

**INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE
EMPOWERMENT IN MULTINATIONALS IN ASIA**

**Research of Influence of Transformational, Inclusive and Coaching Leadership
styles on Employee Empowerment in Multinationals in Asia**

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ABSTRACT

In the era of dynamic transformation of the workplace, leadership has emerged as a significant constant which determines success of organisations and aides' employees to reach their potential. The imperative is how leaders engage their employees, lending employee empowerment to be a critical component of organisation's values and framework. Employee empowerment has been articulated as a business strategy, and invaluable asset to the competitive advantage (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Research indicates leadership styles enable innovation and creativity, belonging, collaboration and enhanced workplace happiness in employees (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002).

This study researches leadership styles with philosophies aligned to Transformational, Inclusive and Coaching and its relationship in influencing employee empowerment in multinational organisations (MNCs) in Asian subsidiaries. The study hypothesises although various leadership styles are prevalent the recent decade, styles akin to Transformational, Inclusive and Coaching have been instrumental in empowering employees in Asian subsidiaries.

Literature review was conducted from reputable literature, peer reviewed journals, and published papers. The objective is to investigate predictive hypothesis and construct relationships with theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the three leadership styles to outcomes of employee empowerment.

The researcher followed a mixed approach, primary data was gathered through qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with leaders in Asian subsidiaries, research instrument used for quantitative analysis is a multifactor leadership questionnaire (Avolio and Bass) participated by employees of Asian subsidiaries. The findings from qualitative and quantitative methods is presented through descriptive analysis of Braun and Clark model of thematic methods, following a positive paradigm to explore outcomes of employee empowerment.

This research resulted in suggesting transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles influence and enhance employee empowerment in Asian subsidiaries. Limitations and recommendations present insights that could be explored for future research, with quantitative methodology of larger samples and in-person interviews to evaluate behavioural themes.

KEY WORDS Leadership Styles, Development, Transformational, Inclusive, Coaching, Employee empowerment, Innovation, Belonging, Collaboration, Employee Happiness, Influence, Vision Guiding, Trust, Organisation, Explore, Investigate, Multinationals, Asian subsidiaries.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Multinational Corporations – MNCs

Employee Empowerment - EE

Transformational Leadership – TL

Inclusive Leadership – IL

Coaching Leadership - CL

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 TITLE

The working title of this research is Influence of Leadership Styles on Employee Empowerment in Multinational Corporations in Asian Subsidiaries.

This research explores the extent which employees are empowered to demonstrate aspects of innovation and creativity, collaboration, trust, belonging, security and employee happiness when leaders exercise specific styles of transformational, coaching and inclusive nature, leading to synchronised efforts to achieve collective goals and unified vision of MNCs in Asian subsidiaries.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

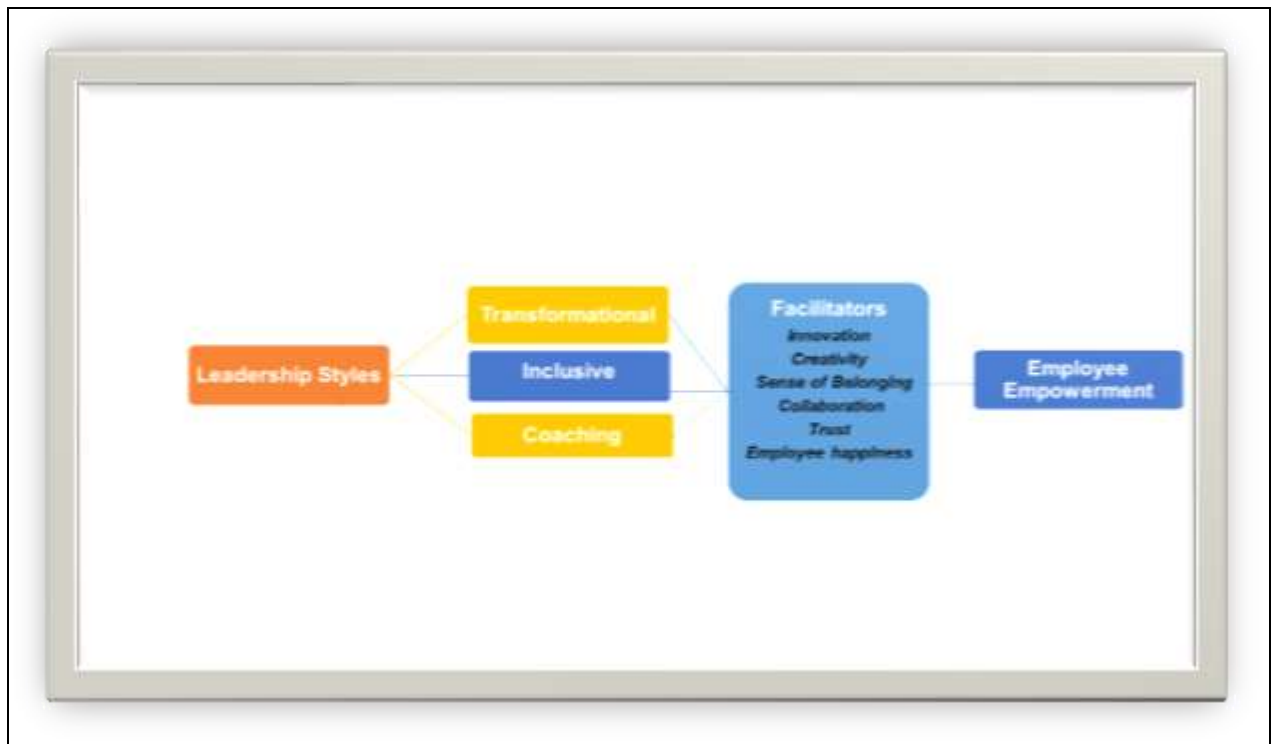
Leadership has an immense impact to influence the talent force to perform, grow and reach their potential by achieving organisational competencies, business strategies and societal needs (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The rationale of this research explores the manner, in which profound MNCs in Asian subsidiaries encourage their leaders to enable, influence and empower their employees to strive in an evolved working world. Further attributing to developing a pipeline of leaders who identify, enhance and flex their mindset, behaviour and specifically their leadership styles, to influence vital facets of employee empowerment leading to innovation, creativity, collaboration, fostering trust and happiness across levels (Gibbons, 2006).

Existing literature states leadership styles are on a dynamic continuum of ever-evolving landscape. Establishing a new-age cohort of leaders in Asian subsidiaries, who lead through eminent change, drive performance and cultivate a strong culture of empowerment in their employees (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003). In an increasingly agile world emerging leadership styles aligned to transformational, inclusive and coaching are rooted in leadership theories which respond to a myriad of situations rather than the individual traits of the leader (Nortje, 2010). Unprecedented circumstances, unpredictable economic trends and globalisation with client needs are

rapidly evolving; attracting and retaining talent is pivotal for MNCs to succeed (Gibbons, 2006). Employee empowerment is postulated as a 'positive, fulfilling and work-relative state of mind' which drive the imperative for organisations to predict revenue, scaled innovation, commitment and to build robust teams, business and communities (Halbesleben, J. R. & Wheeler, A., 2008).

The exploration of this research probes into the positive paradigm of leadership styles of transformational, inclusive and coaching and the narrative of how leaders influence their employee's motivational and empowerment levels to reach the desired vision and objectives of the organisation (Bachmann & Kroeger, 2017).

Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework



1.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR RESEARCH

The exponential and economic growth in Asian countries in the past decade has resulted in robust development of leadership and managerial talent. This growth in Asia is a double edged sword, it has catapulted some of the developing economies to leaders in the emerging markets in a compressed timeframe, resulting in a new generation of effective leaders to be developed and forged to attract and retain the best Talent; for successful organizational functioning and internationalization (Tung and Verbeke, 2010).

Established MNCs like the Big 4 Financial Services Firms, IBM, Google, Disney and Four Seasons in Asian subsidiaries, recognise the paramount need to develop the next generation of leaders through talent development and accelerated opportunities, to empower their most strategic asset i.e. their employees as other organisational elements of technology, products and processes result from the motivation of their workforce. Based on research, this study examines attributes of influence of transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles to strengthen aspects of employee empowerment and transforming the overall performance and calibre of organisations (Zhang and Bartol, 2010).

A leader's influence, support and trust play a vital role in empowering employees to be innovative, create without boundaries, collaborate across borders with diverse teams, foster trust and cultivate a healthy working environment (Spreitzer ,2008). Transformational style positively influences facets of employee empowerment such as innovation and creativity, thus enabling employees to be more self-directive, decisive and accountable for results (Wang et al, 2011). It is emphasized that this style has a definitive influence on employee empowerment, when leaders seek to develop traits of innovation, creativity with collaboration in their employees.

The coaching leadership style urges employees to identify their true potential whilst embracing healthy conflict to foster teaming, taking ownership to enrich their happiness at the workplace (Hurt and Thomas, 2009). Inferred by Boekhorst (2014) inclusive leadership style advances intercultural agility within teams, by diminishing microaggressions and fostering belonging for all individuals, to contribute with confidence to the organisation's purpose. Research is indicative of positive

relationships and paradigms between transformational, inclusive and coaching styles and employees feeling empowered (Klein, A., Wallis, J. and Cooke, R, 2013).

Furthermore, the justification of this research will examine, in the landscape of MNCs in Asian subsidiaries the extent of influence of transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles have on employee empowerment, with focus to demonstrate empowerment outcomes pertinent to innovation, creativity, collaboration, trust, belonging and employee happiness.

Theoretical Framework

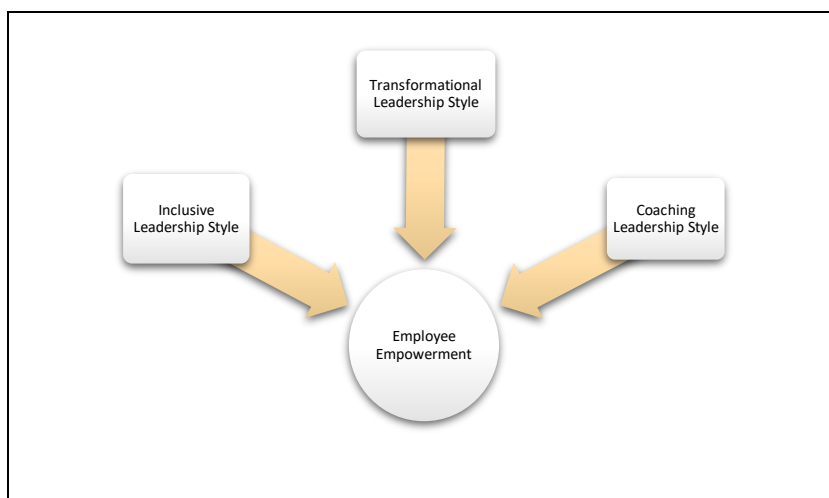


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework

1.4 RESEARCH PLAN

This chapter entails primary and secondary research methods and applied theories for the research paper. It also investigates the research philosophies applied, structure and strategies considered, measures and indicators, research samples, results of thematic analysis and overall procedure which is presented in this section of the paper. It also encompasses the rationale behind the quantitative methods approached with descriptions of the framework of leadership questionnaire and recorded interviews. The topics of research posits leadership styles and traits, employee empowerment, aspects of employee empowerment and nuances of transformational, inclusive and

coaching styles. The research also explores a survey questionnaire with a targeted sample of 136 employees with a tenure of more than five years in middle to senior management in Multinational companies in Asian subsidiaries, to investigate the influence of leadership styles in facets of their empowerment. The survey tool is a structured questionnaire, postulating a positive paradigm with simplistic involvement from the researcher, established on a scaled Linkert measure with generic and competency-based questions of a quantitative nature to navigate fundamental relationships between the variables i.e. transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles to the empowerment of employees. Primary research also includes analysing qualitative data through thematic analysis of recorded virtual interviews conducted with six C- Suite and executive leaders in MNCs in Asia, drawing on the Braun and Clarke's framework (2006) to identify, analyse and review data and interview transcripts; to further illustrate the hypothesis and relationship of transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles to enhance employee empowerment (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017).

Theorized by Bryman & Bell (2011) and Saunders et al. (2012) a positivist paradigm relating to a deductive approach was chosen, and the indicators of research have been segmented into hypothesis, which will be probed further in the research:

H1: There is a relationship between leadership styles and aspects of employee empowerment

H2: There is a significant relationship between transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership and dimensions of employee engagement.

H3: Transformational, Inclusive and Coaching leadership is more likely to increase the levels of employee empowerment pertinent to innovation & creativity, collaboration, trust, belonging and employee happiness.

Literature Review

The depth of literature is explored through reviewed researched papers and critical analysis relative to transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership and its influence of components of employee empowerment in MNCs in Asia. This chapter comprises of published research, journal articles and summary with comparisons

postulating awareness of conceptual theories to underpin empirical relationships between the variables of leadership styles (Transformational, Inclusive, Coaching) and its influence on empowerment of employees. The review of literature dwells into *Scope of leadership, Leadership practices and styles, Concept of employee empowerment, Relationship and influence of leadership styles on employee empowerment, Rationale of the research and Conclusion.*

Research Objectives and Questions

This chapter aims to explain the holistic objectives and questions investigated in the present study.

Results

Descriptive and statistical findings of the survey questionnaire and outcomes of the leadership interviews are scaled in the framework of thematic analysis of the research and presented in this chapter. Statistic and quantitative findings are displayed with narratives for further explanation.

Discussion

This chapter entails comparison and contrasts of the present research findings with existing literature review and analysis of data with past peer reviewed journals and reports. It also infers apropos to the current research paper's strengths, limitations with recommendations for future research.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the correlation of current and past research's findings to accomplish the objectives and aims of this research paper.

