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**The impact of Leadership Behaviours on Employee Engagement
in Financial Services Organisations in Brazil**

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Abstract

The impact of Leadership Behaviours on Employee Engagement in Financial Services Organisations in Brazil

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Leaders play a significant role in organisations once they can affect employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Provided the importance of a more profound comprehension of this topic, this research aims to uncover the effect leadership behaviours have on employee engagement within the 'Big Four' companies in the financial services industry in Brazil. The author pursued a qualitative approach. The primary data was collected via eleven semi-structured interviews with low-level employees within the organisations. The findings indicated that most leaders in these companies had a positive impact on employee engagement. Remarkably, this research found that behaviours such as openness, consideration to employees' opinions, leaders as coaches, recognition and feedback, allowing fair autonomy in the tasks, offering encouragement to act, leading by example, and challenging behaviour, came out as strong engaging leadership traits. This research also found that some leaders who do not adopt some engaging leadership behaviours encompass traits such as: lack of challenging attitudes, discouraging employees from thinking, leading by a negative example, demanding, conservative, lack of openness, distant manager, and lack of knowledge sharing. A critical finding is a connection between human resources activities and organisational attitudes on aiding the relationship manager/employee and organisational commitment, contributing highly to employee engagement. The research found that manager behaviour is not always the unique reason for employees' disengagement, and organisational behaviour can be a critical driver of employee engagement. This research indicates that leadership behaviour can directly affect engagement, contributing to current literature on this topic and offering insights and recommendations to companies and human resources managers.

Keywords: Engagement; Leadership; Job satisfaction; Employee commitment; Burnout.

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List of Abbreviations

HR – Human Resources

1. INTRODUCTION

This research aims to get a more profound knowledge into the impact of leadership behaviours on employee engagement in ‘Big Four’ companies within the financial services sector in Brazil, Deloitte, EY, PwC, and KPMG. They operate across 150 countries, sharing a mutual brand, purpose, and quality standards (Shore and Wright 2018). The four combined have more than 85% participation in the capital market since they are audit firms aiming to reassess financial statements and make them more trustworthy (Hope *et al.* 2020).

The ‘Big Four effect’ is an impression that these companies are more accurate and reliable than ‘non-big fours’ (Hope *et al.* 2020). A reason for this effect may be a joint of people management strategies, competence, along with suitable methodologies and processes. In summary, they hire better talent, have more learning and development tools, and offer better incentives (Hope *et al.* 2020). Therefore, a well-designed people management administration is critical to achieving high levels of employee engagement, bringing satisfactory results (Shore and Wright 2018; Hope *et al.* 2020). A lack of engaged employees in financial services organisations can severely impact profits and return of investments, as their primary product to sell are competent human services.

In Latin America, employee engagement has been shown to be extremely low, with 31% of employees engaged in 2019 and only 24% in 2020 (Ladesma 2021). This decline may be due to the shift to the working from home strategy, creating a great challenge for managers since they are defined as the most important antecedent for employee engagement (Saks 2006; Ladesma 2021). Employee disengaging can cost \$450 to \$550 billion per year in wasted productivity, creating what literature would name as an ‘engagement gap’ (Achievers 2019).

Literature indicates a close connection between employee engagement and leadership behaviours (Saks 2006; Schaufeli 2015; Ladesma 2021). Employee engagement is vital for companies’ success, not only to attract and retain employees in a changing world but also to staff delivering more than expected (Ladesma 2021). Leaders are in the front of influencing staff if they feel engaged or disengaged (Xu and Thomas 2011; Hitt *et al.* 2012; Saul *et al.* 2015; Decuyper and Schaufeli 2019). The literature also reveals that for creating a dynamic and engaging

environment, leaders are comparable to key actors by establishing an environment that encourages each member to contribute to their own job, career development, and organisational performance (Strategic HRM 2021). The old perception of the organisation being comparable to a machine has changed. Instead, the organisations are more a dynamic system of interpersonal relationships and networks that impact and influence (Saks 2006). Consequently, leadership support, encouragement and recognition, procedural and distributive justice are some of the antecedents to greater levels of employee engagement (Saks 2006).

New models of leadership which would increase employee engagement levels have been developed. In addition, nowadays, the organisational design is more horizontal integrated (shared leadership) than vertical (top-down influence) (Pretorius *et al.* 2018). The changing and new leadership perceptions affirm that leadership does not depend on a single person but concerns practices across levels within the company hierarchy (Fletcher and Kaufer 2003; Muller *et al.* 2016).

Given the importance of attitudes and behaviours of line managers and seniors and the impacts of different leadership behaviours on employee engagement, this research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of different leadership behaviours among the 'Big Four' companies within the financial services sector in Brazil. The main themes assessed were leadership behaviours, culture and values, employee's engagement and (dis)engaging managers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Leadership

Most people usually recognise what leadership is, although it does not have the same meaning for all (Barker 2001; Pretorius *et al.* 2018). It is suggested that leading is a 'universal phenomenon,' as it is presented in every setting (Armstrong 2012). In adulthood, people's beliefs and attitudes while leading and being followers are somewhat impacted by old relations in childhood and parental aspects (Bass *et al.* 2008). However, it is also suggested that managers can develop critical leadership skills, such as interpersonal, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Those can be developed either with traditional classes, systems or throughout experiences in life (Helsing and Howell 2013).

Some of the central leadership roles is influencing and inspiring the followers to do their jobs efficiently, engaging and motivating them to perform better through positive behaviours and attitudes (Hitt *et al.* 2012; Schaufeli 2015). Furthermore, a great leader communicates a vision about the future, translating intentions to experiences, maintaining and fostering it to inspire truth and confidence in daily work (Mongeau 2003).

There is no leader without followers, who are defined, in theory, as being low in the hierarchy, having less power to influence (Kellerman 2007). Several studies have shown the impact that leaders have on followers' behaviours, as well as their job satisfaction and performance, and mention that followers can show the effects of leadership (Breevaart and Zacher 2019; Gerpott 2020). Therefore, a leader depends highly on their peers, which means followers' expectations and opinions must be considered and what makes them inspired and motivated, so they both can work towards the same objective (Dixon 1994; Armstrong 2012).

The studies on leadership theory started in the 20th century, englobing the vision that leadership is only regarding hierarchical attitudes (Bass and Avolio 1990). However, various viewpoints have created different theories that aim to define best the subject (Bennis and Nanus 1985; Bass and Avolio 1990).

2.1.1 Leadership Theories

There are many types of leaders, which makes the elaboration of a single leadership theory extremely challenging. Consequently, it is suggested that users may rely upon various theories to justify the different factors of leadership attitudes (Armstrong 2012). Analysing and exploring leadership theories is an important method to assess which leaders' styles and set of behaviours are needed in different situations, exploring what makes them great or simply managers (Pretorius *et al.* 2018). Some leadership theories are described below:

- **The Trait theory** is a prior and straightforward description of the common characteristics or traits that leaders may possess. However, there are many criticisms of this theory. Research suggests that a person does not become a leader only relying on their natural traits, indicating that these traits can be developed (Channing 2020; Armstrong 2012; Stogdill 1948).
- **The Contingency (Situational) theory** affirms that there is no right leadership style. It will depend on the business context, needs, and other variables, which will define the understanding and actions required by the leader (Armstrong 2012; Fiedler 1967). Bass *et al.* (2008) also suggest that the leadership style should be in line with follower's maturity. Therefore, the leader must adapt to the situation and renovate their leadership style between task-oriented and relationship-oriented (Khan *et al.* 2016).
- **The Style and Behaviour theory** supports the importance of necessary skills to empower the leader to take specific actions in different business contexts, and this is based on employee-oriented behaviours and job-oriented behaviours (Armstrong 2012). This theory also suggests that leaders can fit in the styles autocratic, democratic, and laisses-faire (Khan *et al.* 2016; Feidler and House 1994).
- **The Path-Goal theory** defines that a leader reveals the most efficient path to be followed by the employees. The employees understand the leaders' behaviour because they are supposed to be a source of empowerment and trust (House and Mitchel 1975). Therefore, the leader acts as a facilitator and coach, rewarding fine performances and engaging in different types of behaviour concerning a situation's

nature. This way, the leader's responsibility is to ensure goal alignment between employees and the organisation. Some leadership styles present in this theory are achievement-oriented, directive, participative, and supportive (Armstrong 2012).

- **Leader-Member Exchange theory** englobes social exchange theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995). The focus is on the unique relationship between leader and follower, reflecting the follower's quality of commitment, loyalty, and behaviours (Breevart *et al.* 2015). Based on this theory, it is found that the leader affects positively some followers' outcomes such as job satisfaction, task performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, and commitment (Dulebohn *et al.* 2012). This theory also argues that the low quality of leader-member relationships is based simply on economic exchange. In contrast, high-quality relationships are based on trust and mutual respect (Breevart *et al.* 2015).

After the study of theories, a focus has shifted on analysing which leadership styles, or in other words, set of behaviours, are more effective than others (Barker 2001; Schaufeli 2015; Lord *et al.* 2017). Thus, leadership style is the route adopted to influence and motivate followers to achieve organisational goals. Each style has been classified through a group or set of behaviours (Schaufeli 2015; Khajeh 2018; Potter *et al.* 2018).

2.1.2. Leadership Styles

The leadership styles impact their teams' behaviours, working attitudes, and degree of efficiency, making the study of engaging leadership increasingly popular (Hoch 2013; Schaufeli 2015). Leaders' style or set of behaviours adopted towards their teams is linked to employees' emotional well-being and stress, consequently, to the level of engagement to a job (Skakon *et al.* 2010; Schaufeli 2015). Several leadership styles that have been previously studied are described below:

- **Charismatic leaders** are confident and get people to believe and inspire their ideas (Armstrong 2012). First described by Weber (1947), charismatic leaders stand out from others and are "magical" to organizations, inspiring followers' performance (Mittal 2015). However, charisma is not enough. After analysing some authoritarian leaders, the risks involved consist of blind extremism upon inspiring

dangerous values (Eatwell 2006). Therefore, practising this leadership theory could be risky, since it is required to understand the difference between ethical and unethical leaders who make use of just charisma to motivate and inspire followers to execute unreasonable ideas (Howell and Avolio 1992).

- **Visionary leadership** is described as a strategic trait. These leaders can clearly communicate the image of a positive and meaningful goal to their team, influencing the organisation's members to cooperate towards that vision (Nanus 1992; Knippenberg and Stam 2014). Visionary leaders can influence team strategic commitment through effective and robust communication (Stam *et al.* 2014). Conversely, Ates *et al.* (2018) shown that if managers do not align with CEO visions, the vision would not be adequately transmitted to followers, diminishing the strategic team commitment.

- **Transformational leadership** is when the leader can strategically change the team's behaviour to achieve its goals by using their beliefs (Burns 1978; Howell and Avolio 1992). It is agreed that the style is composed of four dimensions: idealized influence, as the leader is a model of behaviour to follow; inspirational motivation, so the leader communicates its vision and have high hopes on their team; intellectual stimulation, encouraging others to be creative and the leader as being open to changes, and individual consideration, where leaders develop, care, and coach their team (Arnold 2017; Khajeh 2018). Empirical research has found a positive impact of transformational behaviours on employee commitment and motivation (Bass and Avolio 1990; Arnold 2017; Breevart and Zacher 2019).

