leaders encouraged creative problem solving indicated that their ability to manage their own emotions helped them to build stronger relationships with others, especially under circumstances of conflict or uncertainty, where creative problem solving was necessary yet psychologically and emotionally overwhelming. For example, in the automotive manufacturing industry where production efficiency, productivity and quality were essential drivers of competitiveness, self-awareness (and emotional intelligence) were useful in fostering meaningful dialogue, empathy and mutually agreeable solutions. Therefore, these findings extended the existing body of knowledge to include 'self-awareness' and 'emotional intelligence.'

6.2.1.2. Individual Development: Self-Efficacy

The literature suggested that employees' self-belief to achieve challenging tasks was essential to fostering innovative ideas and solutions that supported organisational change (Cavazotte et al., 2020; Azila-Gbettor, 2023; Iddris et al., 2023).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that self-efficacy emerged as a result of the leader's trust in the employee to accomplish challenging tasks. This motivated employees to exceed expectations. The findings also revealed that through self-efficacy, employees no longer viewed challenges as obstacles but as opportunities; promoting their creativity even further. Therefore, these findings confirmed and extended the existing body of knowledge to include the nuance of 'trust in the employee' as a motivator for employees as well as 'reframing of

the problem' which enabled employees to view challenges from a positive, more opportunity-driven lense.

6.2.1.3. Relational Dynamics: Altruism

The literature suggested that transformational leadership theory encouraged employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the benefit of the organisation in support of innovative solutions (Chen et al., 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Saira et al., 2021).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that participants engaged in tasks over and above their formal roles in fulfilment of their need and desire to be impactful and to engage in meaningful work. For example, participants revealed that the impetus for their engagement in such extra-role behaviours was not driven by economic exchanges but rather social exchanges. This confirms the existing literature on social exchange theory, which purports that transformational leaders engage in social exchanges as opposed to economic exchanges (Saira et al., 2021). However, it extends the literature to include 'meaningful work' as an intangible resource exchange.

6.2.1.4. Relational Dynamics: Willingness to Embrace Change

The current literature suggested that a developmental culture, which is flexible to change and innovation, was enhanced under intellectual stimulation (Yang et al., 2021).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that responses to intellectual stimulation were not always positive, as some participants revealed their encounters with peers who were resistant to embracing new and improved approaches. These individuals demonstrate a low willingness to embrace the change brought forward by leaders. Similarly, participants revealed that 'generational resistance' demonstrated by certain age groups that were not supportive of change was important. Therefore, while the findings confirm the body of knowledge, they also extend it to include 'willingness to embrace change' and 'generational resistance'.

6.2.1.5. Commitment to Work: Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement

The current literature suggested that (under intellectual stimulation leadership) job satisfaction, affective commitment and work engagement heightened an employee's emotional and cognitive attachment and enthusiasm towards their job and the organisation (Nurjanah et al. 2020; Khaola & Rambe, 2020).

The findings on Chapter 5 revealed that intellectual stimulation triggered positive emotional states towards work-related tasks, contributing towards employee job satisfaction. It also emerged that intellectual stimulation influenced an employee's rigour and dedication towards their job, contributing to work engagement. From the findings, it was evident that participants engaged under intellectual stimulation leadership were prompted to take a proactive approach in addressing the issues faced in their work processes as well as to critically evaluate the quality of their work. Therefore, these findings confirmed the existing body of knowledge.

6.3. Discussion: Research Question 2

In what way does leadership's intellectual stimulation, manifest into behaviours taken by employees to go beyond their formal roles?

The second research question explored the behavioural disposition of employees in response to intellectual stimulation from leaders. Extant literature revealed that intellectual stimulation fostered job autonomy (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023), employee creativity and innovative work behaviour (Shafi et al., 2020; Saira et al., 2021; Kuo et al., 2022) Lim & Moon, 2022; as well as volunteer participation and helping behaviour (Lim & Moon, 2022; Kao et al., 2023)

The findings revealed that intellectual stimulation from leaders enhanced the behavioural disposition of employees at three levels: individual empowerment (through role autonomy), relational dynamics (through adaptability, helping others and collaboration with others) and innovative work (through ideation and process modification).