Personal Learning Statement

This segment of the study probes the knowledge gained and reflection from the author's perspective and her learning in the trajectory of conducting this research study.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this research paper is to investigate how transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles influence components of employee empowerment in Asian subsidiaries. The exploration dwells to ascertain if leaders portraying styles aligned to transformational, coaching and inclusive enhance aspects of employee empowerment and positively impact and strengthen innovation and creativity, collaboration, trust, belonging and employee happiness.

Consequently, the following two research questions will be investigated:

- I. Is there a relationship between transformational, inclusive, and coaching leadership styles and employee empowerment?
- II. Which components of employee empowerment is largely influenced by transformational, inclusive, and coaching leadership styles?

The research questions are based on the information given by the past research papers and quantitative research methods. The research questions will aim to discover the underlying relationship between transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles and employee empowerment in their work trajectory. Two research questions are implied to explore the gap between leadership styles and its influence on employee empowerment in MNCs specifically in Asian subsidiaries (Hiller et al., 2011).

From the literature review, it has been explored that leaders with transformational, inclusive and coaching styles can influence and empower their employees to lean into innovation and creativity, collaborate, build trust, feel a sense of belonging and demonstrate happiness at the workplace (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, A. 2007). The research questions will be answered by the collected findings of the questionnaire and recorded interviews, from employees in MNCs in Asian subsidiaries (Roller, 2019).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the realm of globalisation, disruption and the emergence of innovation; organisations have evolved to continuously transform their business models, framework to develop their workforce to imbibe the war on Talent and be on the edge of a competitive advantage (Anita, 2014). Numerous studies have been developed to explain leadership styles and its influence on employee's empowerment within an organisation. Although research of literature reveals a range of leadership styles, three key styles which include practices of transformational, inclusive and coaching are identified as being the most profound for the basis of this research paper (Gallup Management study, 2012). The fundamental proposition of this study is indicative that transformational, inclusive and coaching styles distinguish established MNCs in Asia from their competitors and it is one of the variables that attribute to the overall performance, employee development and empowerment of an organisation. Supported by the findings of Robinson et al (2014) styles and attributes of the leader are a principle component of leaders empowering their employees, similarly stated by Howard and Ulferts (2017) new-age leaders demonstrate consistent components of self-awareness, integrity, confidence, empathy and emotional intelligence to embrace foresighted value of employee empowerment. This research is focused on a positive paradigm of leadership styles and their influence in empowering the betterment employees (Fielder, 1996).

As supported by Darling and Box (1999) most MNCs which have displayed conducive work environments, are led by leaders who drive process transformation and improvements, by harnessing the contribution and commitment of their employees to demonstrate innovation, creativity, build trust, collaborate, foster a sense of belonging and employee happiness. Proposed by Yuan-Duen Lee, Pi-

Ching Chen and Chin-Lai Su (2020), the competencies of the holistic scope of leadership brings in a paradigm shift which moves line managers to leaders from a sphere of controlling, commanding and evaluating to inspiring, securing, enabling and coaching. There are numerous styles cited in literature which is indicative of competence to leadership (Daft, 2008); however research has explored transformational, coaching and inclusive styles to be inclined to relationships, climate and culture of organisations which lends itself to the structural, political and symbolic framework (Cooke and Szumal, 2000).

2.2 LEADERSHIP DEFINED

Leadership is often defined as an influential relationship among leaders and collaborators who to transform significant changes reflective of mutual purposes and vision (Germain, 2012). Described by Rost (1991) leadership is relative to socio-economic opportunities, environmental risks with the pursuit of global sustainable development. A leader is viewed as one who successfully navigates the talent force to achieve outcomes and objectives by methods of direction, coaching, mentoring or coordination (Prentice, 2004). Through the times leaderships has originated from various dimensions and fields; humanities, philosophy, history, psychology and applied in various spheres of research, education and management, is it inevitable that leadership is profoundly linked with the strata of organisational management with origins in strategy as postulated by Kanji & e Sa' (2001) and Northouse (2007).

Traditional concept of 'leaders and followers' has been challenged by researchers Ryan and Tipu (2013) leaning towards the practice of leadership to mobilize, inspire and engage individuals to reach their potential, organisational productivity and profitability. This is an imperative for organisational success and sustainable change for future endeavours described by Grant & Wrzesniewski (2010). The impact of leadership is profound in managing a team, organisation or a nation, the actions and behaviour of leaders have a lasting effect on solutions formalised and results achieved supported by Gupta et al (2008) and Dorfman et al (2012). Behaviour experts have hypothesised traits which is pivotal for new-age leaders; leaders who have a global mindset, intellectual capital with cognitive assurance,

quest for diversity and interpersonal impact and who are attuned to intercultural empathy with a drive to foster inclusion (Dess & Lumpkin, 2003). Fundamental principles of effective leadership demonstrate traits of; systematic thinker, open minded to diverse theories, inclusive to world views and cultural belief systems, analysing complexity, navigating ambiguity, holds relevance to technology and political governance (Visser and Courtice, 2011).

Antonakis and House (2014) and Avery (2004) support Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) to the underlying enablers that contribute to varying outlooks of leadership and its frameworks with principles of influencing behaviours through trust, collaboration, strategy and mindset.

2.3 LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND PRACTICES

This research study outlines three grounded and well-researched theories that has evolved to new-age contextual circumstances, shaping the establishment of MNCs in Asian subsidiaries (Turner and Baker, 2018). The trait approach, situational and behavioural theories steer away from traditional theories such as the Great man approach which is rooted in a leader's innate character traits inferring to men with dominant personalities, hence marginalising individuals of the opposite gender or those with an amicable demeanour as unsuitable leaders (Goleman,2000). Globalisation has brought agility to cultural and socio-economic borders and a paradigm shift to the concept of leadership theories, with focus on leader's behaviour (Goleman,2000).

There is critical attention towards *what a leader does and not who the leader is*, proving the ideology that leadership is a transferable skill which can be developed (Klein, Wallis and Cooke, 2013). As stated by Northouse (2004) contemporary leadership theories spar with traditional outlooks of leadership, questioning goals and moral implications of the leader's motives akin to true leadership and positional authority.

2.3.1 TRAIT THEORY

Trait theory of leadership is established on the socio-economic, demographic, intellect characteristics of leaders, to predict denominators of leadership effectiveness. Trait theory is inferred as a rudimentary model of leadership, citing behaviour patterns, certain social and personal traits which quantify leaders (Bass,1981). Though abundant research has been studied in the past century, the term trait refers to individual attributes of core traits which have been identified as the essence of successful leaders, in their ability to lead and inspire their employees (Yukl, 2002). These traits are illustrated as self-confidence, cognitive abilities, emotional intelligence, integrity, leadership motivation and business acumen. As posited by Yulk (2002) and Northouse (2004), there are strengths aligned to the trait theory, this model is highly amicable and is a yardstick for most leadership traits, providing in-depth knowledge of leadership elements in the journey of leadership.

Figure 3: Studies of leadership character traits hypothesises by researchers

Stogdill (1948)	Mann (1959)	Stogdill (1974)	Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986)	Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991)
Intelligence	Intelligence	Achievement	Intelligence	Drive
Alertness	Masculinity	Persistence	Masculinity	Motivation
Insight	Adjustment	Insight	Dominance	Integrity
Responsibility	Dominance	Initiative		Confidence
Initiative	Extroversion	Self-confidence		Cognitive ability
Persistence	Conservatism	Responsibility		Task knowledge
Self-confidence		Cooperativeness		
Sociability		Tolerance		
		Influence		
		Sociability		

Source: Northouse (2004)

Trait theory studies has been critiqued by researchers, as it insinuates that individuals are often born with specific traits which qualify them to be leaders, which goes against the grain of establishments such as MNCs; where individuals are developed and coached into leadership qualities with experiences. The works of Mester et al and Roodt & Kellerman (2003) challenge White et al (2016) theorizing there is no sufficient evidence indicating intrinsic traits in individuals result in effective leadership. This prevents certain limitations of subjective judgements and affinity biases, where leaders choose successors who they can relate, leading to a school of leaders with a lack of diversity (Bligh et al., 2011). Human resources and talent development teams have ascertained to use this model in assessment centres to evaluate the strengths of future leaders for the success of the organisation (Crane and Hartwell, 2018).

2.3.2 SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Situational theory of leadership was founded by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard on the foundations of management and organisation behaviour and also termed as the Hersey and Blanchard model (1969). The theory infers leaders are agile and can adapt to varied styles depending on the situation and the development level of their teams. Modelled as an astute leadership theory, it is coupled with emotional intelligence and proven to be effective to develop skills of employees and balance the needs of the organisation (Drodge and Murphy, 2002). Hersey and Blanchard's model (1988) dimensions are categorised to four styles: directing, delegating, coaching and supporting, adaptive to employee's developmental cycle.

Stipulated by Drodge and Murphy (2002) situational leadership approach has thrived in MNCs in Asian subsidiaries, due to the complexity of transformational business and socio-economic environment; ensuring business success further illustrating to a highly flexible approach to leadership. This approach encourages collaboration across borders, agility driven approach to scale strategies, motivates socio-economic elements of Asian cultural nuances, functions on a positive dimension by elevating employee motivation and empowerment (Blanchard, 2010).

Cited by House and Mitchell's (1974), the path-goal theory is akin to situational approach rooted in contingency of situations contributing to leadership approaches rich in agility and emotional intelligence, with the ability to develop needs of individuals as per the situation. Effective leaders are often trailblazers with strategic thinking being comfortable with ambiguity, to have a competitive advantage Petrides et al (2007). This theory is researched to be sophisticated in its approach focussed on employees and their empowerment needs rather than the larger organisational periphery (Bass & Bass, 2009).

2.3.3 BEHAVIORAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

Rooted in behaviourism, this leadership approach is based on observable behaviours' that great leaders are coached and developed, not born. This approach is established on the actions and behavior which deem a leader to be impactful warding away from character traits, stating that effective leadership is independent on behaviors (Hiller et al, 2011). Stated by Hernandez et al., (2011) leaders climatized to the behavioral leadership approach are skilled with technical abilities, interpersonal capabilities and conceptual skills to collaborate, lead and empower employees. The theory further emphasis there is no singular style which suits all situations and developments, an effective leader adapts to best accommodate the situation, team group, strategy to be quested and the holistic culture and environment of the organisation. Argued by Tyre (2015) the limitation of this theory is subjected to its relevance for a particular situation and individual but ineffective and irrelevant in another, causing the leader to frequently mould and to varied individual behaviors leading to conditions of 'change fatigue'.

Research has dwelled into various behavioral models and approaches; however, this paper focuses on two behavioural models i.e. University of Michigan and Ohio State (Hellriegel, Jackson et al., 2004). Through time, leadership studies were aimed at intrinsic traits which did not yield pragmatic results, leading to researchers from the Ohio state university (1940) designing a framework with nine behavioral leadership dimensions termed as the 'Leaders Behavior Description Questionnaire' (Robbins, 2001), the questionnaire was administered with diverse groups comprising of students, private companies and the military to explore

commonalities in leadership behaviours', the findings resulted in two categories i.e. people oriented and task oriented leaders, aligned to consideration of employee's and their wellbeing and the overall structure and strategy of the organisation. Illustrating further Avolio et al (2009) postulated leaders who are people oriented prioritise the empowerment and wellness of employees, ensuring their behavior and actions foster needs of their team to be fulfilled and seeking to motivate employees. Leaders attuned to their employees demonstrate behaviors of empathy, coaching and active listening whilst crystallising tasks and results. Task oriented leaders are slanted towards visionary thinking with, lending them to initiate and drive organisational structure and procedures (Avolio et al, 2009).

Argued by Arredondo Trapero and De Lozada (2010) is a culturally endorsed leadership approach prevalent and successful in MNCs in Asia, aiding to new strata of leaders centered in human perspectives appropriate to the political and social construct of the landscape. This leadership approach is eminent in MNCs with a culmination of inclusive traits, transformational thinking and coaching methods form imperatives for employees to feel empowered, thus contributing to the organisation's expansion, client imperatives and to build highest performing teams, posited by Hiller et al (2011) and Gardner et al (2010).

2.4 LEADERSHIP STYLES DEFINED

Through globalisation and inception of MNCs leaders have emerged with various leadership styles to implement strategies, guide and empower their employees, to influence their teams to reach the organisation's goals and vision (Kuchinke, 1998). Effective leaders are known to be self-aware of their predominant and secondary leadership styles (Patnaik and Dubey, 2019). Attuned to strengths and implications whilst striving to hone their capabilities; research is indicative of various leadership styles which leaders adopt, however this study is focused on transformational, coaching and inclusive styles and its influence on holistic employee empowerment (Klein, Wallis, and Cooke, 2013). Leadership styles are largely classified into autocratic where a leader directs an employee to deliver results, democratic leadership which is inclusive to employees feeling a sense of belonging in decision-making processes, and laissez-fair style which is delegative in nature and the

employee takes ownership and accountability of the outcomes (Xirasagar,2008). Effective and successful leaders are known to scope all three styles and staying true to their dominant and secondary styles of strength and comfort (Stairs, 2005). Leadership styles are also categorised to balance prestige and dominance, to navigate organisational and people hierarchies relative geo-political and economic landscape of Asian regions (McCarthy, 2014).

Dynamic shifts and disruption in contemporary business environments like MNCs, has emerged in integrated styles of leadership. Asia is home to some of the largest business opportunities and scales one-third of global economic with enhanced growth prospects (Rijal, 2016). Asian subsidiaries are engaging in homegrown talent with their leadership succession to build strong leadership on the ground, with leaders who have a deep-rooted comprehension of cultural, socio-economic perspectives and political inference, to develop and empower their employees (Lussier and Achua, 2015). Theorized by Isaacs (2000) transformational, inclusion and coaching styles are widely demonstrated by leaders in MNCs in Asia, portraying execution skills, empathy, navigating disruption with awareness to the importance of fostering diversity. MNCs and global enterprises are leveraging the Asian-advantage by investing and empowering their employee's by developing future leaders with a rich grasp of potential partnerships, cultures and unprecedented constraints (Price and Weiss, 2013).