- **Transactional leadership** is exchanging valuable things for the follower, which may motivate the team (Armstrong 2012). Bass *et al.* 2008 suggest that transformational and transactional styles usually are used together once it may be more effective in a bank setting for motivating the peers. Chaudhry and Javed (2012) indicate that transactional style shows high levels of employee motivation over transformational behaviours.

- **Authentic leadership** is an expressive style. These leaders show attitudes desiring to serve others instead of their power or interest, building solid relationships, inspiring others to choose following them due to their nature, consistency, and discipline (George 2007). Furthermore, Ilies *et al.* (2005)

suggested that authentic leadership fosters employee creativity and engagement while informing that organisations develops authentic leaders, using coaches, training, and feedback systems to gain competitiveness. Therefore, focusing on self-esteem, integrity, self-monitoring, and emotional intelligence is vital for those types of leaders' development (Chaudhary and Panda 2018).

A range of studies mentions transformational leadership style as the most effective (Gardner *et al.* 2010; Arnold 2017; Khajeh 2018; Potter *et al.* 2018; Breevart and Zacher 2019). Although, recent literature introduced a variety of other directive definitions of leadership, such as benevolent leadership (Cenkci and Özçelik 2015), engaging leadership (Schaufeli 2015), humble leadership (Waters and Diab 2016), and employee empowerment (Tuckey *et al.* 2012).

Those recent styles have focused on follower performance, well-being, and commitment (Schaufeli 2015). Decuypere and Schaufeli (2019) argued, through a deductive analysis, that there is an overlap of leadership styles. Leaders with different styles tend to adopt similar behaviours that aim to increase employee engagement (Decuypere and Schaufeli 2019).

2.1.3 Leadership Behaviours

Considering that the leadership style can affect work engagement, leaders must show a resilient leadership style to tackle different changes within a variety of situations, behaving appropriately in each process (Yukl 2008; Pretorius *et al.* 2018, Fletcher 2016; Mehmood *et al.* 2016). For example, the group of behaviours categorised in the transformational leadership style has been verified to be the most effective set of behaviours by now, lastly, four key behaviours were identified: influence, intellectual stimulation, motivation, and individualized consideration (Avolio *et al.* 1999; Gardner *et al.* 2010). Similarly, to effects of this research, the literature suggests five distinct leadership practices (Kouzes and Posner 2012):

- Inspiring a shared vision

Leaders have a significant role in picturing changes in their followers' attitudes, and the trust in their leader is critical to best inspire the followers (Breevart and Zacher 2019). Although a leader is not in power to input a commitment into the

follower, they can inspire the team to align their goals (Kouzes and Posner 2012). To promote this inspiration, a leader needs an understanding of the followers, besides a fair amount of communication skills, enthusiasm, and confidence (Kouzes and Posner 2012; Breevart and Zacher 2019).

One of the leadership tactics to influence peers is having shared organisational values within the team. All employees should identify themselves with the company's culture and values before entering the company (McClelland 1975; House 1977).

- Enabling others to act

Leadership is a process that requires an impact on followers. Therefore, the leader must shape a process, supporting the team to notice a path to follow, empowering and qualifying them (Kouzes and Posner 2012). This ability makes followers better understand problems, increasing their analytical and problem-solving skills (Bass and Avolio 1990). It is possible to relate the behaviour trait with 'Intellectual Stimulation', making problems possible to be solved by followers (Bass 1985).

- Challenging the process

Any leadership process involves some challenges, and leaders must consider that taking risks is necessary. One of the most important leadership roles is challenging opportunities to get the best from the team (Kouzes and Posner 2012). In a competitive and changing world, leaders must find micro patterns in their teams and consider the whole function and dysfunction of the business context and process (Kappagomtula 2017). In case any process for change is identified, the leader should be able to create one to challenge the team (Heifetz and Laurie 1997; Pretorius *et al.* 2018; Jaster 2018).

- Modeling the way

It is important that leaders can offer the best consistent examples, considering that actions can inspire more than simply words (Johnson 2015). Leaders can set examples by team-working, telling events that make their personal values appear, being approachable under challenging times, and supporting their followers to reflect on their priorities (Kouzes and Posner 2012; Johnson 2015).

- Encouraging the heart

Encouragement is not only based on vivid actions, but it also comprehends minimal actions that show any degree of appreciation (Kouzes and Posner 2012). This behaviour is linked with the contingent reward for those who meet the project goals and values (Bass 1985). Similarly, the models of high-performance work systems that provide the differences between reward as a control instrument and rewards as a factor of a high-performance were developed to increase employee commitment (Becker and Gerhart 1996; Vandenberg *et al.* 1999).

2.1.4 Leadership Development

Some studies indicate that leadership cannot be developed. It involves strategic processes to empower others through confidence and humility, which would not be learned in formal training (Zhihongs, *et al.* 2013; De Neve *et al.* 2013). However, some studies affirm the opposite, considering that leadership can be part of a management programme, including both informal and formal training, which effectively could transform ordinary people into outstanding leaders (Guthrie and Jones 2012; Channing 2020). The person under the process needs to be open-minded, a fast learner, and critical; however, leadership development also relies on the organisation's environment and culture (Armstrong 2012).

The acceptance of leadership theories and styles given in management organisations is highly beneficial since they provide several vital characteristics crucial to the team leader (Armstrong 2012). Furthermore, several approaches to leadership development are suggested, such as competency assessments, formal training, 360-degree feedback, coaching, and mentoring (Armstrong 2012). Nevertheless, a framework for effective leadership development strategy is suggested, including articulation of leadership contexts, alignment to business strategy, assessment of individual readiness, adaptable organization environment, aspiration alignment, and agile human resources (HR) processes (Maheshwari and Yadav 2018).

Therefore, a fair leadership development design is critical to achieving employee engagement and other positive organisational outcomes effectively. Hence, a leader

has a better stimulus on followers' view of task significance, which leads to employee engagement on the job (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008; Xu and Thomas 2011).

2.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an increasingly critical subject in recent years concerning organisational effectiveness, and leadership behaviour is an antecedent of many other factors, including employee engagement (Xu and Thomas 2011; Saul *et al.* 2015; Decuyper and Schaufeli 2019). Likewise, human assets have become highly profitable to organisations lately (Xu and Thomas 2011).

The term employee engagement was first introduced by Kahn (1990), considering that engaged employees show positive behaviours and traits, actively demonstrating their full presence while performing their job activity. Or in other words, employees boost their presence in the job “. . . physically, cognitively, and emotionally” (Frank, *et al.* 2004, p.15). Additionally, Kouzes and Posner (2012) showed that the connection between the leader and the follower is positively related to enhanced job satisfaction and productivity levels.

Nevertheless, organisational commitment is considered different from engagement because it is purely employees' behaviour regarding their company, whereas engagement is the level concerning employees' presence in their jobs (Saks 2006). Whereas Teh and Sun (2012) argued the term organisational citizenship behaviour is related to positive voluntary attitudes that are not in the job specifications, attitudes held by employees that are helpful to organisations. In this context, Figure 1 represents the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement.

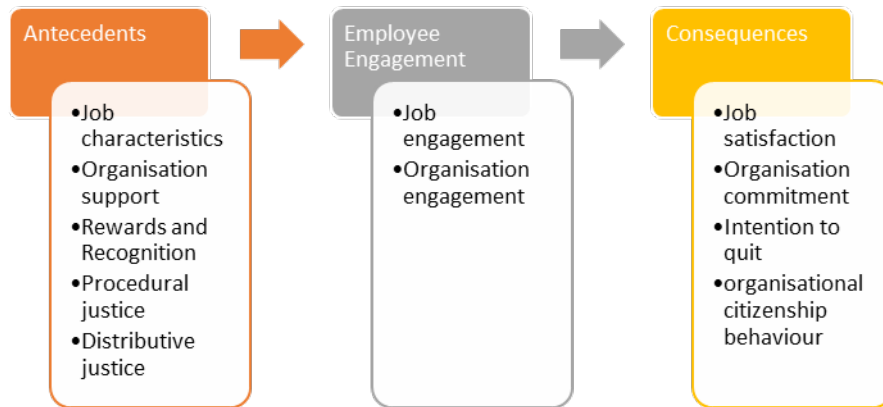


Figure 1 - Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement (Adapted from Saks 2006).

Furthermore, it was developed a range of employee’s attitudes that would demonstrate the consequences of employee engagement forementioned (Figure 2) (IES 2003; Saks 2006).



Figure 2 – The impact of an engaged employee (Source: Adapted from IES 2003).

Thus, employees who note organisational and leaders support are more likely to return high engagement levels to the job (Saks, 2006). The model of Social Exchange Theory (SET) argues that human relationship comprehends a series of intangible two-way communal trades, implying that every person seeks to take the most positive values and rewards from a social meeting (Cropanzano *et al.* 2016). Therefore, every person is looking for a 'productive exchange' delimiting social and cognitive behaviours (Schaufeli 2015). Concluding, meaningful networks and leadership support developed in organisations would also contribute to employee engagement (Saks 2006).

2.2.1 Employee Job Satisfaction

The relationship between the leader and employee is one of the main antecedents of employee job satisfaction (Fila *et al.* 2014). When an employee identifies himself with organisation values, goals, and strategy, the likelihood of positive job satisfaction increases, which means that the leadership can align the company strategy to their own behaviour, supporting the employee to feel comfortable delivering results (Alegre *et al.* 2016).

Employee job satisfaction is also positively correlated to employee empowerment activities, which is based on psychological and behavioural traits that affect employee satisfaction (Pelit *et al.* 2011). The behavioural traits comprehend constructive communications, an environment of trust, and motivational theories performed by leaders that are crucial to positive employee job satisfaction (Yoon 2001).

There is a link between Herzberg's two-factor theory and employee satisfaction (Hancer and George 2003). The theory examines the attributes that directly impact employee job satisfaction while performing a job: senses of recognition, growth, nature of work, responsibility, and achievement, called intrinsic factors. At the same time, hygiene factors contribute to fair employment conditions on all sides of the job: management, benefits, relations with co-workers, working conditions, and compensation, called extrinsic factors. Conversely, the literature argues it is not linked to job satisfaction (Hertzberg 1959 cited in Hancer and George 2003; Hitt *et al.* 2012).

2.2.2 Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment is the acceptance and psychological self-identification with the organisational culture and values, turning it into the employee's willingness to maintain efforts that benefit the organisation (Porter *et al.* 1974; Allen and Meyer 1990). Additionally, it is the employee's will not to leave the organisation, exhibiting loyalty and self-identification with the organisation goals (Bulut and Culha 2010).

A component of organisational commitment is affective and emotional commitment (Allen and Meyer 1990; Puangyoykeaw and Nishide 2015). Affective commitment is related to the psychological aspect and the positive workplace behaviour present in the context (Allen and Meyer 1990). Considering that it is a relationship between the employee and the organisation, it is necessary to instil commitment among the workforce, and the employees should be introduced to the company's mission, culture, and values from the beginning (Hadian 2017). Thus, the organisation and employee relationship should remain intact (Bulut and Culha 2010; Hadian 2017).

Committed employees can improve organisational productivity, being valuable assets to an organisation (Chhabra and Charma 2014). Moreover, organisational commitment is found to be influenced by perceived organisation support, actively impacting employee job satisfaction, intention to quit, and employee engagement (Saks; 2006; Yousef 2016; Arasanmi and Krishna 2019).