6.3.1. Literature comparison

6.3.1.1. Individual Empowerment: Role autonomy

The literature suggested that transformational leadership, through intellectual stimulation, psychologically empowered employees through autonomy (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that employees were autonomous under leadership's intellectual stimulation, which also involved and empowered employees to apply judgement in problem-solving. Therefore, these findings confirmed the existing body of knowledge.

6.3.1.2. Relational Dynamics: Adaptability

The current literature suggested that a developmental culture, which is flexible to change and innovation, was enhanced under intellectual stimulation (Yang et al., 2021).

The findings in Chapter 5 reflected that participants needed to be amenable to embracing unfamiliarity and to use it as an opportunity. In the context of the automotive environment, the findings revealed that in multiple instances, employees were engaged in unfamiliar task environments. This underscored the importance of being amenable to embracing unfamiliarity and to use it as a learning opportunity. Therefore, the findings confirmed the existing body of knowledge and contributed depth through the introduction of unfamiliar task environments.

6.3.1.3. Relational Dynamics: Helping Other and Collaboration with Others

The literature suggested that voluntary participation and helping behaviours contributed towards organisational performance (Lim & Moon, 2022).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that helping and collaborative behaviours contributed towards organisational performance through increased efficiencies. Therefore, the findings confirmed the existing body of knowledge.

6.3.1.4. Innovative Work: Ideation and Process Modification

The literature suggested that employee creativity and innovativeness compelling employees to perform beyond their formal roles (Shafi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023). Khaola & Rambe (2020).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that the generation of new ideas increased and some of these ideas were translated to innovative work processes. Contextually, automotive manufacturing company's are driven by strict manufacturing processes, driven at the parent-firm level, which meant that the majority of innovations that took place were related to work processes. Therefore, the findings confirmed the existing literature and added depth to the type of innovations, amongst employees, typically demonstrated in the automotive context.

6.4. Discussion: Research Question 3

In what ways do the relational dynamics between leaders and employees, encouraged through intellectual stimulation from leaders, manifest into the work environment?

The third research question explored the relational dynamics in the work environment, influenced by intellectual stimulation. Extant literature revealed that intellectual stimulation fostered a heightened developmental culture (Yang et al., 2021), supported organisational learning (Asgari et al., 2020) and promoted a perceived supportive work environment (Khaola & Rambe, 2020; Kao et al., 2023).

The findings in Chapter 5 revealed that in the work environment, the findings revealed that intellectual stimulation from leaders cultivated mutual trust and respect, collective agency and open feedback and communication.

6.4.1. Literature comparison

6.4.1.1. Relational Dynamics: Mutual Trust and Respect

Lee et al. (2020) elaborated that through social exchange theory, the high social exchanges that occur between transformational leaders and employees fostered high levels of trust and respect.

The findings in Chapter 5 supported the literature, as participants cited it as a key proponent to fostering meaningful dialogues without taking matters personally. Therefore, this confirmed the existing body of knowledge.

6.4.1.2. Relational Dynamics: Collective Agency

According to the inspirational motivational dimension of transformational leadership theory, leaders motivate employees by inspiring their collective enthusiasm and commitment towards a common goal (Shafi et al., 2020; Cavazotte et al., 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022; Iddris et al., 2023). This literature is also reflected in the findings in Chapter 5 where, in the context of the automotive manufacturing industry, regular engagement with employees and trade unions was necessary to sustain cohesive and co-operative teams. However, these findings also add depth to the literature to include individualised consideration as a way to drive team cohesion in volatile environments, such as trade union disputes, which could make it challenging for transformational leaders to achieve common objectives.

6.4.1.3. Relational Dynamics: Open Communication and Feedback

Lee et al. (2020) reiterated that transformational leadership establishes high quality social exchanges that foster high levels of trust, respect and communication. Similarly, other studies found that trust encouraged employees' willingness to demonstrate co-operative behaviours, promoted formal and informal communication and workplace conflict avoidance (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022; Kao et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024).

Specifically, trust in the leader was an indication of the employee's perceived confidence in the leader's abilities (Lim & Moon, 2022; Lee et al., 2024).