2.5 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

In multicultural and economic environment which MNCs operate, globalisation of operations is the imperative and leadership styles are vital to drive organisation vision and challenge new opportunities (Tsui et al., 2006). Supported by Kuntz (2019) and Davies and Naswall (2019) transformational leadership is postulated to be impactful to mobilize the workforce towards change, provide vision guiding, enhance innovation to establish market leadership and empower employees for responsibilities of the future. Leaders in Asian subsidiaries, who demonstrate traits of transformational leadership are agile with foresight to their own cultural norms and adapt to nuances of the host country (Tsui et al., 2006).

Described by Shao et al (2017) transformational leadership empowers employees to move from 'good to great' to foster an abundance mindset from self – efficacy to the overall enablement of the organisation. Portraying traits of individualised consideration, motivation and intellectual empowerment, it is also termed as empowering leadership by increasing intrinsic relationship and task motivation of employees resulting in self-competence and determination to excel (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2015). Empowerment of employees relates to delegation of authority from leaders to skilled employees, for decision-making and begin involved in the wider organisational strategy and vision (Christian et al., 2009). By inspiring employees with decision-making and integral core values, transformation leadership builds organisation culture attuned to reach a singular vision through collaboration and social influence amongst employees (Hambrick, 2007).

MNCs in Asian subsidiaries have proven to transition from transactional entities to strategic teams with a culmination of host and home country orient; this paradigm shift of innovation and necessity has led leaders in Asia develop transformational leadership traits building trust and influencing empowerment, commitment and satisfaction in their employees (Liden, 2012). Literature indicates Asian culture emphasises nuances of a greater power distance with respect for hierarchy, interdependency and collaboration fostering trusted relationships to execute quality driven tasks (Lam et al, 2012). Rooted in Confucian values collectivism permeates in Asian culture lending leaders to be humble and parental in empowering and guiding employees through political governance and traditional philosophies (Burke et al., 2007). Stated by Clarke (2013) supported by Jiang and Probst (2016) literature has indicated certain styles to be salient in Asia due to the cultural strata, however transformational leadership is prevalent in Asian subsidiaries strengthening organisational strategy, behavior and employee empowerment.

2.5.1 BENEFITS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Probing socio- cultural contexts in Asia, large extent of existing literature considers leadership styles as universal constructs and transformational leadership is critical to the advancement of Asian subsidiaries in empowering employee's in the global exploration (Giberson et al, 2009). Transformational style is attested to treating employees as strong-minded individuals in an egalitarian approach, encouraging them to reach their potential through innovation and challenge the status quo of the firm (Avolio and Bass, 2004). Theorised by (Spitzeck, 2011) Asian subsidiaries are on the brink of transformation and evolving change, however change can often cause resistance and upraise amongst employees with hindrances to implement. Traits of transformational leaders is the ability to vision guide employees to the big picture, by getting employee's trusted 'buy-in', hence empowering employees to contribute to the change and futuristic framework of the organisation (Smith, Montagno & Kimono, 2004).

History is rich in cultivating transformational leaders through social and cultural necessities, such as Nelson Mandela, John F Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Gandhi and new-age leaders Jacinda Ardern, Steve Jobs, Richard Branson have revolutionised nations, political and economic landscapes in turbulent and unprecedented circumstances (Spitzeck, 2011). Portraying transformational traits of courage, enthusiasm, integral values to stimulate and empower their people's mindset by providing dynamic vision to optimise a myriad of capabilities (Bess et al., 2010).

Transformational leadership is established the sphere of integrity, where leaders are advocates of transparency in communication, work culture and building relationships by doing the right thing (Ballinger and Schoorman, 2007) .Being a more humane approach compared to transactional or authoritarian leadership, this provides robust clarity of responsibility with consistent well articulate messaging and diminishes intra-group conflicts, change fatigue and monotony (Caulfield and Senger,2017).

2.5.2 LIMITATIONS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Argued by research scholars (Chan & Mak, 2012) and (Afsar et al., 2014) in the context of Asian peripheral the transformational style is focussed on the ability of the leader to inspire and empower employees to achieve epitomal heights with the big-picture vision to reach the organisations outcomes; this is crystallised on the leader's traits and abilities which many leaders may not possess or develop lending to the need to substance beyond latent efficacy of the leader.

The second limitation determines lack of conceptualised strategic realities that admonishes focus towards attention to detail with operational tasks and guidance employees require to perform at optimal quality (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Whilst most employees feel largely inspired and empowered by transformational leaders, this style can lead to employees feeling demotivated and burnout to demonstrate grand authenticity, overachieve accomplishments constantly with detrimental risks in viewing change as the focal point of the organisation's strategy (Zhao et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership styles in rooted in employees being empowered by being intrinsically motivated and aligned to the vision of the leader, if there is a lack of vision-sharing with insufficient motivators, lending itself to impeding imbalance and failure of ventures and losing best in class talent (Christian et al., 2009).

2.6 INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Global organisations strive to foster an egalitarian environment in their leadership approaches, communication channels with an engaged workforce to build a trusted work environment, sense of belonging and optimal levels of employee empowerment and happiness (Boekhorst, 2014). Diversity at the workplace is viewed as individuals having a place at the table of influence, whilst inclusion is individuals irrespective of race, gender, disabilities, age and sexual orientation to have a voice at the same table of influence, but the true sense of belonging is employees to have their voice heard (Amabile et al, 2004).

MNCs often rely on diverse talents with multidisciplinary teams with collective capabilities of individuals diverse in their ethnicity, work styles, experiences and age. Inclusive leadership, is a developed and transferable skill in Asian subsidiaries due to the high-power distance and hierarchical cultural conditioning of the socio-cultural terrain (Hunter et al., 2007). With a heterogenous mix of talent in Asian MNCs this leadership style assures all team members feel respected, valued and secure (Tierney, 2008). In MNCs today, Inclusiveness is deemed as not just the 'nice thing to do' but the smart imperative for the organisation, with research indicating it increases employee empowerment and motivation to perform (Carmeli et al., 2009; Edmondson, 2004). Inclusive leaders exhibit traits that foster engagement with employees of demographically, culturally and attitudinally diverse performing teams, by strengthening trust, collaboration, with a sense of organisational belonging (Tierney & Farmer, 2004).

Inclusive leaders commit to building an inclusive workforce driven by egalitarian values and challenge archaic organisational practices that encourage homogeneity causing hindrance to the growth of diversity in talent (Cheung and Lau, 2008). Described by Judge, Piccolo and Ilies (2004) inclusive leaders are highly self-aware of their personal limitations and capabilities, and comprehend how organisational and personal biases narrow their scope of vision, they are known to adapt to various communicative styles, embrace differences to ensure their influence is insightful for talent decisions. Posited by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), they seek to design and implement strategies, policies and sustainable change which prevent deep rooted management biases from ostracising inclusion and belonging.

2.6.1. BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TO EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Inclusive leaders are vanguards of cultural intelligence which connotes the leader's capability to lead teams across borders whilst respecting diverse perspectives, and mindful of cultural nuances of Asian subsidiaries by preventing stereotyping of individuals (Edmondson's, 2004). Scholars Mulki et al (2006) and Babakus et al (2011) hypothesise inclusive leadership style an advocate of collaboration to empower their employees to voice their opinions by sustaining an environment where employees feel secure to extend diversity of thinking engendering a mindset of 'one unified team'. Leaders in MNCs, optimise globalisation with forward-thinking and develop future leaders to be oriented to inclusivity of mindset, behavior and actions (Edmondson's, 2004). Inclusive leadership is an imperative to attract, inspire and retain the best talent, according to the *Deloitte university leadership centre for inclusion and the Billie Jean King leadership initiative* employee's in Asian subsidiaries feel authentic and empowered whilst working with inclusive leaders (Gaddis and Strange, 2002). Inclusive leadership denotes and satisfies rudimental category of needs, which is akin to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) aligned to safety, physiological, esteem, self- actualisation and belonging which cements equality as an inextricable component of personal development and success (Kahn, 1990).

Leaders demonstrating inclusive leadership style empower their employees by engaging in transparent conversations pertinent to equality, justice, and inclusion preventing microaggressions at the workplace (West and Richter, 2008). Microaggressions are incidents individuals are subjected to insinuated remarks bordering on racial, sexual orient, ethnicity, gender, age, class offence leading to demotivation and lack of empowerment (West and Richter, 2008). Inclusive leaders channel their ability to lead effectively by clueing into their emotional intelligence, this lends them to acknowledge all team members as individuals with unique traits, goals and aspirations (Hunter et al, 2007). They also empower their employees by avoiding nepotism and encouraging progression by negating exclusive behaviors and challenging the status quo of detrimental behaviors (Goleman,2000). Research dictates inclusive leadership champions employee happiness and

empowerment by seeking consistent feedback on metrics of trust, belonging, security and collaboration, (Gotsis and Grimani, 2016).

2.6.2 LIMITATIONS OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE

Although there are abundant advantages to leaders demonstrating inclusiveness, the drawbacks are argued by research scholars (Carmeli et al. 2010; Sharifirad 2013) with a highly inclusive nature is the innate need to be collaborative and seek opinions from all individuals. Albeit creating a democratic environment dissolving the organisation's larger vision with lack of singular clarity, as challenged by Lian and Tui (2012). Secondly, inclusive leadership has attributes of fostering relationships with subordinates with the need for validation, this lends itself to lack of holding individuals accountable for behaviors and actions (Gilbreath and Benson 2004). Inclusive style is largely beneficial when employees are seasoned with the desired skilled and competencies, and requires aspects of motivation and encouraging be pivotal to self- sufficiency (Volmer et al, 2012). It is proven to be time consuming leading to levels of impatience from the leader if the employee is a novice in capabilities (Mumford and Hunter, 2005).

Argued by Carmeli et al (2010) supported by Sharifirad (2013) an inclusive environment of an Asian subsidiary is built upon the foundations of diversity in race, religious conditioning, economic – social backgrounds and political beliefs encouraging employees to be empowerment by harnessing their true and authentic selves to the workplace. Channelling individuals to bring the 'outside in' to the organisation's culture causing disruption to collaboration and conflicting views beyond the realms of the business (Carmeli et al, 2010).

2.7 COACHING LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Researched by International Coaching Federation (ICF) (2014) coaching leadership style emerged as one of the most significant frameworks of leadership development in the last decades in MNCs (Berg, 2006). Embracing a new fold of organisational culture of collaboration and participation where coaching is not above and beyond one's day-job, but at the heart of leading teams (Hamlin et al., 2006). Research indicates leaders emphasizing coaching style flex between affiliative and pacesetter style, dually empower their employees in a secure environment by vision guiding them towards accountability, retool future skills and foster trusted relationships in a dynamic and disruptive multicultural environment (Derue et al., 2011 and Zaccaro et al., 2004). Coaches often develop a partnership with their members through trusted conversations, where the coach embarks on the journey with the employee to navigate solutions whilst providing feedback and removing barriers of development (Roots, 2002).

Stated by Sosik and Jung (2010) and supported by Blanchard (2007) the coaching leader is adept in empowering employees by conducting motivating conversations to encourage the learning curve and wavelength of individuals whilst promoting independence and responsibility. This style is inclined to strengthen employee's competencies to reach desired maturity, aligned to the vision of the organisation's goals (Yin, 2009). In the aftermath of global unprecedented circumstances, MNCs in Asian subsidiaries shifted paradigms to sustain a workplace culture with flexible, remote working facilities, which has elevated coaching leaders to engage and empower their teams in decision making whilst empathising with their individualistic needs (Toogood, 2012).

Theorised by Broström et al (2010) and Park, Yang and McLean (2008) coaching leaders are well-articulated in providing constructive feedback for holistic development of employees. As compared to the authoritative style through effective delegation and directive communication thus empowering employees to be challenged with new opportunities and embrace disruption to everchanging status quo. The coaching leadership style promotes a culture 'be the leader you needed' where employees feel empowered to think laterally with a revised outlook to achieve high performance and reach growth opportunities (Cox et al., 2010).

2.7.1 BENEFITS OF COACHING LEADERSHIP TO EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Theorists have categorised culture into espoused values, artefacts and basic underlying assumptions, dwelling into task and relationship orientation (Goffee and Jones, 2001). Stated by Berg and Karlsen (2016) coaching organisations foster a culture that provides invaluable impact to the systematic change, wellbeing and overall retention of employees. Stated by Mulec and Roth (2005) coaching as a leadership style is beneficial to Asian MNCs where employees hail from diverse socio-economic backgrounds of education, experiences and affluence wherein coaching provides intrinsic motivation. Encouraging self-directive willingness to challenge hierarchy, explore opportunities taking on an empowering approach (Derue et al., 2011). With the ability to support their employees making the ‘unconscious conscious’ and empower them to discover constructive areas by providing insights, knowledge and resources of behavioral change (Tyssen et al., 2014).

This style is proven to be impactful to empower employees to navigate change, discover innovative methods whilst enhancing collaboration, employee engagement and happiness (Kampa and White, 2002). Research indicates coaching leaders are visionaries who comprehend the transformational impact of developing positive behaviors and coaching principles, by eliminating archaic status-oriented structures (Huang et al., 2005) and (Carey et al., 2011). Hypothesized by Vesso (2015) and supported by Yukl et al (2002) coaching style is not viewed as a panacea for organisational turbulences, whilst it is rich with conceptual aspects where leaders and employees synergise within the sphere of mentoring, crystallising solutions through dialogues brining in reciprocal knowledge sharing and learning.