According to social exchange theory, employees would expect to be rewarded in the form of attention, money, or gifts, which could increase the company's levels of commitment (Cropanzano 2016; Vance 2006). Additionally, organisation culture is an important driver to increase organisational commitment, highlighting the leaders' role of translating the culture of the organisation into daily behaviours towards their teams (Rashid *et al.* 2003)

2.3 The Engaging Leader through transformational leadership behaviours

Engaging leaders need crucial high levels of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and situational awareness in order to adopt the most appropriate behaviours to situations, inspire and empower their team, and increase employee job performance

(IES 2009; Schaufeli 2015; Joseph *et al.* 2019). Thus, leaders setting a clear vision should stimulate employee engagement since the employees are confident about the linkage of their work to the company's future, being able to internalize the organisation goals (Balwant 2019). These attitudes can create an emotional contagion within the team (Bager and Grandey 2006).

Gardner *et al.* (2010) indicate that the transformational style is the most effective leadership style. The five distinct practices proposed entail transformational behaviours that aim to evidence vision-focused leaders, who custom their behaviours to positively make an impact within their team, motivating, shaping the way, enabling others to solve-problems creatively, providing rewards that reflect the work done (Kouzes and Posner 2012; Balwant 2019).

2.4. Rationale

The rationale of this research is to enhance the understanding of whether and in which ways employee engagement is impacted by leadership behaviours in 'Big Four' companies within the financial services industry in Brazil. Based on a theoretical framework derived from social exchange theory, this research seeks to evaluate if the relationship leader-employee influences the quality of the services delivered. Social exchange theory is based on the positive relationship between cognitive behaviours and resources input by the leader and the level of commitment delivered by the employee (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995; Crozanpano *et al.* 2016).

In order to assess this information, the author studied 'Big Four's low-level employees, adopting is a qualitative approach achieved through semi-structured interviews. The 'Big Four' employees were chosen due to the importance of people's work and the description of this service being labelled as the core operational product that 'Big Four' companies put on sale (Almeida and Almeida 2010).

The four multinational giants which deliver auditing and advisory services are intrinsically named 'Big Four' companies: EY, PwC, KPMG, and Delloite. In this business, the main product that is sold is human services. Therefore the employees are noted as the main asset of those companies (Almeida and Almeida 2010).

Additionally, there are numerous projects and teams spread in projects across several clients. Thus, the tasks carried out by associates, seniors, and managers require leadership skills, influencing the peers' associates in a rational direction, taking control, guiding the associates, and inspiring them to do better, delivering an excellent service (Hoogh *et al.* 2015).

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter explored the extent of literature in employee engagement and leadership that exist to date and apply them in the research methodology, besides addressed employee satisfaction and organisational commitment as a consequence and influence of employee engagement. This chapter also found several leadership key behaviours shown by relevant literature that would impact employee engagement.

Despite the volume of studies, it has been noted that there are numerous leadership and employee engagement studies carried out to date. However, little has been studied about financial services organisations in Brazil that have a significant impact on the current financial market (Hoogh *et al.* 2015; Degenhart and Cunha 2020).

Leadership plays a vital role not only in 'Big Four' companies but also in Brazil. The context is collectivist, meaning that the people are loyal in exchange for tangible and intangible paybacks once Brazilians value communication, trust, and building relationships (Hofstede 2021). Additionally, the country shows high tolerance levels, meaning that people value well-being, moments of happiness, and fun (Hofstede 2021).

3. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Considering the importance of investigating the best practices and behaviours that leaders could adopt on daily work to impact Employee Engagement, the central question of this research is: how leadership behaviours of line managers impact employee engagement of low-level employees in financial services organisations in Brazil?

In this context, the author explored the impact upon employee engagement, which was assessed based on three leadership behaviours delimited by Kouses and Posner (2003):

1. Inspiring a vision
2. Encouragement and recognition.
3. Enabling others to act

Additionally, the author proposes to explore the impact of Leadership Behaviours, which was assessed based on two consequences of Employee Engagement delimited by Saks (2006) measured in two ways:

1. Employee Job Satisfaction
2. Organisational Commitment

The Figure 3 shows the theoretical framework developed in this research, summarizing the impact of leadership behaviours on employee engagement.

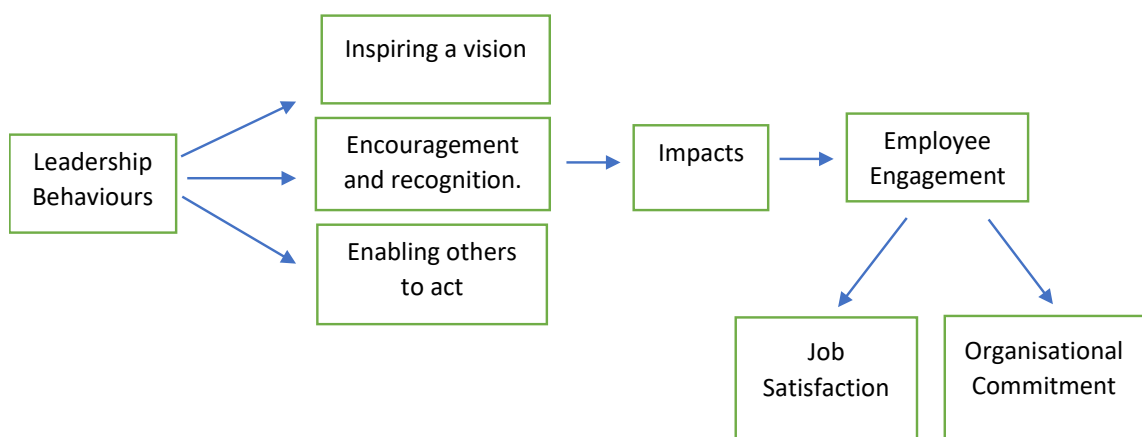


Figure 3 – Theoretical Framework.

3.1 Research Objectives

- To examine whether leadership behaviours, in the form of inspiring a vision, encouragement and recognition and enabling others to act impacts employee engagement.
- To examine employees' perception of leadership behaviours in engendering employee engagement.
- To determine the effectiveness of leadership behaviour on employee engagement as measured by employee satisfaction and organisation commitment.
- To explore whether, and in which ways, the relationship between line manager and employee impacts employee engagement.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details the approach and procedure used in this research, including the research philosophy and framework that supports the formal establishment of this thesis. It also provides an overview of the data collection, as well as the analyses utilized to interpret this information. The research strategy for assessing the linkage between employee engagement and leadership behaviours is exposed, comprehending specifics about the research instrument (semi-structured interviews). The ethical considerations and personal data protection are also described.

The framework defined by Saunders *et al.* (2019) is used to best illustrate the methodology used in this research, showing different levels that would influence the results achieved, like research philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons, and procedures. Figure 4 compares those subtopics to an onion, giving an outline from where the research is placed and comprehending the further described subjects in this chapter (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

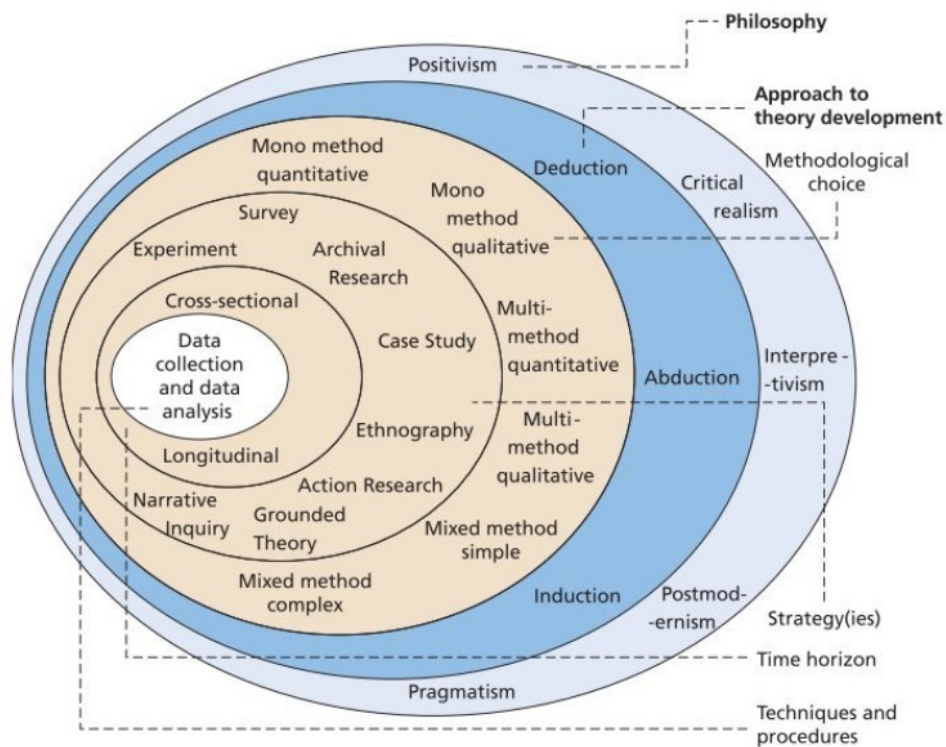


Figure 4 - The research onion (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

4.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is described as a sense of how a study should be performed along with the connection and organisation between theory and data collected (Blumberg *et al.* 2008). The most relevant philosophies to any research are positivism and interpretivism. Interpretivism theorists are highly critical of positivism theory since it affirms that there is no universal law applicable to all, instead, it is assumed that brilliant insights are forgotten is those general laws (Saunders *et al.* 2019). Furthermore, in topics such as business, entrepreneurship, and organisational behaviour, an interpretive approach is considered the most suitable in order to get a critical insight on the subject (Packard 2017; Saunders *et al.* 2019).

Therefore, this research adopts the philosophy of interpretivism as it acknowledges that people are different, experiencing varied viewpoints of life, for instance, what means for some, may not mean for others. The author acknowledges that the respondents have diverse backgrounds and encounter different social realities, therefore, this research has focused on obtaining a subject understanding of respondents' attitudes, behaviours, and feelings (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

4.3 Research Approach

Under positivism and interpretivism philosophies come the deductive and inductive approaches (Saunders *et al.* 2019). The deductive approach comes from testing a theory. In contrast, the inductive approach focuses on generating a theory from exploring a subject (Saunders *et al.* 2019). This research takes on a deductive approach since it involves creating premises supported by researched theories to assess the identified variables. The premisses and objectives identified are tested through data collection and thematic analysis applying qualitative methods.