This was somewhat contradictory to the findings to Chapter 5 as participants placed more emphasis on a psychologically safe environment that fostered transparent and regular communication. It also creates an environment where employees could make mistakes, share their ideas and voice their concerns. A talent specialist reiterated how this freedom to share new ideas and raise concerns provided the organisation with opportunities to take advantage of novel approaches to be introduced by employees into the business.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter highlights the main research findings of the research, synthesising the findings in Chapter 5 with the existing body of knowledge in Chapter 2 into a cohesive set of conclusions that directly address the three research questions. This chapter also includes recommendations to stakeholders and managerial implications. It highlights the limitations of the research and gives recommendations for future research.

7.2. Main Research Findings

7.2.1. Attitudinal disposition of employees

The main research findings to the attitudinal disposition of employees in response to intellectual stimulation relates to three aspects: individual development, relational dynamics and commitment to work, as follows:

7.2.1.1. Individual Development

From an individual-level perspective, this study found that intellectual stimulation cultivated improved self-efficacy and self-awareness (and emotional intelligence), which further supported intrinsic motivation and work engagement. More specifically, employees demonstrated consideration towards different perspectives, raised the awareness of their emotions and their resultant impact on others, displayed empathy and resilience which promoted effective conflict resolution and problem-solving. This extends the literature to include self-awareness and emotional intelligence as attitudes promoted under intellectual stimulation. The findings also support Shafi et al.(2020) and Saira et al. (2021) who elaborated that intellectual stimulation encouraged creativity and perspective-taking. Therefore, this finding confirms and extends the existing body of knowledge by introducing the concept of 'trust in the employee' and 'problem-reframing' (where challenges are viewed as opportunities). Both of these concepts enhance intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy as well as promotes effective problem solving.

7.2.1.2. Relational Dynamics

From a relational perspective, this study found that intellectual stimulation encouraged altruism and a willingness to embrace change. Employees led under intellectual stimulation demonstrated a willingness to perform beyond their formal roles as a way to engage meaningfully with their work and make an impact on influencing organisational objectives. This finding supported the concept of a developmental culture (Yang et al., 2021) reinforced by both transformational leadership theory and social exchange theory. However, it also extended the existing body of knowledge by introducing the concept of meaningful work and generational resistance. Meaningful work was found to be a valuable intangible resource exchange that triggered employees to act beyond their own self-interest. Similarly, it also established that not all employees were open to new approaches, highlighting that the concept of generational resistance, as a consequence of the diverse age groups in the industry, could lead to some resistance towards responding positively to intellectual stimulation.

7.2.1.3. Commitment to Work

From a commitment to work perspective, this study found that intellectual stimulation heightened both an employee's job satisfaction and work engagement by enthralling increased emotional and cognitive attachment towards their job. This confirmed the existing literature that intellectual stimulation led to increased job satisfaction and affective commitment (Nurjanah et al., 2020; Khaola & Rambe, 2020). However, the findings contributed depth to the understanding of work engagement, as both an emotional and cognitive attachment.

7.2.2. Behavioural disposition of employees

The main research findings to the behavioural disposition of employees in response to intellectual stimulation relates to three aspects: individual empowerment, relational dynamics and innovative work, as follows:

7.2.2.1. Individual Empowerment

From an individual-level perspective, this study found that intellectual stimulation enhanced role autonomy, which aligns with existing literature that stated that

transformational leadership supported autonomy (Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022).

7.2.2.2. Relational Dynamics

From a relational perspective this study found that intellectual stimulation encouraged adaptability, helping and collaborative behaviours. It supported the existing body of knowledge that a developmental culture, characterised by flexible change and innovation, was enhanced under intellectual stimulation (Yang et al., 2021). It also extended the existing literature through the concept of unfamiliar task environments as opportunities for new learning.

7.2.2.3. Innovative Work

In terms of innovative work, this study confirmed the existing literature that suggested that employee creativity and innovativeness compelled employees to perform beyond their formal roles (Shafi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022; Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023). Khaola & Rambe (2020) and added depth to it by specifying that work processes modification was the most common type of innovations that took place in South African-based automotive OEMs.