2.7.2 LIMITATIONS OF COACHING LEADERSHIP

Although the coaching style has proven advantages to the development and empowerment of employees, scholars have cited the drawbacks to organisations encouraging leaders to imbibe this style to lead their teams effectively. As challenged by Chuqin Yuan et al (2019) and Chawla and Kelloway (2004) prove that sans mentoring skills coaching styles are largely ineffective as leaders require techniques and time to reach the desired results. Coaching style of leadership has a ripple effect where employees feel empowered to develop efficiency or contort to objectionable

behavior modelled by leaders, lending itself to perpetuating productivity problems, admonishing change, and solutioning out futuristic strategies (Kim, 2014). An observed limitation of the coaching style is it's a two-way channel with commitment from employees is vital for success, built on trust equations between the leader and employee to channel both positive and constructive feedback (Malauaduli et al., 2011). Posited by Grant et al (2013) and cited by Vesso (2014) coaching leadership is a transferable skill which requires emotional intelligence, self-confidence and leadership experience to provide insights with empathy and assurance.

2.8 EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Employee empowerment has been incepted in the recent decades in MNCs, compounding it to the manner in which organisations equip their employees with autonomy to state opinions and have a voice of influence in the vision of the organisation, strategic decisions and operative tasks with minimal supervision from leadership (Melhem, 2004). Employee empowerment is designed as an inverted triangle with clients and employees forming the upper echelons of the framework and leadership as the core support for the organisation (Carlos and Randolph, 2003). Research indicates aspects of empowerment is enabled by job enrichment and enlargement, job enrichment entails employee's going beyond their remit of tasks to take-on responsibilities of management, whilst enlargement indicates flexing the scope of the job to accommodate more tasks in similar levels of domain expertise (Ladden, 2014).

This research is focused on the importance of employee empowerment to the success of the individual and the organisation with outcomes aligned to innovation, creativity, trust and collaboration, belonging and employee happiness (Seibert, Silver & Randolph 2004).

2.8.1 OUTCOMES OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Described by Chiles and Zorn (1995) and Gibbons (2006), when organisations design and implement strategies to elevate employee empowerment they reap in strengthened employee relations, higher income or revenue, 'best in class' business models with high performing satisfied talent force. Employee empowerment is vital to build a successful organisation with a culture of commitment and values with employees experiencing a congenial work environment and be inspired (Devi, 2009; Stairs, 2005). On the polar side of the tangent, employee disengagement is posited to be a significant contributor to failing business models, mediocre performance and accountability, causing organisations to incur high costs with low revenue, unethical work standards (Mohapatra and Mishra 2018). Employee engagement can lead to employee burnout, with individuals going above the extra mile to succeed, however findings support that engagement is the antithesis to burnout, where employees feeling a strong sense of self-assurance and esteem to excel (Demerouti et al, 2001) and Gibbons (2006).

Research has proven drivers of employee empowerment trailing from organisational culture, intrinsic motivation and nurturing the influence of leadership styles (Nortje, 2010). The assessment and selection of leaders are vital to empowerment, in a consultative approach and rotated amongst departments, to avoid nepotism and foster uninhibited growth of employees, this method is often adopted in city councils, private associations and voluntary organisations (Forrester, 2000). It is evident in literature selective employee traits are relative to empowerment, with high levels of self-efficacy, proactive mindset, and innate self-confidence where employees demonstrate enthusiasm, agility to transformation and collaboration (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Theorised by Heathfield (2014), when employees are empowerment the outcomes are reflective in individuals and the organisation; firstly, recognition is an imperative to empowerment where leaders choose to recognise employees with rewards and involvement in the organisation's vision (Spreitzer, 2008). Secondly, employees are empowered when their insights are valued to the leadership in succession planning and talent reviews (Patnaik and Dubey, 2019). Postulated by Macleod and Clarke (2009) transparent channels of communication reinforcing the ethics and values of standing, fourthly providing ownership and accountability with effective delegative

techniques, and lastly a workplace environment which fosters learning and application of new technology and resources, with mediums of feedback to empower and build camaraderie (Stairs, 2005) and (Zhang and Bartol, 2010).

2.9 INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL, INCLUSIVE AND COACHING LEADERSHIP STYLES TO ENHANCE EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Previous studies Yukl (2006) and Mohrman and Benson (2001) have found significant influence and relationship between empowerment of employees in MNCs across Asian regions to the styles of leaders. Stated by Laschinger et al. (2001) employees who feel empowered and secure foster trust equations with their employers, with positive work attitudes and higher performance. This segment postulates the hypothesis: *H3: Transformational, Inclusive and Coaching leadership is more likely to increase the levels of employee empowerment pertinent to innovation & creativity, collaboration, trust, belonging and employee happiness.*

Scholars have researched the importance of leadership styles and drivers of positive leadership aspects vital to employees being empowerment at the workplace (Castro et al., 2008) and Yukl (2006). According to leadership contingency theory there is no universally applicable leadership style and the influence of leadership styles is compounded by the organisation's culture and ability to foster an environment for positive leadership styles to be incepted and sustained (Forrester, 2000). Cited by Men and Stacks (2013) two facets that largely contribute to employees feeling empowered are task and relationship focused; studies indicate transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles empower employees by articulating clarity of goals, organisational vision, foster trust & collaboration, inspire innovation and creativity with a deep-rooted security and belonging.

Influx of innovation in MNCs has lent itself to Asian subsidiaries being on the competitive advantage of adapting to technology transformation, cultural adaptation, demographically accessible and visionary oriented (Nohria et al, 2008). Human resources practices have indicated Transformational, coaching and inclusive styles of leadership have emerged to influence the enhancement of employee empowerment and building future leaders (Kaiser, Hogan, and Craig, 2008). Elaborated by Nohria,

Groysberg, & Lee (2008) leaders demonstrating transformational leadership facilitate how individuals see and empower themselves, to embrace innovative measures often taking a risk with the path unknown. Supported by Batista, et al, (2009) a plethora of empowerment is drawn when employees are provided with resources and confidence to strategize new ventures for the organisation. Thus, cultivating an entrepreneurial drive and mindset, the passion and energy of transformational leaders is invaluable motivating employees to higher intrinsic needs (Heller, 2003). Literature has described inclusive leadership style strengthens the quality of relationships between the organisation and employees by building trust and encouraging collaboration with cross-border cultural awareness and intrigue to learn (Rees and French, 2016). Emphasized by Forrester (2000) Gordon (2005) inclusive leadership develops engaged managers who appreciate individualism in their employees and encourage employee voice by providing a secure environment to share opinions to decision-making for organisational, people and client imperatives.

Supported theories by Heller (2003) indicate inclusive leaders uphold organisational values and integrity as invaluable tangibles in sustaining belonging for their team and creating trust, collaboration and loyalty to hold each other accountable for actions and behaviors. Researchers Sorenson and Grandstaff (2009) found coaching style promotes employee agility for continuous learning by empowering them to collaborate with colleagues to improve business models and enrich talent transformation. Coaching style encourages healthy conflict amongst teams to develop new skills, challenge and hold each other accountable to create high performing teams, thus enforcing happiness and core empowerment (Fortune, 2006).

2.10 CONCLUSION

As MNCs in Asian subsidiaries reflect on the new and evolved normal, it is evident the influence of leadership styles is profound for the betterment and empowerment of their greatest asset the Talent force (Popli and Rizvi, 2016).

Hypothesised by Spreitzer (2008) and Vesso & Alas (2016) dynamics of organisational landscapes and employee relationships, is focused on the contribution of employees to leadership and strategy. This is indicated how leaders empower their employees by fostering trust and continuous development of diverse leadership styles (Rothacker, and Hauer, 2014).

Described by Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) leaders have demonstrated agility and vision guiding through deep exploration of the transformational style, facilitated commitment and expertise of skills through the coaching style and channelled the peripherals of economic and cultural contexts by embedding egalitarian approaches and adapting the inclusive leadership style (Men and Stacks, 2013).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter dwells into the research methodology used to investigate the influence and relationship between transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles and employee empowerment; with research philosophy, type of data and the manner it will be collected. Sampling methods, metrics and measurement tools, areas pertinent to the validity of the methodology to calibrate data will be presented, with analyses to assess the intended hypotheses will conclude this segment. The sample segments, with designated population participating in the study will be outlined with ethical considerations documented for qualitative and quantitative findings. The strengths, findings and limitations of the research methodology will be discussed and examined, highlighting the review of literature akin to attributes of leadership styles and employee empowerment with segued sub-segments.

3.2 RESEARCH AIM

Research and literature have studies pertaining topics relevant to transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles and employee empowerment, citing positive relationships whereby employees who work with leaders demonstrating the stated leadership styles feel more empowered at the workplace enabling facets of innovation & creativity, foster trust and collaboration, belonging and happiness. This research will seek to prove the concept, in a two- pronged approach through primary and secondary research. The study seeks to explore two sides of a tangent to ascertain the views of both employees and leaders; proving the theory of leaders demonstrating transformational, inclusive and coaching styles influence empowerment of employees. For the purpose of the study leaders refer to the Executive level/C-Suite and employees conform middle management participants in MNCs rooted in Asia.

3.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The researcher will aim to address the following research objectives:

- I. Do leadership styles influence the empowerment of employees in MNCs in Asian subsidiaries
- II. Is there a relationship between transformational, inclusive, and coaching leadership styles and aspects of employee empowerment?
- III. Which components of employee empowerment is largely influenced by transformational, inclusive, and coaching leadership styles?

3.4 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHIES

The author of this paper has followed a positive paradigm and albeit there are various philosophies, the chosen method is 'Research Onion' as cited by (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

The Research Onion explains the first step is identifying the philosophy method. Deciphered by Saunders et al. (2007) research philosophy is an over-arching term to the development and nature of knowledge. There are two aspects of research philosophies; Epistemology and Ontology. Ontology is variant of reality whereas, Epistemology leans towards positivism of interpretation (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2011). This study explores the emphasis society speculates on the persona of individuals. Apropos, this study channels an introspective approach, which percolates the meaning behind what people say with observable behaviors. Saunders et al. (2007) postulate this is the most appropriate approach when exploring organisation behaviour and nuanced strategic research.

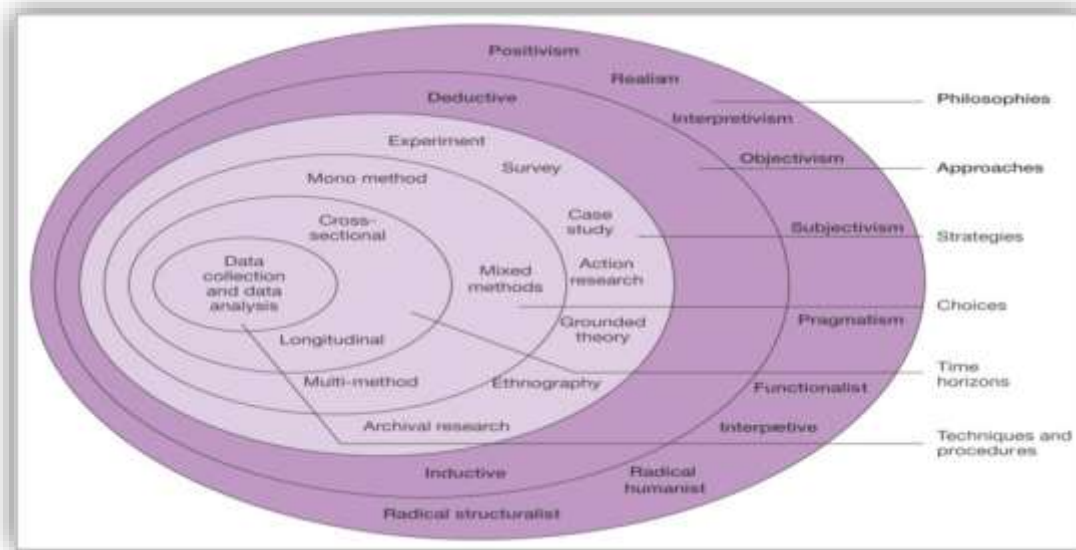


Figure 4: Source Saunders et al, 2007

3.5 RESEARCH APPROACHES

To enunciate the research philosophy, approaches are developed to correlate the hypotheses, objectives, findings and results. Research approach is an imperative aspect to a study and categorised into the logic or rationale of the study, generalizability of data and interactions of variables, medium of use and exploration of data, and the holistic theory. Research approaches are divided into three types; deductive, inductive and abductive research approach.

To illustrate the differences between the three types of approaches; *deductive* approach tests the assumptions of the hypotheses where the research starts with the data gathered and relates it to the theories postulated, whilst *inductive* approach is quite the opposite and contributes to the emergence of new theories with generalizations and the research moves from theory to relevant data to draw conclusions, an *abductive* research is an anomaly to both starting with 'surprising facts' with research process lending itself to the explanation of facts.

The researcher has explored the inductive approach largely for this study, and used both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the data collected aligned to the objectives of this study, and sought common themes through the method of thematic analysis (Thomas, 2006).

The inductive approach lends itself to qualitative research method of recorded leadership interviews with findings and results illustrated in themes, allowing leeway with the vantage point of agility in the focal point of the study as the research evolves, the author of this paper favours this cognitive approach to address the overall aims and objectives of the thesis.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.6.1 Qualitative and Quantitative methods

Research methods and comprise of two frameworks; qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative method adopts a more deductive approach and showcases findings in an empirical structure, the measure of metrics is usually a medium to large sample size to test factual research questions. As indicated by Zikmund, et al (2013) a generic quantitative approach is represented in the form of surveys or questionnaires where the results are analysed. Qualitative research explored in this study comprises of semi-structured interviews with leaders in MNCs in Asia, to seek their views on for contextual information from a cognitive and experiential perspective (Porter and Bhattacharya, 2005).