4.4 Research Design

The research design carried out in this research commenced from the importance of theory to assess the information collected. The data collection was carried out within 'Big Four' companies' employees under the financial services sector in Brazil. Thus, the author opted to use qualitative and exploratory research based on data collected by semi-structured, non-standardized interviews (Appendix A). The method is based on a list of critical questions that can change, to some degree, from interview to interview, depending on the flow of the conversation and business context that the interviewee is immersed in. It is advantageous because there are several key questions to be answered, the questions will be open-ended, and the logic of questions may vary (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

Therefore, the interviews were conducted with low-level employees, from 3 months to 2 years of experience. Since those associates are not under a senior level and are not expected to lead a team, being under leadership instructions impacts their productivity. Hence, there is a shortage of bias in their answers. Those questions and answers can be contingently interpreted, relying on what each participant says and their experiences (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

4.5 Research Strategy

An association between leadership and employee engagement would actively mean that a change on one would steadily impact the other (Gravetter and Forzano 2012). In order to illustrate the connection between the variables, the author should take appropriate, meaningful interpretations around these topics (Saunders *et al.* 2019). For this reason, this research adopted the use of interviews, which is the most effective method when researching small samples and deep answers, generally used in qualitative research (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

Due to current issues related to Covid-19, the interviews occurred online, in real-time one-to-one conversations through Microsoft Teams, once it offers video-conferencing facilities, file transfers, real-time transcription, and the possibility of the process being recorded. Those types of interviews are known as synchronous

electronic interviews, and employing this technology is beneficial as the interviewees can be geographically spread (Saunders *et al.* 2019)

Furthermore, the author ran one pilot interview with one colleague to test the questions' suitability through Microsoft Teams. It was composed of proposed and additional questions so that the author could mitigate some risks of misunderstanding, bias, incomplete information, ie. The author also audio taped recorded the interviews on an electronic device in order to diminish the risk of losing data in case Microsoft Teams does not process the recordings.

4.6 Research Procedure

This research has been developed through the overview of the Saks (2006) study, which defined the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement and grounded on the key leadership behaviours designed by Kouzes and Posner (2012). The studies carried out led the author in the development of appropriate interview questions which match the expectations of this research topic. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019, p.134), the interviews method:

“... Suggests you value data collected through personal interaction with your participants more highly views expressed through responses than views expressed to an anonymous questionnaire.”

Additionally, since an interpretivist approach is adopted, the interview questions were developed after themes identified in the literature review. The themes were subjected to change regarding the backgrounds or interviewee features (Saunders *et al.* 2019). The themes for the questions were the leadership behaviours: inspiring a vision, encouragement and recognition, and allowing others to act. Additional themes to assess employee engagement were include, such as organisational commitment and employee satisfaction.

The interviews were internet-mediated, synchronous visuals, and recorded using Microsoft teams. Using this sort of technology is positive, according to Saunders *et al.* (2019, p. 478):

“...Where the population you wish to interview are geographically dispersed (...) You may be able to build rapport with an interviewee during an internet mediated interview where

you have carefully prepared for this, including sending pre-interview information to your participant... ”

Thus, the author mailed the invite to participants containing the ‘information’ and ‘consent’ sheets (see Appendices B and C) along with data protection information. Afterwards, they were transcribed and translated from Portuguese to English in a text document, which was organized on a spreadsheet to facilitate data analysis.

4.7 Research Sample

It is worth highlighting the difference between non-probability samples, which is more subjective as it allows the use of the available participants to contribute to the research; and probability samples, which is simply a random selection of the population. The author used a non-probabilistic sampling based on a conventional approach, as targeted interviewees are not known priorly and it allows the author to find participants to test the objectives. Therefore, the author could answer delimited research questions and objectives that this research focused on. It allows for in-depth research that focuses on a small number of interviewees in the research industry, so the author could explore the rich responses to evaluate leadership roles and consequent levels of employee engagement in the business context.

The sample size was selected through the availability/convenience approach, and eleven low-level employees from ‘Big Four’ companies were gathered from the author’s connections. The interviewee's anonymity was preserved. Therefore, it would allow more impartial answers diminishing bias (Saunders *et al.* 2019). The data collected was first transcript on a text document and later organized on a spreadsheet with only relevant parts to answering the research objectives. The data collected were both visual and verbal data through a videorecording (Saunders *et al.* 2019). The psychological choice in this research affects the data collected. Based on an interpretivist approach, the author conducts the interviews considering participants' events and viewpoints, firstly having to comprehend to later interpret those answers (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

4.8 Data analysis and reliability

This research covered a thematic coding analysis because it allowed the author to search for themes or patterns linked to grounded theory given in the literature review, that allocate further analysis of the topic and research question (Saunders *et al.* 2019). Hence, the author was able to understand rich information, assimilating data to the transcript, creating a thematic explanation, developing, and testing responses, meeting theories based on thematic relationships and verifying conclusions (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

The author focused on organizing the information collected into themes concerning each answer. Some participation bias may have occurred during work, such as cultural differences and credibility of the information due to the globalised world. Although, this was a diminished bias since it was conducted semi-structured interviews containing clarifying questions, probing meanings, exploring each response, and interpreting the answers appropriately (Saunders *et al.* 2019).

The data collected was input into a spreadsheet so that the author could visualise common themes connected to the four research objectives. The rationale in this step was to diminish bias on the data and increase its reliability. The author reviewed the responses under the themes of leadership behaviours and employee engagement. Additionally, the author included common themes and sub-themes connected to the main themes priorly defined.

4.9 Time horizon

Considering a limited time exists in academic studies, as a cross-sectional method is chosen since it englobes research on a phenomenon during a given time, besides, it is the most suitable method to answer the research question. The author has taken two weeks to complete the eleven interviews and achieve the time prior scheduled.

4.10 Research limitations

Nevertheless, this research is based on scientific theories and a theoretical framework, and it has been analysed through reliable interview procedures. It

indicates several limitations. The research has been performed through cross-sectional information in order to answer the research questions, therefore longitudinal data was not used in this research. This is explained since time limitation was an issue and the author believes this research would have been richer through applying longitudinal data, which means collecting information over time instead of only capturing one time (Saunders 2019).

The decision to collect qualitative data has suffered from the number of employees analysed. This research was issued to a minimum percentage of 'Big Four' companies' employees. Managers and seniors were excluded from the data since they could have some bias regarding leadership and consequent impact. The sample size is relatively small, and some of the results are miscellaneous. Therefore, the author acknowledges that the results may not indicate a fixed conclusion. The author then understands that the analysis may show a relatively small view of employees of how and whether respective leadership behaviours impact employee engagement.

4.11 Research Ethics

This research was developed under ethical consequences, which concern how to collect data from others and manage it properly. The ethical standards were in line with what is defined by the National College of Ireland. The author informed the interview participants about their data protection rights, a choice to abstain from questions they like, anonymity, and remembering the participants was a voluntary process. They were given information and a consent sheet (Appendices B and C). Ethical concerns about the analysis and interpretation of those responses were also considered.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a concise evaluation of the findings of the participants' responses involving the research objectives and split between recurrent themes throughout the interviews. All the interviewees were informed about the theme of this research. Their answers were completely voluntary and confidential, grounded on data protection rules, to increase the level of confidence and reduce bias on the answers.

As highlighted in section 4.4, the interviewees were all with employees from generation Y (the millennials, born between 1980-1996) and generation Z (born between 1997-2012), comprehending less than two years of employment in 'Big Four' companies within financial services sector in Brazil, and do not have considerable leadership knowledge. It is worth mentioning that the participants usually are shifting into a variety of business projects hence, they are under the control of different managers regarding the project. Table 1 below is representing the participants' profiles.

Table 1 - Participants' profile

Participant	Job role	Gender	Big four	Generation
1	Business consultant	Female	Delloite	Millenial
2	Audit associate	Male	PwC	Gen Z
3	Change management	Female	PwC	Gen Z
4	Audit associate	Female	EY	Millenial
5	Evaluation consultant	Female	Kpmg	Gen Z
6	Audit associate	Female	PwC	Gen Z
7	Audit associate	Male	PwC	Gen Z
8	Economy consultant	Female	EY	Millenial
9	Audit associate	Male	Kpmg	Gen Z
10	Deals consultant	Male	PwC	Gen Z
11	Audit associate	Female	PwC	Gen Z

Source: Elaborated by the author 2021.

A thematic approach has been taken to uncover the research objectives presented in section 3.2 and synthesise the data. Therefore, the findings of the interviews are further explained under themes and subthemes identified as headings according to Figure 5 below.



Figure 5 - Themes and subthemes (Elaborated by the author 2021).

The finding, analysis, and insights from the interviews for each theme, as well as its subthemes, are described below.

5.2 Leadership behaviours

Addressing the first research objective (examine whether leadership behaviours impact employee engagement), the author considered the peers' view about the influence of managerial behaviours in the form of inspiring a vision, encouragement and recognition, and enabling others to act. After that, whether and how engaged the associates have felt about the tasks carried on. The author divides it in 3 subthemes as follows.

5.2.1 A path to follow

The participants were asked whether and how their manager would encourage them to think creatively and seek solutions and whether this affects their engagement. It is found that all the participants are under the influence of their line manager

attitude, giving them a path to follow. The majority said that such behaviour increases their motivation while performing the tasks.

“My manager schedules a call with us to explain the tasks... to understand our difficulties... to see which areas we are keen on learning; they share loads of norms and materials that we should follow... Therefore, giving us everything ready, showing us an easy path to follow. So, this is like an incentive to do better.” – (Participant 7)

“(...) my manager encourages me to learn the tools on the digital, so I can do better work in the digital world. I feel motivated because I see my leader doing the same. So, it's not a superficial command, I can see the Importance of those tools.” – (Participant 4)

“My manager just sent a link to our group. He is always seeking ways to optimize our work. He participates in loads of meetings with directors that aim to implement the 'digital work'. So, he sends always links in the group saying, 'have a look, this can optimize this process and ease this work'.” – (Participant 6)

“(...) learning about this project with this manager makes me realize that I could apply it to future projects. This motivates me, so I can share information with others and optimize their work.” – (Participant 1)

“My manager always gives us support. Because there are some questions that we cannot resolve by ourselves... but he always sends us a clear path and a clue. He shows how we should proceed in case something goes wrong... And the last option if the thing is not so simple, we can ask him.” – (Participant 7)

“He makes the way very clear for us to look for more methods to perform the tasks. For example, we were precipitating an asset, and he gave me some options and let me free to do it in another way. Because we don't keep just executing our tasks, we can think out of the box and do something to make the process better.” – (Participant 9)

These responses indicate the importance of appropriate leadership behaviours in order to guide the employees' path. Some of the main leadership behaviours highlighted by the interviewees were knowledge sharing, displaying expertise, keeping up to date, allowing others to think, and giving them options. Moreover,

these behaviours were related to more satisfied employees. Once they feel not stuck in their tasks, they increase their engagement.

5.2.2 Inspiring trust

The participants were asked whether and how their line managers would express confidence in their tasks, and how they can rely on their line managers while bringing their thoughts to a project. The findings suggest that managers who express confidence, positively displaying their job's expertise and knowing how to behave accordingly have a positive impact on the employees' view on the task and job, increasing their level of trust on their manager and tasks.

“He is always clear about the assignments, always respectful, and positively encouraging our thoughts.” – (Participant 1)

“They express confidence showing that their expertise, giving us some visions and clues about excel, that is very important for my career. On other projects, these managers can engage us through discussions, design, and demonstrating that our opinions are always going to be valued (...). We also have some weekly meetings where we share what we are doing and our goals. The cool is that it leaves us motivated.” – (Participant 10)

“I feel free to ask. My manager usually says, 'there is not a silly question, every question brings a learning point because every human has questions sometimes'.” – (Participant 7)

“(...) Because my manager knows how to behave in different situations” – (Participant 9)

However, one participant highlights that an overconfident manager who shows superiority makes them feel diminished and insecure about bringing up their thoughts.