7.2.3. Relational Dynamics in the Work Environment

7.2.3.1. Mutual trust and respect

This study confirmed that existing body of knowledge that suggested that through social exchange theory, the high social exchanges that occur between transformational leaders and employees fostered high levels of trust and respect (Lee et al., 2020).

7.2.3.2. Collective agency

The study confirmed the existing body of knowledge that inspirational motivation of transformational leaders inspired collective action (Shafi et al., 2020; Cavazotte et al., 2020; Lim & Moon, 2022; Iddris et al., 2023) and added depth to it to include individualised consideration as a way to drive team cohesion in

volatile environments, such as with trade union disputes, which could make it challenging for transformational leaders to achieve common objectives.

7.2.3.3. Open communication and feedback

The study contradicted the existing body of knowledge and instead, introduced psychological safety as a way to foster transparent and regular communication where employees could make mistakes, share their ideas and voice their concerns.

7.3. Relevance to Existing Body of Knowledge

The study contributed significantly to the existing literature on intellectual stimulation (as a dimension of transformational leadership) and extra-role behaviours (related to intellectual stimulation), in the following ways:

7.3.1. From an attitudinal disposition perspective:

7.3.1.1. At the individual-level, the study introduced self-awareness and emotional intelligence as concepts that heightened self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Secondly, it confirmed the role of trust in fostering high-quality social exchange relationships and introduced the concept of trust in the employee and problem-reframing, both of which enhance intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy.

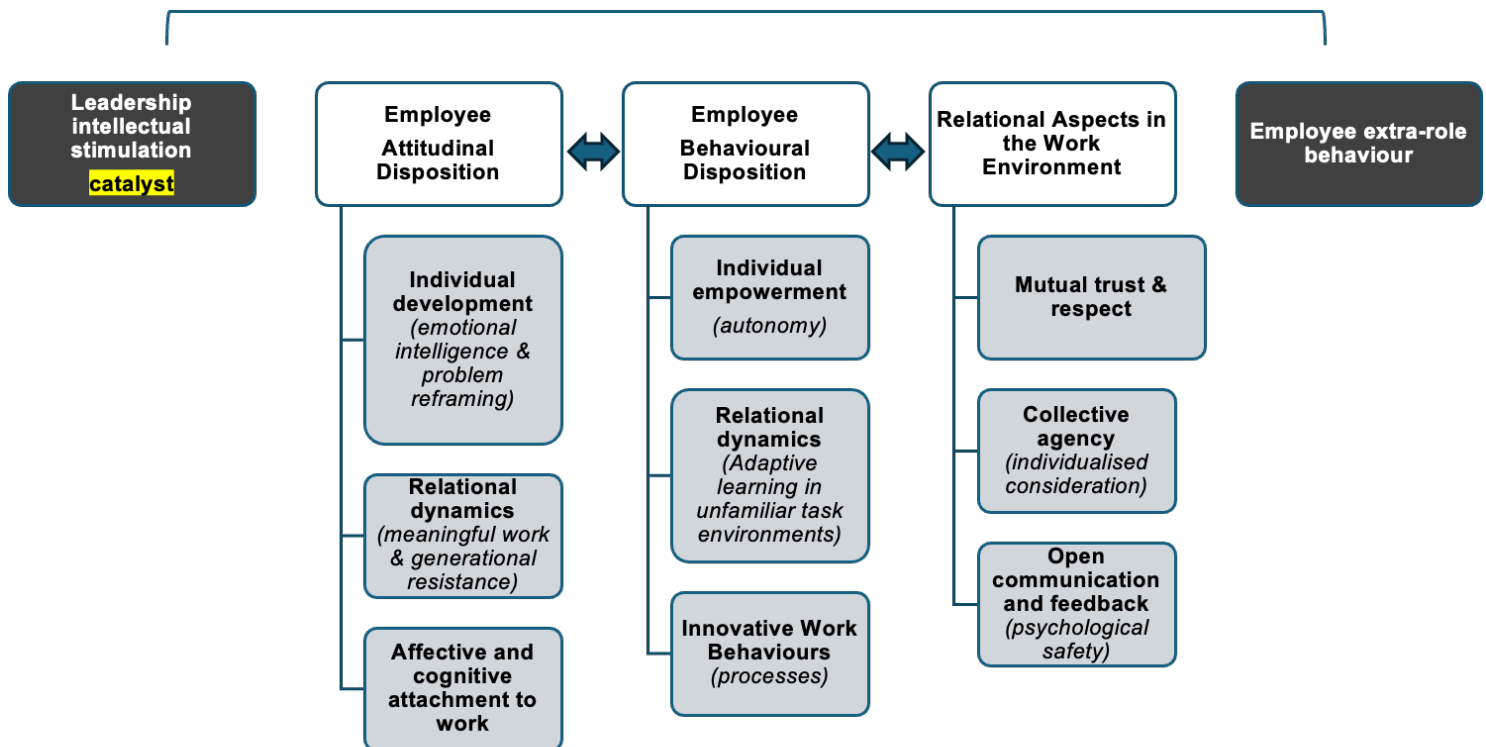
7.3.1.2. In terms of relational dynamics, it supported claims in literature of a developmental culture reinforcing positive social exchanges and introduced the concept of meaningful work as a positive social resource exchange and introduced generational resistance as a potential hindrance to a leader's intellectual stimulation efforts.