Qualitative and quantitative methods are imperative for a richly sourced study, with review and prognosis of each available method the researcher has facilitated both methods for primary data collection. Through the process of survey questionnaire and semi-structured virtual interviews. The methods are used to assess a two-pronged approach to navigate employees and leader's perspective. The quantitative research is analysed through a survey with findings from multifactor leadership questionnaire widely used for data collection methods (Avolio and Bass method). The questionnaire is modified in verbatim to lend itself to the traits of transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles pertinent to this research study, close ended with a five-point Linkert scale and administered with a sample of leaders in Executive and C-suite leadership roles. The questionnaire is designed to state anonymity for ethical purposes.

Findings of qualitative research, is gathered from the semi-structured interviews, the researcher has explored Braun and Clarke's model (2006), to draw out thematic

analysis driven by specific research questions in a bottom-up inductive framework (Blumberg et al., 2011).

3.7 SURVEY DESIGN

The format of the survey questionnaire was structured on the fundamentals of 'Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method' (Dillman,2007). The survey has been designed based on the framework of this academic resource, peer reviewed and validated. The survey criteria are modified to be applicable for the internet and online format. The researcher has designed a respondent-friendly survey with participants from MNCs in Asia to construct a meaningful questionnaire. The design of the survey has been created to reflect simplicity and obtain succinct responses from 135 participants using the platform Google Forms with random sampling from fifteen MNCs of Asian subsidiaries. Postulated by Avolio and Bass (1997) the composition of the MLQ is a validated instrument used in diverse research studies to explore the influence and impact of transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles on employee empowerment. The MLQ has been modified in verbatim using a five-point Likert scale to scale observed leadership styles ranging from *Agree, strongly agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree to Strongly disagree*.

Qualitative research is conducted through semi-structured interviews with six leaders from Asian MNCs, the findings are drawn from thematic analysis imbibing Braun and Clarke's framework (2006). As contrived by Alhojailan (2012) and Boyatzis (1998), although there are several ways to approach thematic analysis, the researcher follows the Braun and Clarke's model, as it is proven to be the most influential offering a succinct and vision driven framework. An advantage of thematic analysis is the agility of the method for explorative studies to probe into diverse patterns. Unlike other methodologies, thematic analysis is not rooted to a theoretical perspective, making it a flexible method to crystallise the depth of research and study of leadership styles; deeming this a suitable method for this study (Javadi and Zarea, 2016). The purpose of this method of analysis is to represent viewpoints from a nuanced and candid manner. This is an iterative process which moves from chunks of data and verbatim to a map of the vital themes which emerged from the interviews. The process has five

steps; familiarize data, assign preliminary codes to the data, describe the content, navigate themes from the interviews, review emergent themes, define and cluster themes, present findings (Maguire Delahunt, 2017).

3.8 RESEARCH SAMPLE

Numerous factors were considered whilst disseminating the sample for this research. Established literature and peer reviewed papers were researched to select the intended participants. The sample size for the quantitative and qualitative methods varies drastically, the quantitative method administered a survey with a group of 240 employees in MNCs in Asia with a response rate of 136 participants. Drawing reference from Roller (2019) validity and reliability is vital to crystallise the conceptual aspect of qualitative analysis segment of research, four or five interviews paced one-hour or more will gather accurate results, with lucrative data to validate the research.

The researcher interviewed six professionals in Executive and C-Suit management levels from MNCs in Asian subsidiaries in virtual recorded interviews conducted via platforms Skype and Microsoft teams. A key component of this study is to indicate if employees feel empowered when their leaders exhibit leadership styles, with traits aligned to transformational, inclusive and coaching, to ensure the intended participants for the survey and interview were in collaboration and an accurate fit. A non-probabilistic purposive sampling method was administered relying on the subjective judgement of the researcher based on her knowledge of the population, in addition to being cost and time effective. For purposive sampling, the researcher explored expert sampling to include participants who were knowledgeable in leadership effectiveness and employee engagement methods, to gauge perspectives of a range of participants with diverse viewpoints (Robinson, 2014).

3.9 TARGET PARTICIPANTS FOR RESEARCH

The intended target participants for quantitative research were chosen based on the criteria listed; Gender, Age, work tenure in MNCs, Job title and field of expertise. The questionnaire was sent to 240 employees specific to their working experience in MNCs in Asian subsidiaries with a turn-around time of five days to complete the survey. Responses were collated on *Google Forms* and extrapolated compute findings and presented visually through pie-charts and tabulated formats. Targeted participants for qualitative research included leaders leading teams/individuals in MNCs in Asia, with a tenure in their leadership role of minimum 10 years, whilst being cognizant to diverse participant groups in age, gender and ethnicity. The researcher conversed with six leaders in Executive and C-suite management levels, comprising of four female and two males from six distinctive MNCs located in Asia, to ensure the qualitative findings are rich in perspectives, contrast and nuances pertaining to leadership styles and effectiveness.

Profiles of six leaders who participated in the semi-structured interview is listed in the below tabular figure. To maintain confidentiality and for ethical purposes, the participant's name, designation, organisation details are anonymised and represented with a cipher.

Participant Number	Designation	Business Vertical in the organisation	Tenure in Leadership Position	Gender
1	Executive Director	Human Resources	13 years	Female
2	Director	Taxation	17 years	Female
3	Associate Director	Enablement services	11 years	Female
4	Partner	Financial Services	21 years	Male
5	Director	Talent Development	16 years	Female
6	Senior Manager	Technology Services	11 years	Male

Table 1 – Summary of participants profile for Qualitative research

3.10 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview schedule for primary research was conducted through open ended non-prescriptive questions pertinent to transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles, observable behaviour patterns of employee empowerment and the elements of leadership styles in MNCs in Asia lending itself to the economic, social and cultural nuances (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009).The researcher choose participants who are well- versed in dimensions of leadership impacts and styles with a tenure of minimum 10 years in a leadership orientated role. The participants were provided with the interview questions prior to the interview to formulate responses and avoid latent content.

Post confirmation of the leader's participation, the author provided the participants with a consent form and sent formal email invites with the interview details and timeframe. All interviews were conducted via Skype and Microsoft teams for approximately 45minutes to an hour. Lending to a semi-structured interview format, the researcher provided context and shared background of the research study at the start of the interview, and recorded the interview with the participant's consent. Questions were categorised into contextual, competency based and concluding elements delving into the participants experience, with illustrations pertinent to transformation, behavioural traits and precedented outcomes of demonstration of leadership styles.

3.11 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

This research explores quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain diverse and variant perspectives and a rich outlook to the research. The qualitative method was derived via a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio and Bass) to gather data from 136 professionals employed in MNCs in Asia. There is a myriad of advantages of using structured questionnaires to attain primary research and data, including the cost per questionnaire being relatively low, analysing questionnaires which is linear in its structure and format, providing respondents with ample time to curate accurate responses (Weiers,1988).

The questionnaire for this research comprises of two segments; Biographical Questionnaire and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire with Linkert scale, with 12 statements distributed in both segments to disseminate demographic variables to

include elements of gender, age, work tenure, job title. Competency specific questions comprise of transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles relative to enablers of employee empowerment. The Biographical questionnaire comprises of personal information gathered with the respondent's consent, namely Gender, Age, Tenure of service and Job title, this factual data is used to ascribe descriptive characteristics of the sample. The second segment pertains to the Multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) where transformational, inclusive and coaching styles are the independent variables in this study, whilst the instrument used to formulate a relationship and gauge influence to facets of employee empowerment (Avolio and Bass, 1995). The overall questionnaire is used to scale 136 employee's perception of their supervisor's/line-managers leadership style and how it enhances their empowerment at the workplace.

3.12 TIME HORIZON

This research study is rooted in the philosophy of 'Research Onion' exploring a paradigm of positivism, with a caveat of time duration allocated to complete the study. The two approaches navigated for research is the longitudinal study, which administers and researches the study over a span of time, ideally a year or longer to evaluate changes and transformation which has occurred, or a cross-sectional study which researches a specific phenomenon in a postulated timeframe. For the purpose of this research, the cross-sectional approach is viable to accommodate finite duration available. The data and findings for this study was gathered over a period of 21 days (three weeks) (Saunders et al., 2007).

3.13 DATA ANALYSIS

Interpreting data through analysis is vital to present and communicate key findings of research. The method of analysis is dependent on the research design, data distribution and types of variables. The researcher has adopted descriptive and inferential analysis to draw findings from quantitative research methods administered through an MLQ. Descriptive analysis is the first level of analysis projecting information of data inclusive of statistics such as frequency, minimum and maximum range. Post

this analysis has been accurately described, inferences are drawn out, to summarise and find patterns. Descriptive statistics is well suited for this research study, to draw findings from a structured and limited sample and not a generalised large population. For the analysis of qualitative research, data is gathered from the semi-structured interviews and transcribed for reliability of the data. The researcher has adopted the Braun and Clarke's framework (2006), with thematic analysis as the method to review responses and bucket themes of Transformational leadership, Inclusive leadership and Coaching leadership citing traits of each style and embedding enablers of employee empowerment. A conceptualised summary was presented with findings to represent results and conclusion of the research study.

3.14 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In summary, this chapter entails an overview of the sampling design, the research design and construct, procedure for data gathering and analysis with methods used to compute research questions and hypothesize this study.

The ensuing chapter will review and discuss the findings of the research that emerged from the data and measures.

3.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations have been addressed, in line with the National College of Ireland's (NCI) Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for Research Involving Human Participants, September 2017. As part of this research, an ethics form has been completed (Appendix 1) which states the nature of this study and details the interaction with survey and interview participants. The participants in this study are classed as non-vulnerable, therefore no issues arise in the form of consent. The Ethics Board has approved this research study, on foot of the research proposal submission process in January 2020. Permission was sought from the relevant authorities within the organisation to proceed with contacting participants on this particular study (Appendix 2).

In order to organise the interviews for this study, participants were contacted via email and informed on the purpose of this research study, with the option to participate being on a voluntary basis. Consent forms for participation were then distributed to the participants (Appendix 3) to ensure full understanding and clear rules of participation. The note of consent was prefixed to the survey questionnaire for participants responding to the MLQ. The interview consent form was returned via email to the researcher if the participant was comfortable to proceed. The Data Protection Acts 1998- 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018 were considered and adhered to throughout this study, in the context of addressing the importance of safeguarding personal data. To ensure the protection of each participant, their identities are omitted from written and recorded documentation.

However, general descriptive of their management status, gender and length of service was detailed, to describe demography. For record keeping purposes, all recordings are electronically and password protected and in line with NCI's data retention policy. Only the researcher and assigned supervisor has permitted access to the data.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails findings from primary research conducted through qualitative and quantitative analysis, participated by employees in MNCs in Asian subsidiaries. The purpose of the analysis is to augment the influence of leadership styles to the empowerment of employees; wherein transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership styles are considered as independent variables and employee empowerment as the dependent variable.

4.2 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Data is collected via a Multifactor Leadership questionnaire with Linkert scale, responses were permuted in a close-ended approach from a sample of 136 middle managers and above. The questionnaire consists of 12 questions categorised into demographic segments and competency-based statements to probe the influence and relationship of the three leadership styles to enrichment of employee empowerment with drivers to indicate how each leadership style influences empowerment of employees.

The overall questionnaire is used to scale 136 employee's perspectives to their managers leadership styles leaning towards transformational, inclusive or coaching, and channels of influence to enhancing their empowerment at the workplace.

This section outlines descriptive analysis deployed to test and describe the stated hypothesis and derive logical conclusions, through data collated, this method enables the researcher to present numerical data in a summarised narrative, structured and accurate manner (Durrheim, 2002). The demographic variables presented are relative to the respondents: Age, Gender, Tenure and Job Title.

4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Gender

From data collated, it is observed the majority of the respondents are female 68% and the remaining 31% were male, with the remaining percentage of respondent choosing not to state their gender identity.

Age

From the analysis, the largest population of respondents comprised of age group 25-35, which is 55%, followed by age group of 36-46 which comprises of 28%. The age group of over 57 constituted 11% with 4% of the population in the age group 46-56.

Tenure of employment

Data indicates that 39% of the largest population has 10-15 years of work background, whilst 33% of the respondents worked between 5-10 years. Moreover, 17% of the participants have prior experience of above 15 years with 11% of the respondents with contractual work spanning 10 years.

Job Title

Analysis indicates 51% of the population were managers and senior managers in MNCs, 16% were team leaders, 12% constituted domain consultants, 11% comprised of C-Suite and executive management with the remaining 10% spread across individual contributors and analysts.

4.2.2 COMPETENCY CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

The research study through qualitative and quantitative analysis aims to prove transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles influence and have a profound relationship with employee empowerment. The MLQ was used to collate data from 136 respondents, measured on Linkert scale and dichotomised follow a positive paradigm of the hypothesis; neutral responses such as 'neither agree or disagree' are included in the descriptive analysis only for the purpose of quantitative reasoning. On the Linkert scale positive responses correspond to

'strongly agree' and 'agree' whilst negative responses are 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree'. The researcher has formulated five competency-based questions, which articulates the drivers of transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership to influence employee empowerment. From figure 5, it is observed from research that Innovation and creativity are the vital enablers of transformation leadership which enhances aspects of employee empowerment. The statement facilitated participants to explore specific enablers of transformational leadership which encouraged employees to foster innovation and creativity in the workplace.

33% strongly agreed and responded positively inferring that leaders demonstrating transformational leadership, navigated them to be innovative and creative with their work, 52% agreed to perspective whilst 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed with 3% disagreeing that transformational leaders have no liaison to promote innovation or creativity in the workplace.