“They express tons of confidence because they have years of expertise. When they want to sell a product, they have a sort of sketch on their mind. So, we go on developing the work along the way (...). Since they show confidence, I start to trust them. It's also a little bad because sometimes I feel frightened or apprehensive

about questioning something as they have so much expertise and they have this sort of overconfidence.” – (Participant 8)

The answers obtained indicate that inspiring trust is positively related to employee engagement. When managers display behaviours such as situational awareness, openness, expertise, respectable, social awareness, and an exact amount of confidence, the employees feel positive about their job.

5.2.3 Communication

The participants were asked how their line manager would communicate with them; consequently, how they would feel about their manager's way of communicating. The author has found that all the participants feel that the communication style impacts their engagement. Most participants (8) are impacted positively by their leader.

“It’s difficult to be optimistic about my department. We have to be very realistic. I had contact with different managers. Personally, mine is very reasonable, seeking something to motivate us to work.” – (Participant 10)

“Yes. The people are very young, so in the end, I feel very comfortable because everyone has an open mind. It’s good that they are open, and we can participate on kick-off meetings; thus I feel valued to bring our thoughts.” – (Participant 11)

“Even though it’s loads of work, they usually say they we are going to finish the job in the end, so we don’t need to worry.” – (Participant 11)

However, 3 participants felt negatively impacted by their management communication style. The author has found that the lack of openness and an excess of straightforwardness in their relationship makes the employee unwilling to participate in team meetings. Additionally, characteristics in communication that exhibit managers as demanding and conservatory are negative to employee engagement.

“I don’t feel comfortable in projects with the manager that is not so good with communication. I start to wonder, ‘what if I am wrong?’ because I simply don’t know that manager enough; therefore, I don’t know how this manager would

react... Since he/she doesn't talk enough with me, I simply don't know him, so I feel shy because it's an opinion within the team too.” – (Participant 6)

“In the beginning, I was timid because I thought the other managers would be like my last manager, who was demanding and conservator. With the current one, since the communication is open, I feel free to bring up my thoughts and consequently, I engage better in work.” – (Participant 1)

“The communication is very straightforward. The information is passed; however, I feel under pressure because the manager makes me feel like the tasks cannot go wrong. I usually feel very anxious, and when I feel anxiety, I can't produce. I also feel very static... you know when you are fixed in front of the computer, and you can start?” – (Participant 11)

In summary, the interviewed employees indicated that communication traits could influence the relationship quality between employee-leader, impacting employee engagement. The main positive behaviours are openness, realism, reasonability, and optimistic traits, as shown in the responses above.

5.2.4 Collaboration and Encouragement

Participants were asked whether and how their managers would contribute to their training and development and then whether they would feel engaged in work in case this happens. The findings show that the managers who show concern for their development make them feel more engaged in work from all the participants' views.

“Currently, this is my favourite company I have ever worked for. We make many friends. The seniors, managers, and other team members are focused on helping and sharing knowledge, that is a company's value that we are encouraged to put on practice, this I haven't seen in any other company...” (Participant 11)

“When I see a manager that gives me some hours of his time to mentor and to teach me to expand my knowledge on a subject, this makes me want to do more.” (Participant 9)

“(...) particularly in a project that I am close with the leader, the ones that follow us closely sending us training and tools... I end up performing better.” – (Participant 1)

“Constantly my manager supports me, encouraging me to undertake some courses, he mentors me. He does that through a weekly meeting.” (Participant 4)

“Because when they are teaching me, I feel like they are investing their time and project's hours so I can learn and be better. In the end, I will have more responsibility too, so it's a two-way effort.” – (Participant 8)

“Since my manager sends me different pieces of training, this increases my confidence on the job, and I feel more well prepared.” – (Participant 3)

“I work with a team that the relationship is very good (...) they are always seeking to give us support and give timely feedbacks... also to help the firm to deliver better jobs and to help me so I can develop as a professional. This contributes a lot relating to my professional growth within the firm and to my growth as a professional, So if someday I end up leaving the company, the knowledge that I am acquiring is going to impact a lot elsewhere.” – (Participant 7)

The perceptions indicated by the interviewed included behavioural traits that would increase employees' perception of managerial collaboration. Some of these behaviours were managers as coaches or mentors, the closeness between leader and employee, constructive feedback, knowledge sharing, and embracing the company's values.

5.3 Culture and Values

Addressing the second research objective, the theme of culture and values focuses on uncovering the employees' perception of leadership behaviours engendering employee engagement. The author has found that the line managers continually imply their companies' culture and values in their behaviours. Although, when there is a lack of managerial attitude, it is observed that HR deliver activities to facilitate the relationship between the line manager and employee.

5.3.1 Consideration of employees' values and wellbeing

The participants were asked whether and how their line manager considers their professional values and well-being. The research has found that 9 participants have supportive managers and they seemed impacted and satisfied with this sort of attitude.

“This is always very respected. A while ago, I had some personal problems, mainly in the home office, so they always send us off to not make us burn out.” – (Participant 7)

“Yes. For example, this week, I needed to use the bank hours, and they allowed me to get a day off on Friday.” – (Participant 8)

“Wellbeing is one of the company's values, so my managers are always open to hearing about my personal issues. Mainly now in a global pandemic, I feel free to ask something to my superior like an extra free time to exercise or do something more serious.” – (Participant 10)

“Yes (...) for example, should I say that I want to get experience in the offshore industry, my manager will include me in projects in the offshore industry, maybe it's not immediately, but my manager is considering it.” – (Participant 2)

“They consider. They ask and encourage us to trace our goals. They help us to achieve our goal, giving away clues on how we can improve. Sending materials, etc.,” – (Participant 5)

One participant has a manager that considers his value and wellbeing, even though he does not agree that it affects his engagement as an employee. However, he seemed satisfied with this managerial behaviour.

“About opinion, my manager asks, but about my wellbeing, he does not ask much. I don't feel this affects my engagement, though. I never had a personal issue that needed attention. However, I feel that they are open so I could talk about my personal issues and wellbeing.” – (Participant 6)

The perceptions obtained highlighted the importance of this kind of managerial consideration with employees' professional values and wellbeing to increase their work satisfaction.

5.3.2 Driving an engaged culture

Participants were asked whether and how their manager would translate the company's values into their daily attitudes and how they felt about the job. Their managers showed the respective sort of attitude. The findings show that every participant feels optimistic about the presence of these values in managerial behaviour.

"They say the company values, for example, they demonstrate a great level of accuracy and ethics in the tasks in order to be able to report the reality to stakeholders. When I see that the company is working ethically, I end up feeling that I am in the right place, contributing more in work." – (Participant 11)

"Generally, yes. My company is very flexible, and my manager considers my personal time available, just demands that I hand in the task done on time." – (Participant 5)

"The culture is very strong in PwC. The behavioural vision is actively impacted by the PwC culture. And my supervisor impacts it because he translates those values into daily work because the company environment and the people believe on PwC values." – (Participant 2)

"My leader is also my coach; he always gives me feedback reviewing my tasks... For example, my manager leaves very clear that we should not engage with some clients that are involved in corruption, for example, stating some of the values of my company" – (Participant 10)

"Then the job starts to make sense. When we see these values transfer, the job starts to get a meaning..." (Participant 4)

One participant also has stated that the company send on pieces of training about the values and culture. Therefore the values and culture are constantly shared.

"Besides the leader expressing the values in his behaviours... the company also is always sending new training and new policies... therefore we regularly receive emails with training showing shared-conducts within the company" – (Participant 7)

The interviewed participants indicated that they feel similarly satisfied when the manager translates the company's values into their attitudes. Different values were expressed between the participants, such as taking responsibility for their career, confidentiality, flexibility, transparency, social interaction, accuracy, and ethics.

5.3.4 HR Activities

Throughout the interviewee's responses, the author has found that when there is a lack of leadership attitude regarding the employee, the HR is consistently in the background, supporting the leadership and employee relationship and therefore, employee engagement, improving the work environment considerably.

"But at the end of the projects, the supervisor can give us formal feedback through an HR system called High5." – (Participant 3)

"I do not see this recognition. It had more recognition when I was in the audit department than here in my small department. We have 'applause' that is a tool that its easily possible to congratulate others. But in this department, I don't get any applause. Formally we have a feedback platform that I feel that's very accurate... although informally we never have anything, and I miss this." – (Participant 8)

"The company encourages a lot. Because it is offered many pieces of training in the cloud and then we can participate in other training from the other departments so we can know all the services offered by the company." – (Participant 5)

"The company always gave me timely feedbacks highlighting the things that I should do in order to be promoted. Therefore, I know what I need to improve." – (Participant 6)

"The company sends some training to undertake during the cycle. We have some training hours to do. So, this time to learn formally, we also have." – (Participant 8)

"There are programs related to meditation, emotional health, and they even offer some psychologists to talk through telephone (...) This affects my engagement because I miss personal contact, and it's very positive." – (Participant 5)

“The company consider our values, not the manager. There is a formal system where we can input our personal and professional objectives.” – (Participant 7)

“There is a delimited career framework, and then it shows that I would be a partner in the future...” – (Participant 2)

“It’s cool to see the actions that the company has, such as voluntarily actions. KPMG Brazil has the first transsexual as a leader, and I feel this is cool. KPMG for me is the people whom I work with, they always feel proud of themselves, and it impacts me”. – (Participant 3)

Most participants raised several comments about their company’s activities, indicating that the HR department plays an important role in assisting leadership in securing employee engagement, such as raising employer branding (advertisement of diversity, voluntary actions), career framework development, wellbeing, learning and development, and feedback platforms.

5.4 Employee engagement

Addressing the third research objective, the author also intrinsically assessed the levels of employee engagement, as measured by employees’ satisfaction and organisation commitment. The findings include that generally, the employees are committed to their organisation and satisfied in their jobs.

5.4.1 Employees' satisfaction

Employees were asked whether and how they are satisfied in their current role. The findings include that the overall answers were positive. Some positive characteristics include supervisor support, a challenging environment, a learning culture, building relationship, flexibility, and a structured career framework.

“I am happy and out of my comfort zone because every day is a challenge, and I feel I am constantly learning something new. My manager is open; therefore, I can chat with her, and I value social interaction, and my manager input in building a connection with me makes me feel valued.” – (Participant 3)

“Satisfied. It’s an important phase of my life. The company is very cool, there are loads of challenges, but I feel it’s a good experience for my professional career.” – (Participant 4)

“Very satisfied and happy (...) its flexible, I can conciliate all that I have to do, and I don’t feel sad in my job.” – (Participant 7)

“I am delighted. Because sometimes I am very apprehensive, so I always have a curiosity to discover new things. But overall, I feel very comfortable, not only with my manager but with my team.” – (Participant 9)

“(…) For now, it’s as expected. I value learning now in the beginning of my career, and I am getting it, so I am happy.” – (Participant 10)

“I am happy. But I also feel scared and preoccupied. Because we have a career framework and every year we can be promoted regarding our performance, so I am afraid that next year I will have more responsibility. But I am very happy that everything is aligned, and we can show our critical thinking.” – (Participant 11)

However, some participants are not completely satisfied with the job. The findings include that the opposing side is the salary, lack of incentive packages, employee self-reputation in the market, communication and relationship, and lack of supervisor support.