7.3.2. From a behavioural disposition perspective

7.3.2.1. From a relational perspective, it introduced the concept of unfamiliar task environment and avenues new learning and development

- 7.3.2.2. In terms of innovative work, it specified process innovation as common demonstrations of behaviour in the automotive environment
- 7.3.2.3. In terms of the work environment, it added depth to the literature by arguing that intellectual stimulation together with individualised consideration was necessary drive team cohesion in volatile environments.

The study's contributions are illustrated in the figure below:



7.4. Recommendations to Stakeholders and Managerial Implications

These study's contributions have multiple implications for leaders who aim to cultivate employee creativity and innovativeness in a highly dynamic and complex automotive environment:

- 7.4.1. To drive positive attitudes, social exchanges between leaders and employees should be at the core of leadership practices. For example, leaders should emphasise the importance of emotional intelligence, problem-reframing, meaningful work and demonstrate a commitment towards change. Therefore, training, workshops and discussions could be introduced as a mechanism to strengthen the quality of interpersonal social exchanges.
- 7.4.2. Leadership should confront the challenges of generational resistance through coaching and regular engagement with employees, fostering an environment of trust, respect and regular communication and individualised consideration to those who may be reluctant to adapt.
- 7.4.3. To cultivate a favourable work environment, leaders should endorse psychological safety as a pathway to sharing and refining new ideas as well as employing individualised consideration when engaging staff members, specifically in volatile work contexts.

7.5. Limitations of the research

This study employed an exploratory, qualitative research approach in an automotive manufacturing context, which means that it may not be generalisable to other industry contexts. In addition to this, the study's design and scope contains the following limitations:

7.6. Researcher bias

As the primary instrument to the data analysis process, the researcher was aware of the possibility of personal biases imposed during the data analysis process. However, the researcher adopted prolonged observation (through time spent working in the field) and persistent observation, which contributed to the thick descriptions of the phenomenon.

7.7. Time horizon

The study was cross-sectional and representative of perceptions at a single point in time, which in this case, took place in 2024. Therefore, the findings of this study made no presumptions about any other period.

7.8. Data collection strategies

While the study collected data from managers at various seniority levels and departments, who provided in-depth and nuanced observations, adding depth to insights, it relied on qualitative data from semi-structured interviews.

7.9. Recommendations for future research

Further avenue for further research could replicate this investigation with multinational companies based in South Africa, navigating disruptive change within other industry contexts as well as investigating the influence of procedural justice and organisational support on extra-role behaviour as there is limited research on the topic.

7.10. CONCLUSION

This research has provided an integrated understanding of the influence of intellectual stimulation and extra-role behaviours (specific to intellectual stimulation) in a disruptive change environment. Data from semi-structured interviews with ten participants of managers (working within core functions at different levels of seniority) was collected and analysed, The findings and the literature were synthesis, where key contributions to literature have been made. As such, a model was proposed.

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