Figure 5: My leader encourages innovation and creativity in the workplace by demonstrating transformation leadership style

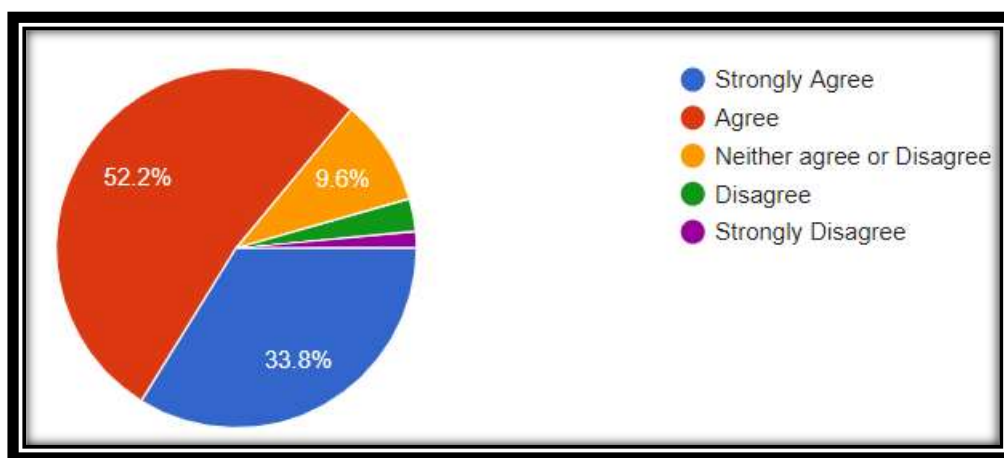
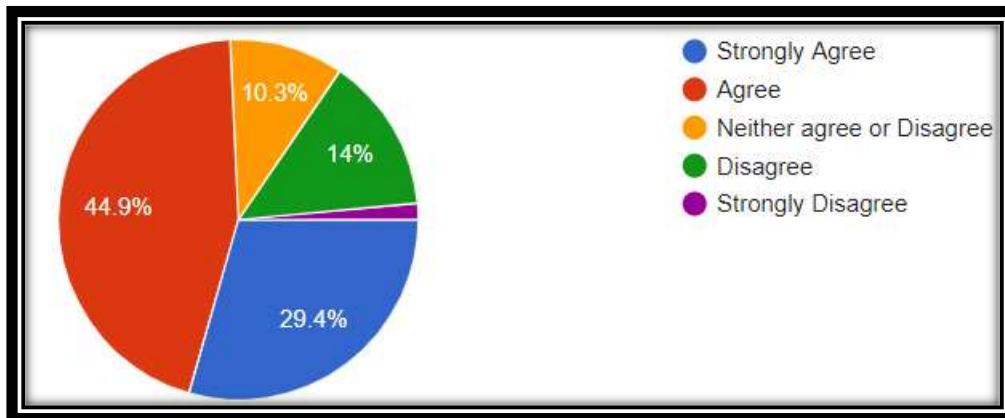


Figure 5.1, supports literature explored in this research study which is descriptive of coaching leaders enabling their employees with elements of collaboration, trust and effective communication to foster empowerment and self-assurance.

44% of the respondents agree with the statement of leaders demonstrating coaching style navigate enablers of collaboration, trust and efficacy in communication to build high performing teams, 29% of the population strongly agree with the statement whilst 14% disagree & 2% strongly disagree to the hypothesis which indicates coaching

leadership has relevance to strengthen trust, communication and collaboration to empower employees.

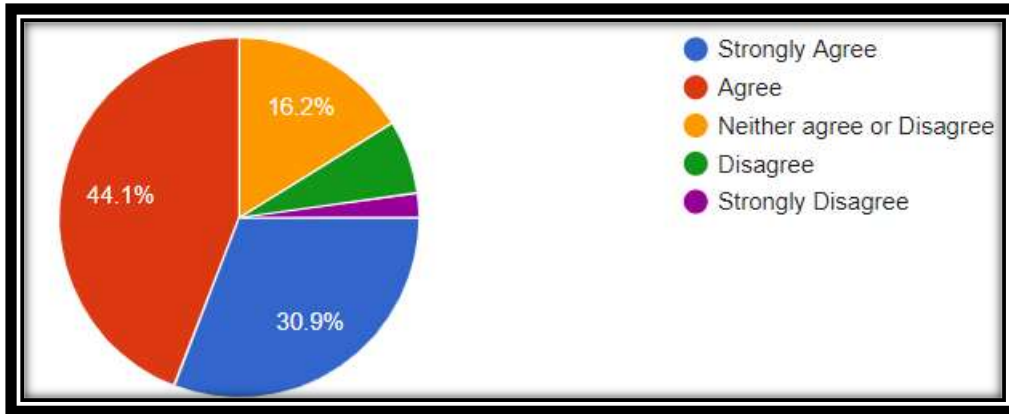
Figure 5.1: My leader builds a collaborative team with trust and communication by role modelling Coaching leadership style



Indicative of figure 5.2, as cited in this research study both data and literature has proven inclusive leadership to foster a sense of belonging and security in the workplace, enabling employees to feel engaged, foster employee happiness and be empowered.

From the MLQ, 44% of the respondents agree and 30% of participants strongly agree that leaders inculcating inclusive leadership promote a secure and conducive workplace environment, whilst 30% strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed imploring that inclusive leadership style has no relationship to enrich employee empowerment through belonging and security.

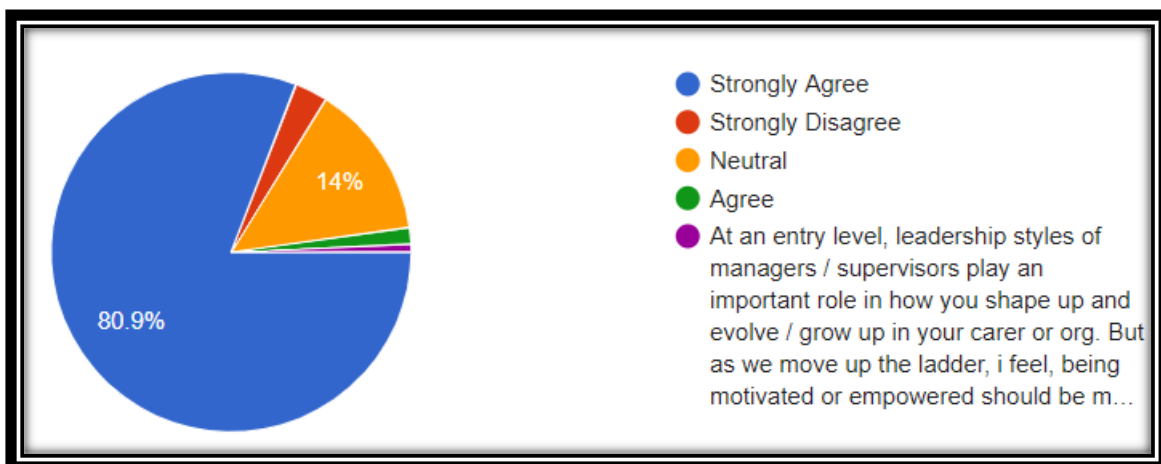
Figure 5.2: My leader demonstrates inclusive leadership by championing belonging and happiness at the workplace.



And lastly, figure 5.3 explores the narrative does transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles have an impact to influence the empowerment of employees, through enablers of innovation & creativity, trust and collaboration within teams, foster belonging and security with a sense of employee voice and happiness.

The response to this statement was crystallised through a highly positive response where 80% strongly affirmed that leadership styles have a profound influence to develop and empower the talent force to scale their potential with positive drivers of sustenance, 2% agreed to the statement whilst 3% of the population strongly disagreed citing leadership styles have no relative alliance to employee happiness and empowerment.

Figure 5.3: Does transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles influence employee motivation and empowerment



4.3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This segment crystallises findings from qualitative analysis conducted through virtual recorded interviews with six professionals in leadership roles in executive management serving in MNCs in Asia. The targeted leaders have a tenure of 10 years and above, with a diverse mix of two males and four females. The researcher focussed on two themes to postulate the hypothesis of this research, present findings and analyse the findings through thematic analysis:

H2: There is a significant relationship between transformational, inclusive and coaching leadership and dimensions of employee engagement.

H3: Transformational, Inclusive and Coaching leadership is more likely to increase the levels of employee empowerment pertinent to innovation & creativity, collaboration, trust, belonging and employee happiness.

4.3.1 LEADERSHIP STYLES AN ENABLER OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

The participants were asked questions segmented into :

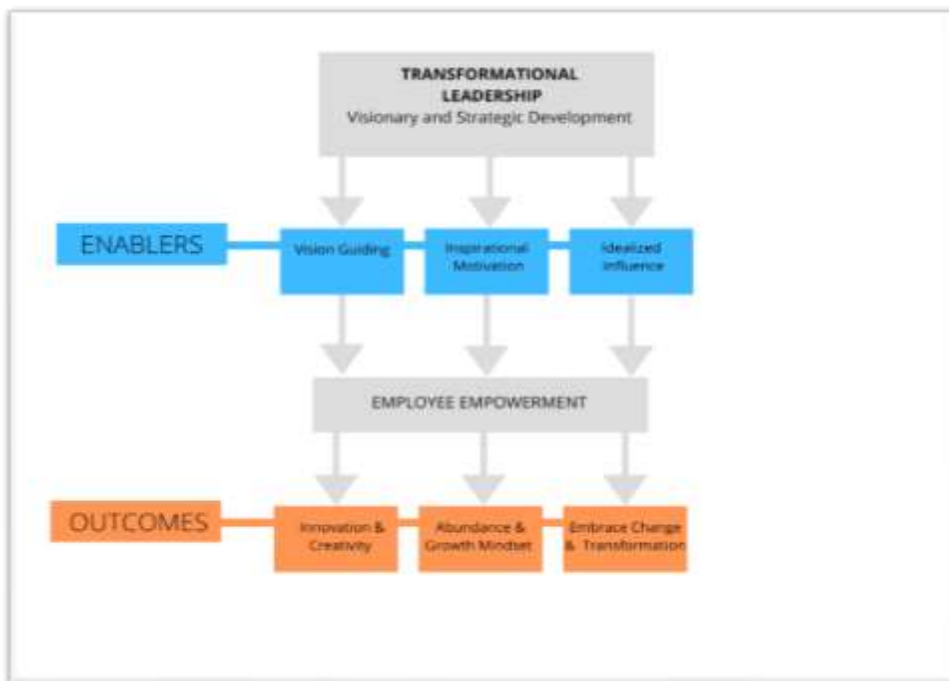
- context of leadership styles and its influence on employee empowerment
- competency specific questions relative to the enablers of transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership leaders to enhancing employee empowerment

The predominant findings entailed participants specifying behaviors which leaders demonstrated aligned to leadership styles which brought out elements of innovation, security, trust, collaboration, belonging and employee happiness overarching a strong sense of empowerment. Participants articulated from their rich experience, attributes transformational, coaching and inclusive leaders demonstrated which acted as enablers to foster outcomes of employee empowerment.

4.3.2 Transformational leadership enablers and outcomes of employee empowerment

Participants were probed to enunciate the contribution of transformational style which enabled MNCs in Asia to be leaders in the emerging markets, by inculcating innovation and creativity in their employees to feel empowered. The findings articulate quotes from the respondents to acquire depth in narratives and diverse perspectives to the transformational style enablers.

Figure 6 – Thematic findings of Transformational leadership enablers and outcomes of employee empowerment



‘Different strokes for different folks, at different times. Leaders should have the agility to flex their styles to suit individual and situations. Transformational leaders enable their teams with authority to make decision, ruling out quasi-authority to be solution-oriented and future focussed’ – (Participant 1).

However, few participants accounted to a caveat of change across the Asian landscape contributing to a global cultural, which has stemmed intrigue towards technology and disruptive incepted in universities developing a stratum of new-age leaders who gravitate towards creativity and lateral thinking, thereby imbuing empowerment in their employee with strategic thinking and vision guiding – (Participant 3,4 and 6).

From the participants perspectives the overall findings establish enablers of transformational style to strengthen employee empowerment is positive, with room for exploration to further develop transformational leaders who encourage strategic thinking, innovation and disruption.

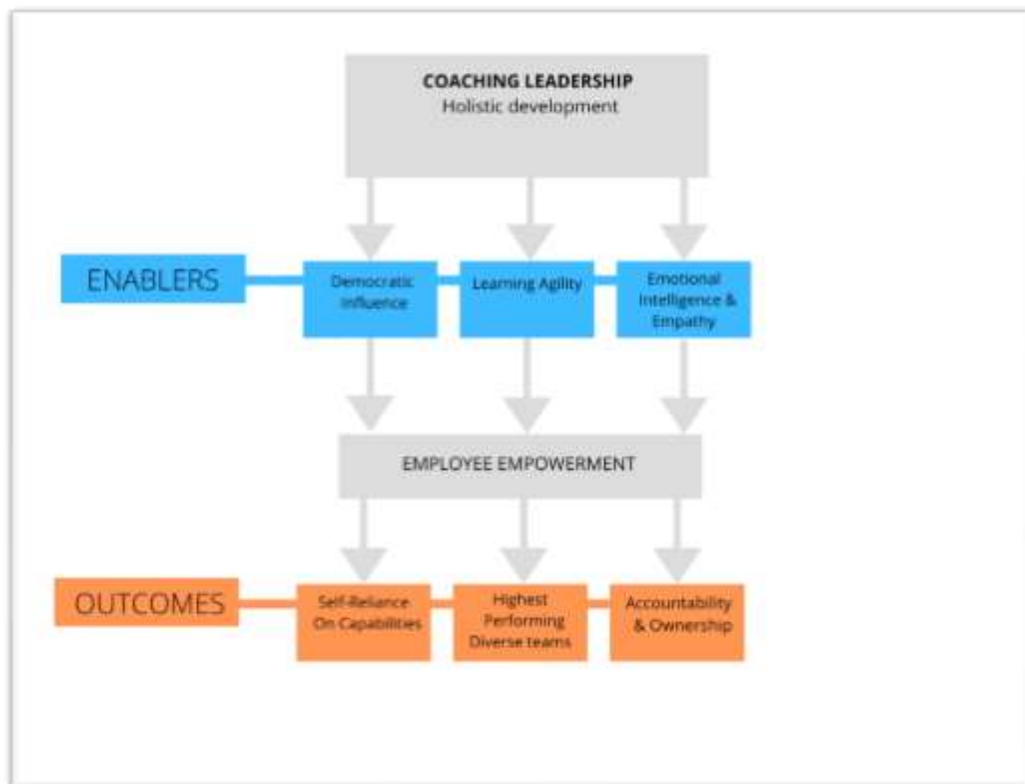
In contrast to this, finding indicates employees can feel a sense of empowerment of innovation, risk taking and creativity with the holistic support of their leaders flexing to suit the individual's style and organisational framework (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009).