“I am satisfied, although I don’t see myself here for a long time. Nowadays the market doesn’t see well people who stay longer in a company. Sometimes it’s good to know new people, to know new processes.” – (Participant 9)

“Medium. The lack of money recognition leaves quite me upset.” – (Participant 1)

“From 0 to 10. I give 9. The negative side is the salary. I enjoy my supervisor and my team. I really like to be challenged, and the lack of routines, every day has something new to do.” – (Participant 2)

“Very satisfied and happy. It should be better incentives, though, as the feedbacks and motivation during a global pandemic. The company also helps with tools to development.” – (Participant 8)

“I am happy, but there is room for improvement. The negatives are not being listened to, and there is no room to say your thoughts, there is a lack of support too.

In the beginning, it was complicated because I had to develop myself and I missed an extra help.” – (Participant 5)

The answers obtained indicated that HR activities and management behaviours are essential and can affect employee satisfaction. On the other hand, some participants indicated that even satisfied with their managers and teams, and they would appreciate changes, like better salaries or more support.

5.4.2 Employees' organisational commitment

The participants were asked whether and why they feel a sense of belonging to their organisation. The findings include that 9 participants feel that they belong to their company. Most of the reasons are due to the company's culture and environment, onboarding process, company's values, sense of community, knowledge sharing, and supervisor support.

“Yes, the culture is very strong in PwC. In general, as workers, we are not offered the same conditions as PwC. The behavioural vision is actively impacted by the PwC culture. And my supervisor impacts it because he translates those values into daily work because the company environment and the people believe on PwC values.” – (Participant 2)

“Yes. It's cool to see the actions that the company has, such as voluntarily actions. KPMG Brazil has the first trans as a leader, and I feel this is cool. KPMG, for me, is the people whom I work with, they always feel proud of themselves, and it impacts me. If my leaders are engaged, why wouldn't I be?” – (Participant 3)

“I feel that the values are only for marketing in all companies. But currently, this is my favourite company I've worked for (...) The seniors and other team members are focused on helping and sharing knowledge, that is a company's value”. - (Participant 11)

“Yes. This work that they are to include me... to always talk about my objectives. To have a coach and to offer trainings... so many mechanisms that the company has by itself helps a lot on my satisfaction.” – (Participant 7)

“Yes, I have felt very comfortable in the company since the beginning. I have felt welcome in this company because we do every day meet there, so I have got a sort of friendship with my managers.” – (Participant 8)

“Yes. I think it’s more about the company’s culture. There is an onboarding process so we feel very welcomed, and it is possible to learn deeper about the company’s values and environment... even now, working remotely, I can feel part of the company. Things do this through communication and sending a letter to our address... and the managers sometimes send presents so I can feel that I am appreciated.” – (Participant 9)

However, 2 participants do not display a sense of organisational commitment. The findings include some characteristics that would diminish organisational commitment, such as antiquated company’s values, lack of alignment within the team or supervisor, and lack of HR policies.

“No. I share the values, and I consider myself engaged... I participate in training and whatever is made available to us... But I don’t share some values that I feel are outdated. The lack of some policies I feel affects this.” – (Participant 6)

“I try to give myself to the company, but I don’t feel like a team member. If everyone were able to give themselves, I would feel part of a team. I don’t feel recognition by others or my colleagues” (Participant 1)

The answers obtained indicated that HR activities highly impact organisational commitment. However, the results also indicate that it is still the leadership responsibility to convert the company’s values into daily behaviours, transforming the company environment into one that correlates to the previously advertised values.

5.5 (Dis)Engaging managers

Addressing the research objectives wholly and connecting them, the author has found common characteristics of an engaging and disengaging manager throughout the interview. Under the observation of this research, most of the managers of ‘Big Four’ organisations within the financial services sector in Brazil display positive

traits on employee engagement. However, the author has found a small number of negative behaviours affecting employee engagement.

5.5.1 Engaging managers

The research findings include engaging manager attitudes that impact employee engagement: openness, consideration of employees' opinions, leaders as a coach, recognition and feedback, fair autonomy in the tasks, encouragement to act, leading by example, and challenging behaviour shown in Figure 6.

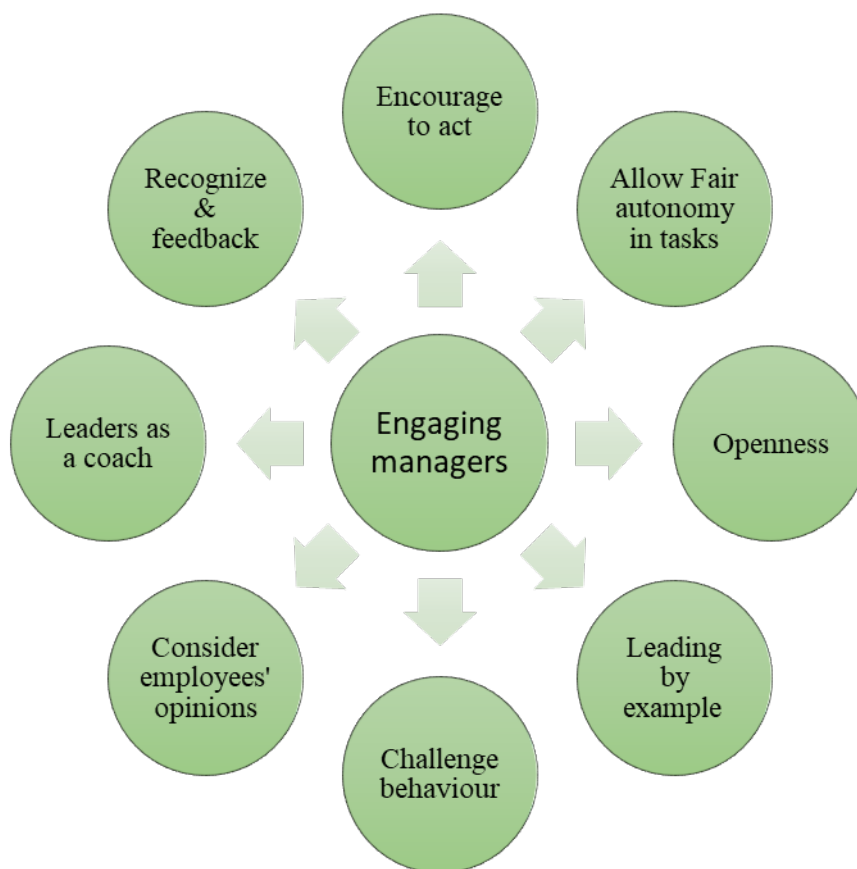


Figure 6 - Engaging managers traits (Elaborated by the author 2021).

The interviewees' comments that led the author to this conclusion are delimited below.

“Each project has one particularity. Since we do some jobs related to fraud and they have importance, I feel free to ask questions about my job, and the manager shows that she wants to know my thoughts about the projects.” – (Participant 2)

“Usually, most of the managers show that they care about me. Also, the policies that every employee has access to a coach, therefore having this coach/leader keeping up with our career steps... hence this coach ends up including us in the company.” – (Participant 7)

“It’s important to know how our leader is noticing our perspective of growth within the company. Because this motivates me to seek more knowledge to add up on the tasks.” – (Participant 9)

“Formally, always in the end of a project... the manager sends an email to the team, highlighting how we have solved the problems of our client. And publicly, the manager also schedules a meeting at the end of every project saying what’s good and what we should improve. Also, it’s given personal feedback when it’s needed.” – (Participant 7)

“I feel like the task is 100% mine, and it’s not mine at the same time, once my supervisor always must review. I feel free to perform the task in a way, but if it’s not agreed by my supervisor, I would have to do it again in the way he wants. To sum up, I feel free but not much.” – (Participant 2)

“There are certain processes that the manager asks how I would do a task instead of copying the way that the task has been done last fiscal year... So, the task wouldn’t be done automatically. Therefore, they aim to encourage to use other ways to execute the tasks.” – (Participant 7)

“Usually, they give me a challenge to do. They also stay open, so I can ask questions. They are always guiding me to change and improve what I am doing. This impacts my engagement. Since I feel challenged, I feel the responsibility to complete the tasks in a better way.” – (Participant 8)

“Yes. My manager gives us some ideas and lets us rack our brains. This affects my engagement because my efforts to conduct the activities by myself are important for my self-awareness and self-knowledge.” – (Participant 9)

“Their example is precious. Since I can see their efforts being valued, so I feel mine will be as well.” – (Participant 10)

“If my leaders are engaged, why wouldn't I be?” – (Participant 3)

“Since my manager acts such way, that is the way I will act. Managers that are not so engaging make me feel a certain discouragement to perform better the tasks. When the manager is more outgoing, wants to know more about the people they are working with, making chat also about your personal matters, it gives me more satisfaction to work.” – (Participant 6)

This subtheme ties up all other subthemes together, and its findings englobe that engaging managers can directly impact employees' behaviour concerning the job, along with employee satisfaction and organisational commitment, two consequences of employee engagement.

5.5.2 Disengaging managers

The research findings include disengaging manager attitudes that impact employee engagement, which is lack of challenging attitudes, discouraging employees from thinking, leading by a negative example, demanding, conservative, lack of openness, distant manager, and lack of knowledge sharing, as shown in Figure 7.

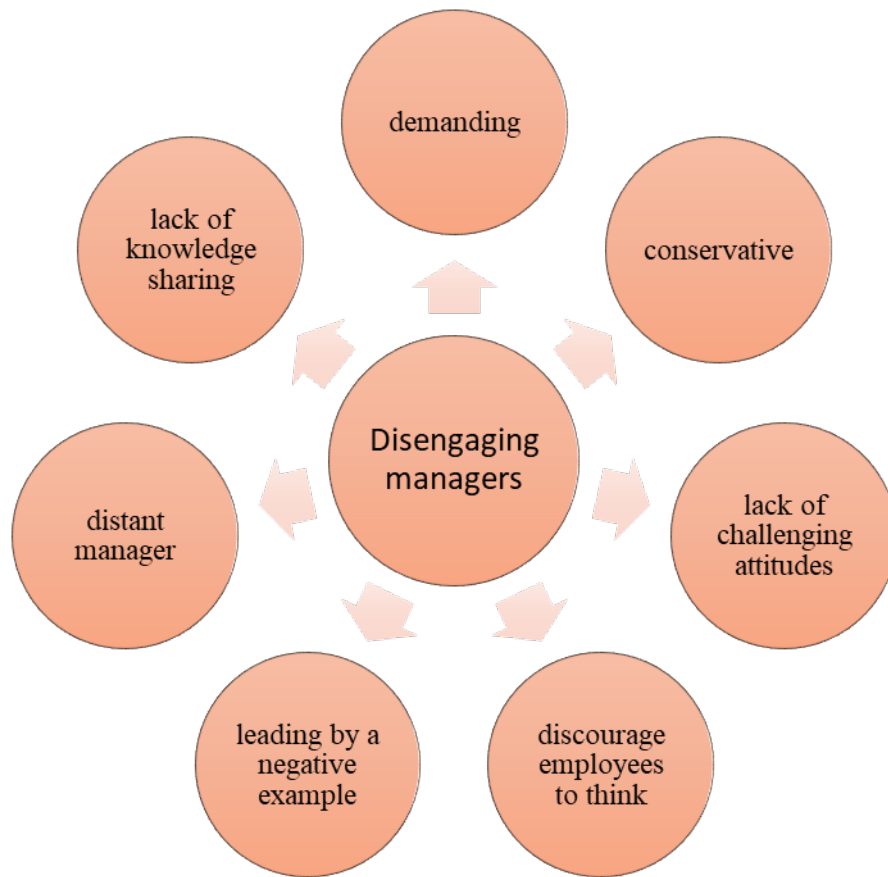


Figure 7 - Disengaging manager traits (Elaborated by the author 2021).

The interviewees' comments that led the author to this conclusion are delimited below.

"It's more automated work. Sometimes I don't know many ways to perform the task besides the one they explained. It's negative. Because it settles in the fact that I don't have much expertise, then I do the tasks the way they said, without thinking much. – (Participant 5)

"Because the managers are always overworked. Therefore, I don't think this is healthy. Also, I don't know if the pay is enough compared with the work given. My manager's examples given to me impact my opinion. For example, my manager says she is going on holiday now after two years, and she is going to work. Thus, I don't know if I want this for me." – (Participant 3)

“I don’t want to stay here until I retire. My leaders’ impact on this is because I can see how my seniors suffer, so I feel they have much responsibility, then I don’t know if I want this for myself.” – (Participant 11)

“(…) with the one who is demanding I feel afraid even to be myself.” – (Participant 5)

“The manager that is not encouraging, make me feel more stuck on the job or even when I don’t perform the tasks the way that manager wants, I feel very stuck like I have not done right the task.” – (Participant 5)

“When I see my leader doing the job right, this engages me. Either way, when I see a senior lost, I would end up feeling lost in the way.” – (Participant 11)

“Since I feel very inferior and unequal as the managers have years’ experience. So, I feel frightened to question and share my thoughts...” – (Participant 8)

The answers englobe that a disengaging manager can directly impact employees’ behaviours regarding the job, being capable of diminishing employees’ satisfaction and organisational commitment.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results from various themes and subthemes in the form to explore the research objectives, including that the relationship between line manager and employee impacts employee engagement. This happens through many behavioural traits, some of them are inspiring trust, driving an engaged culture, openness in communication, feedback, and recognition, encouraging employees to act, and knowledge sharing. On the other hand, the author also found the employees perception of leadership behaviours in engendering employee engagement. Most of the responses have shown that leadership and organisational support from the onboarding process to day-to-day activities are fundamental to guarantee employee engagement.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This research aimed to understand the effects of leadership behaviours developed by Kouzes and Posner (2012) on employee engagement by exploring whether and how leaders portray such behaviours. It was done analysing if leadership behaviours have an impact on two types of engagement: job engagement (relationship with the work) and organisation engagement (relationship with the company).

The author believes that organisations and leaders who focus on engaging behaviours as found in the analysis and driving an engaged culture within the organisations on the scope can positively engage employees for constructive individual productivity, team, and business performance. The findings in this research agree with the results of studies conducted by Schaufeli (2015) and Saks (2009). They conclude that there is a positive linkage between leadership behaviours and employee engagement.

Despite the studies aforementioned, some further findings within this research correlate to the organisations in scope being 'Big Four' under the financial services sector, which was not a factor in other studies in this subject. In this chapter, the author will discuss the overall findings against the study's objectives, discuss how it connects to recent literature, divide it by themes, provide the research limitations, and indicate the functional implications of the research's findings.

6.2 Leadership behaviours

The research credibly evidences that for the organisations under the scope, where employees experience leadership behaviours and attitudes, and feel engaged when a sort of behaviours emerges, the employees would value traits of transformational leadership style (Arnold 2017; Khajeh 2019). The research found that openness, consideration to employees' opinions, leaders as a coach, recognition and feedback, fair autonomy allowance in tasks, encouragement to act, leading by example, and challenging behaviour positively affect employee engagement. Those attitudes positively correlate to exemplary leadership behaviours as marked in literature,

which is model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enabling others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes and Posner 2012).

The findings indicate that there is a strong sense of collaboration through tasks, leaders, and team members. Hence, social exchange theory is present for the whole relationship between employee-leader, which is congruent with Crozanpano *et al.* (2016), who believes that cognitive behaviours input by the leader impacts employee commitment. It also aligns to what is evidenced by Breevart *et al.* (2015), who evidences that when this relationship is less focused on the economic exchange and more focused on trust and respect, the levels of employee engagement are more satisfactory.

In addition, the findings indicate that granting employees a path to follow correlates to employee engagement. This finding relates to behaviours such as enabling others to act and intellectual stimulation (Bass 1985; Kouzes and Posner 2012). Recent research highlighted that encouraging people to be curious can generate a variety of workplace benefits like a collaborative environment facilitating to resolve customers issues (Gino 2018). This sort of employee curiosity correlates to leadership attitudes of modelling and encouraging the employees to act. However, it is a careful managerial attitude to have towards the employee, where managers can confuse and simply tell what the peers should do, instead to encourage them (Gino 2018; Milner and Milner 2018). Thus, coaching managers to be proper leaders would be highly profitable to an organisation (Milner and Milner 2018).

It was noted that when managers display behaviours such as situational and social awareness that are within the umbrella of emotional intelligence, the employees feel more trust in the leader. Inspiring trust is fundamental to creating an engaged team of peers. This insight agrees with what has been fore mentioned in the literature review by IES (2009), Chaudhary and Panda (2018), and Joseph *et al.* (2019). It has been increasingly accepted the leaders who are able to manage themselves and able to behave appropriately regarding the situation.

Another trait evidenced in the analysis chapter is the behaviours that are beneficial for boosting the communication and relationship between leader and employee. This finding agrees with what has been indicated in the literature review. When expectedly, managers should be able to communicate visions appropriately with

employees, displaying high expectations and corroborating to an intellectual motivation (Mongeau 2003; Stam *et al.* 2014). On the one hand, the findings include that a leader should have positive communication traits with employees such as openness, realism, reasonability, and optimistic characteristics, priorly defined as a positive perception from employees. On the other hand, relevant literature suggests through an empirical study that all leaders performing high, regardless of their leadership style, displays positive and similar communication skills (Schaufeli 2019).

6.3 Culture and values

Nevertheless, employees from the ‘Big Four’ companies in Brazil were analysed through interviews. Thus, the findings could not englobe other industries and sectors, populations, and across other countries, notwithstanding the companies being multinationals and present in more than 200 countries. Even though the ‘Big Four’ organisations under scope being multinationals comprehending similar culture and values, a cultural bias is still acknowledged.

The findings indicate that considering employees values and wellbeing is positively related to employee engagement. This can be justified due to the fact that Brazil does not display high levels of individualism, unlike European countries, for instance (Hofstede 2021). It means that Brazilians, in general, would prefer to getting to know the working team before engaging in work, and the people value trustworthy relationships, which would be in exchange for commitment and loyalty (Hofstede 2021).

Consequently, the results indicated that when employees feel valued as a person and the leaders are capable of instilling an engaged culture in an environment of trust, it highly contributes to a collaborative organisational environment. Hence, some of the positive leadership attitudes translated into their behaviours to help create an engaged culture are essential, such as ensuring confidentiality, transparency, social interaction, accuracy, and ethics. The findings of this research concur with Yoon *et al.* (2001) and Xu and Thomas (2010) studies, who explain that building a trusted environment is part of the psychological security, which makes employee engagement feasible (Kahn 1990).

The findings also include that HR activities consistently aid the relationship between manager and employee, being considered a part of the leadership development and consequent organisational commitment while meeting organisation goals (Armstrong 2012). HR activities like raising employer branding (advertisement of diversity, voluntary actions), career development, work-life balance, learning and development, and feedback platforms are found to be very critical on employee engagement. This is in line with Harvard Business Review present articles, which underline that HR activities concentrating on diversity and inclusivity for broader thinking, work-life balance, coaching/mentorship, and career support are fundamental for creativity and employee engagement (Corley 2020; Glaveski 2021).

6.4 Employee engagement

The author evaluated to which degree the interviewed employees are satisfied in their jobs and whether this is affected by the leadership behaviours. The findings indicate that supervisor support, a challenging environment, a learning culture, building relationship, flexibility, and a structured career development path, are critical to increasing employee satisfaction. These findings correlate with the ones from the literature review since supervisor support is suggested to be one of the antecedents of employee satisfaction (Yoon 2001; Fila *et al.* 2014).

The findings have a connection with the literature review, when it is noted that employee satisfaction is argued to be delivered from psychological and behavioural aspects, actively impacted by communication, environment, and motivation theories (Pelit *et al.* 2011). Literature interestingly mentions that whereas job resources contribute to employee satisfaction, job demands are negatively related to job satisfaction, increasing employee likelihood of burnout (Schaufeli 2015). In addition, leaders engaging employees with behaviours such as inspiring (sense of contribution), strengthening (freedom and responsibility), and connecting (belongingness), makes the employees' intrinsic needs are met, which is positive towards their engagement (Schaufeli 2015).

Literature also indicates that corroborating to a further psychological safer and emotionally resourceful environment may not be easy for a manager because it

depends on out-of-work resources (personal insecurities), however, it is yet possible to create an encouraging environment through emotional contagion (Schaufeli 2019). In the meantime, organisational commitment is defined as psychological self-identification (Porter *et al.* 1974; Allen and Meyer 1990). Therefore, organisation support is a strong antecedent of organisational commitment, which is a consequence of employee engagement (Arasanmi and Krishna 2019; Saks 2006).

These research findings actively indicate that the employees' commitment is impacted by HR Activities, such as the company's culture, values, onboarding process, and supervisor support to translate the values into daily behaviours. This finding entirely agrees with the ones on literature (Bulut and Culha 2010; Hadian 2017). Nevertheless, Byford *et al.* (2017) critiques that the onboarding process is not sufficient, recommending the use of the word 'integration' instead, once is difficult to get a complete picture of the company's operationally, culturally, and strategic goals, what can have consequences on talent retention, another consequence of employee engagement.

6.5 (Dis)Engaging manager

Engaging leadership behaviours were fore described as having a direct impact on employee satisfaction and organisational commitment. Consequently, whereas an engaging manager has a high amount of emotional intelligence and empathy, a disengaging manager does not (IES 2009). It is worth highlighting those leaders are different of managers, once leaders can be considered as the engaging managers while disengaging managers focus on planning and budgeting instead of setting a direction and motivating peers (Kotter 2001; Armstrong 2012) Although for success, the companies need both, effective organisations allow a great leadership development for people with leadership potential (Kotter 2001; Maheshwari and Yadav 2018). Thus, the literature and findings emphasize the HR importance on ensuring employee engagement, which can be assured through a good leadership development programme (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008; Xu and Thomas 2011).

The author also remarked that a distant manager is not directly proportional to engagement. In this case, it is worth mentioning that the reason may be since the companies in context exhibit a flatter organisational design, displaying less

hierarchy in their framework and built to embrace change (Rotman 2006). That means that employees would have been hired with higher expectations and fair autonomy in the tasks. It is considered the term of shared leadership on organisations that are built to change, and it is when the leadership substitutes hierarchy, sharing knowledge and control rapidly (Rotman 2006). The ‘Big Four’ companies in context are flatter organisations, which allocate countless leaders who could grasp the external environment and internal forces (Rotman 2006).

This research raised that an overconfident manager has a negative effect on employee engagement. However, Phua *et al.* (2018) has found that overconfident CEOs, with strong beliefs on their ideas, are linked to employee retention (employee engagement consequence) and higher employee investment in company stock. Moreover, Trapp (2018) provided a solution that would be ensuring diversity of thinking around the leader. Therefore recruiters should find the balance and people with complementary skillset while building a team. This is when the importance of self-awareness, an emotional intelligence trait, is highlighted to acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses (Trapp 2018).