4.3.3 Coaching leadership enablers and outcomes of employee empowerment

As leaders with a wealth of experience, the participants were asked to comment on the influence of coaching to holistic development and empowerment of employees, based on foundations of this research the question pertained to enriching knowledge of employees beyond technical or functional expertise.

The respondents linked enablers of coaching leadership to transfer of knowledge with attributes of collaboration, commitment to quality and results and being empowered in a highest performing diverse team.

Figure 6.1 Thematic analysis of Coaching leadership enablers and outcomes of employee empowerment.



‘Coaching is not above and beyond a leader’s day-job, it is their day-job. I have seen lives and career’s transform to reach pivotal potential under the leadership of coaching style.’ – (Participant 3).

‘A key enabler of coaching as empowerment is to help people help themselves, leaders who enable employees with knowledge and applicable capabilities truly demonstrate the coaching style, which yields significant long-term results.’ – (Participant 1).

However, most participants described the need of the hour is to create a competency framework and performance management system with metrics and return on investment to coaching. As a style coaching is in demand, however managers will invest in coaching their teams when there is a tangible measure and performance related outcome weaved into it – (Participants 5 and 8).

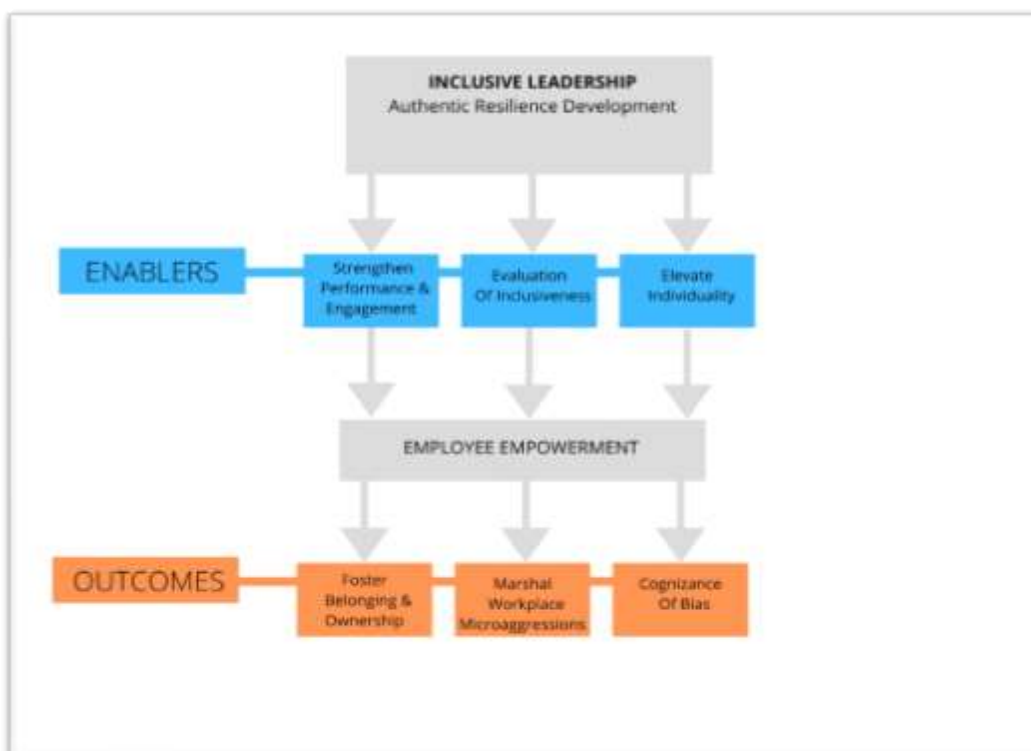
‘Coaching style is a fundamental skill all leaders and management should develop and acquire, this is universally needed and accepted with an abundant appetite across gender, generational and demographical diversities.’ – (Participant 4).

In conclusion, the findings are deemed positive with all six interviewees voicing coaching style to be an advantageous relationship with critical enablers of recognising strengths and developing weaknesses, with empowerment outcomes of self-reliance, reach optimal work-life potential, contribute to the organisation’s legacy and client services (Xu and Thomas, 2011).

4.3.4 Inclusive leadership enablers and outcomes of employee empowerment

Interviewees are asked to provide an account of their experience in fostering inclusiveness in the Talent life cycle, and the socio-economic and cultural impacts in striving to demonstrate inclusive leadership in Asian subsidiaries. Unanimously the participants concurred to being an inclusive leader stemmed beyond the amicable aspect rather it has evolved to be the smart imperative for employer’s brand and success.

Figure 6.2 Inclusive leadership enablers and outcomes of employee empowerment



‘It is a need today to be an inclusive leader, an imperative to resilience workforce, a key enabler of inclusive leadership starts with resourcing of best in-class diverse

talents, however the true enabler of empowerment is an inclusive culture stemming from belonging' – (Participant 3).

Leaders further articulated the importance of marshalling insider-outsider dynamics in the workplace, citing the true sense of belonging is demonstrated in observable behaviors of confidence and self-assurance where individuals shed the imposter syndrome and work-mask morphing into their authentic selves – (Participants 1 and 5).

'We are embarking on a journey of transformation, where authenticity is the way forward to resilience and organisations need to measure leadership behaviors of inclusiveness, leading from the front, role model and ripple down positive elements leading to empowerment outcomes of accountability and belonging.' – (Participant 6).

'Subtle intangibles enable employee engagement and empowerment, we need to call out microaggressions vocal or behavioral, build inclusive teams who hold each other accountable to reach deliverables and portray positive behaviors.' (Participant 2).

To summarise, the findings for enablers of inclusive leadership has a positive realm where leaders are in their exploration journey to foster an inclusive environment in the DNA and culture of the organisation, to empower their employees in resilience of both planned and unprecedented circumstances, prioritise their well-being correlating to outcomes of employees feeling a steep sense of belonging to the organisation, with high levels of performance, happiness and engagement (Blanchard, 2010).

4.4 CONCLUSION

The findings reveal positive results, where leaders expressed the importance of transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles not only to empower employees to build successful and growth-oriented organisations (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008). Elevated brand value where employees are the greatest asset to foster a legacy where the best talent have a desire to be associated and contribute to the organisational entities (Chiles and Zorn, 1995).

Literature indicates leadership styles are demonstrated and embedded in the core values and fundamentals of MNCs of Asian subsidiaries. The emergence of leadership in these strata is transcending a paradigm shift from being transactional to leading from insights (Carmeli, Palmon and Ziv, 2010).

The results of this study further indicate that an array of leadership styles are vital prerequisites for employees to be empowered.

However, transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles are proven to be a predictor with stringent enablers which incept, build and sustains aspects of employee empowerment in Asian subsidiaries, due to established attributes that align to the socio- cultural and economic terrain of Asian regions to develop the talent force of the future (Koo and Park 2018).

CHAPTER 5

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

This research is extensive in sources of literature, theoretical frameworks and analyzed through established measuring mediums, however the researcher acknowledges there are elements of limitations to this research.

This study is solely focused on MNCs within the realm of Asian subsidiaries and not extended to financial services or public sectors.

Primary research method was conducted through qualitative analysis and confined to a moderate sized sample group due to the time constraints and the aftermath of global pandemic unprecedented circumstances, the researcher is aware this does not represent the extend of the workforce population in Asian subsidiaries.

Although the researcher explored a mixed approach, the limitation extends to the qualitative research conducted through virtual interviews in lieu of in-person conversations, which lends itself to more robust conversations compared to virtual mediums with differentiating time-zone and technology disruptions.

5.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

Theorists have probed the importance of future studies in this realm to gauge the extent of influence and impact of leadership styles and behavior to the holistic empowerment and happiness of employees at the workplace.

This research paper has insights pertinent to the relationship and ripple effect leadership has on employee empowerment in the landscape of MNCs in Asia, with analysis and data gathered from Asian subsidiaries.

Albeit this research does have limitations and omits investigation of a large array of leadership styles and is centered to the region of Asia lending to the research an influential glaze specifically to socio-economic and cultural sphere within Asia.

Future research could expand on this study by channeling the influence and comparison of a pool of leadership styles and explore beyond the ethos of Asia. Secondly, whilst there is abundant literature available on the attributes and personas of transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles there is a dearth of research which examines specific enablers of the stated styles to the outcomes of employee empowerment.

The research stumbled up numerous references to the relationship of leadership styles to employee performance and engagement alas there is scarcity of literature pertinent to the facilitation of employee empowerment through leadership styles.

Thirdly, the sample size for quantitative analysis is limited to a relatively small sampling representing a low response rate.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles to empowerment of employees in Asian subsidiaries.

Through literature review and research analysis, the researcher revealed findings of empowerment in organisations and employees when leaders subsequently demonstrated and role-modelled attributes of transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles.

The researcher hypothesised, there is a relationship to the influence of leadership styles to enable certain aspects of employee empowerment aligned to innovation, creativity, trust, foster collaboration with employee motivation and happiness.

This research albeit explores a positive paradigm to reinforce the hypothesis, however the gap in literature does prelude to limited research to correlate the enablers of transformational, coaching and inclusive leadership styles to specific facets of employee empowerment.

6.1 Personal learning statement

The last year of embarking on my HR Masters has been a great learning curve, with new skills and knowledge acquired. In particular, completing this dissertation led me to the world of research and an appreciation for the many research articles and studies I had the opportunity to explore. I decided to focus on the topic of Leadership styles as it well aligned to my area of interest and work trajectory and I believed that researching any topic within this area would have long-term benefits. Throughout the completion of the dissertation, I embarked of a myriad of revelations and learnings. However, this journey has imbibed a level of personal commitment and dedication to excel in my future field of research.

Furthermore, I am more confident in my ability in my future aspirations of research and leadership development in the sphere of Talent management.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Recommendations

The findings of this research embark valid implications for MNCs in Asian subsidiaries. Whilst literature is not expansive to the influence of leadership styles to employee empowerment per se, this study has aimed to throw light to advance the status quo of knowledge for transformational, inclusive and coaching styles and their influence to enrich specific enablers of employee empowerment (Nortje, A., 2010).

The results of this research indicate the criticality of leadership styles to holistic employee empowerment, the researcher has cited recommendations for MNCs in Asia to explore and invest:

Firstly, organisations could incept manager development initiatives with assessment centres, MLQs and behavioral skills at nascent stages to foster proactive growth with cognitive-awareness to people development, to motivate their employees resulting in an inspired and knowledge driven Talent force (Lian, and Tui, 2012).

Secondly, formal coaching for managers could be provided by leadership mentors on demonstrating attributes of transformational, coaching and inclusive styles aided with workplace analytics and data to proven the impact on organisational and employee empowerment, with applicable resources (Garavan et al, 2009).

Lastly, Talent and Business leaders could revise frameworks of talent reviews, succession metrics and people development strategies in alignment to the

organisation’s values, business imperatives, client services to recruit, inspire and retain effective leaders who would be vested in the growth and empowerment of their employees (Popli and Rizvi, 2016).

Please find the summary of costings with implementation timelines below:

		Recommendations		
		Costings and Timelines for Implementation		
Participants	Objectives	Duration	Costing	Timeline
All Newly promoted managers	Awareness towards Leadership styles Elements of Coaching, Delegation and Feedback techniques Training on Resources pertinent to employee well-being	3 Days	EU 150pp	1.Design and developed content (Jan 2020- May 2020) 2. Review of content with leadership and HR partners material (Jun 2020) 3.Implementing training (Aug 2020-Nov 2020) 4. Evaluation of training outcomes using Kirkpatrick assessments (Jan 2021 - Mar 2021)
All Managers and senior managers	Workshop on Building highest performing teams Behavioral Interview skills workshop	2 Days	EU 200pp	

7.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from this research navigate intriguing channels for future studies. In compare with several reviewed literature, findings are indicative of transformational, inclusive and coaching styles are pivotal to foster empowerment in employees in relevance to economic, social and cultural fragments of Asia, positively imbining enablers of innovation and creativity, collaboration of teams, trust, belonging and employee engagement through workplace happiness.

Hiller, et al. (2011) posits effective leaders flex their styles to demonstrate varied styles to reflect the organisation’s goals and support talent to reach their potential, however is in larger interest for research to be dwelled into critical outcomes and

enablers of employee empowerment to transformational, inclusive and coaching styles.

CHAPTER 8

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CHAPTER 9

REFLECTION (CIPD REQUIREMENT)

As I reflect upon my journey to venture into the world of academics as a mature student, with profound Human resources management (HRM) experience of over thirteen years, my learning into the scope of holistic Talent management has been invaluable. I have a deep sense of satisfaction and joy in the knowledge and accolade I've gained.