6.6 Practical implications

The research brings substantial implications for managers and for organisations, indicating that leadership and organisation behaviours may impact employee engagement in a variety of ways. First, the research suggests that engaging managers do exist, and HR should be aware of leadership development training and how to support leadership while promoting employee engagement. Secondly, this research accomplishes a better understanding of some drivers on employee engagement, which is one of the biggest challenges facing HR nowadays, by acknowledging that leadership behaviour is an antecedent of employee engagement. Therefore, this research corroborates to an essential tool for managers while building an engaged workforce and culture. Thirdly, it was noted that leadership must show a fair degree of emotional intelligence, this aspect would bring benefits such as employee satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee retention, and organisational productivity (Saks 2006; Schaufeli 2015; Chaudhary and Panda 2018).

Several recent studies raised the importance of leadership training and how it would be more effective (Guthrie and Jones 2012; Channing 2020). HR should support the hunting, employ, and develop people with some sort of leadership potential, which is essential for a more precise performance management assessment, offering a clear leadership syllabus for leadership success (CIPD 2020). Instead of using a hypercritical competency model, it is suggested a model based on psychological capabilities that are beyond steady over time (Deloitte 2020). Further, the research enhanced the necessity of psychological meaningfulness, basic needs, and motivation, which can be helpful to employee engagement and creativity (Hancer and George 2003; Decuyper and Schaufeli 2019).

The research also raised the importance of an appropriate onboarding process; employees would have shared values with the organisation and can be more inspired to be more engaged, improving the relationship quality between organisation and employee. In doing so, the organisations can expect to get higher returns and all the benefits around employee engagement.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The author concluded the overall research and reflected on the research aim and questions. Therefore, this chapter discusses the opportunities for future research giving suggestions, grounded on this research limitations. Subsequently, the author brought recommendations considering the costs and resources involved to practically aid current business issues. Lastly, this chapter closed with the author's personal learning statement, comprehending the author's experiences and education that have been studied along the course, interpreting how it is related to this research. The author also ponders how this research has benefited and what recommendations could be made for the future. Throughout this research, the main aim established was leadership behaviours and the impact on employee engagement within the context observed, which was very evident from the participant's interview.

7.2 Recommendations and financial costs

This research studied the effect upon employee engagement when a variety of leadership behaviours are used. The following recommendations are aimed at increasing and establishing employee engagement concerning leadership behaviours and development.

- Recruit the 'right' talent

Companies being able to hire employees based on their values, experiences, and strengths while emphasizing finding the right match has been shown to have a range of benefits to companies when they want to enhance employee engagement or yet get people with leadership potential (Deloitte 2020). Most companies use competency-based recruitment, which is making a decision based on behavioural aspects. Therefore, comes the need to align the competencies with future business demands (CIPD 2020), which may involve the creation of policies. The business may need to invest in an HR provider or even outsource the process, depending on the business's willingness to reimburse for the service. It is indeed time costly, and a business owner would need an extra person to do so. The reasonable timeframe

for the adoption of this process may be 4 – 6 months. And then returns is suggested a yearly follow up of policies.

- Leadership training formal and informal

When a business wants to get the most of employees, it needs to offer training. This research encourages businesses to develop a leadership development programme (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008). Literature suggests that both formal and informal pieces of training should be carried out since the best can be learnt from daily experiences. A senior manager as a coach is ideal so the business can make a follow up to the leader development (Channing 2020). This can be costly, relying on the amount of training and coach. The timescale for this sort of development is pricey and may take longer than expected since it involves the use of energy and time of staff. Reasonably it may take 6 to 12 months to implement. However, an affordable way out is relying on technology. Insight concerning the future of leadership development suggests expanding the use of the ‘personal learning cloud’. It would act as a system offering training and interactive tools (Moldoveanu and Narayandas 2019). Therefore, it is essential so the leaders learn theories and current approaches that would make an impact on employee engagement.

- Invest in better HR policies

This requires that the business, in context, identify processes that would make employees feel valued, recognised, that they are in a flexible environment, and have career development opportunities. The researcher recommends creating policies containing reward management, such as the possibility of getting a half day off or an extra annual day leave when getting outstanding feedback on a task. This is very affordable and quickly to be implemented, allowing only 1-3 weeks to implement the policy. The author suggests that only costs involved to get some assistance from an HR provider would be necessary since the employees’ hours consumed would be less than expected. Therefore the employees would pay their own reward.

Additionally, a structured career framework policy is suggested in order to promote employees yearly by performance. This is also very affordable and quickly to be implemented, allowing only 1-3 weeks to implement the policy. To conclude, the author believes that the list is extensive. The businesses looking into employee

engagement development have much to invest in and can use their creativity. Besides high financing, a return for life is expected.

7.3 Future research

This research, through a qualitative study, could effectively verify the indirect impact on employees' contentment, satisfaction, and how committed to the company they seemed to be. This also led the author to important insights. Nevertheless, to gain factual data, a quantitative study is recommended upon the analysis of statistics. The research could assess the exact degree of impact that leadership has on engagement.

In addition, the research omits any impact on other interesting HR variables, such as performance management. This can be brought as one outcome of leadership behaviours and whether it affects or not. Therefore, future research could bring additional insights emphasizing performance assessments.

On the other hand, it is also recommended that other countries are analysed to evaluate the cultural awareness and biases that current leaders must evict and allow in determined locations. The author also suggests that longitudinal data is carried out through the comparison of generations. A deep assessment as this can contribute to leaders in knowing what to expect and how to satisfy and engage each generation's particularities.

Finally, the author recommends the assessment under other industries along with companies of different sizes. In this research perspective, the author acknowledges that the companies under context have a structured HR framework with more prosperous employee engagement activities. Currently, there are countless companies without robust HR. Although, in a medium or small company, the impact would be very much perceptible with the lack of a solid HR, applying the possibility of further discussions and recommendations.

7.4 Conclusion

The author has explored, evaluated, and contributed to understanding the impact on employee engagement when different leadership behaviours are adopted in the context of the 'Big Four' organisations within the financial services sector in Brazil. Relying on the findings of this research, most employees display high levels of engagement when an engaging manager and engaging culture is found.

The literature review led the author down on theoretical facts and insights concerning leadership and organisational behaviours, highlighting a gap in the literature regarding the effect on employee engagement in financial services organisations in Brazil. Comprehending this gap in the literature, the author did not find many studies considering the 'Big Four' organisations' particularities, so the author considered that the industry in context is worth looking further. The leadership tools for the numerous employees that 'Big Four' companies continuously employ and develop may be interested in this research findings. Other financial services organisations also may be interested in acquiring, in a practical way, knowledge over how to develop better and engage its employees.

In conclusion, engaged employees are extremely beneficial and profitable to those companies under the scope since they are willing to make a positive impact, being granted with a strong bond with the leader and organisation. Employee engagement is a critical subject for contemporary companies that aim to remain profitable and self-sufficient. Promoting employee engagement is the same as increasing collaboration, creativity, and a higher quality environment.

7.5 Personal learning statement

The last year completing my HR masters, considering Covid-19 restrictions, has been challenging and, in the meanwhile, helpful for my mental health. My learning curve reached a climax that was crucial for the person I am today, with the number of skills conquered and knowledge acquired along the way. Particularly, the masters and the time I have been in Ireland have opened my mind to a big world full of amazing people and resources and that each of us has a place in the world.

The importance of managing Human Resources may sometimes be wrongly diminished. Many challenges that the world faces today are related to human attitudes that could be prevented with the right amount of reasonability that most HR providers have. I decided to focus on leadership behaviours and employee engagement because I see that many problems in organisations are related to negative managerial behaviours. I believe in the possibility of having well-nurtured people in the world, and HR is here to help the relationship of top management and employees, they together can achieve great ideas.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal level of engagement:

Q1. What is your current role and what do you do daily?

Q2. What do you think of your current role? why?

Impact by line manager

Inspiring a Vision

Q3. How does your manager communicate with employees? Are you optimistic or pessimistic? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q4. How does your manager express confidence in a new task? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q5. Are you sure to bring your thoughts into a shared vision within your team? How do you think it affects your engagement as an employee?

Q6. Does your manager see the values, culture and mission of the company? How do you think it affects your engagement as an employee?

Encouragement and Recognition

Q7. How does your manager recognize your good work? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q8. Does your manager personally publicly congratulate you or co-workers for the job well done or do you provide particular feedback when improvements are needed? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q9: How does your manager encourage you to think creatively and seek solutions? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q10. Do the results you receive reflect the work you put in the projects? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Allowing others to act

Q11. How comfortable are you to offer different views to your manager? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q12. How much autonomy do you have in deciding the best way to do your job? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q13. How does your manager support your training and career development? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Q14. How does your manager make you think about solving a task otherwise? How did that happen? How do you think this affects your engagement as an employee?

Direct Impact on Employee engagement

Supervisor Support

Q15. Does your supervisor care about your opinions and well-being?

Q16. Does your supervisor consider your goals and professional values?

Employee satisfaction

Q17. Overall, how satisfied are you in your current role?

Impact directly on organizational commitment

Q18. Would you be happy to work in your organization until you retire?

Q19. Do you feel a feeling of belonging to your organization?

APPENDIX B

Consent form to take part in research

“The impacts of Leadership Behaviours on Employee Engagement in Financial Services Organisations in Brazil”

June 2021

Researcher Details:

Taynara Alves Silva
Master of Arts in Human Resource Management
National College of Ireland

1. I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
2. I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
3. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
4. I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing.
5. I agree to my interview being video-recorded.
6. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
7. I acknowledge that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
8. I understand that the researcher will use my quotes in a direct/indirect manner.
9. I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
10. I understand that signed consent forms, original recordings and transcriptions of my interview will be retained by the researcher until she gets the dissertation's results.
11. I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
12. I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of the participant

Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of the researcher

Date

APPENDIX C

Information sheet

‘The impact of Leadership Behaviours on Employee Engagement in Financial Services Organisations in Brazil’

June 2021

Dear participant,

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information.

I am a student at the National College of Ireland completing a Master’s in Human Resource Management. I will conduct a qualitative research, which will be carried out through a semi-structured interview. For this research, I am eager to interact with Financial Services employees to complete the following topic: **“The impact of Leadership Behaviours on Employee Engagement in Financial Services Organisations in Brazil”**.

The primary purpose of my dissertation is to explore the impacts of leadership behaviours on employee engagement in financial services setting located in Brazil. I also aim to investigate any aspects to those behaviours previously highlighted in academic literature and how employers could improve their behaviours aiding employee engagement.

This interview will be video recorded (via Microsoft Teams) and will last around 30-40 minutes. It will be totally anonymous, and your identity will be kept out of the data. The only individuals who will access this information are my dissertation supervisor, Ms Pauline Kelly Phelan, and me. As stated, this will be completely anonymous, and your employer will not have access to the information.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse participation, refuse any question and withdraw at any time without any consequence whatsoever.

If you have any questions surrounding this, please do not hesitate to contact me: taynara_alves@id.uff.br or through phone: [+353 083 983 9893](tel:+3530839839893).

Kind regards,

Taynara Alves Silva