As an International student, I had to comprehend the nuances of the educational framework to navigate protocols of review of literature, referencing formats and terminal assessments. My abundance mindset served me well, with the guidance of my professors I learnt the art of leveraging literature, scoping journals and summaries of lectures to find my style of narratives, leading to an exploration of research.

I embarked on my dissertation proposal, with research and comprehending methods of research proposals, I submitted my dissertation in January 2020 on the topic 'Influence of Leadership Styles on Employee Empowerment in Multinationals'. The objective of my research has been amended with the aid of ample research and hypothesis leading to the final title 'Influence of Leadership Styles on Employee Empowerment in Multinationals in Asian Subsidiaries', with focus on three specific leadership styles rather than a blanket approach.

The next step was to crystallise the purpose and research objectives with outcomes to achieve. This led to analysis of survey questionnaires, and conversational viewpoints to support my hypothesis and reach the desired conclusion. Through research, I navigated literature and peer reviewed journals to select most appropriate sources for this study. The plethora of articles available within the realm of NCI sources and other platforms was invaluable to broadening my learning to support my research.

In analysis of the primary research both a survey questionnaire and leadership interviews were conducted, aided with digitised platforms to reach diversely experienced and intercultural respondents. My learning of research methods has been immense through the scope of this study, to choose appropriate measuring instruments, diagnose data collection methods and sampling techniques. This process was enriching for me to comprehend the breadth of concepts, terminologies and methodical techniques.

In concluding my journey of completing the dissertation, along with the knowledge and new-skills I've acquired, I have excelled in my writing capabilities to weave narratives and revel in the joy of continuous learning.

Nisha Rajamohan

19125607

Dublin, August 2020

CHAPTER 10

APPENDIX

Appendix 1- Ethical Review Application Form

National College of Ireland

Human Participants Ethical Review Application Form

All parts of the below form must be completed. However, in certain cases where sections are not relevant to the proposed study, clearly mark NA in the box provided.

Part A: Title of Project and Contact Information

Name

NISHA RAJAMOHAN

Student Number (if applicable)

19125607

Email

thenishr01@gmail.com

Status:

Undergraduate

Postgraduate **YES**

Staff

Supervisor (if applicable)

NA

Title of Research Project

The Influence of Leadership Styles on Employee Empowerment in Multinational Corporations

Category into which the proposed research falls (see guidelines)

Research Category A **YES**

Research Category B

Research Category C

Have you read the NCI Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants?

Yes **YES**

No

Please indicate any other ethical guidelines or codes of conduct you have consulted

NA

Has this research been submitted to any other research ethics committee?

- Yes
No **NO**

If yes please provide details, and the outcomes of this process, if applicable:

NA

Is this research supported by any form of research funding?

- Yes
No **NO**

If yes please provide details, and indicate whether any restrictions exist on the freedom of the researcher to publish the results:

NA

Part B: Research Proposal

Briefly outline the following information (not more than 200 words in any section).

Proposed starting date and duration of project

01 March 2020 to August 19, 2020

The rationale for the project

The purpose of this study is to examine how leadership styles influence aspects of employee happiness and empowerment in multinational corporations in the recent times.

The research aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this research is focussed on three leadership styles in particular *transformational, inclusive and coaching* that have developed in recent times and its influence in contributing to aspects of employee happiness and empowerment.

The research design

This research paper is in the format of an essay with theoretical frameworks, and explores findings to test hypothesis from primary and secondary research methods. This research paper has reviewed the literature on three distinct research streams; leadership styles, employee empowerment and exploring the relationship of the influence of the three leadership styles on key aspects of employee empowerment, and further articulating outcomes that reflect key findings.

The research sample and sample size

Please indicate the sample size and your justification of this sample size. Describe the age range of participants, and whether they belong to medical groups (those currently receiving medical treatment, those not in remission from previous medical treatment, those recruited because of a previous medical condition, healthy controls recruited for a medical study) or clinical groups (those undergoing non-medical treatment such as counselling, psychoanalysis, in treatment centres, rehabilitation centres, or similar, or those with a DSM disorder diagnosis).

The quantitative research is an online established leadership relative questionnaire aimed at members in prominent multinational corporations. The survey will be conducted with approximately 50 individuals for accuracy and brevity. The questionnaire survey will also be conducted with approximately 15 graduate students. The qualitative research is conducted through recorded Skype based interviews with senior leaders from multinational corporations. The age range of the participants of the sample for both quantitative and qualitative research methods is 21 years to 50 years of age. Participants do not belong to any medical groups or clinical groups.

If the study involves a MEDICAL or CLINICAL group, the following details are required:

- a) **Do you have approval from a hospital/medical/specialist ethics committee?**
If YES, please append the letter of approval. Also required is a letter from a clinically responsible authority at the host institution, supporting the study, detailing the support mechanisms in place for individuals who may become distressed as a result of participating in the study, and the potential risk to participants.
If NO, please detail why this approval cannot or has not been sought.
- b) **Does the study impact on participant's medical condition, wellbeing, or health?**
If YES, please append a letter of approval from a specialist ethics committee.
If NO, please give a detailed explanation about why you do not expect there to be an impact on medical condition, wellbeing, or health.

The nature of any proposed pilot study. Pilot studies are usually required if a) a new intervention is being used, b) a new questionnaire, scale or item is being used, or c) established interventions or questionnaires, scales or items are being used on a new population. If no such study is planned, explain why it is not necessary.

Questionnaires and survey will be guided by past and established research, however the verbatim it will be moderately revised to suit the nature of this research study.

The methods of data analysis. Give details here of the analytic process (e.g. the statistical procedures planned if quantitative, and the approach taken if qualitative. It is not sufficient to name the software to be used).

The research instrument used in this study for collecting quantitative data is leadership questionnaire, which is a widely used data collection method in evaluation of research (Avolio and Bass). The questionnaire survey will be close ended and administered with a sample of approximately 50 individuals. The survey will also be administered with approximately 15 graduate students. The qualitative data will be gathered through recorded skype and telephonic interviews with leaders from MNCs and the findings will be represented in the form of a bar graph. The findings from the questionnaire survey will be depicted separately for each leadership style and its varied influence in the form of pie – charts and bar- graphs.

The qualitative data for the study is from established literature, peer reviewed journals, recommended core texts and other available information from various published and unpublished reports of multinational corporations. Proceeding to test predictive hypothesis and conceptual frameworks of the three leadership styles relevant to employee empowerment.

Study Procedure

Please give as detailed an account as possible of a participant's likely experience in engaging with the study, from point of first learning about the study, to study completion. State how long project participation is likely to take, and whether participants will be offered breaks. Please attach all questionnaires, interview schedules, scales, surveys, and demographic questions, etc. in the Appendix.

The participants were pleased to participate in the said topic, as it contributed to the topic of employee empowerment which is the fundamental basis of all corporations and their growth, and it gave them an opportunity to explore the relationship between leadership styles and employee empowerment. The project participation which is the survey questionnaire is likely to take 45minutes of completion. The one-on-one interview will require 60 minutes of the participants time with a 10minute break.

Interview schedules with three leaders from multinational corporations

June 03, 3pm IST

June 08, 1pm EST

June 11, 2pm IST

Format for online survey questionnaire

The questionnaire is the standard leadership instrument, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Bass, 1990; Avolio & Bass, 2004)

The on-line questionnaire will include Likert-scale questions consisting of three domains, including employees perception of effective leadership styles, feeling of empowerment, and questions on demographic information.

Respondents will be asked to fill out the survey and provide feedback on the survey in terms of wording, clarity of theme, and format. Based on respondent's feedback, the parameters will be edited to avoid ambiguity. The 5-point Likert scale concepts (i.e., leadership style and employee empowerment) will be retained to record accurate responses.

Part C: Ethical Risk

Please identify any ethical issues or risks of harm or distress which may arise during the proposed research, and how you will address this risk. Here you need to consider the potential for physical risk, social risk (i.e. loss of social status, privacy, or reputation), outside of that expected in everyday life, and whether the participant is likely to feel distress as a result of taking part in the study. Debriefing sheets must be included in the appendix if required. These should detail the participant's right to withdraw from the study, the statutory limits upon confidentiality, and the

obligations of the researcher in relation to Freedom of Information legislation. Debriefing sheets should also include details of helplines and avenues for receiving support in the event that participants become distressed as a result of their involvement in this study.

NA

Do the participants belong to any of the following vulnerable groups?

(Please tick all those involved).

- Children;
- The very elderly;
- People with an intellectual or learning disability
- Individuals or groups receiving help through the voluntary sector
- Those in a subordinate position to the researchers such as employees
- Other groups who might not understand the research and consent process
- Other vulnerable groups

How will the research participants in this study be selected, approached and recruited? From where will participants be recruited? If recruiting via an institution or organisation other than NCI please attach a letter of agreement from the host institution agreeing to host the study and circulate recruitment advertisements/email etc.

Participants of this study responding to the survey questionnaire and interview will not be recruited. Participants will be selected via the simple random selection method focusing on multinational corporations. Participants will be approached in person through established contacts, via email and professionals networking platforms to participate in this study.

What inclusion or exclusion criteria will be used?

All vulnerable groups will be excluded in this research study.

Members from multinational corporations and graduate students will be included in this study.

How will participants be informed of the nature of the study and participation?

In person documentation

Email

Professional networking platforms (example: LinkedIn)

Skype telephonic conversations

Does the study involve deception or the withholding of information? If so, provide justification for this decision.

NA

What procedures will be used to document the participants' consent to participate?

Consent form through Email

Survey link will include a 'consent/ agree' submission option

Can study participants withdraw at any time without penalty? If so, how will this be communicated to participants?

Yes, participants can choose to withdraw from the study at their convenience.

This will be clearly stated in the consent form and survey link.

If vulnerable groups are participating, what special arrangements will be made to deal with issues of informed consent/assent?

NA

Please include copies of any information letters, debriefing sheets, and consent forms with the application.

Part D: Confidentiality and Data Protection

Please indicate the form in which the data will be collected.

Identified

Potentially Identifiable

De-Identified YES

What arrangements are in place to ensure that the identity of participants is protected?

The survey is anonymous and participants will not be required to fill in their name and hence will remain de-identified.

Will any information about illegal behaviours be collected as part of the research process? If so, detail your consideration of how this information will be treated.

NA

Please indicate any recording devices being used to collect data (e.g. audio/video).

Skype will be used as the tool for the qualitative method and recorded interview

Please describe the procedures for securing specific permission for the use of these recording devices in advance.

The detailed consent form for the recorded interview, will be shared with the participants prior to the interview for their consent.

Please indicate the form in which the data will be stored.

Identified

Potentially Identifiable

De-Identified Yes

Who will have responsibility for the data generated by the research?

Nisha Rajamohan, author of this research study.

Is there a possibility that the data will be archived for secondary data analysis? If so, has this been included in the informed consent process? Also include information on how and where the data will be stored for secondary analytic purposes.

NA

If not to be stored for secondary data analysis, will the data be stored for 5 years and then destroyed, in accordance with NCI policy?

Yes **YES**

No

Dissemination and Reporting

Please describe how the participants will be informed of dissemination and reporting (e.g. submission for examination, reporting, publications, presentations)?

Participants will be informed of submission for examination, reporting, publications, presentations through email for documentation purposes.

If any dissemination entails the use of audio, video and/or photographic records (including direct quotes), please describe how participants will be informed of this in advance.

Participants of the recorded interview will be informed of their direct quotes and testimonials being used as verbatim in the study through email and the consent form for documentation purposes.

Part E: Signed Declaration

I confirm that I have read the NCI Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants, and agree to abide by them in conducting this research. I also confirm that the information provided on this form is correct.

Signature of Applicant



Date ... 26th January 2020

Signature of Supervisor (where appropriate):

Date _____

Any other information the committee should be aware of?

APPENDIX 2

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

It is intended that participants will be made aware of the following:

- a) Participants will be invited to participate without coercion or pressure
- b) Respondents will participate in the survey voluntarily
- c) Respondents can withdraw from the research study at any due time
- d) Questionnaires will not contain any use of language that would be considered offensive or discriminatory
- e) Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of participants will be preserved at all times;
- f) Referencing of the work of others will be acknowledged by use of the Harvard referencing system according to the Dissertation Handbook
- g) The author has maintained consistent high standards of integrity in analysis and design within this research.

APPENDIX 3

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in an online survey via Goggle platforms on 'The influence of Leadership styles on Employee empowerment in MNCs in Asia'. This is a research dissertation being conducted by Nisha Rajamohan, student at National College of Ireland (2019-2020).

Your participation in the survey would It should take approximately take 15 minutes to complete.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may choose to exit the survey or refuse participation at any time without consequences. You are free to decline to answer any specific question, for any reason.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses will help us learn more about the influence and relationship between Leadership styles and empowerment of employees. There are no foreseeable risks pertinent in participating in this study other than those anticipated in routine life.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your survey answers will be sent to a link at Goggle Forms where data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Goggle platforms does not collect identifying information such as your name, email address, or IP address. Your responses will remain anonymous, with no identification of your participation in this survey and study.

CONTACT

The results of this study is used only for scholarly purposes. If you have any questions about this research, please contact me at nisharajamohan01@outlook.com

APPENDIX 4

ELECTRONIC CONSENT FORM

ELECTRONIC CONSENT

Please select your choice below:

Clicking the 'agree' button below indicates:

- You have read the above information'
- You voluntarily agree to participate
- You are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking the 'disagree' button

A screenshot of two buttons for electronic consent. The top button is light green and labeled 'agree'. The bottom button is light blue and labeled 'disagree'. Both buttons have a small circular icon on the left side.

